

**SUFFOLK  
JOINT EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT**

**ANNUAL REPORT  
1 APRIL 2020 to 31 MARCH 2021**



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## INTRODUCTION

Each year work to be completed by the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) is agreed by Suffolk local authority Chief Executives in a Joint Emergency Planning Business Plan. Most of this work is business as usual and is linked to the continued support, advice and training that is delivered through the Joint Emergency Planning partnership. Priorities, linked to corporate themes, are agreed to ensure that all Suffolk's local authorities continue to meet statutory requirements for emergency planning and business continuity. The Joint Emergency Planning Business Plan was agreed virtually by Suffolk Chief Executives in December 2020.

However, whilst the business plan had been agreed for 2020, the Joint Emergency Planning Unit was already heavily involved in coordinating local authority activities related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic from January 2019. This work had involved providing initial coordination with the discussions taking place at the national level, but very quickly translated into multi-agency planning and coordination activity in Suffolk. At the early stages it was not apparent that the situation would develop both in scale and impact into the greatest and most catastrophic emergency of this generation.

As a consequence, whilst recording progress against the agree priorities, the main focus of this report is on JEPU's work supporting the enduring response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, working with the Suffolk Resilience Forum, partners, volunteers and government departments in response to what was not only an unprecedented national emergency, but one set in the context of a global emergency and the most enduring emergency response in modern times.

It is testament to the work done over the preceding years and the training that had been developed and delivered by the JEPU that Suffolk's local authorities were so well prepared and able to respond so professionally to the crisis. Responding in a multi-agency environment, supported and supporting partners, had been at the heart of our emergency planning process, our training and in the exercises that have been conducted across a range of risks. This has always been a key part of the effectiveness of the response to incidents that have occurred in the past.

Sustaining this response over such an extended period was not something that anyone anticipated or planned for. Most incidents or emergency responses usually take place over a few days and at most a week. This emergency has spanned the entire year and I'm well into 2021. The JEPU team has responded to all the calls on its expertise in a thoroughly professional way and undoubtedly added great value to those organisations that we have supported. This has been a testament to vision and leadership the Head of Emergency Planning, Andy Osman, and the entire team comprising the Joint Emergency Planning Unit.

Neal Evans  
Acting Head of Emergency Planning  
July 2021

## **Business Plan Priorities**

- [Sizewell](#). The Head of Emergency Planning provided input to the joint Suffolk County Council and East Suffolk Council responses to the EDF Energy Stage 4 Public Consultation.

**Outcome: Delivered.**

- [Legislation](#). Work to develop a new Suffolk Radiation Emergency Plan and associated public information was completed in early 2020, but it was agreed that any assessment of implementation of these new arrangements would be delayed due to ongoing Coronavirus response. This work will recommence in 2021/22.

**Outcome: Ongoing.**

- [Community Resilience](#). JEPU continues to support community emergency planning activities where there is identified local demand. As a result of the learning from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) response JEPU are reviewing how the Community Emergency Planning Groups may be better integrated with wider community volunteer activities, potentially through the work of the Collaborative Community Board.

**Outcome: Delivered.**

- [Management of Resources](#). A reset of council contributions to the Joint Emergency Planning Unit that had been agreed in December 2019 delivered one off savings to the County Council for FY 20/21 and set out revised contributions for all councils from FY21/22 that would rise in future years linked to inflationary pressures.

**Outcome: Delivered.**

## **Local Authority working with wider Resilience Partnerships**

- [National Resilience engagement](#). The JEPU has continued to work with several government departments during the period to progress local emergency arrangements that are influenced by national work:
  - [Telecommunications](#). Senior Emergency Planning Officer attended Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Local Resilience Forum Workshop in November 2020 to consider impacts on the shutdown of the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) in 2025.
- [Emergency Services and Other Responders - Suffolk Resilience Forum](#). The JEPU continued to fulfil its role as Suffolk local authorities' focal point for emergency preparedness in conjunction with other local response agencies via the Suffolk Resilience Forum. The Suffolk Resilience Forum Partnership Manager post that is jointly funded between local authorities, Police, Fire, Ambulance, NHS (NHS England and Clinical Commissioning Groups) and the Environment Agency was migrated for JEPU to Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service during this year.
- [United States Air Force](#). Close liaison has continued with the 3rd US Air Force, RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath. Unfortunately, due to the impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19), no events or exercises have been held with the USAF, however regular contact has been maintained and planning is ongoing for a number of exercises and

seminars due to take place in 2021/22. The 48th Medical Wing based at RAF Lakenheath have also been involved in the Suffolk Resilience Forum Vaccination Cell to ensure that they are aware of the NHS programme and to ensure that there are no complications with vaccination involving either USAF personal, their dependants or UK nationals working on the bases.

