



**Audit and Standards Advisory  
Committee**  
5 February 2019

**Report from the Chief Executive**

**Emergency Preparedness Update**

<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Key or Non-Key Decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Open or Part/Fully Exempt:</b> (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
<b>No. of Appendices:</b>	N/A
<b>Background Papers:</b>	N/A
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## 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 At the January 2018 Audit Advisory Committee, it was resolved that an Emergency Preparedness item be added to the forward plan to be discussed in July 2018 and annually thereafter going forward. We have chosen to bring this annual update forward to bring it into line with the London-wide assurance and challenge process that has recently been instigated.
- 1.2 This report briefly outlines the progress made since the July 2018 report, details the type and number of incidents in Brent and provides some information around initiatives and programmes of work under way to enhance our resilience and response arrangements.

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Audit and Standards Advisory Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

## **3.0 Detail**

### **Assurance**

- 3.1 Brent undertakes an annual self-assessment of response and resilience capabilities and submits these centrally to London Resilience. Results from the 33 Local Authorities are collated to identify trends, areas for improvement and areas of good practice. Sub-regionally, peer challenge of the self-assessment scores are undertaken, overseen by Chief Executives and Directors with responsibility for Emergency Planning & Resilience. Our self-assessment is attached at appendix [A]. The Local Authorities Panel is considering the collated results from across London and a regional action plan is in development which will be supplemented by a local action plan once this is completed. A few common themes where improvement is desirable across all Local Authorities have already been identified and a local action plan to address these is being drawn up in conjunction with relevant guidance and support from London Resilience. Themes identified across all local authorities are:
- Humanitarian Response
  - Community Engagement and management
  - Media and Comms management
  - Governance

### **Emergency Shelter & Accommodation**

- 3.2 Brent has made use of the Emergency Accommodation Protocol (a product of one of the Task & Finish Group recommendations) on 4 occasions since its inception, to accommodate small numbers of evacuees from emergencies in local hotels. The protocol recognises the need for quality accommodation to be sourced in a timely manner for those affected by emergencies and balances the needs of those affected with the resource requirements, especially demands on officer time, cost to the council and the ease of implementation in the midst of an emergency. Also, 3 new emergency shelter venues have been identified and agreed with the building owners to be used in case of an emergency in the local area. These are the Windmill Court Community Hall, the Watling Gardens Community Centre and the new Premier Inn, Wembley Stadium location.

### **New Emergency Response Officers**

- 3.3 In August 2018, we recruited an additional 10 new Emergency Response Officers. These staff volunteer to join the scheme and 2 are placed on call each week to provide the immediate 24/7 response to any incident in the borough under the supervision of the Emergency Duty Officer (also on call 24/7). This takes our total number of trained Emergency Response Officers to 24.

### **Standardisation**

- 3.4 To avoid 33 different ways of doing the same thing, London Resilience has commissioned a piece of work to standardise, as far as possible, certain

elements of the Local Authority Response, underpinned by a common Concept of Operations. This ensures that during a multi-borough or pan-London response, there is consistency between the responders regardless of their home authority. Areas selected for standardisation include Liaison Officers, Emergency Centres and Control Centres. Brent is largely already compliant with the new doctrine and adjustments are being made in other areas to become so, where necessary.

### **Digital Tools**

- 3.5 The council's digitisation strategy has enabled electronic capabilities to be developed in areas where manual, paper-based recording and reporting previously existed. Two examples of this are the Situation Reporting tool, which is accessible from any device being used by Response Officers on scene to quickly and succinctly gather and share relevant information regarding the incident back to base and the Electronic Evacuee Registration tool which allows real time recording and analysis of evacuee data as evacuees arrive at a Rest Centre following an emergency to form an initial database of affected people. Paper systems are, of course, retained as back up in the event of system failure. Systems have been tested during simulations and subsequently deployed during live incidents and proven to work well in the field.

### **Brexit**

- 3.6 Assessment on our ability to respond to an emergency in the community.
- 3.6.1 Core response capabilities: Brent Council's core response capabilities (such as staffing, vehicles and software systems) are sourced and maintained in-house and are not critically dependant, in the immediate term, on external suppliers or support.
- 3.6.2 Additional response capabilities: Response capabilities that are provided by suppliers and voluntary sector partners e.g. the British Red Cross, Vodaphone etc. are sourced from well-established, UK-based and multi-national organisations.
- 3.6.3 Other capabilities: Contractors who provide services such as street cleansing or highways management and exist as part of the council's business-as-usual operation may have a role during an emergency. Such suppliers are subject to regular contract management to identify any emerging issues early. There are likely to be stresses in certain sectors, post-Brexit, but the impacts of these are likely to emerge and become known over time and should not manifest acutely at the time of an emergency or as a result of the emergency.
- 3.7 Potential role of Emergency Planning during Brexit
- 3.7.1 Business Continuity: All council services complete an annual assessment of their capability to deliver services during a disruption to business. Whilst not specifically examining the impacts of Brexit, Business Continuity Plans do

gauge the impacts (and short term solutions) of scenarios like loss of staff which is one of the concerns as it relates to Brexit.

