

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Public Protection
DATE	5 th September 2023
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Community Resilience
REPORT NUMBER	COM/23/291
DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	Vikki Cuthbert
REPORT AUTHOR	Fiona Mann
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.12

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update on arrangements which have been put in place with communities across the city to support them in local emergency response during disruptive weather events and power outages.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee -

- 2.1 note the interest from community groups in developing their own resilience arrangements;
- 2.2 note the measures taken by the Council to support communities in supporting themselves during disruptive weather events, including power outages; and
- 2.3 agree to support the establishment of further community resilience groups and that members have a role to play to facilitate their development.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The city has faced a number of challenging winters in recent years, in line with the climate trends faced across the globe. Increased wet weather, storms and disruption relating to these has had an impact on our communities and citizens. This in turn places increased pressure on the Council services that are ordinarily involved in emergency response, e.g. Roads, Environmental Services, Regional Communications Centre, and others.
- 3.2 As part of the Council's duties as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the emergency planning team has been developing resilience arrangements within communities so that they can support one another during events of this kind. This recognises that the responsibility can be shared out, albeit the Council retains the statutory duties as a Category 1 responder and facilitates communities to support this.

- 3.3 The Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (GLRP) debrief reports and lessons identified from Storm Arwen, Malik and Corrie incidents have underpinned the Council's work in community, business and individual resilience spaces. Guidance has come from Scottish Government on [Building Resilient Communities](#), encouraging communities and individuals to harness resources and expertise to help themselves prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, in a way that complements the work of the emergency responders.
- 3.4 [Preparing Scotland](#), Scottish Government Guidance on Resilience, states that all responders should support the development of community resilience and should apply and encourage an innovative approach. Building community resilience should not be seen as an add-on, but should be carried out as part of responders' day-to-day activities. The potential return on investment for responders in promoting community resilience is high, as they can unlock skills, knowledge and resources held by the entire community.
- 3.5 Following the high numbers of volunteers from our communities during the Covid 19 pandemic we have worked to harness that community spirit and encourage the creation of new community resilience groups.
- 3.6 Scotland has over 300 Community Resilience Volunteer Groups. Aberdeen City previously had two such Groups - Cults, Milltimber and Bielside and Culter. In December 2022, we supported a third group to establish itself in Bridge of Don and Danestone. Council officers worked with interested local people to find participants, create a plan and put in place activation arrangements. This group is made up of members of the Community Council, Rotary club, Mens' Shed and a Church in the area. Such groups offer anyone with any ability of any age to take part.
- 3.7 The challenge in increasing the number of community groups is that communities within urban city areas feel less vulnerable than those in rural areas and are therefore less inclined to consider the need to establish local groups. To try to prioritise our efforts and utilise our limited resource we have selected key areas that are known to have historic issues with flooding or be impacted upon when we have severe weather.
- Deeside
 - Bridge of Don and Denmore
 - The Green and Merchant Quarter
 - Riverside Drive and Holburn Street
- 3.8 Officers will be concentrating their efforts for 2023/24 on The Green and Merchant quarter plus Riverside Drive and Holburn Street communities. Support from members would be most welcome, particularly to champion the Community Resilience Volunteer Group concept and to make local connections into communities, particularly key local stakeholders; individuals, business leaders, existing groups.
- 3.9 In return, officers will:
- Offer advice, guidance and training

- Assist in compilation of a community plan
- Support regarding grants and funding
- Advise on insurance for community groups

3.10 In time for winter 2022/23, officers delivered emergency “grab boxes” around the city, including useful items such as hi vis vests, torches and wind up radios, first aid kits etc. These were delivered to every community centre, including our support centres, and they also include various leaflets on winter gritting routes, how to prepare in case of storms or floods and information on starting a group. For winter 2023/24 more leaflet drops will be made into our communities.

3.11 The Council was successful in an application to Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) for funding from their storm fund of 2021/22 and received £125,000. This award was made in recognition of the impact felt across the City from Storm Arwen and subsequent storms. During the storms of 2021/22 it was clear that community led resilience activity can play a critical role in emergency response. To secure the funding, officers created a comprehensive community led resilience programme outlining projects and initiatives that would most benefit from financial support.

