

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCESSES

Committee name	Residents, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Debbie Lewis, Emergency Management and Response Manager
Papers with report	None
Ward	All

HEADLINES

This report provides the Committee with an update on the Council's emergency response processes required in the event of a major incident, emergency or situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

- 1. Notes the resilience activities undertaken within the report.**

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Council, as a local authority, has been classified as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 along with all the emergency services, receiving hospitals and a number of government agencies. The Council has a statutory responsibility to undertake the following duties:-

- Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- Put in place emergency plans
- Put in place business continuity management arrangements
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- Share information with other local responding organisations to enhance coordination
- Cooperate with other local responding organisations to enhance coordination and efficiency
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management

Under the Act, an emergency is defined as:

'An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom, the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK'

Classification: Public

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Emergency Management and Response Service

The Emergency Management and Response Service, (EMRS) comprising the Emergency Management and Response Manager, London Standardisation Project Officer and the on call duty staff, sits within the Anti-social Behaviour and Environment Team under the Service Manager, Nathan Welch. The Director with responsibility for Resilience Preparedness is Perry Scott, Director of Infrastructure, Procurement, Business Improvement, Communications, Waste Services & ICT as part of the Residents Services Directorate with Jean Palmer as the Corporate Director.

The Emergency Management and Response Manager leads on emergency planning for the Council and provides the secretariat function for the statutory, multi-agency Hillingdon Resilience Forum, the group through which this duty is discharged. Resilience partners include the emergency services, Public Health England, NHS England, the Environment Agency, utility companies, local businesses, Heathrow Travel Care, RAF Northolt, Heathrow Airport, Hillingdon Hospital, Hillingdon CCG and the London Resilience Group who work together to prepare plans and procedures for responding to, dealing with and recovering from incidents which could occur in Hillingdon or the surrounding Boroughs.

For the elements outside of the Council's responsibility, such as:- RAF Northolt and Heathrow Airport; infectious diseases; the transportation of patients; flood defences and fires in high density buildings the Council liaises very closely with our resilience partner agencies.

With regard to RAF Northolt and Heathrow Airport, the Squadron Leader and Business Resilience partners, respectively, regularly attend the Hillingdon Resilience Forum and participate in exercises. Both year and this year the Council participated in two Heathrow exercises. In May 2018 Exercise Raptor was held to test the response arrangements to a marauding terrorist incident requiring the evacuation of Terminals 2 and 3 and the activation of the Council's rest centre and humanitarian response capability in addition to working with the neighbouring London Boroughs of Hounslow and Hammersmith and Fulham with regard to the arrangements required for mass fatalities.

This year's Exercise Gator took place on 2nd July and involved the release of Hydrogen Sulphide on a Heathrow Express Train on Platform 1 at Terminal 3. In the response the Council was requested to support the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Border Force (BF) with the processing of passengers in the Survivor Reception Centre and to assist with the registration of the friends and relatives in the Families and Friends Reception Centre in addition to providing humanitarian assistance to the survivors, their relatives and friends for several days and weeks.

Although, infectious diseases and the transport of patients are NHS responsibilities the Council liaises very closely with NHS partner organisations in minimising the risk to our relatives and staff ensuring that any outbreaks are contained within the community in order to minimise the spread of infection. The Council does have a Pandemic Influenza Plan which has been included as a background paper for members of the committee to scrutinise. If, and as, required to do so, the Council also has the capability and the capacity to transport residents.

Where fires in high density buildings are concerned the responsibility for fire-fighting and

making the decision to evacuate the residents is at the behest of the London Fire Brigade. The Council is responsible for looking after displaced residents and providing welfare support to those affected by the incident. As such the Council may be required to provide overnight accommodation in a rest centre and to establish a Humanitarian, or Community Assistance Centre.

Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) the Council is designated as a Lead Local Flood Authority and is responsible for local sources of flooding which is defined as surface water, groundwater or ordinary watercourses. The Environment Agency retains the lead for main-river flooding and providing a national flood warning service. The 'riparian' (a person who owns land on the bank of a natural watercourse or body of water) is responsible for clearing any blockages or damage.

With regard to flood defences, although reference is made to the provision of sandbags within the Council's Flood Plan, given the risk of flooding within the Borough consideration could be given to having a more robust solution in place with the procurement of barriers specifically designed for flood rescue operations in order to contend with difficult conditions.

Local Authorities Panel

The Local Authorities Panel (LAP) of the London Resilience Forum (LRF) provides a pan-London local authority approach to core standards for major emergency and business continuity planning. The Chief Executives London Committee (CELC) and the London Council's Leaders Committee have received and agreed a number of proposals for enhancing the emergency response capabilities and capacities at Borough, sub regional and pan-London levels. These include the introduction of the Resilience Standards for London (replacing the previous Minimum Standards for London) a new Concept of Operations for Emergency Response and Recovery (CONOPS) which sets out a range of requirements to be observed by all 33 London local authorities, and a range of new, standardised procedures and training for a number of emergency response roles.

Standardisation Project

The requirement to have a pan-London, standardised approach arose as a result of the lessons that were identified during the responses to both exercise Unified Response in February 2017 which involved a building collapse onto a tube train which caused mass casualties and mass fatalities, and from the Grenfell Tower Tragedy in June 2017. Having a standardised approach to emergency response also supports the concept of Mutual Aid which ensures that all London Borough staff are trained to the same standard.

The pan-London Standardisation Project has resulted in a new command and control structure comprising the Council Gold Group, Council Silver Group along with two new roles, namely Council Silver and the BECC Manager, which have replaced the Emergency Coordination Officer (ECO) and BECC Supervisor. In order to enable the Council to fully implement the pan-London Standardisation Project, additional senior officers were required to fulfil these two new roles, and as a result of these formal call-out rotas have been in place since February 2019 along with the Council Gold and Emergency Response Officer (ERO) rotas.

All of these roles are supported by clear plans for responding to an emergency event and to enable the on call duty staff to fulfil their roles. Action Cards have been produced for Council Gold, Council Silver, BECC Manager and BECC staff along with a Council Silver Handbook. To date the Council has fifteen executive and senior officers performing the on call Council Gold role, thirty on call Council Silver and BECC Manager Duty staff and fifteen Emergency Response Officers.

The Corporate Emergency Response Plan, BECC Management Operating Procedures and the Recovery Management Plan have also been updated and produced and are available to Council officers responsible for performing the on call duty.

Also included within the Standardisation Project are the Emergency Centres Plan which incorporates the standard operating procedures for Rest Centre, Survivor Reception Centre, Family and Friends Reception Centre, and the Humanitarian Assistance Centre. This plan is due to be ratified by the Corporate Management Team on July 17th and the Council's cohort of Rest Centre Managers and Officers will be trained accordingly by a visiting lecturer from the Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College.

Overview of Emergency Response Staffing Levels

The table below shows the roles and the training undertaken to date.

Role	Trained
Council Gold	14
Council Silver	30
Borough Emergency Control Centre Managers	29
Borough Emergency Control Centre Officers	12
Local Authority Liaison Officers	11
Loggist	21

The Role of Members in an Emergency

Following recent high profile incidents, the Local Authorities Panel commissioned a project to design bespoke guidance and a suite of associated training packages for all Councillors in London. These training packages aim to provide knowledge and awareness of London's response arrangements, as well as more specific information on local arrangements within each of the Boroughs. However, the main focus of the next training is on the political role of councillors in preparedness, response and recovery.

The training packages for Councillors are positioned to enhance existing local briefing and training initiatives at the same time as instilling greater consistency of approach. Guidance on how to provide assurance, how to respond to, and support recovery from the types of emergency events that are likely to occur both within the Borough; as well as providing guidance on relevant emergency planning protocols and procedures.

