

Oxfordshire Environment and Waste Partnership

17 January 2014

Update on Oxfordshire County Council's weather resilience monitoring

Introduction

1. This report gives a short update on Oxfordshire County Council's progress toward recording and monitoring the impact of severe weather events on properties and services. It also outlines opportunities to work with the county's Community Action Groups to build community resilience to weather events. Members are asked to support this initiative.

Background

2. The County Council's Environment and Energy Strategy Team works across directorates to monitor and manage weather and climate risks.
3. Oxfordshire County Council has completed two Local Climate Impact Profiles covering the period 1996 to 2009. These show that during this period there were at least 350 recorded incidents caused by severe weather, costing the council an estimated £21 million.
4. We are now implementing a system to routinely record the impact and cost to OCC of severe weather events. This will help develop the business case to invest in resilience measures that will in turn reduce the impact on services and costs, a key aim of the County Council's Adaptation action plan for 2012-2015.
5. Local climate projections suggest that severe weather events are likely to become more frequent. OCC (through Resource Futures) is exploring opportunities to link the county's Community Action Groups and flood and resilience groups to help build community resilience to these events.

Monitoring the costs of severe weather

6. The Severe Weather Impact Monitoring System, SWIMS, is an online portal hosted by the regional partnership Climate South East, with support from DEFRA. The SWIMS database allows individual services and contractors to report and monitor the costs and impacts of weather on a routine basis. This evidence will help to analyse trends and plan for the future.
7. The system is still under development, although most technical issues have now been resolved. Trials will be conducted with officers across OCC services during January to March with a view to embedding SWIMS in 'business as usual' as soon as possible. The storms and flooding over the past few weeks will provide a good test for the system.
8. In tandem with the SWIMS work, Carillion have developed a system for recording the impact of severe weather on OCC properties. Data for the past year show that Carillion received 152 calls to the helpdesk following severe weather events (mostly rainfall and flooding events). Initial figures indicate a cost of just over

£46,000 to resolve immediate weather related impacts and a further £680,000 in follow up projects. The overall cost to OCC properties was just under £726,000.

9. OCC will now add these impacts and costs to SWIMS to provide a better indication of the overall cost of weather events to OCC.
10. Once the SWIMS system is up and running, we would like to invite other councils and organisations in Oxfordshire to take part. SWIMS is a valuable opportunity for the partnership to work together to improve resilience to the severe weather that we are already experiencing.

Community resilience

11. Recent events highlight the impact of severe weather on communities across the county. With such events expected to become more frequent there is a clear need to consider options to build local resilience to climate extremes.
12. Oxfordshire is fortunate to have one of the most active community networks in the country. Currently there are 55 Community Action Groups focussing on issues of waste reduction, food, energy, transport and biodiversity / conservation. One group, South Oxfordshire Sustainability (a consortium of all the CAGs in South Oxfordshire) has already held two public meetings on water issues in Oxfordshire attended by the Environment Agency, Thames Water, OCC, and the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. They have also facilitated a meeting between Thames Water and South Oxfordshire District Council.
13. With most CAGs having a strong interest in sustainability and resilience and it needs only a small step to link with flood and resilience groups. This would bring a number of benefits: increasing the number of volunteers available; help facilitate greater understanding of possible causes and effects of severe weather conditions; strengthen each network.
14. To initiate the programme, Resource Futures have contacted District Council flood group coordinators with a view to making links with the CAGs. They have also held initial discussions with OCC Emergency Planning Officers to explore opportunities for working together. As a first step they have mapped out where CAGs are located and which of these areas have flood / resilience plans in place. The list is given in Annex 1. Further work on the project is on hold pending award of the new CAG tender in the new financial year.

Recommendations

- a) Members are asked to support this initiative through their local contacts;
- b) To consider a report about participating in the Severe Weather Monitoring System (SWIMS) at a future meeting of the Partnership.

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Annex 1 Community Action Group areas, Flood plans and Parish Plans

Community Action Group	Flood plan	Parish Plan
· Abingdon Carbon Cutters	Y	N
· Abundance	N/A	N/A
· Appleton with Eaton CAGE	Y	N
· Barracks Lane Community Garden	Y	N
· Bicester BabyStore	N/A	N/A
· Bicester Green	N	Y
· Broken Spoke Bike Co-op	Y?	N
· CAGLeys - Blackbird Leys	N	N
· Canalside Environment Group	Y?	N
· Chalgrove Environment Network	Y	N
· Charlbury Green Hub	Y	N
· Cultivate	N/A	N/A
· Dean Court CAG	Y?	N
· DinnerTime	N/A	N/A
· Duns Tew Community Action Group	N	Y
· East Oxford Farmers' & Community Market	Y?	N
· Grassroots Bicester	N	Y
· Great Milton Freecycle Live	N	Y
· Green Broom	N	N
· Greening Chinnor	N	N
· Hendreds Environment Group	N	N
· Hook Norton Low Carbon	N	N
· Kidlington vs Climate Change	Y	N
· LEN - Longworth Environmental Network	N	N
· Living Lightly in Dorchester, Burcot and Clifton Hampden	Y (CH)	Y (Dorchester)
· Low Carbon Barton	N	N
· Low Carbon East Oxford	Y ?	N
· Low Carbon Headington	N	N
· Low Carbon Oxford North - LCON	N	N
· Low Carbon South Oxford - LCSO	N	N
· Low Carbon West Oxford - LCWO	Y	N
· Orinoco	N	N
· Oxford Food Justice	N/A	N/A
· Oxfordshire Chilterns Community Action	N	Y
· OxGrow	Y?	N
· Rose Hill and Iffley Low Carbon	Y?	N
· Sustainable Blewbury	N	Y
· Sustainable Didcot	Y	Y
· Sustainable Faringdon	N	N
· Sustainable Kirtlington	N	N
· Sustainable Stonesfield	N	Y
· Sustainable Wallingford	N	N
· Sustainable Wantage	Y	N
· Sustainable Witney	Y	N
· Sustainable Woodstock	N	N
· Talking Shop Sandford	N	Y
· Thame Environment Group	N	N
· Transition Chipping Norton	N	N
· Transition Eynsham Area - TEA	N	N
· Westmill Sustainable Energy Trust	Y	N
· Wheatley Community Action Group	N	N
· Wolvercote Farmers' Market	Y	N
· Woodcote Community Acton Group	N	N

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