- [Suffolk Local Authorities - Joint Emergency Planning](#). Meetings of the Senior Emergency Planning Officers Group (lead chief/senior officers for Emergency Preparedness from each authority) took place twice during the year in accordance with the JEPU governance arrangements.

## **Local Authority Response to Suffolk Incidents**

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The JEPU has continued to play a significant and pivotal role in guiding, establishing and supporting the emergency response arrangements to protect Suffolk communities from Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. JEPU acts as the hub to the 'response wheel', connecting all the various components and providing the focus for planning and decision-making. Without the JEPU acting as in this role, the SRF response would have been more fragmented and not able to draw together the disparate partners so effectively and so quickly.

- By the end of March 2021, the JEPU had carried out the following activities:
  - Continued to support and provide advice to Local Authorities in their roles as part of the Suffolk Resilience Forum's (SRF) Strategic and Tactical Coordinating Groups, and also provided specialist emergency planning advice to Chairs of both groups.
  - Led and continued to support the multi-agency Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) Excess Deaths Sub-Group to monitor/plan for excess deaths, including contingency planning for establishing/resourcing additional remote emergency mortuary sites.
  - Supported the multi-agency group working to the TCG running the national Pillar 2 Coronavirus (COVID-19) testing in Suffolk.
  - Continued to support and provide specialist emergency planning advice to multi-agency groups set up to manage community issues (Collaborative Community Board) and Personal Protective Equipment.
  - Provided assistance to the multi-agency TCG Joint Workplaces Group, ensuring that emergency planning aspects were considered in relation to Coronavirus (COVID-19) workplace legislation/guidance.
  - Provided support and advice to Suffolk Public Health Incident Management Team meetings which coordinated the response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreaks.
  - Facilitated and chaired the SRF Vaccination cell. This cell consisted of all emergency services, all local authorities in Suffolk (including Suffolk Highways, Suffolk County Council Adult & Community Services, North East Essex & Suffolk and Norfolk & Waveney Clinical Commissioning Groups as well as Essex Partnership University Trust (Vaccination centres operations). The purpose of this cell was to identify locations for vaccination centres within Suffolk as well as supporting the set up and operation of the vaccination centres. Members of JEPU together with Suffolk Fire and Rescue were heavily involved in sourcing the equipment for the vaccination centres prior to them going live as well as supporting them in the early period of operation.

- Assisted Suffolk County Council Public Health Services with the planning and development of a contingency plan to conduct Surge Testing, at short notice, of any Coronavirus 'variants of concern'.
  - JEPU has been instrumental in the establishment and support to the Recovery Coordination framework structure that was established in parallel with the Strategic Coordination Group (RCG) early in 2020. The JEPU Recovery Coordination Officer (a post unique to Suffolk's Local Authority emergency planning partnership) has supported and provided specialist advice to the Chair of the Recovery Coordination Group (RCG).
  - JEPU officers have provided support and advice to the following Recovery Coordination Sub-groups - Health, Care, Education and Wellbeing; Suffolk C19 Communities Board
  - Provided support and advice to the Tactical Management Teams and Business Continuity Forums in Suffolk County Council, East Suffolk Council, West Suffolk Council and Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils.
  - Reviewed and developed our procedures to coordinate and provide support to communities affected by other incidents or emergencies which might require support from Local Authorities. This entailed adapting working practices and plans to ensure that our staff were able to operate in a virtual or COVID-Safe manner and that communities would be provided with support which reduced any safety risks or concerns relating to Coronavirus (COVID-19).
  - Revised our means of delivering training courses to Local Authority staff who would operate the Local Authority Emergency Control Centres (ECC) and Rest Centres by adapting them to reflect the impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Heavy Rainfall and Flooding: 24 - 28 December 2020. Following a prolonged period of wet weather in December which left many water catchments saturated, the Meteorological Office issued weather warnings for heavy rainfall between 23 - 28 December; this weather system was associated with Storm BELLA. The rainfall gauge at Redgrave recorded 54mm of rain (a month's worth) in 24 hours on 24 Dec and the highest flow rate since 1968 was recorded in the River Waveney.
    - 24 December. Initial impacts were reported in the south of the county with a possible flood risk to Stowmarket when the Environment Agency's Rattlesden Storage reservoir overtopping. Fortunately, this resulted only in surface water flooding at the sluice. Additionally, there were a significant number of minor roads across the county that experienced surface water flooding, as well as flooding on parts of the A14.
    - Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service declared a Major Incident with significant flooding occurring in Bungay and the surrounding area. Further rain, coupled with tide-locking on the Suffolk Broads, caused additional flood impacts throughout the Christmas period in Beccles, particularly on 26 December.
    - JEPU supported the multi-agency response and the subsequent investigation into the causes.
  - Severe Weather (Storm Darcy): 8 February 2021. The Meteorological Office issued an AMBER severe weather warning for snow associated with Storm Darcy. Heavy snowfall fell across eastern areas of Suffolk caused the suspension of some council services and roads blocked with drifting snow.
    - JEPU led the multi-agency Tactical Coordination Group and provided cross border liaison with Norfolk.

