



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT**

Committee Report

Meeting: CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE: 1 DECEMBER 2008.

Subject: Morpeth Floods – Provision of Mutual Aid Support

Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise members of the support provided by Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit to Northumberland County Council during the Morpeth Floods of September 2008.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit (TWEPU) provides a 24 hour 7 day a week Duty Officer service. Senior officers within TWEPU operate a rota to provide a link between the responding agencies and the Local Authorities in an emergency, and provide assistance as requested.

2.2 During the weekend of 6th September 2008 the Duty Officer was predominantly engaged liaising between the Tyne and Wear Councils and the Regional Resilience Team (RRT) at Government Office – North East. This involved providing periodic reports to the RRT regarding the flooding situation in each of the five council areas in Tyne and Wear.

2.3 There were instances of localised flooding across Tyne and Wear which the local authorities and emergency services attended to help residents affected by the flooding. All Tyne and Wear councils were affected to varying degrees by the conditions, the worst conditions being experienced by Gateshead and Newcastle.

2.4 However, the worst of the storm was centred on Morpeth in Northumberland. On the evening of the 6 September, a request was received by the Duty Officer from the County Emergency Planning Officer of Northumberland County Council for mutual aid assistance. This request was made due to the extreme conditions which had developed in Morpeth, and the need to relieve some of its own staff who had been on duty continuously throughout the day.

2.5 The priority of TWEPU is to provide assistance to the Tyne and Wear councils if requested. Following the request from Northumberland

additional officers from TWEPU were contacted and placed on standby to provide cover for Tyne and Wear, should it be required.

- 2.6 A full risk assessment was undertaken by the CEPO and the Duty Officer in relation to the current situation in Tyne and Wear. It was established that the flooding situation in Tyne and Wear had passed its peak and would not escalate any further, a decision was made that two officers could attend to assist the significantly deteriorating situation in Morpeth.
- 2.7 In providing this assistance it was made clear to Northumberland Council that TWEPU's first priority was to Tyne and Wear councils, and should the situation in Tyne and Wear subsequently deteriorate, then mutual aid assistance would need to be withdrawn.

3.0 ASSISTANCE PROVIDED

- 3.1 Both officers initially reported to the Northumberland Council Emergency Control Suite in Morpeth, and following a briefing, they were subsequently deployed to King Edward School, which was being used as the main Rest Centre. The officers were mainly involved in assisting evacuees, and arranging for additional bedding to supplement Northumberland's supplies from the Tyne and Wear Central Bedding store.
- 3.2 These officers were in attendance at Morpeth from 2200 hrs on 6th September until 0900 hrs the following morning.

4.0 DEBRIEF

- 4.1 Northumbria LRF has arranged a multi-agency debrief to be held on Tuesday 18th November 208 in the Council Chamber, County Hall Morpeth. Government Office - North East has arranged to Chair the meeting. LRF members have been reminded that severe weather and flooding remain listed as VERY HIGH RISK on the LRF Community Risk Register, and an excellent attendance is anticipated. The main intention of the de-brief is that lessons can be learned and applied for the future.
- 4.2 TWEPU has been requested to contribute to the debrief process, and comments are currently being compiled.

5.0 RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to note the content of this report, and receive further reports as required.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None