

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 3 MARCH 2020
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING
AND GOVERNANCE)

RESILIENCE UPDATE

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the principal resilience activities that have been carried out by the Risk and Resilience Team over the period since the previous report in January 2019.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the contents of the report is noted.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 Local authorities are deemed ‘Category 1 responders’ under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This legislation confers seven duties on responders, these being:

- 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 responders to enhance co-ordination
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only)

- 3.2 During 2019/20 to date, the Risk and Resilience Team have undertaken, or been involved in, the following areas of work in fulfilment of these statutory duties:

- A full review of the WHBC Emergency Plan is underway to incorporate new practices, procedures and doctrine.
- The Risk and Resilience Manager has chaired a county working group to address the issues of spontaneous volunteers and donations, which is a critical area of emerging practice, highlighted in particular by the Grenfell Tower tragedy, and major flooding events.

- The Corporate Business Continuity Plan has been reviewed.
- The team promoted business continuity to local companies at a business simplification event organised through the Council's Public Health and Protection Team and Economic Development Manager.
- Service level business continuity plans are being reviewed to address structural changes and various plan administration matters.
- The WHBC Care of People Plan has been reviewed to update our arrangements for managing reception centres.
- The team has worked with colleagues to address recommendations made in the Hackett Review.
- We responded to a possible evacuation in Hatfield in January 2019. This went smoothly, with good collaboration between all services involved and also with Cadent Gas.
- The team are planning for significant national events.
- We have now formally entered into a small scale partnership with Hertsmere Borough Council to provide resilience support activities. This is proving a success, with the ability to share good practice, plan templates and training, as well as generating a useful income stream.
- As the lead service for 'Prevent' (the government programme around countering radicalisation and extremism) the Risk and Resilience team continues to deliver 'WRAP' (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) sessions. An internal Prevent Group has been set up to ensure efforts are co-ordinated across the teams involved (Risk and Resilience, Community Partnerships and Anti-Social behaviour).
- We have co-operated fully with the Police on Prevent cases during the year and the Risk and Resilience Manager sits on the county Prevent Board.
- Training has been delivered on reception centres, including to the Red Cross.
- A live reception centre exercise was run at Campus West. This involved the Red Cross (some of who were responders at Grenfell Tower) and employees from across the council, both as reception centre staff and also role playing as 'evacuees'.
- The Risk and Resilience Team, once again delivered sessions to year six pupils as part of the Crucial Crew programme. The theme of the session was one of home preparedness, where pupils were asked to pick the items they would have in a home grab bag in case of evacuation. This ties in with the county wide 'Ready for Anything' campaign.
- The council continues to play a full role in the affairs of the Local Resilience Forum, Hertfordshire Resilience, both in its standing groups and also any ad-hoc projects and consultations that are carried out under

the LRF banner. The Risk and Resilience Manager also chaired the Hertfordshire Local Authority Resilience Group during the year.

- The Risk and Resilience team have been fully involved in the Safety Advisory Team through the year, and the Risk and Resilience Manager chairs this for particular events.
- The Risk and Resilience Team appointed an Apprentice in May 2018, who left our employment at the end of February at the end of her contract. The post holder is made a very positive impact in terms of the team's work and proved to be a real asset. A replacement has been appointed to replace her.
- The Risk and Resilience Officer left WHBC in November 2019 and this has caused disruption to planned work while the recruitment process took place. The post has been re-designated as Health and Safety Officer to reflect the greater emphasis on this aspect of the team's work that the post undertakes.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 The duties conferred by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 are detailed in paragraph 3.1 above.

5 Financial Implication(s)

6 Financial Implication(s)

- 6.1 None directly arising from this report, though of course emergencies occurring within the borough are likely to have significant financial impacts. The Hertsmere partnership is targeted to generate up to £18k income.

7 Risk Management Implications

- 7.1 Corporate resilience is listed as one of the council's strategic risks and this includes a failure to have robust systems in place to meet the duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.

8 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 8.1 The Prevent duty has been imposed under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Project 'Griffin' is not a statutory requirement upon local authorities.
- 8.2 The work around Prevent aims to both prevent radicalisation and extremism.

9 Procurement Implication(s)

- 9.1 None.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 10.1 The changing climate is likely to lead to increasing severe weather events (such as flooding and snowfall) that can have resilience implications.

11 Human Resources Implication(s)

- 11.1 None directly, though staffing shortages have impacted on the achievement of some work activities.

12 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

- 12.1 Emergency incidents can have adverse impacts on both physical and mental wellbeing in affected communities, both short term, such as physical injury, and long term, for example psychological trauma. There are also the potential negative effects of incidents on the physical environment, community cohesion etc. These are central to the definitions and guidance within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Having robust resilience planning arrangements where these are recognised is critical to effective response and recovery.

13 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

- 13.1 Work such as Crucial Crew is important ways of engaging with particular groups.

14 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 14.1 The subject of this report is linked to the corporate priority 'maintain a safe and healthy community' and also to statutory requirements under the Civil Contingencies Act and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

15 Equality and Diversity

- 15.1 An EqIA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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