

To consider the report on the Emergency Support group and Emergency Plan and to consider actions that can be taken to help in future crises in light of the current Covid 19 pandemic. This is to ensure that the council's future emergency response is as effective and supportive as possible

The COVID-19 pandemic was perhaps not the emergency envisaged when the council's Emergency Support Sub-Committee was set up, differing considerably in the scope and severity of its impact and its duration from events where the Sub-Committee and community volunteers have recently taken action, such as flooding. However, it is unlikely to be the last of its kind, and any type of emergency response plan needs to be flexible enough to incorporate a broad definition of 'emergency'.

The stated aim of the Emergency Support Sub-Committee is:

To support Bradford Metropolitan District Council in providing an effective Community Emergency Plan for Bingley in the event of a major emergency; this document will assist with operational management of any emergency situation. The Emergency Planning sub committee will ensure that such a plan exists and is tested regularly, at least every 18 months. To co-ordinate the Town Council response in the event of an emergency in the parish, in line with the scope below.

It is important to note that Bradford Council retains statutory responsibility for the district's emergency response. However, is there a role for the Town Council, through the Emergency Support Sub-Committee, to aid and support the community during and after an emergency that the plan currently doesn't reflect?

I think it would be helpful for the council to review the scope of the Sub-Committee's activity and a) assess what additional action the council may want or need to take to support the community while the pandemic is ongoing, and b) put measures in place to enable it to use its resources and powers to the fullest extent when a similar situation arises.

Action taken as part of this could involve:

- A review of the current Emergency Plan and the extent to which it has been useful in the current situation
- Clarification of the scope and remit of the Sub-Committee and the types of emergency it is set up to deal with. Should there be an addendum to the current (Bradford-led) plan?
- Confirmation from Bradford Council of its own role, procedures and expectations
- A resume of the activities and roles of the council, voluntary groups and individual volunteers since mid-March
- Consideration of how the council can best support ongoing needs for community support and volunteers (for example, in the event of a second or even third wave of the coronavirus or in any future emergency)
- Investigation of methods for supporting volunteers in terms of their physical and mental well-being and financial recompense if required
- Consideration of how the council might be able to support individuals/households suffering ongoing adverse consequences from the current or future emergency

Possible outputs could include:

- A standing network of other relevant parties, e.g. volunteer groups, CABAD, faith groups, village societies, GP surgeries etc. able to share strong community knowledge (with or without the involvement of Bradford Council)
- A review of digital capability to increase the ability of the council and individual councillors to work online
- Adjustment of the TOR to reflect the current legislation allowing virtual meetings
- Powers for the Emergency Support Sub-Committee to produce, fund and distribute communications to all households without reference to full council [prepared postcode with help numbers?] but with authorisation from the Clerk (if possible) or Chair. Currently, no expenditure can be incurred without the prior approval of F&GP
- A network of street adopters, who would take responsibility for collecting and sharing (where consent is given) contact details of residents in their local area and identifying any needs. This could build on existing Neighbourhood Watch areas or use a similar model and once established would need to be kept up to date

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