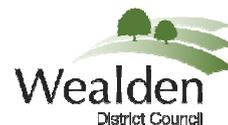




# **Guidance for Elected Members on the Management of an Emergency**

**East Sussex County Council in partnership with**



**Version 2.0 ESCC**

Produced jointly by the local authority members of the East Sussex Resilience & Emergencies Partnership (East Sussex CC, Eastbourne BC, Hastings BC, Lewes DC, Wealden DC – see Appendix 2 paragraph A2.7)

(This supersedes the previous Version 1 produced in September 2011)

## VERSION CONTROL

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<b>Amendment Version</b>	

## References and acknowledgements

The following documents have been used in developing this Guidance:

East Sussex Local Authorities (2003) *Guidance for Elected Members on the Management of a Major Incident*

Sussex Resilience Forum (2008) *Emergency Linking Document* 4<sup>th</sup> Edition

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (2007) *Civil Protection & Emergency Preparedness for Elected Members*

Nottinghamshire County Council (2009) *Elected Members Emergency Plan*

Cabinet Office (2013) *National Recovery Guidance - Common Issues - The role of Elected Members* (pages 30-36) available from:  
<https://www.gov.uk/national-recovery-guidance-common-issues>

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## Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide elected members with a brief summary of how emergencies (major incidents) are managed and to give some guidance as to how they can assist.

It is in four parts:

<b>Section A</b>	Outlines the roles elected members can play in a major emergency
<b>Section B</b>	Describes how we plan for and respond to major emergencies
<b>Section C</b>	Gives additional specific information for your Council
<b>Appendices</b>	Give details of Local Authority duties during an emergency; the legal background; and the main organisations involved

The Civil Contingencies Act defines an emergency as:

- (a) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare;
- (b) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment; or
- (c) war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security

It must be borne in mind that all incidents are different and individual councils have their own policies and procedures. This guidance must be read in that light: it contains general principles and suggestions, but due account must be taken of the circumstances of the particular incident.

## Section A      Role of Elected Members in a Major Emergency

*“As community representatives and figureheads in their local community, elected members for the affected community have an important role to play (particularly) in assisting with the recovery process. Although they have a limited role in the operational response phase, the role of the local authority’s elected members is vital to rebuilding, restoring, rehabilitating and reassuring the communities affected and speaking on their behalf” (from National Recovery Guidance).*

### 1      **Stages of involvement**

Elected members can become involved in major emergencies at four separate stages:

- Prior to an incident – developing understanding of emergency planning (para 3)
- During an incident – limited role (para 4)
- During the recovery stage – major role – usually led by the local authority (para 5)
- Issues which arise after the incident (para 7)

### 2      **Record Keeping**

During a major emergency it is important that good records are kept of actions taken and reasons for decisions made as there will often be an Inquiry. It is recommended that Members keep a log of any involvement they may have in a major incident.

### 3      **Role of Elected Members – (a) During the Planning Stages**

During the planning stage Members can develop an awareness of:

- Civil protection legislation, including the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA)
- General duties of local authorities and other responders under the CCA.
- The support role of local authorities during the response to an incident
- The specific duties of local authorities during the response to an incident
- The lead role of local authorities during the recovery from an incident
- The arrangements for emergency planning within their Authority
- The arrangements for business continuity within their Authority
- The preparation of community resilience plans
- Practical aspects by attending appropriate training and exercises

It is important that communities prepare to help themselves in an emergency in a way that complements the response of the emergency services. Members can help in this respect by actively encouraging town and parish councils in their areas to complete an emergency / resilience plan. An example Community Resilience Plan template can be found using the following link: <http://www.sussexemergency.info/our-community>.

The Council's Emergency Planning Officer can provide further information on all these matters.

#### 4 **Role of Elected Members – (b) During an emergency**

For the emergency responders, the period at the start of an emergency is a crucial time for the protection of people, property and the environment. The role played by the local authority is a supporting one, liaising with the emergency services, providing resources and other facilities as required.

Communications can be very difficult in the immediate aftermath of a major incident with telephone lines handling potentially thousands of calls. As soon as possible the Chief Executive will brief the Leader of the Council and provide continuous updates on the emergency response. The Council's Member Services Officer or Press Officer will advise Members when a detailed briefing is likely to be available. For Health and Safety reasons, Members are asked not to go to the scene or attempt to cross police cordons. While Members may become aware that an incident has happened in their ward it is requested that they do not try to contact the Council call centre, the Emergency Control Room, or the Emergency Response Group for information during the response phase.

