

Community Capacity Case Study: The Meadows Huntly Flood Emergency Planning

1. Project Summary: An *Emergency Alert Plan for Potential Huntly Flooding* was developed to ensure the smooth evacuation and care of vulnerable persons living within the likely flood area in Huntly. In addition, developments have been initiated which reduce the risk of flooding occurring and, if it does happen, to mitigate the effects.

2. What was the need to be addressed? In November 2009 the Meadows area of Huntly experienced flooding after the Meadows Burn burst its banks. This necessitated nearby houses and specialist care facilities to be evacuated at short notice. The specialist facilities include a care home (with approx. 40 residents), plus two smaller units (6 residents). In addition, there are houses, Huntly caravan site, Nordic Outdoor Centre and sports facilities. As a result of the 2009 flood incident it was decided that additional work was required to:

- improve forward planning and management of emergency flood incidents,
- provide sufficient warning to residents and specialist care providers to allow for safe and timely evacuation, and
- prepare for potential future flooding incidents in the light of increased risks of severe weather incidents resulting from climate change.

3.

Which partners were involved?	What role did they play?
Aberdeenshire Council, Area Manager	Led development of <i>Emergency Alert Plan for Potential Huntly Flooding</i> with Council's Risk Manager. Lead Council Officer for managing Huntly Flood incidents as part of a multi-disciplinary team; overall management of Emergency Rest Centre in Huntly; engages with the affected community; member of Strategic Coordinating Group for Huntly emergencies.
Various other Aberdeenshire Council departments eg Risk Manager, Infrastructure Services, Corporate Communications, Housing & Social Work etc	Involved in planning for flood events, monitoring the watercourses and planning flood protection works, taking mitigating action and supporting the community, rest centre management, communicating with the public and partners. Member of Strategic Coordinating Group as necessary.
Police	Member of Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG). Takes lead in emergencies where flooding actually occurring
Fire & Rescue Service	Member of Strategic Coordinating

	Group (SCG)
Scottish Ambulance Service	Member of Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)
Red Cross	Member of Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)
NHS Grampian	Member of Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)
Met Office	Member of Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and issuing of Weather Warnings
SEPA	Member of Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG), provision of a flood warning service for River Deveron, issuing of alerts and warnings
Grampian Housing Association	Information sharing and provision of equipment to protect it's housing stock
Private companies that run specialist care facilities	Development of Emergency Evacuation Plans and implementing them when required.

4. What resources were needed? Staff time of all partners involved (eg. staff turning out in emergencies to provide sandbags, volunteering to manage Huntly Emergency Rest Centre as and when required), purchase of equipment for Emergency Evacuation Centre, sand bags, flood guards for Grampian Housing stock etc, costs of clearing ditches and Burn to reduce flood risks, plus significant investment in planning and developing Huntly Flood Protection Scheme (estimated expenditure £3 million approx.). The Council and other Partners have out of hours emergency planning arrangements as well as arrangement for emergencies during the working week.

5. What actually happened? Following the 2009 Huntly flood, a specific *Emergency Alert Plan for Potential Huntly Flooding* was developed to ensure the smooth evacuation and care of vulnerable persons living within the likely flood area in Huntly (as well as other residents) in the event of another potential flood incident. The *Plan* is triggered in the event of the Met Office issuing a Severe Weather Warning and SEPA issuing a Flood Alert through to a Severe Flood Warning. In addition, developments were initiated which reduce the risk of flooding occurring (Burn and ditches cleared of debris on a regular basis and on a longer timescale planning to establish Huntly Flood Protection Scheme) and if it does happen, to mitigate the effects (local storage of sandbags and flood guards, early warning allowing residents to evacuate before flooding occurs to protect their lives as well as to move cars/household goods to areas of safety to reduce damage).

SEPA provide a flood warning service covering the River Deveron, issuing alerts and warnings based on the monitoring of river levels, rainfall, tidal predictions and weather forecasts. Not all properties have registered for this service. Therefore, improved communication with affected residents was also

considered to be necessary and they were asked by the Marr Area Office to provide alternative contact methods (see letter and form in Appendices). This information is used to send out early warning emails and texts of possible flooding; this supplements the SEPA flood warning service. In addition, communication via local media is seen as being of importance and radio interviews are given.

In the event of a potential flood, the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) has regular teleconferences to update all partners on progress and the SCG makes the final decision on the need for evacuation. The Duty Emergency Response Coordinator (DERC)/Area Manager is in contact with the specialist care providers to ensure that they have received flood warning/alerts etc and are prepared to initiate their own evacuation plans if necessary. The DERC/Area Manager is also in overall charge of the establishment and running of the Emergency Rest Centre. This is now located in the Linden Centre and is for those requiring non-specialist care. It is manned by volunteers (currently all of which are Council employees) and is equipped as necessary to provide shelter and sleeping facilities.

