

Appendix to Council's meeting

26 August 2021

**Civil Defence and Emergency
Management (CDEM)
Covid-19 Alert Level 4
Response**

**Appendix to item 9.1 'Chair's Report –
August 2021'**

Emergency Operations Centre:

- Council's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) has been working as an Incident Management Team since 18 August 2021, which is the day that lockdown began.
- In line with Covid-19 requirements, the team is mostly operating remotely, and is working in two shift 'bubbles'. This method ensures that should we need to scale up and physically come into the EOC, we can maintain shift 'bubbles' and follow all Covid-19 protocols.
- The team is ready to scale up, and de-escalate, at short notice in response to needs.
- We also have escalation and contingency plans in place to cover a range of possible response scenarios. This includes having a separate EOC team identified should we need to respond to a concurrent emergency event such as a flood or earthquake.

National perspective including differences from the March 2020 lockdown response:

March 2020 event:

- CDEM's role in the response is different to last time.
- Last time, CDEM led Caring for Communities which is the national support package for communities in need.
- Last event, there was a regional 0800 number dedicated to CDEM welfare support.
- Also last time, there was a special appropriation fund (Category 2 Funding) that enabled CDEM to be reimbursed for the top up of Foodbanks, and other emergency food providers such as Food Pantry's. Category 2 funding provides an additional funding category under the National CDEM Plan, and is used in cases that don't fit normal emergency funding arrangements. In this light, it was acknowledged that Covid-19 was a very different event in that welfare issues arose because people were isolated in their homes (unable to leave). In other types of emergencies, welfare needs arise when people may be evacuated from their homes to emergency accommodation.
- Last time, there was a national CDEM declaration in place, and the National Crisis Management Centre was active.

August 2021 event:

- This time, there is no national CDEM declaration.
- The Ministry of Health (MOH) is the lead agency for this event, operating under the Health Act.
- The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) is the lead agency for Caring for Communities, including financial support for Foodbanks.
- CDEM is a support agency to others.
- CDEM's role as per the Covid-19 Caring for Communities National Resurgence Plan (in summary) is:
 - o Connect with agencies and partners, including Iwi and Pasifika communities.
 - o Fill any gaps that cannot be met by agencies.
- In other words, while last time CDEM was the first port-of-call, now we are the last port-of-call after:
 - o Family / whanau support
 - o On line options to support food security (on-line food orders and delivery)
 - o MSD or other agencies
- Our observation is that the primary CDEM needs at present within the community relate to food security:

- Community members who have financial challenges that do not meet MSD's criteria for food grants
- Access issues, where community members have no problem paying for food, but are unable to get out of their homes due to Covid-19 restrictions, and have no one to shop for them, and cannot access on-line payment and deliveries
- Supply and re-stocking of emergency food providers, such as Food Pantry's, who do not meet the criteria to register as a Foodbank and achieve funding from MSD.
- CDEM may also be requested to support health related services such as vaccination centres, testing centres and managed isolation facilities.

Current challenge:

- Our EOC is able to support individual community members who have a food security need (such as organising the delivery of a food package). CDEM can claim reimbursement for this through the Category 1 funding under the National CDEM Plan.
- There is a gap for Food Pantry's because they do not meet the criteria to receive funding from MSD to re-stock their shelves, and (unlike the March 2020 event) the new Category 2 funding guidelines do not provide for CDEM to claim reimbursement for topping up these providers.
- Our Controllers have initiated discussions at a national level through the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), and local level (through MSD), to work through solutions to address this gap. These conversations are on-going.
- Right now, we do not have a solution where CDEM could top up the Food Pantry's food stocks, and claim reimbursement. The team is actively working with Food Pantry's in the district to identify and resolve their immediate needs.

Additional information / questions / comments:

- Peter Beggs confirmed that he had given approval for up to \$5,000 to be provided to the Food Pantry's at the discretion of the Local Controller on duty, to meet immediate food security needs. This approval is in anticipation that the conversations taking place with NEMA and MSD may result in the expenditure being able to be claimed back; but even if this isn't the case, knowing that the funding is Controller directed for the purpose of meeting urgent welfare needs in the community, that would not otherwise be met.
- Cr Hiroa asked if the funding would be equally distributed between the Taihape, Bulls and Marton Food Pantry. Peter Beggs responded that the distribution would be based on need, under the direction of the Controller. Sharon Grant added that each Food Pantry receives donations from different sources, and right now, some are better stocked than others. The EOC's Welfare Team is contacting the Food Pantry's regularly to understand where the needs are.