

Item No. 10.	Classification: Open	Date: 17 October 2023	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Borough Emergency Plan 2023	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAMS, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Every year the cabinet reviews the borough's emergency plan to give us assurance that our arrangements to manage and respond to an incident are appropriate and effective. Put simply, in an incident, is Southwark ok?

The framework has been used to good effect throughout the developing phases of our response to the Covid pandemic supporting both our borough response and linking in with the London wide response. It has also been utilised to coordinate the council's actions following the death and funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Whilst both of these significant events influenced our thinking we still have to maintain preparedness to the broad range of other incidents that have the potential to harm the borough.

As we move forward together as a community the lessons learned by ourselves and other organisations will further shape and develop the generic emergency plan. Protecting our local community and keeping residents, businesses and all those who visit our borough safe is a priority, it's included as one of our 2030 ambitions and is a basic moral duty that together we will always put first. Reviewing and consistently improving our generic emergency plan remains key to that obligation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the cabinet:

1. Agrees the annual review of the generic borough emergency plan with the understanding that further lessons from incidents and exercises will continue to be incorporated into future learning and planning.
2. Agrees that updated councillor briefing sessions are put in place to inform both existing and new councillors of their role in emergency planning and to inform future development of incident management.
3. Note that the council's emergency arrangements will continue to be guided by pan-London resilience standards and approach, including any ongoing arrangements resulting from the review of the national COVID-19 response.

4. In the light of the fluidity in Covid infection rates and new strains emerging across London, that the Council reserves the right to activate council wide emergency response arrangements, acting on the advice of public health locally and regionally as appropriate.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5. The council has clear legal and moral obligations to provide effective, robust and demonstrable emergency arrangements to mobilise its resources at short notice to deal with a broad range of incidents. This may be on a localised departmental level where a simple out-of-hours activity is required, or on a much larger scale, where a multi-function response requires dedicated coordination, liaison and communication. In either case, high quality planning provides the foundation for this flexible response, whatever the initiating event may be
6. The generic plan is being presented at this time to ensure that the organisation is satisfied that the annual review and post incident reviews of the plan and of the supporting plans/handbooks provide assurance that our arrangements are both appropriate and effective.
7. The generic emergency plan sets out the council's strategy for dealing with a broad range of incidents. It ensures that the local authority is meeting its moral responsibility to the community and as a designated Category 1 responder it is meeting legal obligations in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
8. The London Borough of Southwark Generic Emergency Plan is available for public view and outlines the structure of the council's response in the event of an emergency
9. The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004, requires that emergency plans are in situ and recommends they be reviewed annually. To ensure the overall generic plan remains effective each supporting hand book and specific individual plans are reviewed on a regular basis. This ensures Southwark Council's moral and legal compliance to maintain our reputation of good practice and to capture additional response capability.
10. Detailed operational procedures are not captured in the generic emergency plan due to the complexity and occasional sensitive nature; they are captured in the supporting handbooks.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

11. Southwark has in place a generic emergency plan which sets out the framework that is used to deploy and control its resources during emergency incidents. The framework within the plan is flexible enough be adapted dependent on circumstances but sufficiently structured to allow the same principles to be employed for all incidents which in turn gives a better

understanding of specific responsibilities and roles

12. The plan has been initiated on a small scale on several occasions during the last year but on each occasion full activation has not been required as the incidents were resolved without further mobilisation of resources.
13. The last two full activations of the plan were throughout the different phases of the Covid pandemic and then in September 2022 following the death and subsequent funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II. During both activations the plan has provided a robust yet flexible framework that has successfully enabled a council wide coordinated response whilst at the same time supporting the continued delivery of our critical services. Whilst the circumstances of these activations were very different the arrangements were found to stand up well and have been adapted to utilise both in person and remote ways of working whilst maintaining the overall framework.
14. The purpose of cabinet agreeing this plan on an annual basis is so that the council can be satisfied the generic plan provides a simple but robust framework that enables the council to respond to emergency incidents affecting the borough. It is also so that the council is satisfied that our arrangements meet pan-London requirements and that our arrangements effectively align with other boroughs ensuring an effective cross-London response if and as required.
15. Agreeing the plan will enable the council to effectively deploy its resources to mitigate the effect of any incident and facilitate the return to normality for local residents, businesses and the community more generally.
16. The arrangements detailed in the plan also support the deployment of London Local Authority Gold (LLAG). It also gives due regard to the requirements detailed in the pan London Concept of Operations for Emergency Response and Recovery document (ConOps).
17. The overarching generic plan is supported by a range of supporting handbooks that cover specific roles integral to the effective management of emergency incidents and a further raft of individual plans covering identified risks that reflect the National Risk Register, the London Risk Register and local Risk Register.

