

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	16
MEETING	Combined Fire Authority
MEETING DATE	12 May 2014
SUBJECT OF REPORT	Recent Flooding Events - Costs
LEAD OFFICER	Phil Chow, Brigade Manager – Governance & Assurance
RECOMMENDATIONS	The Fire Authority is requested to receive the report and to note its contents.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The Chief Fire Officer at the February meeting of the CFA, gave a brief resume on the FRSs role during the significant flooding events during the significant flooding events of December, January and early February. Members requested a brief paper on the costs involved and recovered as a result of the floods.</p>
APPENDICES	Report to the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser

Introduction

- 1 Significant periods of bad weather in December following through into January and February gave rise to Wiltshire FRS having to deal with over 200 flooding incidents in that period. In particular, approximately 100 incidents occurred on three specific days; 23rd December, 24th December and 4th February.
- 2 During that period, the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser requested details from each FRS on the level of incidents and further information on how each FRS was affected by the severe weather. This culminated in the attached Appendix - Report to the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, in April 2014.
- 3 The Chief Fire Officer at the February meeting of the CFA, gave a brief resume on the FRSs role during the significant flooding events during the significant flooding events of December, January and early February. Members requested a brief paper on the costs involved and recovered as a result of the floods.

Bellwin Scheme

- 4 The Government, due to the very nature of these type of incidents, has a scheme called the Bellwin Scheme, which allows Authorities to reclaim some incurred costs as a result of significant incidents. There are limits as to what can be claimed for, and how much, with additional extraordinary expenditure classified as being reclaimable.
- 5 In response to the recent significant flooding events, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Eric Pickles, announced an extension to the terms of the Bellwin Scheme for 2014. That said, unfortunately, due to the amounts incurred by Wiltshire FRS, we are ineligible to claim in our own right, as the total additional costs do not exceed £0.050m (the new limit announced by the Secretary of State). If eligible costs had exceeded £0.050m, Wiltshire FRS would have been eligible to claim for 100% (previously 85%) of the costs in excess of the £0.050m limit.
- 6 Wiltshire FRS, however have been requested by Wiltshire Council and Royal Berkshire FRS to identify additional costs incurred as a result of their actions in which requests were made to Wiltshire FRS to assist in dealing with flooding. This detail has been provided for inclusion on their respective Bellwin Scheme claims and if successful, Wiltshire FRS may be able to receive a reimbursement against some of its costs.

Flooding Costs

- 7 The only eligible additional extraordinary costs incurred as a result of flooding were incurred on on-call costs (retained) which would not have occurred had the floods not have happened. These amounted to approximately £38,900.
- 8 Of the £38,900 on-call costs, £30,100 was incurred in and around the three days (and for the immediate week after) in which there was major flooding, i.e. 23rd and 24th of December 2013 and 4th February 2014.
- 9 Of the £30,100 on call costs incurred, approximately £1,800 was as a result of on call attendance at specific incidents at the request of Wiltshire Council to assist. This amount has been provided to Wiltshire Council as part of the total claim of approximately £7,600 (including £5,800 costs of wholtime attendance), to add to their Bellwin Scheme Claim.
- 10 Royal Berkshire FRS also requested that we attend within the area of Royal Berkshire to cover for their crews attending significant flooding incidents on the 13th and 14th of

February 2014. The costs incurred to assist amounted to just under £2,000, which has been added to their claim. As mentioned above, it may be some time before it is confirmed whether we are due a refund for the costs incurred, under their Bellwin Scheme claim.

Policy Implications

11 None

Risks

12 None, other than there is a risk that the expenditure incurred and claimed on behalf of other authorities may not be fully recovered, and will be dependent on the success of their claim to Government.

HR, Equality and Diversity Implications

13 None.

Environmental Implications

14 None.

Financial and Legal Implications

15 None, other than those covered in the main body of the report.

Combination Implications

16 None.

Recommendations

17 The Fire Authority is requested to receive the report and to note its contents.

Phil Chow

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Unpublished documents used in the preparation of this report:

None.

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