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FOREWORD

I am very pleased to present the final report of the Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review group.

This report provides an account of the work that the group has undertaken to review Redditch Borough Council's emergency planning arrangements. We have consulted with a number of Category 1 responder organisations during the review. I would like to thank them all for taking the time to provide us with evidence.

Overall the group was satisfied that the Council is well prepared to respond to any emergency situations that might unfortunately occur. We have identified a couple of recommendations that we hope will improve the Council's emergency planning arrangements in the future. We have also made suggestions that we think will enhance the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.

I would like to thank Councillors Matt Dormer and Yvonne Smith for their hard work along with my star player, Jess Bayley, for her support.



Councillor Gareth Prosser
Chair of the Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1
We recommend that the content of the Council's emergency plan should be reviewed on an annual basis.
Financial Implications: The cost of Officer time. Legal implications: No legal implications have been identified.

Recommendation 2
We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual update in respect of the Council's emergency planning arrangements.
Financial Implications: The cost of Officer time. Legal implications: No legal implications have been identified.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Introduction

A request to scrutinise civil contingencies and emergency planning was received and endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2017. In line with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's agreement to hold only one Task Group or Short, Sharp Review at any one time the review did not start until September 2017, following the completion of another exercise.

The terms of reference for the review detailed a number of objectives for the group to address as follows:

- 1) To review how the Council complied with legislative requirements and the Council's procedures to keep relevant risks under review.
- 2) To scrutinise the plan(s) used by the Council in discharging its duty and to assess whether the Council ensures they are credible, relevant and effective during a crisis.
- 3) To ensure the Council is prepared and able to provide emergency advice.
- 4) To invite partner category 1 responders to comment on the Council's emergency plan to ensure best practice, prevent duplication and ensure residents receive an integrated response.
- 5) To seek best practice from the experiences of other local authorities nationally by reviewing relevant cases.

The group gathered evidence from a variety of sources. Prior to the start of the review letters were sent out to senior representatives of partner organisations at the request of Members. The organisations that were selected for contact were all Category 1 responders, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The written correspondence advised partner organisations about the review and invited them to either attend a meeting of the group or to submit information in writing about the Council's Emergency Plan and approach to managing civil contingencies. Members were pleased to receive feedback from representatives of the following organisations; Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, West Mercia Police, West Midlands Ambulance Services NHS Foundation Trust, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust and Worcestershire County Council.

A number of Council officers were also invited to submitted evidence for the consideration of the group, either in person or in writing. This included the Deputy Chief Executive, who is the strategic led for emergency planning, the Head of Planning and Regeneration, is the senior Head of Service lead, the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, the Head of Community Services, who is the lead for Rest Centres, and the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager.

Members obtained evidence from a number of relevant documents. This included the last edition of the Council's emergency plan, the West Mercia LRF Joint Emergency Response Arrangements (JERA) report, the Duty Incident Officer Contact Directory for Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District Council; the Worcestershire Local Risk Register, the Bellwin Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to Local Authorities; Shared Service Agreement relating to the provision of emergency planning and business

continuity service, and the National Ambulance Service Guidance for Preparing an Emergency Plan.

National Context

The review was proposed a month after the fire that occurred at Grenfell Tower in London, which unfortunately resulted in a significant loss of life. The fire, and the approach adopted by organisations in the aftermath of the fire, had significant implications from an emergency planning perspective, including for Kensington and Chelsea Council, the local authority in the area. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry, chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, was formally opened in September 2017 and is investigating a range of issues. At the time of writing this the Inquiry had not yet concluded. However, Members have been advised that it is likely that the findings will have significant implications for emergency planning arrangements in the future.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is the key legislation in relation to emergency planning. The act went through parliament following the fuel crisis and severe flooding in 2000, and the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. The act defines an Emergency as:

- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare;
- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment; or
- War, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security.