Additionally there are clear differences between the roles of Leaders, Mayors and Cabinet Members, which are distinct from ward members or scrutiny panel members. Therefore these training packages will better reflect this division of roles and responsibilities.

The purpose of the training packages is to ensure that the approach is proportionate and enhances Members effectiveness in order to ensure their actions during the response to a major incident complements the activities underway by the Council's senior officers.

The guidance and the overarching training programme have been approved by the Local Authorities Panel, with strong endorsement from Chief Executives. The project has progressed into a pilot phase in order to tailor the training packages and test deliverability.

- During June 2019, the first round of the Pilot Phase 1 In House Ward Member Training took place in two of the four pilot boroughs only, with the second round taking place in July 2019 with the remaining two boroughs.
- For the Pilot Phase 2 Central Ward Councillor Training the first round will take place in September 2019 and the second round in October 2019.
- The first round of The Leader, Mayor and Cabinet Member Training will take place during September/October 2019 and the second round in October.
- The final course that emerges from the pilots will be available for delivery from the beginning of 2020.

Emergency Planning Exercises

Emergency planning exercises provide an opportunity to test the plans and procedures in place, as well as enabling trained staff to practice their roles. The Council held an internal emergency planning and business continuity exercise on 14th March 2019 in response to an explosion of a high pressure gas pipeline within the Borough. Fifteen council staff participated in the exercise which tested the new command and control roles and the Council's Corporate Emergency Response and the Pipeline Emergency Plans.

The Council participated in the pan-London local authority Exercise Safer City, which is designed to test the London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) arrangements and the supporting mechanisms including the London Local Authority Coordination Centre (LLACC) and Borough response arrangements. The 2019 exercise also provided the first opportunity for the Council to test elements of the new Standardisation Project. The exercise, which was based around a water contamination incident, was held over two days on 1st and 2nd May 2019.

Hillingdon Resilience Forum held the multi-agency Exercise Amberoid which took place with partner agencies and organisations, including Cadent Gas, on the 4th June 2019 in order to test the multi-agency response and the Council's Pipeline Emergency Plan.

The Council will also be participating in two Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) exercises on 7th October and 12th November 2019.

Terrorist Incidents - Planning, Preparing and Responding

The UK faces a variety of terrorist threats. These are classed into three distinct groups:

Classification: Public

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International Terrorism, Northern Ireland Related Terrorism and Domestic Extremism. Due to the wide range of scenarios which could now be considered terrorist incidents and which may result in an increase in threat level, it is almost impossible to produce a definitive planning assumption. As a result of the threat posed the Council provided a number of Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) Training sessions which were delivered by an MPS Counter Terrorism Officer during 2018. To date 195 Council staff have attended this training and more training sessions will be provided later on in the year.

Additionally a further session was delivered to the post room staff with regard to suspect packages and the Council's emergency procedures are being reviewed as a result.

Incidents in 2018/2019

There have been a number of incidents in the community since May 2018. Those that required the attendance at the scene of a Local Authority Liaison Officer, the evacuation of residents, and/or the support of the Borough Emergency Control Centre or Emergency Management and Response Manager and rest centre activation are listed below. All these incidents have served to validate the call out arrangements, rotas and for managing information and situational awareness. The response to each incident is reviewed to identify any lessons for improvements which are then used to inform operational procedures.

Incidents:-

- 24/05/18 House fire West Drayton
- 10/09/18 Burst water main, Falling Lane
- 29/06/19 Back garden fire Hayes
- 01/07/19 Flat fire West Drayton

Implications on related Council policies

There are no implications are current Council policies.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

The work outlined in this report supports the Council's aim of putting our residents first during the response to major incidents, emergency events or situations.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications of this report.

Legal Implications

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Council has a statutory duty to maintain arrangements to warn the public and to provide information and advice to the public, if an emergency is likely to occur or has occurred.