- 3.7.2 Emergency Plans: The constraint of fuel supply has always been a risk to the UK, not in relation to Brexit prior to this point but Brexit may cause the situation to become acute. Brent maintains a Fuel Disruption Protocol for these situations and in the event of actual constraint, HMG would activate the National Emergency Plan for Fuel, which rations fuel to the public and non-essential business users. Brent Council is an authorised recipient of fuel in these circumstances for our “life and limb” services, which are already known and assessed in order to ensure they receive fuel under a Temporary Logo Scheme, maintained by Emergency Planning.
- 3.7.3 Reporting: Central Government has indicated that during the Brexit period, they may require local authorities to report any issues experienced that are related to Brexit. Indicators such as community tension, staff shortages, shortages of material or food are likely to have to be reported to central government as they occur on the ground. Emergency Planning, will provide the conduit between local and central government via London Resilience once the reporting regime is known.

### **Incidents**

- 3.8 There have been 11 incidents since July 2018 that have warranted an attendance by Emergency Response staff. Of those, 8 caused the Silver (senior manager) level to be notified and all but 2 of those notifications were for information only (the 2 exceptions were not for anything more than “sense-checking” a plan of action or requesting authority to proceed with the intended actions). This demonstrates that Brent’s operational arrangements are adequate in dealing with the types of incidents faced to date and align with the UK’s Response Doctrine principle of subsidiarity. Gold (Chief Executive/Strategic Director) level was informed in most cases for information and exercised their Gold Functions in two instances (for approval of expenditure, setting of strategy and direction of resource). Again, this aligns well with the subsidiarity principle.

A summary table of incidents is provided overleaf:

DATE	INCIDENT TYPE	LOCATION	ROLES ACTIVATED / INFORMED (A/I)									KEY ACTIONS	
			Duty Officer	Silver	LALO	Surveyor	Rest Centre	Red Cross	GOLD /	Comms	Other		
10/07/2018	Fire – Commercial Premises also affecting flats above	54 High Rd, NW10	A	I	A						I		LALO attended scene. Liaise with emergency services. Liaise with residents and landlord. Public info re road closures.
12/07/2018	Fire – Confined entirely to Industrial Estate	East Lane	A	I	I	I				I	I		Monitored remotely via CCTV. Remote liaison with emergency services. Public info re road closures and traffic disruption.
13/07/2018	Flooding - surface water –heavy rainfall	Borough wide	A	I	A					I	I		Monitored and received reports from emergency services into CCTV. Deployed gully suckers and Highways Teams to locations based on priority. 2x LALO's to Church Rd, NW10 for flooded properties. Liaised with emergency services and flooded residents Rehoused 4x residents overnight. Housing Assoc informed to take up repairs/rehousing following day.
22/10/2018	Fire – Commercial Premises	High Rd NW10	A										Minor restaurant fire, monitored remotely. Liaised remotely with emergency

												services, no assistance required. Public info re traffic disruption
31/10/2018	Fire – Single house	57 Waverley Ave HA9	A	I	A				I	I		LALO attended scene. Liaise with emergency services. No rehousing reqd
12/11/2018	Infrastructure & Environmental – 400 litre diesel spill onto public highway	Blackmore Drive, NW10	A	I								Veolia to soak up. Highways to close road and inspect carriageway. Liaison with Royal Mail re diversions to their site. Thames Water and Env Agency notified – quantity of diesel entered public drains.
14/11/2018	Police-led operation	Lynton Close	A	A	A		A		A	A		Stood by resource as per operational plan
16/11/2018	Flooding – surface water - burst water main	Parkfield Rd NW10	A	I	A				I	I		EP & LALO attended scene. Liaison with utility company. Removal of lamp column to enable excavation and repair. Highways to inspect carriageway re reinstatement Visited affected/flooded properties to ensure welfare of residents. Ensure Thames Water reps and loss adjuster aware and undertaking further resident liaison. Planning for alternate fresh water supply (bottled water) if mains supply delayed.
21/11/2018	Fire – Single	171 Malvern	A									Monitored remotely (pipe bomb

	Flat	Rd, NW6									incident also in progress). Liaison with emergency services determined no assistance required
21/11/2018	Possible Explosive device - Pipe bomb	Craven Park NW10	A	I	A		A		I	I	EP & LALO attended scene. Temp shelter of 7 residents at Harlesden Police Station, meals provided. Liaison with police CID re searches.
12/12/2018	Road Traffic Accident – bus into commercial premises	77 Chamberlayne Road	A	I		I					Monitored remotely via CCTV. Building Surveyor stood by Public information re road closures and traffic disruption
04/01/2019	Fire – Residential block	Windmill Court, NW2	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	EP & LALO attended scene. Liaise with emergency services. Updates provided to Gold and chain of command. Rest Centre established and additional staffing attended. Sourced hotels rooms in case required. Housing Needs interviewed potentially affected residents. BHM on scene to survey damage and liaise with residents. Comms piece worked up in case of enquiries. Repairs to damaged properties.

## **Initiatives**

- 3.9 One of the common findings of the assurance work mentioned earlier was that Community Engagement is an area for development across all Local Authorities. Whilst Brent maintains community resilience web pages with helpful pointers and advice, it is recognised that more work is needed in order for our communities to become more resilient and able to look after themselves and each other during an emergency. Brent Emergency Planning is looking to refine its offer to our communities to help them better prepare for an emergency and understand the potential impacts that an emergency may have on them.

### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal financial implications arising from this report.

### **6.0 Equality Implications**

- 6.1 There are no equality financial implications arising from this report.

### **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

- 7.1 Not applicable.