The Cabinet Office produces and biannually updates a National Risk Register. Access to this register is restricted due to the sensitive nature of the information but the content helps to inform Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and local risk registers which in turn shape approaches locally to planning for and managing risks. LRF registers take into account issues from the national register that are relevant at the local level. (For example the risk of coastal erosion occurring in the land-locked counties of Worcestershire, Herefordshire and Shropshire is negligible).

At the national level internet based emergency planning sharing and incident management platform, Resilience Direct, has been developed for the use of organisations that would be involved in planning for and responding to an emergency. This system can be accessed by organisations in Worcestershire, including relevant staff from Redditch Borough Council. During the course of the review Members were provided with a demonstration of this system, which provides users with access to key documentation and exercises. Access is restricted in line with data protection.

The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) was developed at a national level to encourage emergency services to work in partnership in relation to preparing for and responding to emergencies. The group has been advised that initially that although this was developed for the “blue light” emergency services, though in recent years this has become integrated in broader multi-agency response to inform a decision making model. Members were advised that Council staff are aware of JESIP and where relevant principles arising from this can be applied at the local level.

Local Context

Redditch Borough Council entered into a shared service with Bromsgrove District Council and Wyre Forest District Council for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity in 2012. Wyre Forest District Council hosts this shared service and the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager works across all three districts.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 there is a requirement for there to be the establishment of an LRF for each Police Force area. An LRF brings category 1 and 2 responders (as detailed in the CCA (2004)) together to consult, collaborate and share information in relation to planning against risks. In the West Mercia Region there is the West Mercia LRF. The North Worcestershire Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service is represented on the LRF and many of its sub-groups, including the Worcestershire Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) which reviews local risks and emergency planning arrangements. The LRF and many of its sub-groups have produced multi-agency documentation, such as the West Mercia LRF Joint Emergency Response Arrangements (JERA) report, which help to inform emergency planning arrangements. Throughout the review Members were advised about the interdependency of organisations and how different bodies need to work together to prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

One form of multi-agency response using Resilience Direct within Worcestershire is participation in Exercise Telstar. This involves partners utilising the Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) activation and Resilience Direct Response Function to discuss a hypothetical incident in the LRF. Lessons are learnt from these and other exercises which are used to inform changes to emergency planning at a local level. Staff from Redditch Borough Council take part in these exercises on an ongoing basis.

At Redditch Borough Council senior officers take it in turns to act as the Duty Officer for the authority. The Duty Officer is on call for a defined period and responds to any incidents that may be reported during the period in which they serve as Duty Officer. There is a rota for the Duty Officers, all of whom have received relevant training. During the course of the review Members were provided with a log of the calls that had been received by the Duty Officers in 2016 and 2017 and were pleased to learn that all reported incidents were reviewed to ensure that lessons were learned for the future.

There is also a Duty Incident Response Officer Contact Directory, which provides contact details for lead officers per department who should be contacted, where relevant, in an emergency situation. Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that the contact details provided for their departments remains up to date.

The Council has an Emergency Plan which is currently reviewed every three years. There is a separate plan relating to the Council's Rest Centres, which details how these should be managed and where supplies could be accessed should rest centres be needed in an emergency situation. Business Continuity plans have also been developed for every service and these are updated on an annual basis.

Funding for Use in Emergencies

The Council can access emergency financial assistance from the Government through the Bellwin Scheme for costs incurred on or connection with their immediate actions to safeguard life and property or prevent suffering and severe inconvenience as a result of an emergency. In order to access funding via the Bellwin Scheme the Council has to first demonstrate that it has spent 0.2% of the local authority's own budget first before seeking further financial help from the Government. The Government then provides cover for 100% of the remaining financial support required, with the Council paying for any immediate needs and reclaiming the funds. Members have been advised that to date Redditch Borough Council has not had to access funding for an emergency under the Bellwin Scheme.

