

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Emergency Management

The main matter that the Council is being asked to consider is....

- Whether to maintain existing levels of service, decrease or increase levels of service for the Emergency Management activity.

1. Council direction

The direction provided to staff by the Council in December 2010 was to:

- Retain existing levels of service in Civil Defence and Emergency Management.
- Advocate rather than provider might mean withdrawing from funding other programmes.
- Strengthen regional emergency management relationships.
- A stronger linkage between CDEM and CAG requirements - measure stronger linkages.
- Set out a work programme around some of the Blueprint directions.

2. What the activity does

The Emergency Management activity focuses on communities being ready for, responding to and recovering from emergencies when they do happen.

The core elements of the Council's Emergency Management are civil defence and emergency management, rural fire and water safety.

3. What the legislations says

Council has a general responsibility, at times of emergency, of being able to function to the fullest possible extent, even though this may be at a reduced level, and respond to the emergency, as required. This is a requirement for the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002.

Council is also required to be a member of a regional Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group. CDEM Groups and each of the member Councils are required to provide for the planning, organisation, coordination and implementation of comprehensive CDFEM within the CDEM Group and the respective local authority areas.

Under the Forest and Rural Fires Act 1977, the Council has responsibility for promoting and carrying out fire control measures, including a written fire plan, keeping records and appointing one or more rural fire officers and a principal rural fire officer. They also have the power to promote and carry out fire control measures and to make, amend or revoke bylaws for promoting and carrying out fire control measures.

4. Proposed activity objective

The proposed activity objective for the Emergency Management activity is:

To promote individual and community resilience in emergencies and to enhance the community's capability to respond to and recover from disasters.

NB: This objective is the same as the objective stated in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan.

**Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan
Strong Communities - Emergency Management**

5. How this activity currently would contribute to the Council Outcomes

The activity will contribute to the achievement of the Council Outcomes as follows:

Council Outcome	The Emergency Management activity...
A prosperous district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps create an environment that enables our economy to grow, by enhancing the community's resilience to disasters. • Provides a clear emergency planning framework to guide future development of the district and create opportunities when recovering from disasters. • Advocates for other essential infrastructure e.g. broadband, to enable effective community response and recovery during and following emergency events. • Coordinates activities during and after a disaster to provide waste, wastewater, transport and other infrastructure services needed to help the economy grow.
A liveable district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to planning for the future to identify community needs. • Encourages community responsibility. • Promotes development of a safe living environment through local emergency education, response and recovery plans. • Respects and nurtures a local sense of place through local emergency response and recovery plans. • Helps ensure the provision of safe drinking water and waste disposal services during and after an emergency. • Supports initiatives, such as civil defence and rural fire, which promote and reflect community responsibility • Plays a significant role in Civil Defence and the reduction of hazards. • Delivers services in the most affordable manner through joint emergency planning and services.
A clean and green district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays a part in keeping our environment safe and clean by coordinating a response to and recovery from disasters when they do happen. • Protecting the rural natural ecosystems from fire.

The Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint places expectations on the Emergency Management Activity to promote individual and community resilience in emergencies and to enhance the capability of communities to respond to and recover from disasters.

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Emergency Management

6. Things to be aware of

Proposed Changes to CDEM Strategies and Priorities

The Waikato CDEM Group Plan (and, subsequently, the Thames Valley CDEM Plan) is currently under review and will likely reflect a change in direction to more regional overview and coordination of CDEM activities. However, delivery of CDEM services will remain at the local level.

Proposed Changes to Rural Fire Strategies and Priorities

The National Rural Fire Authority Strategic Plan 2004-2014 has identified that effective and efficient rural fire management will be pursued by promoting the voluntary amalgamation for rural Fire Authorities in the regions to form enlarged Rural Fire Districts. If this strategy occurs within the Waikato Region, it may result in the demise of the Thames Valley Rural Fire District. Local discussions are currently underway with the Department of Conservation (DOC) to promote an amalgamation between the Thames Valley Rural Fire Authority and DOC (a rural fire authority in its own way).

7. A word from our community....

- The 2010 community prioritisation survey shows that "preparing the community to respond to and recover from emergencies" is ranked 4th out of the 27 activities surveyed. This activity remains a top priority as determined by the community, when compared to other Council activities.
- In the 2010 communitrack survey, 58% of respondents (residents/non-resident ratepayers) say their household is prepared for an emergency. Further, 60% of respondents feel very safe in their home and for their livelihood if a natural disaster strikes.

8. Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats

- A strength is that we have a established working relationships with other council's, emergency service provides and government agencies through he Thames Valley and Waikato CDEM Group to deliver emergency services.
- A strength is that we have experiences and trained emergency management personnel.
- A strength is that we have community emergency management groups capable of assessing local hazards, preparing and delivering local response and recovery plans and promoting resilience within the community.
- A weakness is that we have many small communities which may be isolated from help, communication and equipment during an emergency event.
- An opportunity is to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of emergency services throughout the District and Region. Working with Waikato CDEM Group and emergency services to align planning, training, operations, etc. to ensure that seamless support is available and provided in an emergency. Investigating other options and partnerships for the delivery of readiness, response and recovery activities.
- An issues is that this District has large non-resident and visitor population, particularly at peak summer periods, who do not understand the local hazardscape and the services available to help them in an emergency and may have very limited ability to help themselves.
- An issue is that the average age of vehicles within the rural fire appliance fleet is approximately 30 years old. While Council acquires them very cheaply (\$7.23 for the vehicle transfer) from the NZ Fire Service, they are often not designed for a

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Emergency Management

rural fire environment and require additional funding to set up and maintain the vehicles. It is often only through the dedicated efforts of the volunteers, that the vehicles are operational when required.

9. Proposed levels of service options

The Council should note that the proposed levels of service are:

- Information is available to help prepare for and Get Thru an emergency.
- Help is available in an emergency.
- Help is available following a disaster.

The levels of service would remain the same for all three options. What the Council is being asked to consider here is whether the current level of investment is adequate, or whether to increase or decrease this investment. An increase or decrease will impact on the extent of activity that supports these levels of service statements.

Option 1: Maintain existing levels of service, with a focus on efficiencies

- This option meets statutory requirements under the CDEM Act, the Forest and Rural Fires Act and the Local Government Act.
- Within this option, there is opportunity to explore efficiencies and different ways of working, e.g. contract with NZ Fire Service to coordinate response activities, collaborate with other agencies to deliver public education to vulnerable sectors of the community, continue to support local communities to prepare all-hazard response/recovery plans, merge hazard management and emergency management activities, apply national/regional templates for CDEM plans and operating procedures.

Concerns with this option are

- During an emergency, in particular, there is a risk that information provided will be delayed or incorrect but that can be managed through consistent, secure processes.
- There is also a risk that communication channels will not be available during an emergency. This will be minimised by having several media for the information and, as a final option, encouraging people to be prepared to manage by themselves for 3 days.

Option 2: Reducing spend in this activity

- Under legislation, Council is required to provide for civil defence emergency management and promote fire control measures.
- Council has no legislative requirement to support surf life saving but has traditionally indicated its support because of the extensive coastal boundary, the underlying intent of the CDEM Act to protect life and the economic benefits from tourism associated with a coastal environment.
- By operating an emergency management and rural fire joint venture with Matamata-Piako DC and Hauraki DC, Council has already minimised CDEM service delivery. Also, many of the coordination and response activities are delivered through volunteers or other agencies. Primarily, Council's role is coordination and political support.
- There appears to be no benefit in reducing CDEM levels of service. The Waikato CDEM Group has resolved to fund Group activities through a regional rate, which would reduce the TCDC rate (2011/12 \$24,628) but not the cost to the ratepayer. However, because the Thames Valley Emergency Operating Area no longer receives a subsidy from Ministry CDEM (it is now a nationally contestable fund

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Emergency Management

provided at a regional level), this would offset any reduction from the regional rate.

- Water safety (surf life saving) is delivered through NZ Surf Life Saving, which already minimises overhead costs. Council's activities are limited to contract management and coordination with infrastructure provision and community consultation. The contract provides for professional lifeguards from Monday to Friday over the peak summer period. Volunteer lifeguards patrol beaches during the weekends. The only benefit in reducing the level of service would be to reduce costs.