- A 4 x 4 Response Cell was established and staffed by JEPU to prioritise and coordinate requests for volunteer 4x4 transport across all agencies to ensure the delivery of life critical services.
- The TCG also supported the NHS ensuring that Coronavirus (Covid-19) test sites and vaccination sites were able to remain operational during the severe weather.
- Coastal Erosion. JEPU continue to assist East Suffolk Council with contingency planning for possible cliff collapse at Kessingland following unprecedented coastal erosion, including supporting the local community with the development of an emergency plan.

## **Countywide Local Authority Resilience Achievements**

### **Statutory Exercises**

- IFF Haverhill - COMAH 3 yearly Exercise. Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19), the live play exercise for both the site and TCG were cancelled and replaced with a virtual workshop, held in September 2020. This workshop confirmed that both the internal and external Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) emergency plans for the site were fit for purpose. As a result, the external COMAH emergency plan has been re issued.
- Calor Gas Saxham - COMAH 3 yearly Exercise. Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19), the live play exercise for both the site and TCG were cancelled and replaced with a virtual workshop, held in September 2020. This workshop confirmed that both the internal and external COMAH emergency plans for the site were fit for purpose. As a result, the external COMAH emergency plan has been re issued.
- Ex EAGLE PREPARE. JEPU ran an exercise on 11 November to test the Sizewell notification process in the event of an Off-Site Nuclear Emergency. The exercise was monitored by the Office for Nuclear Radiation (ONR) and demonstrated SCC preparedness under Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (REPPIR).

### **Major Exercises**

- Ex STOWAWAY THREAT. JEPU supported an exercise, run by ABP Lowestoft on 29 September, to test the port's security and incident procedures to stowaways arriving on a vessel.
- ITFC. JEPU supported a Police-led exercise with Ipswich Town Football Club on 17 July to consider the implication of the easing of Coronavirus (COVID-19) lockdown restrictions and the restarting of football at Portman Rd.
- Port of Felixstowe. JEPU participated in the SRF test of contingency plans for PoF following the Exit from the EU.

### **Multi-Agency Training**

- Exercise Rapid Response - 5 August 2020. JEPU facilitated Exercise Rapid Response. The exercise practiced the response to a localised outbreak within Suffolk with the aim of practicing, testing and developing the Suffolk Local Outbreak Control Plan. The Exercise was attended by over 60 delegates from across the Suffolk Local Resilience Forum (SRF).
- Lowestoft Temporary Flood Barrier. JEPU facilitated the training of approximately 30 military Reservists from the local infantry unit on the construction of the Lowestoft Temporary Flood Barrier. They will provide a pool of resources that can be requested in the event of a tidal surge and barrier deployment.

- Resilience Direct. JEPU provide Resilience Direct (RD) and RD Mapping training to both the Suffolk Public Health Covid-19 Response Hub and SFRS in preparation for surge testing to investigate Coronavirus (COVID-19) 'variants of concern'.

## **Council Resilience Achievements**

### **Suffolk County Council**

#### **Staff & Member Training & Exercises**

- JEPU – Operations Centre training for Covid-19 Response Hub staff.

#### **Business Continuity**

- Nil.

### **East Suffolk Council**

#### **Staff & Member Training & Exercises**

- JEPU Course - Local Authority Emergency Control Centre (managers) - 6 officers provided competency training on remote operations using Resilience Direct (RD) Incident Log.
- JEPU Course - Local Authority Emergency Control Centre (staff) - 15 officers provided competency training on remote operations using.
- JEPU Course - Local Authority Rest Centre Operations – 8 x managers and 16 x volunteers provided competency training on Covid compliant Rest Centre operations.

#### **Rest Centres**

- Plans written for new Rest Centres at Wenhaston, Waldringfield, Darsham and Woodbridge.
- Rest centre plan reviewed following refurbishment of Felixstowe Leisure Centre.
- Two new potential Rest Centres identified at Southwold and Woodbridge.

#### **Community Resilience**

- Supported Coastal Partnership East (CPE) with the London School of Economics / Zurich to assess Lowestoft flood resilience. Workshop process to identify and grade flood risks reduction schemes as part of developing community resilience for Lowestoft.
- East Suffolk Council continues to support the community emergency planning concept and JEPU has facilitated the establishment of several local volunteer groups, including Lowestoft Town Council, and the review of plans.

## **Central Suffolk Councils working together - Babergh DC and Mid Suffolk DC**

#### **Staff & Member Training & Exercises**

- JEPU Course – Tactical Management - 1.
- JEPU Course - Local Authority Emergency Control Centre (managers) – 6 officers.
- JEPU Course - Local Authority Emergency Control Centre (staff) - 7 officers.
- JEPU Course – Rest Centre – 4 managers.
- JEPU Course – Rest Centre - 18 Staff.

#### **Rest Centres**

- All current Rest Centre Plans have been updated in 2020/21.

#### **Business Continuity**

- A lesson Identified process has taken place within BMSDC and this will be reflected in the business continuity plan.

## **Community Resilience**

- A number of CEPG plans have been updated and support is ongoing to several communities are looking to develop their own CEPG plans.

## **Ipswich BC**

### **Staff & Member Training & Exercises**

- JEPU Course - Local Authority Rest Centre Operations – 7 x managers and 22 x volunteers provided competency training on Covid Secure Rest Centre operations.

### **Rest Centres**

- Nil.

### **Business Continuity**

- Nil.

### **Community Resilience**

- Supported IBC's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment review process to identify and manage flood risks as part of the planning and development process for Ipswich.

## **West Suffolk Council**

### **Staff & Member Training & Exercises**

- JEPU Course - Local Authority Emergency Control Centre (managers) - 6 officers.
- JEPU Course - Local Authority Emergency Control Centre (staff) - 17 officers.
- JEPU Course – Rest Centre - 8 managers.
- JEPU Course – Rest Centre - 36 staff.

### **Rest Centres**

- All current Rest Centre Plans have been updated in 2020/21.

### **Business Continuity**

- A lesson Identified process has taken place within West Suffolk and this will be reflected in the business continuity plan.

### **Community Resilience**

- A number of CEPG plans have been updated and support is ongoing to several communities are looking to develop their own CEPG plans.

## **What we spent**

The Joint Emergency Planning Unit is funded by contributions from each council that signed the Joint Emergency Planning Partnership legal agreement. Annual contributions are agreed each December by Suffolk Chief Executives Group and budget reports are provided 6-monthly to Senior Emergency Planning Officers Group. The partnership offers considerable economies of scale compared to the cost of each council providing its own internal resource. The End Year Budget Report for financial Year 2020/2021 is at Annex A.

Annex A:

Joint Emergency Planning Unit - End Year Budget Report 20/21.



## Joint Emergency Planning Unit - End Year Budget Report 20/21

20/21 Budget:

Activity	In Year
	FY20/21
Direct Employee <sup>1</sup>	567600
Indirect Employee <sup>2</sup>	600
Transport Related <sup>3</sup>	11,040
Supplies & Services <sup>4</sup>	17425
Income	41000
FY Total	596,665

Outturn - March 21:

Activity	In Year
	FY20/21
Direct Employee	566,182
Indirect Employee	7382
Transport Related	3276
Supplies & Services	26871
Outturn	603711

**Bottom Line: £7,046 overspend met from reserves.**

20/21 Contributions:

Suffolk CC	352,410
Babergh DC	24,304
East Suffolk Council	66,871
Ipswich BC	40,962
Mid-Suffolk DC	25,520
West Suffolk Council	45,598
COMAH Treat	4000
COMAH Calor	4000
COMAH PPG	4000
COMAH IFF	4000
REPPIR EDF	25,000
Total	596,665

Commentary:

- Overspend pressures:
  - 2% Pay rise.
  - Additional Coronavirus (Covid-19) expenditure.

### Reserves @ 1 Apr 21

	Current	Changes from 1 April 2020
Total:	£119.2k	- £7k
of which:		
Joint EP Reserves	£72.5k	- £3.5k
Council EP Reserves -		
SCC	£0 <sup>5</sup>	- £2.3k
WSC	£10.2k	- £0.3k
BMSDC	£10.9k	- £0.3k
IBC	£9.2k	- £0.2k
ESC	£17 k	- £0.4k

<sup>1</sup> Salaries, Pension

<sup>2</sup> Training, recruitment

<sup>3</sup> Travel & car allowance

<sup>4</sup> Venue costs, phones, IT, consumables, Temporary Mortuary Contract, local authorities SRF funding, repayment for emergency services REPPIR/COMAH costs

<sup>5</sup> Suffolk County Council have centralised reserves and emergency planning is no longer a disaggregated amount.