As the situation becomes clearer and the immediate danger is brought under control, briefings will be available to Members and, in particular, to those whose wards are involved who may wish to assist by:

- Being aware of the latest position by attending briefing sessions, etc;
- Supporting and providing reassurance to the affected community;
- Supporting officers involved in the response to the emergency
- Support the response with local knowledge e.g. identifying vulnerable people;
- Support liaison with Town and Parish Councils and local community groups;
- As a community leader acting as a channel of communication with public;
- Act as a voluntary helper (depending on individual skills);

#### 5 **Role of Elected Members – (c) During the Recovery Stage**

The recovery process involves re-establishing the community and local businesses and restoring 'normality' which, depending on the nature of the event, may be different from what existed before.

During this phase, the strategic coordination of the incident is handed over from the emergency services to the Local Authority. This will be led by a Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG).

As community leaders, elected members may become involved through:

- Providing a political lead on the way in which decisions are made.
- Being community supporters and champions
- Using local knowledge and community contacts to identify priorities
- Representing their community on the Community Recovery Committee.
- Supporting efforts to repair and reconstruct the affected community
- Promoting joint working between County, District and Parish authorities.
- Liaising with other elected representatives including MPs / MEPs

- Seeking additional resources and financial assistance from Government
- Approving regeneration issues;
- Considering the need for longer term accommodation;
- Involvement in the management of any appeal funds and memorials;
- Anniversaries and commemoration.
- Ensuring that the lessons learnt are applied to the emergency plans.

## 6 **Role of Elected Members – Dealing with the Media and VIP Visitors**

Media relations in an emergency incident are crucial and can often be an important factor in determining how well (or otherwise) the Council and Emergency Services are reported as dealing with the situation.

Members may be approached to give media statements and interviews.

To ensure a consistent and accurate approach it is important that Members are fully briefed by the appropriate Council's Press Officer. Any Council communication with the media will be in accordance with the agreed procedures and, in the early stages, in consultation with the police and fire services. Members should refrain from speaking to the media direct, unless guided to do so by their Council's Press Officer, to avoid any mixed messages which could have a detrimental effect on the community and overall emergency response.

If the incident is of such magnitude as to attract regional or national interest, Members may become involved in meeting and greeting VIPs and briefing visitors on the progress being made.

## 7 **Role of Elected Members – Post Incident Issues**

Members also need to be aware of other issues that may arise in the aftermath of an emergency incident. These can include:

- Civil litigation
- Criminal proceedings
- Public inquiries
- Loss of income for the Council
- Anniversaries
- Insurance and claims to the Government
- Long term effects on the community
- Business regeneration

## Section B      How we plan for and respond to major emergencies

### 8      **Legal requirement to cooperate in preparing emergency plans** (Appendix 2)

It is a legal requirement that plans must be prepared to deal with major emergencies. This involves local authorities, emergency services, health bodies and others working together to produce coordinated plans.

In this area, the coordination is achieved through the ‘Sussex Resilience Forum’ (SRF) on which all the organisations are represented. Through this body,

- The risks facing the community are assessed
- Plans are prepared to meet those risks
- Exercises are undertaken to test those plans

### 9      **The Local Authority’s own Emergency and Business Continuity Plans**

There is also a legal duty on local authorities to prepare and test Plans<sup>1</sup> which set out their own responses to an emergency whether that involves

- (a) Providing support to the Emergency Services and / or Community (an external emergency i.e. ‘Emergency Planning’);  
and / or
- (b) Exceptional measures to continue to provide its own critical services (an internal emergency i.e. ‘Business Continuity’). (Critical Services are those where a major disruption would cause significant adverse effects to human welfare, the environment, legal issues, financial issues or the Council’s reputation.)

For most major emergency incidents within its area, the response of the District or Borough concerned would include setting up an Emergency Control Centre (ECC). This would be used to coordinate the local authority response – to receive requests and action them, to monitor progress and to assist in liaising with other responding organisations such as the Police, County Council, etc.

Where an incident involves more than one District / Borough it may be necessary to open the County Council’s Emergency Centre as well to co-ordinate the county-wide response.

### 10      **Three levels of multi-agency response**

In the event of a major incident there will generally be three levels of multi-agency management: Strategic, Tactical and Operational (often referred to as Gold, Silver and Bronze).

A Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG - ‘Gold’) would be set up (usually at Police headquarters in Lewes). This would include senior managers from all relevant

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2 – paragraph A2.9 – Emergency Plans & Resilience and Emergencies Plan template

organisations involved in the emergency. This Group takes responsibility for the strategic management of the incident and ensuring sufficient resources are made available. Local authority representation on the SCG would be through a senior officer from both the District / Borough involved and from the County Council.

Tactical Command (Silver) is the multi-agency group which meets near the scene to assess risks, identify the resource needs and coordinate the response. The local authority response will be led by a 'Tactical Commander' called the Local Authority Incident Liaison Officer or LAILO. This will usually be an officer from the District or Borough in which the incident has happened. The LAILO will normally represent all local authority interests.

Operational Command (Bronze) are the responders at the scene responsible for implementing the decisions of the tactical group and managing the immediate "hands-on" work.

## 11 **Roles and Responsibilities of Local Authorities**

The principal duties of local authorities in an emergency include:-

- Support and care of the community
- Support for the emergency services
- Co-ordination of the response by the voluntary sector
- Liaison with utility companies
- Leading the rehabilitation of the community by aiding the recovery process.
- Continue to provide their critical services

The local authorities in Sussex have agreed a mutual aid protocol that enables them to call upon each other for support during a major emergency.

A list of the duties of local authorities during a major emergency is given in Appendix 1

## 12 **Recovery from an Emergency**

The Police normally chair the Strategic Coordinating Group during the response stage of an emergency. However, depending on the size and nature of the incident, it may be appropriate to set up a multi-agency Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) to plan the return to normality once the response phase has passed. The local authorities have a major role to play in the recovery process and this RCG is normally led by a chief officer from the local authority area in which the incident occurred.

The Recovery Coordinating Group would normally be set up soon after the incident started so that planning for the return to normality can begin at the earliest possible time. There is an agreed Sussex Resilience Forum Recovery Plan which sets out the framework in accordance with national guidelines.

As part of this Recovery Plan, it is proposed to set up a Community Recovery Committee consisting of representatives of local groups. Local Elected Members will have an important part to play on this Committee.

## 13 **Role of Emergency Planning Officers**

Emergency Planning Officers prepare plans to cover a variety of potential emergencies. They maintain important links with numerous different organisations. They develop and deliver training programmes and exercises, all intended to prepare local authorities to deal with a major incident when it occurs.

The plans are developed in such a way that the local authority's response can be implemented without the direct input of the Emergency Planning Officer although, if available, he or she will often be able to provide invaluable advice and guidance.

All Sussex local authorities provide an out-of-hours 'Duty Officer' as a point of contact in case a major incident occurs or is anticipated.

This 'Duty Officer' is responsible for:

- Liaison with the Emergency Services
- Alerting and calling out other Council officers as required
- Alerting and calling out other agencies and organisations as required
- Briefing senior officers as required
- Making an assessment of the support the local authority can provide

## 14 **Who Pays for the Council's Emergency Response?**

Each Council has a responsibility for its own costs incurred in dealing with emergencies in its area. Depending on the scale and nature of the emergency, the Government may make grants available in respect of some expenses (in accordance with the Bellwin Scheme).

## 15 **Further information**

Contact your Council's Emergency Planning Officer for further information and / or check the Council's Intranet or external web-site under 'Emergency Planning'.

## Section C Specific Local Authority Information

(This space is available to add any specific Local Authority information or contact arrangements.)

### East Sussex County Council

	Name + Job Title	Contact Number
First contact number for information about a major emergency	Andy Cottell Democratic Services Manager	01273 481955 <a href="mailto:Andy.cottell@eastsussex.gov.uk">Andy.cottell@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>
Lead Chief Officer for Emergency Planning	Rupert Clubb Director of Economy, Transport & Environment	01273 482200 <a href="mailto:rupert.clubb@eastsussex.gov.uk">rupert.clubb@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>
Manager responsible for Emergency Planning	David Broadley Emergency Planning Manager	01323 747085 <a href="mailto:David.Broadley@eastsussex.gov.uk">David.Broadley@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>
Communications	Warwick Smith Head of Communications	01273 481354 <a href="mailto:warwick.smith@eastsussex.gov.uk">warwick.smith@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>
	David Zwirek Communications Account Manager	01273 481435 <a href="mailto:david.zwirek@eastsussex.gov.uk">david.zwirek@eastsussex.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix 1 Roles and Responsibilities of Local Authorities

### A1.1 All Local Authorities

All local authorities may be required to provide:

