ABSTRACT
This Report is to inform members of the principal areas of work undertaken by the Civil Contingencies Service for the period April 2010 to March 2011.

1 RECOMMENDATION
The Strategic Policy Committee is asked to note and endorse the contents of this report.

2 INTRODUCTION
The Civil Contingencies Service comprises the Civil Contingencies Manager and Civil Contingencies Officer supported by the Chief Executive’s Support Manager and Chief Executive as appropriate. The role of the service is to ensure that the council meets its statutory responsibilities and can assess, prepare, plan, respond and recover effectively to an emergency or major incident that might occur.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005, have implications for the way in which the local authority operates. The regulations formalise the planning process in preparing for and responding to emergencies and came into effect from November 2005. The Act places duties on Category 1 responders who are the local authority, emergency services, NHS, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency. The emphasis is to develop an integrated emergency planning approach, involving all departments of the council, other agencies, emergency services and the voluntary sector. This is achieved through assessment, preparation, planning, training and exercising, with audit and monitoring informing future activity.

3. PROGRESS REPORT

a. Duty Officer Rota
The Civil Contingencies Service has in place a duty officer rota, which operates a single point of contact pager. In the period April 2010 to March 2011, the duty officer service received 75 pager calls out of hours, an increase of 36% from the previous year in the number of incidents requiring the out-of-hours emergency planning service; the increase being mainly in the period November to January during the severe winter conditions. This was from a range of sources such as Tayside Police, Tayside Fire & Rescue and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. In addition, the duty officer offers assistance to other services who seek advice or guidance in relation to service emergencies out of hours.

b. Training 2010/2011
Training continues to be facilitated across the council.

A number of training events have been undertaken in partnership with Tayside Strategic Co-ordinating Group, (Tayside SCG) particularly in relation to the work required for compliance under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This has included a range of multi agency training and
exercise events. In addition, emergency and security awareness training has been undertaken and provided as part of employee development for council staff.

Strategic Managers’ training was provided for chief officers across the Tayside area; facilitated by the Scottish Government (Scottish Resilience Development Service) attended by a range of partner agencies, including the emergency services, NHS and other local authorities. Strategic Managers’ training was also facilitated for chief officers and senior staff within Angus Council which was well received. All training has been fully evaluated, with positive feedback, with further training planned during 2011/2012. Training continues to be a key priority and as such courses are developed on a needs led basis, in addition to existing courses. Training arranged for elected members had to be postponed but will be rescheduled later this year.

Angus Council is the lead partner agency for training and exercising within Tayside SCG. More information is noted in this regard at paragraph 3g below.

c. Severe Weather - 2010/2011

A prolonged period of severe winter weather, culminating in significant snow fall impacted Angus in November/December 2010 and January 2011. This caused significant disruption to communities, council services and transport networks via the main arterial routes, rail and air travel. There were also significant supply chain issues, with gas, oil and essential food supply delays in deliveries affecting council services and wider community outlets. Due to the severity of the weather and emerging issues, co-ordination arrangements were activated within the council, led by civil contingencies, to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the prioritisation of resources and identification of key issues on a daily basis. Incident management plans were also activated to enable business continuity identified critical services to be prioritised and delivered.

Tayside SCG was also activated, due to the severe weather impacting on a pan Tayside basis. Daily teleconferences were undertaken with key strategic and tactical partners, including the emergency services, NHS, local authorities, Tayside Contracts and utilities, to ensure a consistent approach was achieved to support the tasking of key resources such as voluntary agencies and 4 x 4 availability. The output from these meetings were integrated into the incident management structure from a council perspective; equally, outputs from the council incident management structure were raised via the SCG when necessary.

The Scottish Government Resilience Room was activated and remained operational for a considerable period of time; horizon scanning on a pan Scotland basis and supporting local responders where necessary. Tayside SCG collated information and cascaded this to the Resilience Room on a daily basis. Council resources were stretched to capacity; however, daily prioritisation of resources, with up to date information being collated from all services, enabled prioritising of tasks and resources; this remaining to the fore at all times.

Debriefs have been undertaken identifying areas of good practice and where improvements can be made.

d. Severe Weather – Updated Information

Severe weather continues to be a significant hazard and high risk within Angus. Flooding events continue to be at the fore for responders, in particular pluvial events, where consistent heavy rainfall impacts the roads network, smaller watercourses and agricultural land. Civil contingencies are a pivotal contact in terms of cascading of information from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Met Office to council services, to ensure a proportionate and co-ordinated response.