6. What was the output of the project?

- Development of *Emergency Alert Plan for Potential Huntly Flooding* (February 2013) plus specialist care providers' Emergency Evacuation Plans
- Strategic Coordinating Group manages emergencies where there is a need for multi-partner intervention
- Ditches and Burn are regularly cleared and flood alleviation equipment purchased and stored locally for use by residents, Council or Grampian Housing Association
- Emergency equipment purchased and stored locally (eg. jackets, sleeping bags, mats, admin equipment)
- Email and text facility established to provide early warning to Huntly residents.

7. What were the outcomes of the project? The outcomes listed below are specified in Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership [Aberdeenshire Single Outcome Agreement 2012/13](#). This document sets out how local outcomes and priorities relate to National Outcomes and provides details of indicators used to assess performance against Local Outcomes:

Local Outcome: OP5 Older people feel valued and treated as equal members of society.	√
Local Outcome: S1 Successful, achieving, inclusive communities with the confidence, capability and capacity to tackle the things that matter to them	√
Local Outcome: S2 Strong, local communities through the contributions of volunteers	√
Local Outcome: S3 Community planning partner services are responsive to local people's needs	√

8. What impact did the project have (how do you know)? The project has resulted in those involved in emergency planning as well as specialist care providers and communities being better informed about potential flooding risks, better prepared and enabled to react in a more timely manner to avert disaster and reduce physical risks. Communities and planning partners are therefore more resilient in the face of increased risks from extreme weather events linked to climate change.

Although the River Deveron has not again burst its banks around Huntly since 2009, there have been a number of local flood risk incidents where the Strategic Coordinating Group needed to be initiated. The latest of these occurred in December 2012, when some precautionary evacuation was deemed necessary and the Emergency Rest Centre was opened.

9. What was learned from the project? Risks to vulnerable residents and others can be significantly reduced by preparing a bespoke emergency plan for a known risk which allows all partners to be better prepared and coordinated in their response to an emergency situation. The plan needs to be tested rigorously via regular emergency incident training exercises which also allow staff and volunteers to undergo training on dealing with emergencies. After each emergency incident and training exercise, lessons should be learnt and the plan adapted as necessary.

10. Next Steps:

- Construction of the Huntly Flood Protection Scheme to reduce the risk of flooding occurring
- Emergency planning training to be carried out at the Linden Community Centre (Huntly Emergency Evacuation Centre) so that all volunteers are at rest centre manager level
- Recruitment of additional volunteers to help run the Emergency Evacuation Centre.

11. Completed by: Lizzy Shepherd

Date: 29th April 2013

12. If you would like more information about this project please contact Les Allan on Tel: 019755 64800 or Email: leslie.allan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

13. Photographic evidence or attach copies of other output:



Flooding in Huntly



Our Ref: LA/JH/TV5

24 November 2011

«AddressBlock»

Dear Resident

Les Allan

Area Manager

Marr Area Office

School Road

Alford AB33 8TY

Telephone 019755 64800

Fax 019755 63286

HUNTLY FLOODING

Following recent flood warnings in Huntly, we would like to compile information to allow us to communicate more effectively with local residents on emergency planning arrangements. It would be very helpful if you could take a few moments to complete the attached form and return it in the prepaid envelope by 1 December 2011. Alternatively, the same information could be put in an email to marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

The information provided in this form will be used solely by Aberdeenshire Council for the purposes of emergency planning and may be shared with the Emergency Services (and other responders) in the event of an emergency/potential emergency. If you have any queries regarding the completion of this form please contact Linda Milne, 019755 64801.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Leslie Allan
AREA MANAGER (MARR)

Enc

**If you have difficulty reading this document please contact
Linda Milne on 019755 64801**

HUNTLY FLOODING

NB: Please complete in Capital Letters
Y / N - delete as appropriate

Address			
Residents	Full Name	Age	Any disabilities or health issues?
Name of School children attend -			
Pets			
For those who have indicated they have disabilities or health issues, if you are advised to evacuate would you require assistance to leave your home? Y / N If Yes please give details of assistance required.			
Would you use your own transport? Y / N			
If you are advised to evacuate would you have somewhere to go to stay? Y / N If Yes please give address:			
Any other comments.			
Contact details	Telephone: Home		Telephone: Work
	Mobile		
	Email		
Do you use?	Facebook	Y / N	Twitter Y / N
Are you registered with Floodline?	Y / N	If not would you like to receive guidance on registering?	Y / N

Signature**Date.....**

By signing this form you give consent to the information provided being used for emergency purposes as described.

Data Controller	Aberdeenshire Council
Processing purposes	Emergency Planning
Data to be disclosed to	Emergency Services (and other responders) in the event of an emergency/potential emergency

Return to: Leslie Allan, Marr Area Manager, Marr Area Office, School Road,
ALFORD. AB33 8TY
marr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk