

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

20 May 2022

**Civil contingency planning and Storm
Arwen review**



**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with background information on civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements and a review of the response to Storm Arwen.

Executive summary

- 2 The presentation attached in appendix 2 will aim to provide Members with an overview of:
 - (a) civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements in the county;
 - (b) Storm Arwen, impacts and response;
 - (c) the de-briefs and review;
 - (d) the initial conclusions from the review;
 - (e) the suggested improvement plan.

Recommendation

- 3 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within this report and presentation and are asked for their comments on the proposed improvement plan.

Background

- 4 Storm Arwen hit the north of the United Kingdom on the afternoon of Friday 26 November 2021 and that night caused extensive damage across northern England.
- 5 More than one million homes lost power as falling trees and poles brought down power lines, with over 100,000 homes experiencing several days without power. The strong winds also caused structural damage to buildings and transport was disrupted with rail services cancelled, roads blocked by fallen trees and overturned vehicles and snow accumulations across the Pennines.
- 6 In County Durham, 14,891 utility customers were affected by a loss of power. The outages affected all parts of the county and many residents were without power for several days before power was restored to all properties on Thursday 9 December.
- 7 The storm was one of the most disruptive weather events County Durham has experienced in recent times. The county, its communities and residents were impacted significantly and for many, the prolonged duration of power outages was unprecedented.
- 8 A number of de-briefs and reviews of the response to the storm have been commissioned and undertaken including a national review by the Department for Business, Energy, Innovation and Science (BEIS) and by County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (CDDLRF).
- 9 In addition, the council undertook its own review, which consisted of seeking the views and experiences of officers who responded to the incident; elected Members; local community organisations and parish councils which responded to the incident; and the general public
- 10 To include an element of external challenge and peer review, the council engaged with Durham University and Cornwall Council in the de-brief.
- 11 The review has identified a number of areas that worked well and also a number of areas which need to be improved, which provides the basis for a proposed improvement plan which is due to be considered by Cabinet.
- 12 The views of Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought on the review and the proposed improvement plan

Conclusion

- 13 The presentation attached in appendix 2 provides Members with an overview of:

- (a) civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements in the county;
- (b) Storm Arwen, impacts and response;
- (c) the de-briefs and review;
- (d) the initial conclusions from the review;
- (e) the suggested improvement plan.

14 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within this report and presentation and are asked for their comments on the suggested improvement plan.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.