

SUFFOLK COMMUNITY EMERGENCY PLANNING STRATEGY 2017-2020

BACKGROUND

1. Why Do We Need To Review the Strategy?

- The original reasons behind why we promote CEP have not changed from the initial concept launched in 2010:
 - Help identify people who are vulnerable, infrastructure at risk and immediate local needs during emergencies.
 - Access community resources to support emergency services response.
 - Improve communications and information channels before, during and after an incident or emergency.
 - Promote stronger community engagement in recovering from emergencies.
 - Enhance general community spirit, self-confidence and re-assurance.
- CEP activities have grown both in terms of the number of groups involved and the appetite for support ranging from workshop and training activities to the formation of the CEP Steering Group. It is time for us to review the original concept and ensure that it is fit for purpose.
- Reducing capacities and resources within public services, including Local Authorities, reinforce the need to reduce demand during emergencies by encouraging self-reliance and promoting greater use of the voluntary sector.
- Suffolk's experience of emergencies over the past 10 years, animal disease, flooding, severe weather and major fires plus other risks such as pandemic flu, nuclear incidents and industrial incidents reinforce the need for communities to be prepared.

2. What has been achieved from the original concept? The original concept covered the following principles:

- Provide a formal link between Suffolk communities and the existing civil protection framework (Suffolk Resilience Forum)
 - *Current Position: CEP is linked to local emergency responder partners within the SRF through Local Authorities (JEPUs).*
- Maximise use of existing community structures and networks already in place to avoid inventing another 'wheel'.
 - *Current Position: CEP uses existing networks, eg. Town or Parish councils, and has delivered activities alongside other community level events; eg flood awareness with the EA. However, CEP could be joined up better with the wider public sector community activity.*
- Improve information flow before, during and after an emergency.
 - *Current Position: JEPUs circulates information on a regular basis during normal office hours.*
- Maximise use of community resources as part of an integrated emergency response and recovery.
 - *Current Position: JEPUs is aware of some resources within the CEP groups such as possible rest centres and have trained a number of their volunteers to assist with the setting up and running of rest centres.*

- Improve Suffolk contingency arrangements for preparing for, reacting to and recovering from a major incident which may affect many communities.
 - *Current Position: An increasing number of Suffolk communities have emergency plans that provide an opportunity to work with these communities during emergencies. The coverage of these community emergency plans across Suffolk is patchy and there is little linkage with emergency services and local authority operational emergency plans.*
- Involvement in community resilience was to be encouraged but remained voluntary.
 - *Current Position: The voluntary nature of CEP remains unchanged and some communities will never be part of the process for a range of reasons; lack of capacity, competing community initiatives, do not perceive there is a risk or do not recognise any value added of CEP work.*

The focus group sessions held when the concept was originally developed identified a “wish list” of items that participants felt they would like to have available to them as shown below. The items that remain outstanding (bold italicised) and their completion remains the focus for this paper and the Steering Group.

- ***A single communication system to communities about emergency preparedness***
- ***A means to facilitate aggregated/cooperative purchasing of supplies or equipment***
- ***Communication link with other emergency planning groups***
- A means to request and receive suggestions for donations of equipment
- ***A conduit to channel individual communities’ emergency plans to the emergency services***
- Expert feedback on posted emergency plans
- A forum for sharing plans, templates, ideas and best practice with other communities
- ***Quarterly focus / discussion groups face to face with communities***
- A means of posting and disseminating local examples of how communities have managed the situations before the emergency services got to them, or indeed never got involved
- Simple templates for developing a community emergency plan
- ***Data on communities for the emergency services to use***
- ***A means of individuals or groups within communities to offer local knowledge to other agencies that may help prevent issues such as flooding and ways to avoid it happening in the first place.***
- A terminology glossary
- A list of community assets – ie. a database of where to source skills, resources etc.
- A short guide on how to go about emergency planning
- Information on what support is available from other communities
- ***Involving community emergency arrangements in wider exercises involving other local responders.***
- Information on what the County or District has by means of resources that can be provided to communities – such as a large hall that a village may not have
- Up-to-the-minute information on surrounding problems so residents don’t leave their community for another location that may be worse off
- Names of experienced people in communities around the county who can help other communities get started

- **Provision of top-line information on how the emergency services will operate once they arrive in a community – what they will want from you so that you can “plug in”**
- A regular Emergency Planning Newsletter
- **A means for emergency services to communicate the ‘real’ story to communities on the level of front-line resource**
- Clear contact details of those who are involved with emergency planning centrally at county level
- A message board to publish incidences that are occurring around the county for the public to tap in to
- A steering group made up of communities to drive future developments
- **A template for ‘z card’ style information for groups to complete with their own local info**
- Somewhere to post reports & share experiences
- Details of relevant volunteers groups e.g. 4x4 response
- Details where items such as **sandbags** and Rest Centre resources are stored

AIM

3. The aim of the Suffolk community emergency planning strategy is to set out a direction for improving community emergency planning through to 2020, influenced by experience and maximising future opportunities, which lead to communities that are more aware of their risks and better prepared to cope with an incident that affects them.

ANALYSIS

4. The JEPU has reviewed the effect of the 2010 Community Resilience Concept and associated work with communities to date. A SWOT analysis (below) has been completed, see below, to identify areas for improvement, potential threats, activities that have added value and future opportunities.

