



Doncaster Council

Report

Date:23/01/2023

TO: THE CHAIR AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITIES & ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY PANEL

Report Title: An overview of the Council's plans and arrangements for responding to the heatwave experienced in 2022.

Relevant Member(s)	Cabinet	Wards Affected	Key Decision?
Cllr Nigel Ball Cllr Joe Blackham Cllr Rachael Blake		All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report aims to give Members of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Panel an overview of the plans and arrangements Doncaster Council had in place to respond to the heatwave experienced in July 2022. It outlines how the Council supported partner agencies and the support and welfare arrangements put in place to ensure responding staff were kept safe. It also outlines how the Council and partners supported vulnerable residents and recommendations for future preparedness and response.

John Billings, Group Manager from South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue is also attending the Panel to outline their response to the heatwave.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This report is not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Panel is asked to consider the information provided in this report and support the recommendations identified for future preparedness and response.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Reviewing such issues ensures the Panel is aware and assured of the plans and arrangements put in place by the Council when responding to heatwave situations, which ultimately have an impact on the residents of Doncaster.

BACKGROUND

5. South Yorkshire experienced extreme heatwave condition temperatures on Monday 18 July 2022 and Tuesday 19 July 2022.
6. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty on category 1 responders to assess the risk of emergencies occurring, put in place emergency plans, and create business continuity plans to ensure they can continue to exercise critical functions in the event of an emergency.
7. Doncaster Council has a suite of emergency plans for various scenarios to ensure it is prepared to respond and mitigate the impacts of an emergency on both the Council and community. Relevant plans referred to during the heatwave include:
 - Corporate Emergency Plan (sets out the command and control structures of the council)
 - Doncaster Council Heatwave Contingency Plan (sets out the actions to be taken in the event of a heatwave)
 - Service Business Continuity Plans (to ensure critical services can continue to operate during an emergency).
8. Following the Met Office issuing an Amber Warning for Extreme Heat from Sunday 17th July 2022 (issued on 12th July 2022), the Director of Public Health requested a multi-agency TCG be held on Friday 15th July. On Friday the 15th July a Red warning of extreme heat and a Level 4 heat-health alert (emergency) was issued for the period covering Monday 18th and Tuesday 19th July 2022. An additional TCG was also chaired by the Deputy Director of Public Health on Tuesday 19th July 2022.
9. At the request of the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) held multiagency TCG meetings on Monday 18 July and Tuesday 19 July 2022, each day of extreme temperatures. Doncaster Council Tactical/Silver officers also dialled into these meetings.
10. The LRF shared Situation Reports with partner agencies each day from 13 July 2022 to 19 July 2022 to support multiagency awareness of the potential risks and the impacts of the heatwave.
11. Late afternoon on Tuesday 19 July 2022, South Yorkshire Police (SYP) declared a Major Incident in response to receiving a high number of 999 calls from members of the public regarding fires as they couldn't get through to South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue (SYFRS). SYP called a Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) meeting of Strategic/Gold officers at 1700hrs that day to develop shared situational awareness and assess the multiagency risks of the diverted calls and high number of fires. The LRF declared a multiagency Major Incident at 1750hrs.

A further SCG was held at 2100hrs. A final SCG was held on Wednesday 20 July 2022 at 1200 during which the Major Incident was stood down at 1225hrs.