Under the shared service arrangement the Council has access to a Contingency Fund that is held by the host authority on behalf of all partners. This can be used “...*for the purchase of Emergency Supplies as well as other costs identified such as the satellite telephone contact costs and the procurement of additional support where needed.*” (shared service agreement 2nd March 2017, page 3).

CHAPTER 1: RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1	We recommend that the content of the Council's emergency plan should be reviewed on an annual basis.
Financial Implications	The cost of Officer time.
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications.

Prior to the launch of the review Members requested a copy of the Council's Emergency Plan. The plan was subsequently updated, with the agreement of CMT, as some of the content was found to be out of date. On the return of the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager Members learned that the original version of the plan had been archived, which explained why some of the content was out of date. When the emergency plan was reviewed and updated this replaced the outdated previous plan held on Resilience Direct.

The group noted that changing circumstances, particularly in light of the Grenfell Tower fire, highlighted the need for emergency plans to be reviewed more regularly than every three years. This three year timetable was set in accordance with national emergency planning guidance for plan reviews, with a caveat that following an incident locally or nationally any learning arising from a debrief or inquiry would be incorporated into an organisation's emergency planning arrangements. A number of the expert witnesses that the group consulted from Category 1 organisations suggested that emergency plans should be reviewed on at least an annual basis. The group therefore concluded that the content of the Council's Emergency Plan should be reviewed on an annual basis, though Members would expect further reviews of the plan's content to take place mid-year if an emergency occurred to ensure that lessons could be learned.

Members were also provided with a copy of the Duty Incident Response Officer Contact Directory. The first version of this directory provided to Members was updated in 2016, though Members learned that this had subsequently been updated on a number of occasions in 2017 (the latest update brought to Members' attention was undertaken on 24th January 2018). Due to the turnover of staff at the Council, which is not dissimilar from other local authorities in the country, Members concluded that the content could potentially become out of date relatively quickly. The group would therefore be keen to ensure that the Council continues to review the content of the Duty Incident Response Officer Contact Directory on a regular basis.

Recommendation 2	We recommend that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should receive an annual update in respect of the Council's emergency planning arrangements.
Financial Implications	The cost of Officer time.
Legal Implications	No legal implications have been identified.

The Councillors appointed to this review had some prior knowledge about emergency planning arrangements. Councillors Prosser and Dormer had both had careers in the emergency services, as a retired Police Inspector and serving firefighter respectively, whilst Councillor Smith had some knowledge of relevant issues derived from her time serving as the Council's Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services. However, Members had not previously explored emergency planning arrangements at the Council in detail and the group was aware that no training had been delivered to Members for some time in respect of emergency planning arrangements.

The group had been considering proposing that emergency planning training should be provided to all elected Members. However, during the course of the group's interview with the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager Members learned that Officers were planning to provide this training to elected Members in due course. For this reason they concluded that a recommendation on this subject was not necessary. Members would expect that once this training is available it should be delivered to newly elected Members in their first year of service and thereafter once every two years. This should ensure that elected Members retain familiarity with emergency planning arrangements and are aware of any changes that may occur over time due to legislative amendments or in response to local and national emergencies.

The group concluded that due to the importance of emergency planning to the wider community it was important to ensure that information was provided in respect of this matter for Members' consideration at a public meeting. As the Overview and Scrutiny Committee can investigate matters of interest to the public the group felt that this would be the most appropriate body to receive an annual update. A report on this subject to the Committee, meetings of which are open to the public, would also help to place information about these arrangements in the public domain. Following on from the fire at Grenfell Tower Members concluded that such an arrangement would help to provide reassurance to Redditch residents that the Council takes emergency planning seriously and has appropriate arrangements in place to manage any incidents should they occur.

Members are asked to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has the power to determine the content of its work programme. Consequently a decision can be taken on this recommendation by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – POINTS TO NOTE

The Civil Contingencies Short Sharp Review was proposed in the immediate aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire. This incident focused national attention on how local authorities, among other organisations, planned for and could protect the public during emergencies. In this context the Overview and Scrutiny Committee concluded that it would be appropriate to launch a review of this subject.

