



REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Resources
TO:	Council Forum
ON:	30.1.2014

SUBJECT – Flood Awareness Campaign within Blackburn with Darwen

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To raise awareness of a proposed Media campaign to promote flood awareness to Residents and Business within Blackburn with Darwen borough council.

2. OPTIONS

N/A

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

To note the report.

4. BACKGROUND

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA2004), the Council has a number of duties, one of which is a duty to “warn and inform” members of the Community about potential and real risks they may face within their community. In light of the recent and ongoing National flooding (Cornwall, Kent etc.), it was thought timely to promote Community Resilience and the “be prepared” message to the Community to help raise awareness of issues around flooding.

If the Community are more aware of potential hazards (flooding) and are better prepared, they will not be completely reliant upon the Council for support which in turn enables the council to prioritise and focus its activities on vulnerable members of the Community who may require assistance.

5. RATIONALE

Flooding has become more frequent across the UK over the last few years. Following Sir Michael Pitt’s report on the 2007 Flooding within the UK, specific areas of further work were required to prepare the UK for flood events. This report included hard engineering works as well as more public awareness work.

As a result of the Pitt Review’s recommendation and the Flood & Water Management Act 2010, the Council has a responsibility to work with partners and write plans to manage the response to an incident and also for specific things such as flooding and

also for reservoirs over a certain capacity. This links to the CCA 2004 duties to plan, prepare and train for emergencies, warn and inform the public about emergencies, share information and co-ordinate activities with similar partners (Police, Fire, Ambulance etc.)

Additionally, the warning and informing of all households and organisations, via letter, which may specifically be affected by reservoir flooding must also be undertaken.

The Press and Communications team are preparing a media campaign to promote flood awareness across the Borough to ensure that Blackburn with Darwen residents know what to do if flooding is imminent, or forecast to occur; with advice from the Environment Agency and support from the Council. It would appear that residents in Cornwall residents (as one example) were not as prepared as they could be for the floods of December 2013 – January 2014 (ongoing).

The Council is currently working with the Environment Agency to promote remedial engineering work being undertaken in the Hollin Bridge Street area. The Public awareness session is planned for 21.1.2014 when Council staff (Civil Contingencies, Drainage, Neighbourhoods and Flood Engagement Officer) will be available to answer questions on flood awareness and ongoing engineering work.

The media campaign will include all other service area information/work relating to flood awareness to ensure that it is a co-ordinated message of Council activity and Community Resilience. Current Council flood awareness activities which link with this Media campaign to raise awareness are Flood Watch, Hollin Bridge Street drop in, Corporate Management Exercise etc.

There are no procurement issues.

This media campaign will tie in with the constant Environment Agency media campaign. Their website promotes Community Resilience and enables members of the Community to prepare themselves and their property for flooding. The Council has no responsibility to protect properties in the Community, this lies with the property owner. There are many organisations which promote flood prevent products such as Flood Boards and lightweight “inflating” flood sacks, and air brick covers etc.

The thrust of the Flood Watch Community Pathfinder project, and Environment Agency media messages are:

- To raise awareness of flood risks and what actions can be taken in the event of a flood
- To build community resilience to flooding
- Identifying vulnerable residents in flood risk areas
- To empower individuals to be involved in community resilience

Flood Watch project promotes Community Action and Community groups coming together in a geographical area to prepare themselves (with support from EA and BwD) for flooding

This media campaign will raise awareness of how to prepare for flooding and what actions to take. This information may have assisted the Community and reduced the impact of flooding of Darwen in 2012 and the recovery from it.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Media promotional activity i.e. purchasing digital media credits and leaflets will be purchased using existing allocated Defra funding for reservoirs as there is a specific remit to warn and inform residents under the Floods & Water Management Act 2010.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The main legislation in this specific area that Civil contingencies Service work to are: Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and Floods & Water Management Act 2010.

All Unitary Authorities (and two tier county councils) are Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs). Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, LLFAs have been assigned a number of duties and powers relating to the management of local flood risk.

LLFAs duties are to:

- 1) develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area,
- 2) establish and maintain a register and record of structures or features which are likely to have a significant effect on flood risk in its area.

LLFA powers are to :

- 1) do works to manage flood risk
- 2) [investigate flooding incidents](#)
- 3) designate structures/features which affect flood risk

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

N/A

10. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

N/A

11. CONSULTATIONS

N/A

Chief Officer/Member

Contact Officer: Rachel Hutchinson – Civil Contingencies Manager
Date: 22 January 2014
Background Papers: None