Policy framework implications

18. Southwark 2030 ambitions underpin the core values of our developing Borough Plan looking toward 2030 to support the vision to build a better future for the people of Southwark by delivering quality affordable homes, improving our neighborhoods, tackling the climate emergency and strengthening our local economy. Having a robust emergency plan in place with supporting arrangements not only meets important statutory duties in relation to Civil Contingencies Act 2004 but moreover supports our aim for a borough where everyone in Southwark can feel and be safe in their homes and work.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

19. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) requires each Category 1 responder to put in place plans deal with emergencies. As a Category 1 responder the council must ensure that its arrangements are robust, agile and able to respond to the differing needs of the community in any single incident (or multiples of incidents). In activating arrangements, either in response to an incident or through recovery, the council is mindful of its commitments for equality and fairness and in ensuring that no group is detrimentally impacted as a result of actions arising from emergency response
20. During an emergency incident vulnerable people may be less able to help themselves than self-reliant people. Those who are vulnerable will vary depending on the nature of the emergency and some will become vulnerable because of the emergency. The generic plan identifies the need to work with other emergency responders to identify and support vulnerable people throughout the different phases of an incident (section 2.4)
21. The generic plan confirms the need for ongoing support for both vulnerable and all those affected by an emergency event. The local authority may appoint a Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officer to coordinate the ongoing support.
22. The Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officer may activate a number of Humanitarian Assistance capabilities thorough which immediate and ongoing assistance is offered. The lead officer may establish a Humanitarian Assistance Steering Group to coordinate and deliver these actions. Further detailed guidance is available in the handbook for Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officers issued by London Local Authorities in March 2021.
23. Emergency Incidents, their management and the situations to which staff could be exposed are likely to be physically and mentally demanding and will present a range of Health & Safety and Welfare Risks. The plan identifies mitigation that the council should follow before an incident, during the incident and after its conclusion.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

24. As with other plans and strategies, the council will give due consideration to the Public Sector Equality Duty as a positive duty to in assessing our local emergency planning response arrangements. For example, in setting up Humanitarian Assistance Centre (and other such Centre's) the council will be mindful of access and other such equalities considerations to ensure that

all individuals affected by an incident are given equal opportunity for support (e.g. providing support where language is a barrier in communications).

25. Guidance on establishing and maintaining emergency centers can be found in the supporting handbook #3. This identifies key issues for consideration when setting up a center together with guidance as to the various types of center and specific supporting functions that may be required.

Climate change implications

26. The generic plan outlines the frame work that can be applied to manage any of the broad range of potential emergency incidents. All actions and responses will be made having consideration for the councils climate change policies and protocols. However, on occasion, responses may need to be immediate with few or no alternative courses of action.

Resource implications

27. A broad range of facilities and equipment are in place to support any emergency response. These include:
 - A fully equipped Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC)
 - A fully equipped Alternative Borough Emergency Control Centre (ABECC)
 - The technical equipment and ability to operate a fully remote BECC
 - A general use van to assist in emergency operations
 - A range of rest centre equipment including a stock of PPE
 - An ongoing pan London MOU with British Red Cross to support staffing and equipment provision in rest centres
 - Nominated rest centres within the borough (usually schools, leisure centres and halls)
 - Tools and equipment associated with specific council services
 - A range of communications & data infrastructure and equipment.

Legal implications

28. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) requires each Category 1 responder to put in place plans deal with emergencies. As a Category 1 responder the council is required to co-operate and liaise with a broad spectrum of stakeholders in the planning process. The Southwark Borough Resilience Forum (BRF) provides the opportunity to liaise and interact with these parties on a regular basis. Outcomes from this regular liaison informs the review and revision of the generic emergency plan.

Financial implications

29. The resources identified above are all in place. There are no additional financial implications arising from agreement of the plan.
30. Given the unpredictable nature in which emergency incidents can arise, it

may be that responding to some incidents will require additional resources to ensure an effective, efficient and safe response for residents and businesses in the borough. The council will seek to deploy resources as best appropriate in this instance and would seek additional support from central government and other such bodies where this was felt to be appropriate to the scale of incident

Consultation

31. The generic emergency plan is agreed annually and published on the website, in line with the council's values with regards openness and transparency. Feedback received on the plan and associated arrangements will be taken into account when re-assessing and refreshing the plan each year.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

32. Cabinet has the power to make this decision under Part 3C of the constitution. The approval of the Emergency Plan is an item that is considered annually by the Cabinet
33. As detailed in this report, pursuant to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 schedule 1, Southwark as a category 1 responder has statutory responsibility for emergency planning. The statutory duties in section 2 of the Act require the council to assess, plan and advise in relation to emergencies including providing advice to the public. Regulations and government guidance provide detail on how to perform these duties
34. The cabinet needs to ensure that the public sector equality duty in section 149 Equality Act 2010 is considered in relation to this report. i.e. to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and to foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and others. Reference is made to this in the Community impact section above

Strategic Director of Finance

35. The report is requesting that cabinet agree the annual review of the generic borough emergency plan
36. The strategic director of finance notes the resource implications in the report and notes that there are no additional financial implications arising from the report

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
None		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Generic Emergency Plan 2023

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council		
Lead Officer	Althea Loderick, Chief Executive		
Report Author	Andy Snazell, Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager		
Version	Final		
Dated	4 October 2023		
Key Decision?	Yes		
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER			
Officer Title		Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance		Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance		Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member		Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team			4 October 2023