When the review was launched, in September 2017, this occurred at a time when the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager was on maternity leave. Cover arrangements were in place to ensure that the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service was represented at all relevant partnership meetings and Wyre Forest District Council continued to co-ordinate the shared service. However, the group found, upon interviewing the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager towards the end of their review, that many of their questions about the subject would have been answered and the review could have been completed within a couple of meetings if they had waited until she returned before launching the review. Her significant understanding of the subject and ability to demonstrate effective forward planning on behalf of the shared service reassured the group that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place to enable the authority to plan for and manage an emergency situation.

The group understands that prior to the launch of the review senior officers had formally requested that the exercise should be postponed until the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager had returned from maternity leave, but this request was declined. In light of the Grenfell Tower fire scrutiny Members had felt that this review was too important to delay and the exercise had therefore been launched.

The group recognises that local authorities cannot be complacent and there is always the potential to make improvements to any policies and working practices. However, the group are mindful of the fact that, as requested by Members, various Category 1 responders were invited to comment on the Council's emergency planning arrangements. Whilst all of the feedback received from these witnesses was appreciated, the group is concerned that potentially this could have distracted them from their own work perhaps unnecessarily, given that the group subsequently concluded when they interviewed the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager that the Council had sound arrangements in place.

To ensure that something similar does not happen again the group is suggesting that in future the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should take into account the availability of (a) key expert witness(es) when determining when to launch a review.

CONCLUSION

The Civil Contingencies Short, Sharp Review has been undertaken at a time when Councils' emergency planning arrangements are in the public eye.

This small scrutiny group has undertaken a detailed investigation of the Council's approach to emergency planning. Whilst Members have identified some areas where improvements could be made the group was relieved to find that the Council has appropriate plans and procedures in place to enable the authority to operate effectively in the event of an emergency. Members of the group were united in their hope that a serious event should never occur in the Borough of Redditch. However, unfortunately there is always a risk, regardless of location in the country, that an emergency might occur and Members feel assured that the Council would be able to operate effectively in such a scenario.

The small number of recommendations proposed by the group are designed to enhance both the Council's emergency planning arrangement and the Overview and Scrutiny process. Members therefore commend their report to the Executive Committee and call for their recommendations to be approved.

APPENDIX 1

Scrutiny Proposal Form

(This form should be completed by sponsoring Member(s), Officers and / or members of the public when proposing an item for Scrutiny).

Note: The matters detailed below have not yet received any detailed consideration. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee reserves the right to reject suggestions for scrutiny that fall outside the Borough Council's remit.

Proposer's name and designation	Cllr. Tom Baker-Price Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Date of referral	04/07/17
Proposed topic title	Civil protection and emergency capability short sharp review.		
Link to national, regional and local priorities and targets	<p>The civil contingencies act 2004 (The act) requires this council as a category 1 responder to assess, plan and advise the public in the event of emergencies. The act defines an emergency in section 1 of the act which includes a diverse range of events such as the disruption to food supplies, the substantial loss of life and homelessness.</p> <p>Although these types of emergencies are highly unlikely to occur if they do happen the response of Redditch Borough Council (RBC) is vital to the protection of life and the public at large. RBC has a moral and legal duty to have credible well thought out plans and capability to protect the population with partners in an event of an emergency.</p>		
Background to the issue	<p>Grenfell tower fire in London has focused national attention on how local authorities plan and protect the public during emergencies. Kensington and Chelsea Borough council became responsible for providing emergency relief for hundreds of families. The authorities' difficulty in responding to this crisis has led to social unrest, continued difficulty for the victims and has led to further human security risks.</p> <p>This council must be mindful it may have a legal duty to provide significant additional services resourced from existing budgets and staff without notice.</p> <p>The protection of the public from harm during an emergency could be the most important task this council ever undertakes in terms of direct impact upon residents. Scrutiny of the plans RBC has to protect the public and its capability to deliver is in the public interest to ensure the council is prepared.</p>		