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act gives SEPA increased responsibility to provide flood risk information and as such help minimise the risk of flood damage. A new updated Floodline service has been launched which provides advance warning to those in river flood risk areas promoting actions that householders or business owners can take to limit the consequences on their properties and is an important step in promoting community resilience and the self help message. Council plans have been updated to reflect the changes in the services being promoted by SEPA and the Met Office respectively.

www.floodlinescotland.org.uk
SEPA and the Met Office, have also introduced a new joint Scottish Flood Forecasting Service, which aligns flood alert information with weather forecasting, providing a more improved, impact based modelling, which ultimately offers more specific information in terms of likely consequences impacting communities. This service, proposes improvement to timescales and the type of content and information being provided to partners. Statements are issued on a daily basis embracing a five day period, in advance of deteriorating weather and or flood alerts. Relevant staff in the council have been briefed on the new system.

e. Business Continuity

Progress has continued in 2010 - 11 in relation to business continuity with all departments now having identified the resources they would require to bring back previously identified critical services within their desired timescales. Resource and incident management plans have been validated by departments, with further work required in terms of information technology gaps and recovery time objectives. The progress of this work has been some what impacted by the prolonged period of severe weather and recent events affecting County Buildings.

f. Emergency Planning Information

Information has recently been updated on the Angus Council Website pulling together the various strands of information including plans.  
www.angus.gov.uk/emergencyplanning/default.html

g. Tayside Strategic Co-ordinating Group (Tayside SCG)

Membership of Tayside SCG is routinely open to all Category 1 responders that operate within the Tayside Police area and are represented at senior officer (Strategic) level. Those responder and other organisations within Category 2, which may include the voluntary sector, may also attend Tayside SCG meetings routinely or when appropriate, also at senior officer level. Depending on the nature of the emergency or incident other organisations may be invited to attend SCG meetings as is necessary.

The SCG has no powers to direct members nor is there any legal basis upon which to produce a collective decision. However, while representing their own organisations’ interests, members will always endeavour to assist the chair achieve a consensus view. Protection of life and property is always the highest priority. The SCG routinely meets three times a year and other meetings are called if members are required to deal with major incidents or other emergencies.

Tayside SCG is focused on delivering the statutory responsibilities within the CCA 2004. This involves ensuring there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi-agency response to any major incident or emergency which may impact on the communities in the Tayside area. To achieve this, each strategic lead has accepted a portfolio of business and assumed responsibility to follow the remit given and lead work in this area, reporting progress or exceptions to SCG colleagues at the routine meetings. National organisations who are Category 1 responders have no portfolio lead but contribute in groups at all levels.

Angus Council, through the Chief Executive, is leading on the Training and Exercising Portfolio. The Employee Development Manager has assumed the role of chair for the Training and Exercising Management Group, supported by the Civil Contingencies Officer. Work is progressing, with proactive and established partnerships progressing the work of the SCG.

h. Events

The Civil Contingencies Service continues to offer a supporting role to departments and organisations with regard to safety at events.

A Safe and Legal Events Pack has been produced in partnership with other council departments and external agencies to provide comprehensive, “one-stop” advice to assist organisers of all types of events through the complex processes and various regulations to ensure that their events are organised, safely and legally. The Angus Ahead Campaign through their aims, promote and encourage new events in the county; this pack supports and compliments those aims.
i. Emergency Planning Society – Scottish Branch

Both the Civil Contingencies Manager and the Civil Contingencies Officer have been elected for a fourth term of office on the Executive Committee of the Emergency Planning Society, Scottish Branch as Chair and Training & Development Officer respectively. The work of the Scottish Branch contributes significantly to the Civil Contingencies agenda within Scotland and as such contributes to influencing the direction and development of projects, policy and guidance.

Recent activities have included the hosting of the national conference and professional networking interest groups, all of which enhance and contribute to the learning and sharing of good practice of practitioners across Scotland. The Emergency Planning Society is the professional association for Emergency Planners and as such is a key partner in shaping the future of Emergency Planning within the UK.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with the terms of this report.

5 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

6 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective (as required by legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

7 CONSULTATION

The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, Head of Law & Administration and Head of Finance have been consulted on the terms of this report.

Richard Stiff
Chief Executive

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NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.