



Committee	Cabinet
Date	07/05/2024
Subject	Resilience and Emergency Response Fund
Cabinet Member	Vince Langdon-Morris Cabinet Member with responsibility for Resources and Value for Money
Report Author and Director	Kate Blakemore Strategic Director kate.blakemore@eastsoffolk.gov.uk
Supporting Head of Service	Lorraine Rogers Chief Finance Officer & Section 151 Officer Lorraine.rogers@eastsoffolk.gov.uk

Key Decision?	No
Is the report Open or Exempt?	OPEN

Category of Exempt Information and reason why it is NOT in the public interest to disclose the exempt information.	Not applicable.
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Purpose/Summary

Storm BABET caused widespread flooding and disruption to East Suffolk between Friday 20 October and Sunday 22 October 2023. In response to this incident a Resilience Reserve of £500,000 was established at budget Council on the 21 February 2024.

This report presents the terms of reference outlining how this reserve will be used, to be renamed as the Resilience and Emergency Response Fund.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the terms of reference for the Resilience and Emergency Response Fund outlined in Appendix A.
2. Approves the appointment of a new 'Coordinator/Convenor' role and the associated supplementary budget requirement totalling £96,713 for an initial two years starting in 2024/25, to provide a communication, coordinating and enabling role for residents and communities, acting as a point of contact for residents to support them prior to, during and after a climate related emergency.

Strategic plan

How does this proposal support Our Direction 2028?

Environmental Impact	Climate change is causing a shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures. In the UK the rising global temperature is causing warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers and more frequent and intense weather extremes. This report outlines how the Council intends to better support its residents and communities from the effects of climate related emergencies.
Sustainable Housing	No direct impact.
Tackling Inequalities	No direct impact.
Thriving Economy	No direct impact.
Our Foundations / governance of the organisation	Establishing terms of reference for this Resilience and Emergency Response Fund will ensure that it is used as intended, in an open and transparent way.

Justification for recommendations

1. Background

- 1.1 Climate change is causing a shift in the planet's weather patterns and average temperatures. In the UK the rising global temperature is causing warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, and more frequent and intense weather extremes. These extreme weather events include, but are not limited to, coastal and tidal flooding, from rising sea levels, and fluvial (river) and pluvial (surface water) flooding from prolonged rainfall in the winter and intense storms leading to flash flooding in the summer.
- 1.2 Storm BABET caused widespread flooding and disruption to East Suffolk between Friday 20 October and Sunday 22 October 2023. The storm brought approximately 80mm of rainfall over large areas of the county; more than a month's worth of average October rainfall in just 24 hours.
- 1.3 Flood impacts were widespread across Suffolk, from Haverhill in the West to Halesworth and Wrentham in the East, with over 850 properties internally flooded from rivers (fluvial) and surface water (pluvial). The majority of flooded properties were in Framlingham (East Suffolk) and Debenham (Mid Suffolk). Anglian Water's Whitton water treatment site was badly flooded resulting in more than 3,000 properties across Ipswich having no water for approximately 24 hours. Many roads, including the A12, A11 and A140 on the strategic network, were impassable and Network Rail suspended services across many Anglia routes. 320 properties in East Suffolk were directly impacted by this storm.
- 1.4 During this incident Officers and Members worked hard to support our residents and communities that were directly affected, supporting the wider work of the Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) of which we are a part, whilst on the ground supporting our affected residents by:
 - Establishing East Suffolk Flood Recovery Group from the outset, chaired by the Chief Executive and attended by senior officers from Council, JEPU and East Suffolk Services Limited (ESSL).
 - Providing a physical presence of Housing Needs/Customer Services Officers in Framlingham and Wickham Market for the first few days immediately following the event to deal with general queries/housing queries/help to replace damaged goods.
 - Providing skips through ESSL to enable the clean-up of households – removal and disposal of damaged goods - 40 tonnes collected and 100+ white goods.
 - Undertook the clean-up of the highway and streets through ESSL – sweeping roads and pavements. Passing information to Suffolk County Council so it could carry out gully sucking.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Due to climate change these types of incidents are sadly going to increase. Whilst there is much in place already to support residents, such as grants under the flood recovery framework to assist with initial recovery costs, with households and businesses potentially being eligible for 100% discount to council tax/business rates for a minimum of 3 months, a gap was identified in being able to support the immediate needs of our residents and communities when such incidents occur.
- 2.2 For example, the decision to provide skips to affected areas to support residents with the removal of water damaged materials was clearly needed, but no immediate budget was available.
- 2.3 Members therefore subsequently approved a Resilience Reserve in the Budget to Council on the 21 February 2024, to be used in response to future climate related emergencies that directly affect the residents and communities of East Suffolk.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 To ensure full transparency in terms of how this Resilience Reserve will be managed, terms of reference have since been developed, with the reserve being renamed to the Resilience and Emergency Response Fund.
- 3.2 These terms of reference outline the scope of this reserve and includes examples of how this funding could be used.
- 3.3 The overall intention of this Resilience and Emergency Response Fund is:
 - To provide short-term financial support to communities, working with and through Parish and Town Councils, with immediate recovery activities after a climate related emergency event.
 - To provide the Council with the ability to be flexible and responsive to cover any additional costs, within reason, that the Council incurs immediately after an emergency event.
- 3.4 For the full Terms of Reference please refer to Appendix A.
- 3.5 The real benefit of this Fund will be the Council's ability to act quickly in an emergency situation, having immediate access to this this Fund will bring significant benefits for our residents at a time of need.
- 3.6 In addition to this Reserve, it has also been identified that appointing an officer to undertake a 'Coordinator/Convenor' role for an initial two years to provide a communication, coordinating and enabling role for residents and communities, acting as a point of contact for residents to support them prior to, during and after a climate related emergency would create further capacity within the Council to better support our residents and communities.
- 3.7 The main purposes of this role would be:
 - To provide a communication, coordinating and enabling role for residents and communities, acting as a point of contact for residents to support them prior to, during and after a climate related emergency.