<p>Key Objectives Please keep to SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)</p>	<p>6) To review how RBC has made assessments under the act of relevant emergencies and the procedures designed to keep the assessment of relevant risks under review.</p> <p>7) To scrutinise the plan(s) RBC has made in discharging its duty under the act ensuring they are credible, relevant and effective during a crisis.</p> <p>8) To ensure RBC is prepared and able to provide emergency advice in line with the act.</p> <p>9) Invite partner category 1 responders to comment on the plan to ensure best practice, prevent duplication and ensure residents receive an integrated response.</p> <p>10) To seek best practice from the experiences of other local authorities nationally by reviewing relevant cases.</p>
<p>How long do you think is needed to complete this exercise? (Where possible please estimate the number of weeks, months and meetings required)</p>	<p>It is anticipated that this review should take approximately three months and Members will aim to complete the investigation by January 2018.</p>

Please return this form to: Jess Bayley or Amanda Scarce, Senior Democratic Services Officers, Redditch Borough Council, Town Hall, Walter Stranz Square, Redditch, B98 8AH

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APPENDIX 2

Acknowledgements

The group would like to thank the following people for providing evidence during the course of their review:

Stuart Allen, EPRR Manager, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning and Regeneration
Station Commander James Banks, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Rachel Bennett, PA and Team Leader for the Post Room
Steve Brant, Operational Services Manager, Wyre Forest District Council
James Brodwick, Emergency Planning Manager, Warwickshire and West Mercia Police
Sue Hanley, Deputy Chief Executive
Dr. Frances Howie, Director of Public Health, Worcestershire County Council
Rebecca Pritchett, North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager
Nick Riding, Emergency Planning Manager, Worcestershire County Council
Robert Stevens, West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
Judith Willis, Head of Community Services

APPENDIX 3
Timeline of Activities

Date	Task Group Activity
20/09/17	Scoping meeting.
02/10/17	Considering key documentation, including the Council's Emergency Plan and Rest Centres Plan.
12/10/17	Interview with the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources and consideration of information about the Bellwin Scheme.
07/11/17	Interview with Mr Stuart Allen, Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.
14/11/17	Consideration of the written responses to questions from Council officers. Also consideration of the content of the Review of Persistent Lessons Identified Relating to Interoperability from Emergencies and Major Incidents since 1986.
22/11/17	Consideration of the West Mercia LRF Joint Emergency Response Arrangements (JERA).
01/12/17	Meeting with the Deputy Chief Executive and Demonstration of Resilience Direct.
07/12/17	Interview with Station Commander Banks, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. Also consideration of written feedback received from Mr Robert Stevens, West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust and analysis of call logs for Duty Officers at the Council in 2016 and 2017.
17/01/18	Interview with the North Worcestershire Civil Contingencies and Resilience Manager and consideration of written feedback received from Mr James Brodwick, Warwickshire and West Mercia Police, and Dr. Frances Howie and Mr Nick Riding, from Worcestershire County Council. The group proposed an initial list of draft recommendations during this meeting.
19/02/18	Finalising the content of the group's report.

APPENDIX 4
Declarations of Interest

At every meeting of the group Councillor Yvonne Smith declared that she was the former Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services, the remit for which includes emergency planning. In line with paragraph 5 of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules she recognised that she could not take part in scrutinising any decisions in which she had been directly involved. However, the group did not scrutinise any decisions that she had taken part in making when serving on the Executive Committee.

APPENDIX 5: GLOSSARY

CCA 2004 – Civil Contingencies Act 2004

CMT – Corporate Management Team

JERA – joint Emergency Response Arrangements

JESIP – Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme

LRF – Local Resilience Forum

TCG – Tactical Co-ordinating Group