

<b>Item No.</b> 15.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 14 July 2020	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Borough Emergency Plan 2020	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR PETER JOHN, 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? This year, in the light of the ongoing response to COVID-19, that assurance feels particularly apt.

COVID-19 is the longest, single incident the borough has faced. The end of June marked 100 days of lockdown across England. Southwark was quick to set up a borough emergency control centre in the face of the coming pandemic and, in the light of lockdown, one of the first to move to a virtual operation. All set within the framework outlined in the attached plan and as part of a London wide response. In the more than 100 days that have passed many in our community have been affected in different ways by this horrid virus, with the detail of our borough wide response reported to Cabinet. Once again, I’d like to thank all those who work on bringing our borough safely back to business and those residents who patiently act with responsibility and respect in keeping themselves, their loved ones and the loved one of others safe.

Although the government have reduced the UK wide virus alert level, COVID-19 remains in general circulation. As a council and borough we must remain vigilant and prepared – and assurance on the generic emergency plan is key to that planning. As we move forward together as a community into recovery and renewal 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, a basic moral duty and one Southwark together will always put first.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the cabinet agrees the annual review of the generic borough emergency plan with the understanding that further lessons from the ongoing response to COVID-19 will continue to be incorporated into ongoing learning.
2. That councillor briefing sessions are put in place at the earliest opportunity to further explore the role of councillors in emergency planning and to inform future development of incident management.
3. That the cabinet note that the council’s emergency arrangements will continue to be guided by pan-London standards and approach, including any ongoing transition arrangements in place as part of the city-wide COVID-19 response.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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**

10. 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.
11. The plan has been fully activated during our response to Covid 19 providing the structure to coordinate and support the delivery of our critical services both during the outbreak and into the renewal phase. The arrangements were found to stand up well and were quickly adapted to utilise remote ways of working whilst maintaining the overall framework.
12. 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.

13. 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.
14. 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).
15. 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.

### **Ongoing learning to inform emergency and business continuity planning**

16. An internal audit in 2017 recommended enhanced overarching governance for the generic emergency plan. Following realignment of cabinet member portfolios in May 2018 the Leader took responsibility for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity with the emergency planning and resilience section managed and reporting directly to the Chief Executive's Office. This ensures that an organisational response to incident can be swiftly deployed and effectively managed with limited impact on 'business as usual' activities during the period of an incident and into recovery.
17. Whilst the framework of our plan has been used to good effect it will continue to evolve reflecting lessons learned and best practice from within and outside of London, including – in recognition of the international nature of our borough - learning from other global cities where appropriate.
18. Our own Business Continuity planning process will be subject to ongoing review and revision incorporating the experiences from our COVID 19 response and renewal phases continuing to strengthen our own resilience and emergency response capability.
19. The generic plan has also been reviewed and amended to include the recommendations contained in the Riordan/Ney report and to support the Resilience Standards for London contained in the Sean Ruth report. Compliance with the Resilience Standards has been peer reviewed in conjunction with the other members of the Central Sub Regional Resilience Forum.

### **Role of councillors**

20. In line with the both the Riordan/Ney and the Sean Ruth reports lead elected members received a briefing on the generic emergency plan and the Borough emergency scheme in October 2018. Lead members also completed a familiarisation visit to the command suite at the Metropolitan Police premises in Lambeth in July 2019.

21. At their meeting on 7 May 2020, the overview and scrutiny committee, in considering the council's May update on the progress of the borough wide COVID-19 response, identified the following recommendations for actions:
- That the council ensure that it is using all resources available to best use during a crisis or in the event that business continuity procedures are invoked. Councillors hold a great deal of knowledge about their wards and the council must ensure this is leveraged to avoid duplication of knowledge. The role of councillor must be clearly defined as part of the Council Business Continuity Plans
  - That as part of new councillor induction, all Councillors should receive a briefing on the Council's Business Continuity plan and training on the role of Councillors during an event which invokes the Business Continuity response, especially a crisis.
22. The cabinet adopted the above recommendations at their meeting on 16 June 2020. In doing so the cabinet noted that the council regularly reviews business continuity arrangements taking account of learning from incidents including role of councillors. The role of councillors is set out in the package of supporting documents for the Generic Emergency Plan, including what to do in an incident and their role as advocates and in community reassurance.
23. Guidance on the role of councillors is also set out in London wide planning documents, as part of the London Resilience Framework and approach to consistent standards in emergency planning across the city. This guidance was shared earlier in the year. Briefings were planned to take place for all councillors on the Emergency Plan and the Council's Business Continuity plan. The purpose being to further explore the role of councillors in emergency planning and inform next step incident planning. However, due to resources being prioritised on the ongoing response these briefings did not take place and will be re-scheduled at the earliest opportunity. This will include new member induction and training on the role of Councillors during an event which invokes the Council's Business Continuity response.

### **Policy implications**

24. The Council Plan 2018-22, describes the vision for a fairer future for all including making Southwark a great place to live with clean, green and safe communities. 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 has the right to feel safe and be safe.
25. Ongoing negotiations continue regarding the UK's exit from the European Union. Where appropriate direct and indirect impacts of the final exit arrangements will be assessed and incorporated into the generic plan

### **Community impact statement**

26. 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.

27. As with other plans and strategies, the council will give due consideration to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as a positive duty to in assessing our local emergency planning response arrangements. For example, in setting up Humanitarian Assistance Centres (and other such centres) 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).

### **Resource implications**

28. 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)
  - 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 technical equipment and ability to operate a fully remote BECC.

### **Legal implications**

29. 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**

30. The resources identified above are all in place. There are no additional financial implications arising from agreement of the plan.
31. 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**

32. 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**

### **Director of Law and Democracy**

- 33. Cabinet has the power to make this decision under Part 3C of the constitution.
- 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
- 35. The decision maker needs to have regard to the PSED when making this decision

### **Strategic Director of Finance and Governance(FC18/004)**

- 36. The report is requesting the cabinet to agree the annual review of the generic borough emergency 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

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Held At</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Southwark Generic Emergency Plan 2019-2020	Emergency Planning section 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2QH	Andy Snazell 020 7525 3517
<b>Link (please copy and paste into your browser):</b> <a href="http://thesource/assets/files/10527/-1-Southwark-Council-Generic-Emergency-Plan-Issue-13.pdf">http://thesource/assets/files/10527/-1-Southwark-Council-Generic-Emergency-Plan-Issue-13.pdf</a>		

## **APPENDICES**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Title</b>
None	

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Peter John, Leader of the Council	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive	
<b>Report Author</b>	Andy Snazell, Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	2 July 2020	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Law and Democracy	Yes/	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Governance	Yes	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		2 July 2020