<p>STRENGTHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure & Coordination (Steering Group) • Engagement & Support from Environment Agency • Good relationships between JEPU and CEP Groups • Reputation of CEP Initiative 	<p>WEAKNESSES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency • Partners Awareness of CEP • Single points of failure within Groups • Councillor Awareness • Lack of live play Exercises • Information flows e.g. DIY RC's • Liaising with communities during an incident • 'Selling' value added to communities.
<p>OPPORTUNITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden CEP contacts list • Collaboration with voluntary organisations. • Secure funding sources • Enhance training/exercising • Elected Member awareness to promote the CEP concept. • Maximise use of existing links with communities 	<p>THREATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JEPU Resources / Prioritisation • Community Apathy • Lack of budget • Competing /Conflicting priorities within communities

OPTIONS FOR FURTHER WORK

5. The following options for future CEP work have been identified by the JEPU:

CEP Steering Group Development: The Steering Group is one of the main drivers of community emergency planning within the county of Suffolk. Having now established itself, it needs to identify processes where it can evaluate, and where necessary, update its terms of reference/constitution to ensure that it meets the needs of established CEP groups. In particular, it needs to ensure that when individual working groups are established they have clear terms of reference, working plans and realistic deadlines.

This can be achieved as follows:

- The Steering Group should develop a work plan for the next 12 months which will be reviewed at each steering group meeting.
- The chair of all working groups (currently there are 3 working groups - Funding, Communications and training/exercising) need to give an update at each meeting on their activities.
- Minutes of all the meetings will be published on the get prepared now website and circulated to all CEP groups.
- The Steering Group representatives will give an update on contact made with the groups that they represent at each steering group meeting.
- The date of the AGM will be published at least 6 months in advance to ensure that all CEP group members and other interested parties have the opportunity to attend.
- The AGM will include an end of year report, reviewing what has been done over the last year, and also identifying the key objectives / work plan for the forthcoming year.
- Assist with promoting CEP awareness amongst those communities without a plan.

The outcomes that we expect to see from the steering groups activities are as follows:

- Better alignment of Steering Group activity with needs of CEP groups.
- Workshops, training and exercises being planned and delivered that are relevant to the needs of the CEP groups and volunteers.

County/District/Borough Councillor Awareness: Assist in the promotion of CEP awareness in communities without a plan.

This can be achieved as follows

- Offer CEP awareness briefings to councillors making best use of routes that are known to work in each council and involving respective Democratic Services.
- Offer distribution of electronic version of CEP newsletter to elected members (County, District and Borough) in conjunction with Democratic Services

The outcomes that we expect to see from activities are as follows:

- Increase in councillor awareness of CEP activity

Consistency of approach to CEP across Suffolk: Promote the principles of CEP consistently across the County in order to make the use of CEP groups during an incident more effective with an emphasis on the value added and an acceptance that not all will engage.

This can be achieved as follows

- Adopting common principals for CEP plans and offering these in various formats ranging from simple and detailed.
- Delivering CEP courses based on common training objectives
- Publicising training opportunities
- Prioritising CEP engagement to those communities that face specific risks/have experienced recent incidents.

The outcomes that we expect to see from activities are as follows:

- Common CEP arrangements that match the community need and capacity to plan.
- All CEP volunteers receive the same level of training
- CEP activity is focused on areas at greater risk.

Communications: Communicate with CEP groups and other communities in an effective manner using a range of communication methods.

This can be achieved as follows

- Carry out a review of the style and content of the current 'Get Prepared Now' website.
- Review the current methods of promoting CEP via Social Media, Newsletters, Emails, briefings etc and tailor communications building upon what is known to works for different communities and to reduce duplication with existing communications channels.
- Develop a communication approach in conjunction with existing Locality Officers which provides an easy to digest communications to flow between JEPUs, CEP Groups, Emergency Services, neighbouring Counties.
- Use experience of successful CEP communications to promote new groups.
- Explore use of Town and Parish Clerks meetings to raise CEP awareness. Where adopted, ensure relevant locality member is informed.
- Use existing CEP communications to share information on specific risks such as flooding, severe weather and health risks.
- Develop appropriate communication channels to inform CEP groups during an incident.

The outcomes that we expect to see from activities are as follows:

- Communications with existing CEP groups matches what the groups need.
- CEP communications activity builds upon pre-existing community channels and does not duplicate.
- Communications activity increases the number of CEP groups longer term.

- Agreed communications approach between responders and CEP groups during emergencies.

Training and Exercising: Provide training and exercise opportunities for CEP groups in order to prepare them to support emergency response

This can be achieved as follows

- To identify the training and exercise requirements of CEP groups.
- To develop a training and workshop training programme which addresses the training /exercise requirements of CEP groups.
- To identify and develop table top and live play exercises for CEP groups.
- To publish a training and exercising program for all CEP groups (12 months in advance).
- Support and enable volunteers to organise and run CEP group exercises and training under the direction of the CEP Training & Exercise Sub Group

The outcomes that we expect to see from activities are as follows:

- Appropriately trained volunteers within CEP groups
- Trained CEP groups having exercised with emergency responders
- Validation of CEP plans

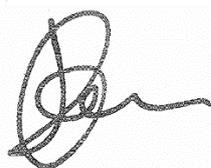
CEP relationship with Voluntary Organisations: Develop and enhance the CEP relationships with other Voluntary Organisations (Vol Orgs) structures such as The SRF Voluntary Organisations Group, Community Action Suffolk, etc.

This can be achieved by

- Resolving how Suffolk Vol Orgs are managed during an emergency to make sure that this fits with CEP groups
- Investigating appropriate CEP representative (Steering Group) attendance at SVOG meetings.
- Reviewing existing community based voluntary groups to encourage them to adopt CEP activities

The outcomes that we expect to see from activities are as follows:

- Voluntary organisations & CEP groups are able to work effectively alongside each other during an emergency in support of the emergency response



Andy Osman
Head of Emergency Planning
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit