



Media release

March 2011

Help make your community prepared for any emergency

BEDFORDSHIRE and Luton Local Resilience Forum is urging communities to step forward and help achieve its vision of being the best prepared place for emergencies.

New national guidance on community emergency planning was launched yesterday (MON), encouraging communities to create their own emergency plan and think about what they can do to ensure they are as prepared as possible.

Iain Berry, vice chair of BLLRF and emergency planning manager for Central Bedfordshire Council said, “Local emergency responders will always have to prioritise those in greatest need during an emergency, especially where life is in danger. There will be times when you may be affected by an emergency but your life is not in immediate danger. During this time, you need to know how to help yourself and those around you”.

“Many individuals and communities already support and help each other during times of need. However, those who have spent time planning and preparing are better able to cope and recover from emergencies. We want people to ask ‘What would you do if...?’ so if there was an emergency they would know exactly what to do.”

Emergency planning officers from across Bedfordshire will come together later this month to see how they can help communities implement the new guidance.

The aim is to help communities think about why and how they can be prepared for an emergency, identify what risks they are susceptible to e.g. a local river flooding, and also help identify the makeup of their community.

It encourages communities and individuals to harness local resources and expertise to help them during an emergency, in a way that complements the work of the emergency services. This may be by identifying meeting points and responsibilities in emergency circumstances. For example, do you know who in your community is a trained first aider? Are there any doctors who live in your neighbourhood? Does anyone own a 4 x 4 vehicle? Where is the nearest shop for supplies?

A Developing Community Resilience Through Schools programme has also been launched, which aims to give practical guidance for producing, training and exercising a school emergency plan. This includes a template for an emergency plan that can be adapted by schools to meet their specific needs.

BLLRF's vision is to make Bedfordshire and Luton the best prepared place for any emergency. Through the 'What would you do if...?' campaign, the forum aims to promote the importance of being prepared and ensure people living and working within the county feel safe.

What you can do to help:

- **Get people involved:** Are you part of a local community group that could get involved or fit resilience into the agenda?
- **Make your contribution:** Make others aware of your skills and resources, e.g. are you a trained first aider? Do you own a 4 x 4 that could be used in an emergency situation?
- **Be aware of risks:** Are you aware of the risks that may affect your community? e.g. is your area susceptible to flooding?
- **Work in partnership with local emergency responders:** Your community should know what local emergency responders are able to do for you in an emergency and vice versa – this means talking to each other during the planning and exercising process.
- **Don't put yourself at risk** - Individuals and community groups should never do anything that puts themselves or their community at risk.

For further details on developing a community resilience plan, visit www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk or www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/communityresilience.

Ends

Notes to editors

BLLRF was formed in 2004, bringing together the key agencies required to respond to emergencies. Comprising local agencies including the emergency services, local authorities, National Health Service (NHS) and the voluntary and community sector the forum was created to ensure the best possible plans are in place should a major emergency occur.

BLLRF's vision is to make Bedfordshire and Luton the best prepared place for any emergency. Through the 'What would you do if...?' campaign, the forum aims to promote the importance of being prepared and ensure people living and working within the county feel safe. For more information visit www.whatwouldyoudoif.co.uk

Media contacts

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