12. As the weather became warmer from early July 2022, Heat Health Alerts and Weather Warnings were shared by the Resilience and Emergency Planning team to Leadership, Heads of Service, Elected Members, Communications Team and partners by email. The emails are based on the key risks and actions included in the plan and place emphasis on key Public Health advice, and links to the Heatwave Plan for England which contains specific considerations for Health and Social Care Professionals, care homes, schools and early year settings. The emails were in turn shared with these establishments, with assurance provided to the TCG.
13. The Communications and Public Health teams reviewed risks to ensure appropriate public health messages were issued to communities via the Council's website, social media platforms, weekly resident emails, targeted communications to those most vulnerable to extreme heat temperatures and an encouragement to the public and colleagues to check on those who may be struggling in the conditions experienced.
14. The Resilience and Emergency Planning team subsequently contacted all Heads of Service asking them to consider potential impacts and their business continuity arrangements and report any business continuity issues. The following service changes were reported:
 - Libraries and museums closed Monday 18 July and Tuesday 19 July
 - One Primary school closed due to staff shortages
 - Regulation & Enforcement suspended visits and enforcement patrol work after 1300hrs 18 July and 1200hrs on 19 July 2022 to avoid extreme heat
 - Bin collections and Street Scene services started earlier to avoid working in extreme heat
 - Some schools reported collecting children early and not sending children to school on 19 July 2022.
15. The Assistant Director of HR and Communications emailed all staff on 15 July 2022 advising of the Red Extreme Heat Warning and Level 4 Heat Health Alert. This contained advice on:
 - Staying safe and looking after those around us
 - Reminded managers to review risk assessments and business continuity plans
 - Advising staff to work from home where possible
 - Take into consideration flexible working where possible, taking regular breaks and hydration
 - Outdoor workers to have access to bottled water (e.g., refillable) and plan outdoor work in shaded areas, reschedule, or reduce the frequency or over strenuous physical activities
 - Wearing lighter uniform
 - Remaining vigilant of colleagues who may be showing signs/symptoms of heat effects.
16. Additional actions undertaken by TCG members included:

- Highways monitoring of road surface temperatures to review the need for mitigating actions
 - Review of planned events and issuing of advice to event organisers to review risk assessments in light of extreme temperatures
 - Proactive welfare calls from Adult Social Care and Customer Services staff to vulnerable residents which were targeted and prioritised in advance of alerts
 - Welfare packs provided by the Complex Lives teams with support and advice provision
 - Translation of key advice into alternative languages through the Council's Health Protection team and the use of signed advice from Action Deafness in public communications.
17. As a result of excessive demand on South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's control room in answering calls and directing resources, some challenges were experienced in contacting them for live data.
 18. When intelligence was received either from SYFRS, members of the public or Council colleagues, Forward Liaison Officers were deployed to gather intelligence and provide support to emergency services. Other services such as Highways teams were deployed to support with road closures.
 19. Associated incidents that were reported included a number of wildfires across the borough including Sprotbrough, Auckley and Clayton. A number of residents were also affected by power outages caused by the high temperatures.
 20. During periods of hot weather this year, teams have carried out patrols of open water to identify and reduce the risk of open water swimming. Street Scene and Countryside Rangers have also supported by patrolling woodland to identify any fires or barbecues used by campers, installing signage on fire risk and created fire breaks to prevent any potential spread of fire.
 21. Following the incident a multiagency debrief was carried out by the South Yorkshire LRF. A lot of notable good practice was identified however there were some areas for improvement. These recommendations are now being progressed with partners.
 22. A debrief and after action review was undertaken through the Doncaster multi-agency Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) with recommendations being embedded into future preparedness and response. The local recommendations are:
 - Review of TCG membership for heat-health/extreme heat events, particularly across the Team Doncaster partnership.
 - Review of communication flows, timeliness and coordination when a major incident is declared (e.g. fires / wildfires across the borough, road closures)
 - Embed considerations to inequalities in communications activity in response to future incidents.
 - Timeliness and review of plans and risk assessment, preparation of proactive communications in events such as this that have an advance warning period.
 - Reconsider communication flows with operational teams on the ground (2-way communication) in incidents such as multiple fires

- Review of rest centre plan and key contacts (the reviewed plan is already out for comment).
- Consideration to how we monitor health impacts of such events over and above OPEL levels.
- Review of local threat and risk assessments for heat events to include strengthening profile of wider impacts such as fires and council buildings, high-risk housing such as top floor flats to understand and raise the profile for preparedness and response activities in the future.
- All service areas to review business continuity plans to consider extreme heat events and learning for this event.
- Build on processes for proactive calls/support for vulnerable people to include how we increase the capacity.
- Exercise of heatwave plan following review.
- Consideration to review of how the Emergency Control Centre and incident response plans are activated, mobilised and coordinated in the future.
- Consider in future incidents opportunities to engage a wider cohort of council staff to report incidents and key behaviours where appropriate.
- Add explicit reference to temporary accommodation (e.g., for asylum seekers & refugees) and early years provision to TCG silver brief templates.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED


23. There are no specific options to consider within this report. The report aims to provide an opportunity for the Panel to consider the information provided and provide feedback and comments.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

24. Not Applicable.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

- 25.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 Tackling Climate Change		✓		
Comments: The impacts of heatwave events can be reduced through tackling climate change and more sustainable buildings and infrastructure. Some contingencies rely on less sustainable mitigations e.g., provision of bottled water in some settings rather than reusable or promotion of opportunities to refill. High				


temperatures can be linked to poor air quality, high levels of ozone, and fine particles (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). As a result of drier than usual vegetation, the risk of wildfires is much greater in the event of a heatwave.

 Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work				✓
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Comments:

 Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs				✓
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Comments:

 Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all		✓		
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Comments: Early consideration is given to support those who are most vulnerable in a heatwave by disseminating information and public health advice to services, providers, partners and staff. Greater consideration is needed to built environment that exacerbates the impacts of heat e.g. those living in urban areas and south-facing top-floor flats can be more vulnerable.



 Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs		✓		
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Comments: Robust response and recovery plans are in place, and lessons learned are embedded in future responses. Some contingencies rely on less sustainable mitigations e.g., provision of bottled water in some settings rather than reusable or promotion of opportunities to refill.

Heatwaves and higher temperatures can have an impact on levels of environmental pollution. Specifically, periods of higher levels of air pollution often accompany heatwaves. Prolonged sunshine and higher temperatures can also accelerate the growth of blue-green algae which can cause problems for aquatic life, and increase wider problems including odour, dust and vermin infestation.

Warm weather can see an increase in people playing or swimming in open water sites and associated injuries or deaths.

 Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough		✓		
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Comments: Proactive advice and guidance was shared with settings such as education, early years and family hubs. Infants and young children are more vulnerable to heat				
 Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future			✓	
Comments: Road surfaces can be susceptible to melting under extreme or prolonged temperatures (more likely as a result of direct sunlight). Traffic congestion leading to delays could have serious consequences for those stranded in vehicles, especially those more vulnerable in the 'at risk' groups. The rail network will be susceptible to rails warping or buckling under extreme or prolonged temperatures although this will vary. Rising temperatures increase demand on supply due to the use of air conditioning units and reduce the power-carrying capacity of the system as it is harder to cool. Rising temperatures can also cause cooling problems for power stations as they are unable to cool components and additionally lowers the power station's efficiency.				
 Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities		✓		
Comments: Planned events were reviewed with advice provided to event planners to review risk assessments in light of extreme heat. Some cultural and heritage buildings are less resilient to the heat with some closures to reduce impacts on staff and visitors				
Fair & Inclusive		✓		
Comments: The impacts of heatwave events vary across different population groups with many more vulnerable due to age, health conditions and environmental factors such as living in urban areas, top floor flats, cooling and ventilation. Consideration to inequalities was made during the response and has been strengthened in future planning.				

26. **Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SF | Date: 13.12.22]**

There are no specific legal implications in relation to this report

27. **Financial Implications**

No Financial Implications have been sought for this report. Further specific advice can be provided in relation to any issues raised by the Committee.

28. **Human Resources Implications [Officer Initials: DK | Date: 15/12/2022]**

There are no direct HR implications to this report, however, any emerging matters that impact on the workforce will require HR engagement at the appropriate time.

29. **Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW | Date: 14/12/22]**

There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

30. There are no risks and assumptions associated with this report as no decisions are being recommended or taken.

CONSULTATION

31. No specific consultation has been undertaken in respect of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

32. Not Applicable

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

33.

- COBR – Cabinet Office Briefing Room
- TCG – Tactical Coordinating Group
- SCG – Strategic Coordinating Group
- SYFRS – South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- SYLRF – South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum
- SYP – South Yorkshire Police

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