



MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN Version 10.0

Part 11 Community Leadership Plan

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Part 11 - THE ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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1.1 - PRE EMERGENCY

The Emergency Planning Officer should have

- Prepared plans
- Trained and exercised staff and volunteers
- Developed relationships with
 - Emergency services
 - Other local authorities
 - Utilities and agencies
 - Voluntary organisations

Elected Members can

- Acquaint themselves with plans
- Seek briefings
- Be prepared for media interest

2.1 - THE MAJOR EMERGENCY

The initial response will be from the Emergency Services, supported by the Local Authority.

- The Council response will be coordinated by the Chief Executive (or his substitute) acting as chairman of the Crisis Management Team and as the District Emergency Coordinator
- The District Emergency Centre (DEC) may be opened
- The Council should have a presence at the Strategic Coordinating Group.

2.2 - DURING AN EMERGENCY

Elected Members should

- Avoid giving instructions to officers in the Crisis Management Team, the District Emergency Centre, the Forward Control Point or operatives undertaking work on site as this could disrupt the coordination and integration essential for an efficient response. All requests for action or information must be directed through the District Emergency Coordinator who will prioritise them along with all other requests for action.
- Remember the frantic activity
- Be aware that enquiries will not always be greeted with the usual enthusiasm
- Please be patient
- Use local radio as information source
- Telephone only when the District Emergency Centre is likely to be operational, and then not directly. The District Emergency Coordinator will brief appropriate members on a regular basis – the Leader, Cabinet Member for Safe Community, local Members for area(s) affected and other Members when required

2.3 - WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Avoid visiting scene of incident before consulting District Emergency Coordinator. Seek advice from Emergency Planning Officer – be briefed on any health and safety precautions necessary, or personal protective equipment required
- Do not visit District Emergency Centre without prior arrangement with District Emergency Coordinator

2.4 - IF YOUR ELECTORAL WARD IS AFFECTED

- Use local contacts to obtain information, identify problems and vulnerable people
- Liaise with your local Community Response Team (if you have one) (See Part 6.4)
- If appropriate, assist responders with liaison on the ground, using local knowledge
- Visit rest centres to reassure and identify problems
- Act as two way conduit of information
- Discuss whether it is appropriate to become part of the media response team. If you are to be interviewed, seek to be properly briefed first; decide what you want to say and ensure that you are not pushed into appearing to agree with opinions that you do not hold. Make no flippant comments before or after the interview – you may be on air or being recorded. Any statements to the media must be cleared by the Council's Communications Team, the Crisis Management Team and the media co-ordination group at the Strategic Co-ordination Group
- Encourage and support responders
- Attend any public meetings

2.5 - IF YOUR WARD IS NOT AFFECTED

- Adopt a low profile
- Avoid distracting those of your colleagues who have a positive role to play
- Remember there may be some reductions in standard of service. Be patient

2.6 - CONCLUSION

Remember each major emergency will be different, so response will differ. Your involvement will differ, but your role is to be

- Enabling
- Supportive
- Flexible
- Non interfering

3.1 - POST EMERGENCY – THE RECOVERY PHASE

From: National Recovery Guidance - Recovery Plan Guidance Template – HM Government – November 2008

The Elected Members of the community affected have an important role to play in assisting with the recovery process. They have a duty as the community representatives to gather and make known the concerns of their community and feed them into the recovery process mainly through the Community Recovery Committee. They also have a very important role in disseminating credible information and advice back to the community.

As civic leaders, elected members are usually involved with many other aspects of community life through such things as School Governing bodies, local charities and various community groups. They can be a valuable source of help and specialist advice.

They have a role as:

- The focus for community concerns
- Identifying problems and vulnerabilities of their community that may require priority attention and feeding them back to the relevant recovery group
- The knowledge bank of local personalities and resources
- Encouragement and support to recovery teams working within their community
- Enhancing local community liaison
- Visiting people affected to be a listening ear and to give them reassurance
- Consider, at an early stage, recommendations from the Recovery Co-ordinating Group on the strategic choice between 'normalisation' and 'regeneration' of the affected area
- Assisting with the media in getting messages to the community (following established policy guidelines)
- Assisting with VIP visits
- Liaising with other elected representatives (MPs/MEPs/other Local Authority's representatives, etc.)
- Assisting (and possibly chairing) debrief sessions with the community

Through their normal duties as committee members, elected members give the Authority strategic direction and decide policy. They will scrutinise decisions of officers and other committees and suggest improvements. They will ultimately authorise actions affecting the Local Authority's functions, so they will need to be kept well informed with accurate and up to date information to enable them to make credible and well informed judgements.

Note: The normal political processes and structures will still apply in the recovery phase. Some Members may sit on both the Recovery Committee and their normal committees.

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In addition

- If appropriate seek to join debriefing groups or review bodies
- If recommendations are made, press for implementation and support funding
- Feed back to your constituents
- Prepare for a possible role with memorial services, disaster funds and appeals.

See also Part 10 - Recovery