Reduction in emergency management costs would primarily be achieved through:

- *Training* - a reduction in training for rural fire forces and CDEM officers and volunteers. During the Canterbury earthquake, volunteers from the Thames Valley EOA were recognised because of their training and ability to immediately contribute to the response. Any reduction in training costs would compromise this District's ability to effectively respond to an emergency. This would also negatively impact on the District's ability to contribute to the national and regional response capability and Council's reputation and legislative compliance.
- *Printing & Stationary* - production and distribution of community action plans. In 2011/12, this budget was reduced from \$11,030 to \$3,490 as an arbitrary budget reduction to minimise rate increases. Removal of this budget would mean that community response and recovery plans could still be made electronically but compromise our ability to provide hard copies to householders, libraries, etc.
- *Water safety* (surf life saving) is a discretionary activity and the level of service could be reduced, if desired. This would reduce the availability of lifeguards during the week over the peak summer period and is likely to result in public rancour.
- *Warning Systems* - Funding has been set aside to provide warning systems. This has been broadly defined to include signage (e.g. tsunami evacuation routes), sirens, emergency information systems.

Option 3: Increasing spend in this activity

- Increasing efforts in this activity aligns with Council's legislative obligation to plan and provide for civil defence emergency management and promote fire control measures.
- The community has clearly indicated its expectation, through consultation processes and informal feedback, that Council should provide information, which will assist them to prepare for, respond to and recover from an emergency.
- The Blueprint places expectations on the Emergency Management Activity to promote individual and community resilience in emergencies and to enhance the capability of communities to respond to and recover from disasters.
- New technology has changed community expectations about the availability, immediacy and quality of information, which can assist them in an emergency situation or even just to minimise inconvenience.
- This expectation requires a higher level of service for the delivery of information to the public, including providing a multiplicity of sources to suit individual needs, accuracy and immediacy, availability 24/7 no matter the circumstances.

Increasing efforts in this activity would mean:

- *All-hazard response and recovery plans* - To speed up the process for developing these plans, contracting additional resource to assist communities. Based on current resources, this is projected to take >ten years.
- *Public education* - E.g. reimbursing local volunteers to engage with vulnerable

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Emergency Management

sectors of the community to improve their resilience.

- *Response vehicles* - improving the standard of the aging (30years) rural fire vehicle fleet to make it fit for purpose for this district and minimise maintenance costs.
- *Public information* - improving emergency management information systems to enable a comprehensive hazard database, public alerting systems and response/recovery updates.
- *Water safety* - extending the period covered by the regional lifeguard service over the summer period.

10. How is this activity managed?

The Thames Valley Combined CDEM Committee is a joint venture of the three District Council's (Thames-Coromandel, Matamata-Piako and Hauraki) and is funded 40% by Thames-Coromandel.

11. What do we currently spend on this activity?

As a proportion of the Council's annual budget for the 2011/2012 year, the Emergency Management activity represents approximately 0.60% of total spend.

2011/2012 Draft Annual Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$0.54m
Capital Expenditure	\$0.07m
Total budgeted spend for Emergency Management for 2011/2012	\$0.60m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 2011/2012	\$100.97m
Total percentage of budget spent on Emergency Management	0.60%
2009-2019 Ten Year Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$5.89m
Capital Expenditure	\$0.48m
Total budgeted spend for Emergency Management for 10 years	\$6.37m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 10 years	\$1,295.64m
Total percentage of budget spent on Emergency Management	0.49%

12. How this activity is funded, and why.

The Emergency Management activity is currently funded as follows:

Funding rationale summary as outlined in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan

The activity does provide benefits to the community as a whole particularly in respect of the civil defence operation. Civil defence emergencies can be declared over the whole District or part of the District depending on circumstances. The provision of emergency services can be seen to be in the nature of an insurance policy. Everyone in the District contributes to the "premium" but an emergency may affect just a few people.

The funding mechanisms used for operating expenditure are

General Rates	UAGC	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies
	80-100%			

**Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan
Strong Communities - Emergency Management**

The funding mechanisms used for capital expenditure are

Develop. &/or Financial Contribution	Borrowing	Asset Sales	UAGC	Depreciation	General Rates	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies	Lump Sum Contribution
	✓	✓	✓	✓					

Staff recommend no changes to the funding policy for the Emergency Management activity.

13. Staff recommendation

- In light of the Council's direction to align the annual rates increase to CPI, staff recommend the Council maintain existing levels of service with a focus on efficiency gains.
- Staff recommend no changes to the funding policy for the Emergency Management activity.