

Meeting Name:	Cabinet
Date:	22 July 2024
Report title:	Borough Generic Emergency Plan and Corporate Business Continuity Plans 2024
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council
Ward(s) or groups affected:	All
Classification:	Open
Reason for lateness (if applicable):	N/a

FOREWORD - COUNCILLOR KIERON WILLIAM, 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 outlined in the generic plan has been used to good effect to support the boroughs response to all of the significant emergency incidents that have impacted the borough in recent years.

Whilst exceptional events, such as our response to Covid and the council's actions following the death and funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II, have 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 plans. 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 emergency plans remains key to that obligation.

I am therefore asking the cabinet, after consideration of the officers' report set out from paragraph 1 onwards, to approve the recommendations below.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for 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 and other enquires such as phase two of the Grenfell enquiry.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4. 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.
5. To ensure both confidence and understanding of the council's emergency arrangements its generic emergency plan is submitted for council approval on an annual basis. This maintains awareness of any new developments and assurance that our plans remain robust and fit for purpose.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

6. No alternative options considered. As a category 1 responder we have a statutory duty to identify risks and to plan for those risks.

POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

7. The plan will continue to provide the framework that is used to manage significant emergency events affecting the borough. The plan will be reviewed again following any activation and in addition will be:
 - i. Amended in the light of London/National recommendations
 - ii. Updated to include identified best practice
 - iii. Tested by exercising using simulated events and tabletop scenarios.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

8. 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.

9. 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 plans and of the supporting plans/handbooks provide assurance that our arrangements are both appropriate and effective.
10. 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 and that it can maintain the delivery of its key services.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. 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 and within individual departmental business continuity plans.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

14. 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.
15. The emergency 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.
16. The last two full activations of the emergency 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.

17. The growing threat of cyber-crime poses significant challenges to the understanding and management of this type of incident. The framework contained within the plan has been used to good effect during both simulated training exercises and in response to a live cyber threat in February 2024. Lessons learned from training and cyber events will be incorporated into the plan.
18. The purpose of cabinet agreeing the 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.
19. Agreeing the plan will enable the council to effectively deploy its resources to mitigate the effect of any incident, maintain key services and facilitate the return to normality for local residents, businesses and the community more generally.
20. 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).
21. 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

22. 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.
23. The value of having a clear emergency framework that is both straightforward in its approach yet robust enough to be applied in all circumstances has been demonstrated by its continued use and development. However it must remain subject to constant review and challenge to ensure we continually keep pace with developing and new risks.

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

Community impact statement

24. 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.
25. 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, supported by the specific emergency handbooks all prioritise the care of the vulnerable during an emergency.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

26. 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).

Health impact statement

27. There are no direct health impacts from the continued implementation of the generic emergency plan. However, should there not be a generic frame work to coordinate the councils response there is the possibility of not supporting the community to the best of our ability and subsequently increasing the risk of detrimental effects as a result.

Climate change implications

28. The approval of the emergency plan has no direct climate change implications. Any actions taken in response to an emergency situation will always have due consideration for climate change implications.

Resource implications

29. 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.

The resources listed above are all in place with no additional financial requirements.

Staffing issues

30. Staff are drawn from across the council to fulfil the roles necessary for the call emergency scheme. Whilst there is a constant movement of those personnel onto and away from the scheme it presents no unique risk to maintaining the overall scheme

Budget issues.

31. Financial reward for the out of hours responses to the majority of incidents will be covered by the on-call allowance that officers receive during their time on St-by. These allowances are drawn from the emergency planning budget. In exceptional and protracted circumstances, it may be necessary for additional staff to fulfil roles. In these occasional circumstances it may be necessary to seek the support of the Strategic director of finance to authorise additional payments drawn from corporate reserves.

Consultation

32. The generic emergency plan has been in place since 2005. It is revised and updated on an annual basis. There are no significant changes to the plan this year, so no further consultation is required.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance

33. 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.
34. 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.
35. 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, Finance

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

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Generic emergency plan

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Kieron Williams. Leader of the Council	
Lead Officer	Stephen Gaskell, Assistant Chief Executive for Strategy and Communities	
Report Author	Andy Snazell, Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager	
Version	Final	
Dated	9 July 2024	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
	Officer Title	Comments Sought
	Assistant Chief Executive, Governance and Assurance	Yes
	Strategic Director, Finance	Yes
	Cabinet Member	Yes
	Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	9 July 2024