

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 January 2022
Subject:	Review of the Council's Sandbag Policy
Report of:	Environmental Health Manager
Corporate Lead:	Head of Community Services
Lead Members:	Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment.
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

Tewkesbury Borough Council has a policy which sets out when and where it should issue sandbags during a flooding event. The policy is reviewed periodically and this paper sets out that review and proposed changes to the policy.

Officers have reviewed the policy and find it substantially fit for purpose. The Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group has also considered the policy and agreed the minor changes to the policy.

The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide sandbags to the public and it has generally been the policy to only supply filled sandbags to vulnerable members of the community. Householders and business owners are responsible for protecting their own property, but experience has shown that the public expects the Council to help if flooding is imminent.

Recommendation:

- 1. That the Executive Committee APPROVE the policy.**
- 2. That the Head of Community Services be authorised to make minor amendments to the policy e.g. adding or removing Parish Councils to the list in the appendix to the policy.**

Reasons for Recommendation:

In certain circumstances the Council provides sandbags to members of the public during the course of flooding events. The policy provides Officers with a framework which will be applied to the supply of sandbags during such events. The policy also gives clarity to communities, businesses and individuals on what to expect from the Council in relation to the provision of sandbags.

<p>Resource Implications:</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>There is no legal requirement for the Council to provide sandbags or any other specific form of assistance in time of an emergency. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on the Council to assess, plan and advise during emergencies. A policy statement on provision of sandbags would form a part of the Councils emergency plans formulated in discharge of that duty.</p>
<p>Risk Management Implications:</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Performance Management Follow-up:</p> <p>None.</p>
<p>Environmental Implications:</p> <p>None.</p>

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has a sandbag policy which is due for a periodic review. The draft reviewed policy is attached to this report as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Council does not have a statutory duty to provide sandbags to the public and it has generally been the policy to only supply filled sandbags to vulnerable members of the community. Householders and business owners are responsible for protecting their own property, but experience has shown that the public expects the Council to help if flooding is imminent.
- 1.3 Sandbags are often used as a first defence for flooding, but their effectiveness is questionable at best. Research by the Environment Agency suggests that at best sandbags offer only 40% success in keeping water out (The Pitt Review, 2007).
- 1.4 Sandbags have a number of disadvantages. Sandbags are very heavy and moving them can be an issue for most people, including Council / Ubico operatives. Sandbags are time consuming and labour intensive to make up, deliver and place and there is often not enough time to deliver them before a flash flood.
- 1.5 Filled sandbags will generally only be supplied to vulnerable individuals who have no other alternative to protect their property.
- 1.6 Empty sandbags are more widely available for residents to fill and these will also be distributed through certain Parish Councils.

2.0 POLICY REVIEW

2.1 The Sandbag Policy has been reviewed and is found on the whole to be fit for purpose.

2.2 There are only two proposed changes to the policy. One is to reduce the number of filled sandbags distributed to protect a vulnerable persons property from twelve to six. The reason for this is based on the experience of Officers over recent years and it is felt that six sandbags is the correct number to protect a property, although each case is assessed at the time of any incident.

2.3 The other change, which was suggested by the Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group, is to add a paragraph on the disposal of sandbags.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 The Climate Change and Flood Risk Management Group has also considered the policy and agreed the minor changes to the policy.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 None.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 None.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 None.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

Background Papers: None.
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Appendices: 1 – Draft Sandbag Policy.