



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (RUNNYMEDE)

Community Resilience

22nd September 2011

This report is for information only

KEY ISSUE

To inform the Local Committee about the proposed community resilience event titled: *Runnymede Prepared* on Saturday 12th November 2011 and to request they consider methods of supporting it, in particular helping to promote attendance and participation from local residents and businesses.

SUMMARY

The aim of the *Runnymede Prepared* event is to raise awareness of the types of risk the community could face and what they can do to prepare to help increase their own resilience and that of the local community. The event is being held in Chertsey, but there will be useful information for residents from across the Borough. This is the first stage of Surrey's Local Resilience Forum community resilience programme of work and the event will focus on river flooding, as this is one of the largest risks the local community faces. Runnymede Borough Council, Surrey County Council and the Environment Agency are working in partnership in the development of this work.

During this free event, attendees will be able to hear from people with first hand experience of a range of resilience issues, particularly focused on flooding. Examples include residents directly affected by flooding and experienced in producing community based flood plans, the National Flood Forum, The Environment Agency and Surrey Fire & Rescue Service. There will be the opportunity for residents to view exhibits ranging from watercourse management in the borough to flood resilience methods that can be applied to their homes. They will be able to find out more about how they can prepare

for emergencies and have access to easy to use household and community emergency plan templates.

Current promotion methods being considered include press releases, information on the Runnymede Borough Council website, public notice boards, posters in leisure centres, day centres, libraries and a direct leaflet drop in the highest flood risk postcode areas, emails to community and business groups.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee is requested to support Surrey's Local Resilience Forum Community Resilience programme of work and raise awareness within their communities, especially around the Runnymede Prepared event happening on Saturday 12th November 2011 at the Chertsey Hall, 10:00 – 12:30.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 When emergency incidents happen there is a limit to the assistance that key responding organisations (such as the emergency services and local authorities) can provide to members of the public. Work has been carried out for a number of years to encourage householders to improve their own resilience, allowing them to be better placed to respond and recover from an emergency and free up responding authorities to deal with those who are worst affected and the most vulnerable in the community. In addition as a Category one Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Surrey County Council has a statutory duty to advise the public of risks before an emergency.
- 1.2 Runnymede is one of the top ten administrative areas with the highest risk of river flooding in the Country. Flooding represents the highest risk to Runnymede residents, with widespread risk to life and property, business and commerce. 8,200 residential properties and 960 commercial properties are at risk of a 1 in 100 flood risk from the Thames, Chertsey Bourne, Addlestone Bourne and the River Wey. In the recent past there has been river flooding in Chertsey, Egham, Thorpe, New Haw and Woodham (2000, 2003 and 2009). Surface water flooding affected various parts of the Borough in 1993, 1998, 1999, 2006 and 2007. See Annexes attached to this report.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Despite efforts from a number of groups and organisations e.g. the Environment Agency and local authorities over recent years to raise awareness of community risk and resilience, take up has been limited in terms of the development of community emergency plans. However, the need remains unchanged. While Runnymede and Surrey are safe places to live and work, there are certain risks that have the potential to impact on people's lives. The Surrey Community Risk Register (which is freely available to the public on the Surrey County Council website) provides a list of these risks; including what is considered the likelihood of them happening and their level of impact. This is supported by information on how people can prepare and what they should do if an incident occurs, along with individual household and community emergency plan templates.
- 2.2 The organisations planning the event have identified that the key outcomes for Runnymede Prepared are as follows:
 - to raise awareness of the risks Runnymede residents face (focusing on flooding);
 - promote measures that households can take to mitigate these risks (protecting their homes and belongings);

- increase the number of residents signed up to receive the free Environment Agency flood warnings,
- promote the creation of community level emergency plans;
- and promote the benefits of business continuity for local businesses.

3 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 The proposed *Runnymede Prepared* event will be discussed with the Chair of the Runnymede Flood Forum by Runnymede Borough Council representatives, to help ensure it meets the needs of local residents at risk from river flooding.

4 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are resource implications associated with this event. These are mainly focused around officer time; however there will be costs for hiring the venue (estimated to be £500) as well as publicity costs (awaiting a confirmed cost estimate from Runnymede Borough Council). It is proposed that these associated costs are shared between Surrey County Council, Runnymede Borough Council, and the Environment Agency.

5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Chertsey Hall has disabled access, a hearing loop and audiovisual equipment. Staff will be on hand to provide specific assistance where required.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Communities which develop their own local emergency plans are likely to be more resilient and better able to support each other through the communication networks which are required as a key part of the plan. This is likely to indirectly help increase community safety.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 *Runnymede Prepared* is an important first stage in Surrey's Local Resilience Forum community resilience programme of work to help make local communities more resilient to emergencies. In order to build community resilience it is important that the event is well attended by local residents and representatives from community groups. The Local Committee is asked to consider ways it or its Members could raise awareness and encourage their local communities, not only to attend but also take up some of the measures being promoted – particularly community based flood plans.

8 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members have well established local community networks and in order to engage effectively with local communities and develop community resilience their support in promoting both attendance at the event and the benefits of this approach is essential.

9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 9.1 Following the *Runnymede Prepared* event, similar events will be proposed in the other Surrey Borough and Districts focusing on the local risks. If there is interest shown by local community groups following the event, assistance can be offered in developing their plans as required.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: 7th June 2011 – Officer Report to Local Committee (Runnymede): Community Resilience Civil Contingencies Act 2004:
<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/civil-contingencies-act>

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