

Introduction

This document has been agreed as the Warwickshire County Council Sandbag Policy and approved by the Head of Localities and Community Safety on behalf of the Strategic Director for Communities.

Aim

The aim of the sandbag policy is to formalise County Council principles and procedures for the distribution of sandbags across Warwickshire.

Objectives

- To clarify Warwickshire County Council's policy and procedures for partners and the public.
- To establish a standardised County Council procedure for responding to requests for sandbags from partners and the public.
- To ensure the County Council is able to protect critical national infrastructure and support partners through the strategic distribution of available resources.

Sandbag Provision

Warwickshire County Council, through County Highways, maintains a limited stock of sandbags prioritised for use on County roads to protect properties flooding from the highway and ensure road safety.

Owners of infrastructure and priority services are responsible for protecting their assets from flooding and maintaining service provision. During extreme flood events Warwickshire County Council will consider the need and capability to support this through strategic use of stock at priority sites across the county. This allocation is strictly subject to available stock and competing priorities but where possible will include:

- Critical national infrastructure sectors including health, transport, energy, water and communications.
- Housing for vulnerable people including residential/care homes and sheltered accommodation.
- County Council owned property.
- Supporting local partners.
- Public/community buildings (subject to assessment)

The County Council will consider requests for support from Districts and Borough Councils through the Resilience Team's 24/7 Duty Officer; requests will be considered and prioritised based on likely impacts and current/forecast conditions across Warwickshire. The County Council will do all it can to support partners on a best endeavours basis however support may not be possible and therefore cannot be assumed.

Whilst Local Authorities do not have a duty to provide sandbags to the public, the County Council, through its Resilience Team, annually offers 200 unfilled sandbags to all Parish/Town Councils and established Community Groups within Warwickshire free of charge. A request for additional sandbags may be made throughout the year if the original supply has been used during a flood event. Those accepting this offer are expected to store them in a suitable environment and make them available to their community in the event of local flooding.

This method of support is practical for provision, storage and protection of large quantities of sandbags and ensures they are readily available within the communities that need them when required. Those requesting this allocation are expected to ensure they can distribute empty bags or fill and deploy them safely as part of their emergency arrangements.

The Resilience Team encourages everyone to be aware of the flood risk in their area and take any appropriate measures to protect themselves and their property such as purchasing their own flood protection equipment prior to a flood event. Further information on how to do this is available online from the Environment Agency and National Flood Forum Blue Pages directory.

Public requests for sandbag support and further information regarding the policy and arrangements in your area should be directed to the appropriate District, Borough and Parish/Town Councils.

Sandbag Disposal

Once the risk of flooding has passed it is the responsibility of those who received sandbags to either retain unused/clean bags for future use or safely and appropriately dispose of used/contaminated bags. Disposal of used bags is supported at Household Waste Recycling Centres across Warwickshire strictly upon prior arrangement with the County Council Waste Management Team.