- To work collaboratively with our partners to promote the effective coordination of support and resources for residents and communities in relation to climate related emergencies, both increasing preparedness and resilience during and after said emergencies.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 A Resilience Reserve of £500,000 was established in the budget to Council on the 21 February 2024, to be renamed as a Resilience and Emergency Response Fund.
- 4.2 Additional funding to support the appointment of a Coordinator/Convenor role would be required. Considering a draft job description, it is likely that this post will be a band 6 post and would therefore require funding for two years of approximately £96,713 (this includes on-costs).
- 4.3 If Members agree to this post, it is proposed that the funding for this post is treated as budget growth and the report seeks approval for a supplementary budget of £96,713 across 2024/25 and 2025/26

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The legal framework for responding to emergencies sets out clear roles and responsibilities, and emergency planning work relies heavily on established doctrine and procedures which broadly apply across different types of emergencies. This proposal is not intended to replicate or replace any existing governance we have in place to ensure we comply with the relevant legislation.

6. Risk Implications

- 6.1 East Suffolk is sadly at risk of future climate related emergencies. This paper seeks to provide additional support to our residents and communities when such incidents occur.

7. Options

- 7.1 Whilst the Resilience Fund has already been established, there is an option to progress the spend of this fund without a pre agreed terms of reference. However, this option is not suitable as it does not provide for good governance or transparency in terms of how this fund would be spent.
- 7.2 There is also an option to not appoint to the Coordinator/Convenor role. However, such a role would better complement the aims of the Resilience and Emergency Response Fund and provide much needed capacity to work with our residents and communities both prior to and during climate related incidents.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 That Cabinet approves:
- The terms of reference for the Resilience and Emergency Response Fund outlined in Appendix A.
 - The appointment of a new 'Coordinator/Convenor' role and the associated supplementary budget requirement totalling £96,713 for an initial two years starting in 2024/25, to provide a communication, coordinating and enabling role

for residents and communities, acting as a point of contact for residents to support them prior to, during and after a climate related emergency.

Areas of consideration comments

Section 151 Officer comments:

In accordance with the Finance Procedure Rules a supplementary budget of £96,713 requires Cabinet approved. If approved, the current budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be amended as required. Seeking approval of the Terms of Reference for use of the Resilience and Emergency Response Fund, provides clarity and transparency to ensure good governance and appropriate use of public funds.

Monitoring Officer comments:

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no additional comments.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion/EQIA:

When emergency events occur, they happen fast and can sometimes adversely affect our most vulnerable residents. This fund will allow us to better help these individuals.

Safeguarding:

Not applicable.

Crime and Disorder:

Not applicable.

Corporate Services implications:

Not applicable.

Residents and Businesses consultation/consideration:

The recommendations, if approved by Cabinet, will better support our residents and communities both prior to and during climate related emergencies.

Appendices:

Appendix A	Resilience Fund Terms of Reference
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Background reference papers:

Date	Type	Available From
21/2/2024	Council Budget Papers	ESC Website