3.12 There are a number of key priorities for the use of the £125,000:

1. **Delivery in advance of Winter 2023 of battery packs;** to support the most vulnerable individuals who need to use power reliant medical equipment within their own property during a power outage. Working with Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) 20 vulnerable children and a number of adults have been identified who require a continuous power supply.
2. **Delivery in advance of winter 2023 battery packs** to the 3 existing Community Resilience Groups. This will assist the overall ACC response to a power outage emergency.
3. **Creation of and participation in Multi-agency Community Resilience Conference** for the Grampian Area. This is being held on October 2nd at the Beach Ballroom. The conference is aimed at community groups wishing to start or improve their resilience activities /arrangements. Objectives are:-
 - Promotion of the individual, household, family and community resilience
 - Increased understanding of roles and responsibilities of the Category 1 responders
 - Increased understanding of how community groups fit into emergency response
 - Demonstration of the types of resilience activities community groups
 - Encouraging networking between groups

3.13 National Power Outage (NPO) and electricity restoration planning is high on the agenda across Regional Resilience Partnerships, Local Resilience Partnerships (LRP), local authorities and the UK and Scottish Governments. This risk has existed for many decades but has come into sharp focus due to geopolitics; war in Ukraine, fuel insecurity and financial uncertainty.

- 3.14 Electricity restoration is the procedure to recover from the total or significant partial shutdown of the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS). For planning purposes, such an event will be known across the United Kingdom as a NPO which has caused an extensive loss of supply. The planning assumption is that full power restoration could take up to seven days. An NPO is likely to occur in less than 2 minutes without warning.
- 3.15 Aberdeen City Council is represented on the GLRP working group and has a draft NPO plan out for consultation internally. This is an ongoing piece of work and likely to take many months to complete. Good progress has been made in some of the fundamentals of what we do in this type of incident, including:
- Specialist emergency grab boxes with additional kit including battery back ups have been deployed to information hubs
 - Agreed information points for the public - Sports Village & Get Active Sports Aberdeen; Jesmond, Beacon Peterculter, Kincorth, Sheddocksley
 - Scoping exercises regarding resources staff and awareness raising underway
- 3.16 Aberdeen City Council recently participated in Exercise Mighty Oak which was a UK government run exercise to primarily stress-test government planning thus far and how that linked into the variable planning stages that exist in different parts of the UK. The debrief has just been received and it is evident that there is much work for the UK and Scottish Governments to do particularly in the area of communication between responders and with the public, also how food and water supplies will be delivered. However, GLRP have agreed we will all continue to plan using the same and current planning assumptions, along with experience and lessons learned from recent power outages over past few years, rather than wait for updated assumptions and direction. Grampians category 1 responders will work together ensuring cohesiveness across the region.
- 3.17 A draft NPO plan is being consulted upon and we will be working with partners to ensure plans complement each other. Council teams will then undertake appropriate exercising of the plan.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. As we have a £125,000 fund which we gained from SSEN that can support the Council's efforts in Community Resilience for the City.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The Council has responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to maintain arrangements to warn the public, and to provide information and advice to the public, if an emergency is likely to occur or has occurred. Community resilience arrangements are one way in which the local authority fulfils this duty.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations in this report. The activities described are partly in response to the global impact of the environmental changes caused by climate change.

7. RISK

7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Failure to provide adequate support to communities	Support to Community Resilience Groups	L	Yes
Compliance	Failure to comply with Civil Contingencies Act 2004	Emergency Planning Team to ensure compliance	L	Yes
Operational	Failure to manage the impacts of climate events on operational services	Providing communities with mechanisms for self-support will lessen the impact on operational services	L	Yes
Financial	Escalating costs for operational costs bearing the burden of emergency response.	Providing communities with mechanisms for self-support will lessen the impact on operational services	L	Yes
Reputational	Loss of trust in Council services to support communities during weather events	Provision of support mechanisms from the Council to maintain confidence	L	Yes

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Environment / Climate	Inability to provide a consistent and sustainable response to climate events	Emergency planning structures	L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

The proposals in this report have no impact on the Council Delivery Plan.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 Assessment has been completed.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Other	None required.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Links are embedded in the report.

11. APPENDICES

1. [Elderly-Vulnerable 4pp.pdf](#)
2. [Gritting for around Aberdeen.pdf](#)
3. [How to prepare for bad weather.pdf](#)
4. [Setting up a resilience group.pdf](#)

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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