- Information and advice to the public
- Media officers to liaise with SRF partners to co-ordinate release of information
- Help lines
- Appeal fund arrangements
- Plant and equipment
- Clearance of debris
- Alerting arrangements for other local authorities
- Alerting arrangements for relevant internal departments.
- Liaison officers to relevant joint commands
- A Strategic level officer to the Strategic Coordinating Group
- An emergency control and co-ordination arrangement
- Arrangements to collect, collate and disseminate information
- Alerting arrangements for voluntary organisations and co-ordinate their support.
- Long term support to the local community
- Liaison with government departments, public utilities and other organisations
- Arrangements to co-ordinate the Council's response with adjacent areas.
- Continue to provide its critical services

### A1.2 County Councils

- Provide Social Care and welfare arrangements to Rest Centres
- Provide trained social care staff to assist Police Family Liaison in the Victim Identification Process
- Plan for and respond to threats to public health
- Provide and manage Humanitarian Assistance Centres.
- Arrange road closures and diversions
- Co-ordinate aftercare, in conjunction with the police, health services and voluntary organisations.
- Request military assistance in support of the civil community
- Alert the relevant Director of Public Health to all emergencies posing actual or potential toxic hazards, including oil pollution,
- Establish an Emergency Mortuary on instruction of HM Coroner
- Set up an Emergency Mortuary (at Woodvale, Brighton)
- Request the National Emergency Mortuary Arrangements (NEMA)
- Prepare site to accept the NEMA
- Coordinate Tier 2 and 3 oil spills, providing a Shoreline Response Centre

### A1.3 District and Borough Councils

- Set up and manage Rest Centres
- Arrange temporary accommodation
- Provide building and safety inspections

- Provide maps and building plans
- Provide environmental health services
- Arrange emergency feeding
- Organise transport (with the County Council)
- Shoreline clean-up of oil or harmful materials (coastal authorities)
- Support to major public events
- Support the provision of Emergency Assistance Centres

#### A1.4 **Unitary Authority (Brighton and Hove CC)**

The Unitary Authority has all the same responsibilities as the two County Councils plus all the responsibilities of Boroughs and Districts. In addition the City Council is responsible for:

- Hosting major political party conferences
- Providing the Emergency Mortuary at Woodvale, Brighton

## Appendix 2      Legal Background to Local Authority Duties

### A2.1    **The Civil Contingencies Act 2004**

During the early part of the last decade, the United Kingdom experienced the impacts of a number of large-scale emergencies. The widespread flooding, fuel shortages, the outbreak of foot-and-mouth in 2000, along with the subsequent terrorist attacks in New York on 9/11, demonstrated the need for a more integrated approach to emergency planning.

This led to a Government review of emergency planning in England and Wales. The outcome of this was the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which provided an improved, more consistent and more resilient approach to emergency planning.

The Act is in two parts

Part 1: relates to local arrangements for civil protection and responsibilities of local responders.

Part 2: covers emergency powers that can be used by Central Government.

### A2.2    **Category 1 Responders and their Duties**

The Act places statutory duties on those organisations that have responsibilities to respond to major emergencies affecting communities. These include the emergency services (Police, Fire and Ambulance), health agencies, Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and others. These are known as Category 1 responders.

These 'Category 1' responders, are subject to six duties:

- A duty to carry out **risk assessments** and publish all or part of a Community Risk Register  
*(This is published on the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) web-site)*
- A duty to **plan for emergencies**
- The requirement to have robust **business continuity arrangements** in place to maintain service delivery
- A duty to have in place to **arrangements Warn & Inform** the Public both before and during emergencies  
*(There is a Sussex Warning and Informing Group of communication officers)*
- A duty to **co-operate with partner agencies**
- A duty to **share information** with partner agencies  
*(The duties to cooperate and share is achieved through the SRF)*

In addition, Local Authorities have a seventh statutory duty:

- To **promote business continuity** to local businesses and the voluntary sector.  
*(A Sussex-wide leaflet and DVD have been produced by the LAs)*

### A2.3 **Category 2 Responders**

The Act also defines a secondary group of responders. These 'Category 2' responders are those organisations which, although not 'primary' responders, could potentially have a significant role. For example, utility companies, communication agencies and transport operators. Category 2 responders have statutory duties to cooperate and to share information with Category 1 responders in the planning and response to major emergencies.

### A2.4 **Definition of an Emergency (Major Incident)**

The Civil Contingencies Act defines an emergency as:

- (a) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare;
- (b) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment; or
- (c) war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.

