

## **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

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**Date:** Monday, 6 June 2022

**Title:** Emergency Plan

**Contact Officer:** Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

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### **Background**

After the flooding of December 2020, the Town Council resolved to create its own emergency plan.

### **Current Situation**

#### **Emergency Plan**

Although not complete, good progress has been made on the Town Council's emergency plan. Meetings have been held between officers and multiple stakeholders to research its requirements and limitations. The Town Council is not the lead emergency planning authority so the Town Council cannot interfere with the planning of the lead authority.

The Council operates two facilities, The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall which could be used in an emergency as a place of safety. These facilities can be made available in an emergency to the appropriate authorities by returning forms to the County Council. They would be opened by a member of the Town Council on-call list and then trained County, District and on occasion NHS staff would run the facilities.

During current contracted working hours it would be assumed that the Town Council would make divert all available resources in an emergency situation. These resources would typically be the council maintenance team and vehicles.

### **Witney Flood Mitigation Group & River Side Gardens**

As the Town Council are not the lead authority in flood prevention or emergency planning it makes it hard to give the Witney Flood Mitigation Group and resident of Riverside Gardens an answer on how they can be assisted. One area the council could help is to encourage the group to make a grant bid for flood prevention equipment.

Riverside Gardens is an identified high-risk area for flooding and the problem is compounded as many residents are elderly and cannot physically prevent flooding. The problem could be solved by the formation of a volunteer group to aid in the situation of flooding. There is no guarantee this group will be formed, but making flood prevention equipment more readily available could sufficiently increase the response time to flood prevention. If a sandbag store

was installed in the vicinity, those willing to help would have the resource made available to them.

### **Emergency Call Out & Out of Office Contact**

Within the Open Spaces Strategy Action Plan Objective EE14 is: *Identify options and a more structured approach to providing a more responsive out of hours service / call out service, as well as introducing possible work practices at weekends.*

Members are referred to the confidential appendix to this report because it relates to employees terms and conditions of employment

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Removing town council staff from duties to assist in an emergency response would have an impact on operations. Additionally, although, the maintenance team can help in emergency responses such as building flood defence many office staff are not in a position to help. The roles many staff are currently recruited in do not detail physical work, they are therefore un-insured and are not trained to deal with distressed residents.

### **Financial implications**

Described here or as stated in the report above.

➤ There is no allocated budget to deal with emergency response.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Inclusion into the emergency plan of Witney Town Council maintenance staff assisting in an emergency in contracted working hours.
2. Inclusion into the emergency plan of making Town Council facilities available as places of safety in an emergency.
3. Designate officers to work with Witney Flood Mitigation Group on a grant bid for flood prevention equipment.
4. The attached confidential appendix on emergency call outs.