

CABINET

DATE OF MEETING: 7 APRIL 2022

TITLE OF REPORT: HART RESPONSE TO STORM EUNICE

Report of: Head of Environment & Technical

Cabinet Portfolio: Environment

Key Decision No

Confidentiality Non Exempt

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report provides an update on Hart's emergency response to Storm Eunice.

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Cabinet:

- notes and endorses the decisions taken by the Joint Chief Executive under emergency powers as set out in paragraph 6.4 of this report
- notes and endorses the expenditure incurred to date in providing the councils response to Storm Eunice.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Storm Eunice was one of three named storms that hit the UK during the period 14 -21 February 2022. Storm Eunice caused a huge amount of damage in parts of Western, Central and Northern Europe; millions of people were left without power across affected areas, and many homes sustained damage. The UK was particularly hard hit, with 1.4 million people left without power at the peak. During the storm the fastest wind gust ever recorded in England was measured at The Needles, Isle of Wight where a wind speed of 122mph was reached.

3.2 On Thursday 17 February 2022 in response to the worsening weather forecasts a major incident was declared by the Hampshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF). This identified that all Category 1 responders (including Hart District Council) were formally in 'response' at a multi-agency level. In accordance with the Councils constitution this enabled emergency decisions to be undertaken. Storm Eunice passed across the UK on Friday 18 February.

3.3 The Joint Chief Executive chaired an initial meeting of key officers on 17 February to agree the councils response to Storm Eunice, and in accordance with the Councils civil emergency response procedures initiated a log sheet

of decisions made and actions taken, a copy of this log sheet is available on request.

4 MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 In Hart the main impact of the storm was fallen trees which blocked roads and brought down power lines which interrupted electricity supplies to some residents. Harts response to the storm was coordinated with other category one responders through the LRF with officers attending meetings of both the tactical and strategic co-ordinating group.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 When planning the council response, worst case scenarios for the potential impact of the storm were considered. These included:
- significant travel disruption,
 - long term power outages for many residents and businesses,
 - damage to buildings.
 - loss of life.
- 5.2 To ensure the council was well prepared to respond to these scenarios the team set up to manage the response included officers from a variety of service areas. These included countryside, infrastructure, housing, communications, and environmental health.
- 5.3 After the storm a debrief meeting was held with officers involved in providing the response and lessons learnt agreed. The primary action arising from this meeting being agreement to include in the 22/23 Environment and Technical Service Plan an action to produce a Hart Storm Response Plan.

6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or The Hart Vision 2040

- 6.1 The Civil Contingencies Act requires Hart as a category one responder are required to initiate and take action as necessary to respond to any civil emergency.

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	No
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	No
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

- 6.2 The Councils constitution provides the Joint Chief Executive with additional powers to take decisions when a major incident is declared by the LRF.

Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.3 At the time of writing this report the cost incurred by Hart for providing the emergency response to Storm Eunice was £11,111, the majority of this was for tree safety works. These costs may increase slightly as some works to trees damaged by the storm are still outstanding, and to date no insurance claims have been received.
- 6.4 Key decisions taken by the Joint Chief Executive during the emergency response are provided below:

Date	Time	Action
17/02/22	16:06	Joint Chief Executive confirmed the declaration of a major incident by the LRF and invoked Harts emergency plan.
17/02/22	17:36	Severe Weather emergency protocol activated and homelessness officers put on standby for the weekend.
17/02/22	17:36	Hart website updated to provide information about the impact of the storm on service delivery.
19/02/22	14:30	Following the decision by LRF to stand down the major incident the Joint Chief Executive confirmed that Hart was no longer in emergency response and stood down officers from the countryside team.

Risk Management

- 6.5 No risks associated with this reports recommendations have been identified.

7 EQUALITIES

- 7.1 No equality implications associated with this reports recommendations have been identified.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Although extreme weather events such as Storm Eunice can't be directly attributed to climate change, it is predicted that the severity and frequency of extreme weather events such as Storm Eunice will increase as a consequence of climate change.

9 ACTION

- 9.1 The production of a Storm Response Plan for Hart is included within the 2022/23 Service Plan for Environment and Technical Services.

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Appendices: None

Background papers: None