Threats of 'serious damage to human welfare' include:

Loss of human life; human illness or injury; homelessness; damage to property; disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel; disruption of a system of communication; disruption of facilities for transport; or, disruption of services relating to health.

Threats of 'serious damage to the environment' include contamination of land, water or air with biological, chemical or radio-active matter; or, disruption or destruction of plant life or animal life.

### A2.5 **Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF)**

There is a requirement under the Civil Contingencies Act for responders to cooperate in planning for and responding to civil emergencies. This is achieved through the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF). This is a body comprising representatives of all Category 1 Responders and representation from Category 2 Responders to ensure effective delivery of those duties under the Act that need to be developed in a multi-agency environment.

The area covered by the Sussex Resilience Forum is based on the police force area (geographically: East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove).

The plans, training and exercising developed through the Sussex Resilience Forum are designed to develop an integrated emergency management process. However, the responsibility for the actions of each Category 1 or Category 2 Responder remains with that organisation and ultimately with its chief officer.

A list of the Category 1 members of the Sussex Resilience Forum is shown in Appendix 3.

## A2.6 Public Health responsibilities of Local Authorities

County Councils and Unitary Authorities became responsible for public health from April 2013 through the National Health Service Act 2006 and Health and Social Care Act 2012. This includes giving information and advice on appropriate health protection arrangements within their local area including to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). The responsibility rests with the Director of Public Health and includes planning for and responding to incidents and emergencies that present a threat to the public's health.

These duties are in addition to local authority responsibilities as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA 2004).

## A2.7 East Sussex Resilience & Emergencies Partnership (ESREP)

ESREP is a voluntary partnership involving East Sussex CC, Eastbourne BC, Hastings BC, Lewes DC, Wealden DC and East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (from Sep 2015). It exists to assist these organisations in meeting their statutory emergency planning responsibilities locally and to meet the commitments to the SRF. This support is provided by a small team of Emergency Planning Officers whose work programme is overseen by a Board of senior officers from the Partners. This arrangement provides both a more effective use of resources and greater resilience.

## A2.8 Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) + METHANE

To ensure consistent messages between emergency services and partners who could be involved in responding to an emergency, a single mnemonic 'METHANE' has been adopted. This sets out the order and particularly the type of information needed. This is part of the national Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) which have been extended to local authorities and other responders. For more information use this link: <http://www.jesip.org.uk/>.

**M** Has a **M**ajor incident been declared  
**E** **E**xact location of the incident  
**T** **T**ype of incident (e.g. flood, fire, etc.)  
**H** **H**azards present or suspected  
**A** **A**ccess – routes that are safe to use  
**N** **N**umber, type, severity of casualties  
**E** **E**mergency services & other agencies eg LA present and those required

## A2.9 Emergency Plans and the Resilience and Emergency Plan template

Traditionally, each local authority has their own form and style of emergency plans. ESREP is currently working on a 'Resilience and Emergency Plan' template for use by District and Borough Councils. This will bring together into one document what would previously have been the Generic Emergency Plan, the Business Continuity Plan and the Emergency Control Centre Plan. The aim is to have a single organisational structure to respond to and manage the incident whether it is an external emergency affecting the community, an internal emergency affecting the Council's services, or both. Authorities can choose to use this template as is, modify it or continue to use their own plans as they feel appropriate.

## Appendix 3      Members of the Sussex Resilience Forum Category 1 Responders

### **Local Authorities**

Brighton & Hove City Council  
East Sussex County Council  
West Sussex County Council

Adur District Council  
Arun District Council  
Chichester District Council  
Crawley Borough Council  
Eastbourne Borough Council  
Hastings Borough Council  
Horsham District Council  
Lewes District Council  
Mid-Sussex District Council  
Rother District Council  
Wealden District Council  
Worthing Borough Council

### **Emergency “Blue Light” Services**

British Transport Police  
East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service  
South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust  
Sussex Police  
West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service

### **NHS England / Public Health England & Acute Trusts**

Surrey and Sussex Area Team, NHS England  
Surrey & Sussex Public Health England Centre  
Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust (BSUH)  
East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust (includes Eastbourne District General Hospital and Conquest Hospital in Hastings) (ESHT)  
Royal West Sussex NHS Trust  
Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust (includes Worthing Hospital, St Richards Hospital in Chichester and Southlands Hospital in Shoreham by Sea) (WSHT)

### **National Agencies**

Environment Agency  
Maritime & Coastguard Agency