



Audit and Standards Advisory Committee

20 January 2020

Report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS UPDATE

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Non-key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	One: 1. Appendix A: Brent RSL Self-Assessment
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Daryl Jooste Civil Contingencies Manager 0208 937 5415 daryl.jooste@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 At the January 2018 Audit Advisory Committee, it was resolved that an Emergency Preparedness item be added to its Forward Plan to be discussed annually going forward. This report briefly outlines the progress made since the 2019 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 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Consider and note the information contained in this report

3.0 Detail

3.1 New Assurance Mechanism – Resilience Standards for London (RSL)

- 3.1.1 The nature of the emergencies in London are becoming increasingly varied and there is heightened expectation on authorities to provide the individual and collective leadership required during incidents.

- 3.1.2 Following several major emergencies affecting London and putting the London Resilience Partnership under considerable strain during 2017, London Councils commissioned an independent peer challenge that took place in early 2018, focusing on the extent to which Boroughs' collaborative resilience arrangements continue to provide assurance. The London Resilience Forum (LRF) and the Local Authorities' Panel (LAP) are overseeing the recommendations.
- 3.1.3 The previous standards used were the Minimum Standards for London (MSL), comprising of sixteen (16) standards designed to support the London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) arrangements. It was recommended that the Minimum Standards for London, which were introduced in 2007 to ensure a baseline standard of resilience planning across London local authorities, be replaced.
- 3.1.4 A resultant outcome of the review was the new Resilience Standards for London (RSL) v1.0 which were officially launched in 2019. All 33 London Councils will be undertaking a self-assessment on an annual basis using the new Resilience Standards for London. The self-assessment is an important improvement tool for the Council and its stakeholders and should be an accurate and honest representation as to how the Council is currently performing.
- 3.1.5 A series of peer challenge workshops will be arranged in order to share and challenge the results from the individual self-assessments across Boroughs. This will be led by the Resilience Support Team (RST) at the City of London Corporation, overseen by LAP.
- 3.1.6 In addition, a peer review will be facilitated by the LGA with 6 boroughs undergoing the process each year. In 2020, selected boroughs are Brent, Ealing, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Wandsworth. In Brent, the Peer Review will take place over a three-day period on the 27-29 January 2020. Our self-assessment submission to London Resilience for 2020 and the peer review team at the LGA is attached at Appendix [A].

3.2 Emergency Shelter & Accommodation

- 3.2.1 Since January 2019, Brent has opened an emergency shelter (Rest Centre) for persons displaced from emergencies on 6 occasions; the largest single instance was for 250 people displaced by a fire in their backpacker's hostel in October.
- 3.2.2 The Emergency Accommodation Protocol (a product of one of the 2017 Task & Finish Group recommendations) was used on 4 occasions 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.
- 3.2.3 One new emergency shelter venue has come forward and agreed to be used in case of an emergency in the local area. This takes the total number of such venues in the borough to 48.

3.3 New Emergency Response Officers

- 3.3.1 In November 2019, we recruited an additional 11 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 31, up from 24 last year.

3.4 Impact of Brexit on our ability to respond to an emergency

- 3.4.1 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.
- 3.4.2 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.
- 3.4.3 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.

3.5 Potential role of Emergency Planning during Brexit

- 3.5.1 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.
- 3.5.2 Emergency Plans: The constraint of fuel supply has always been a risk to the UK. 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.
- 3.5.3 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, and 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.

3.6 Incidents

- 3.6.1 There have been 15 incidents since January 2019 that have warranted a response by Emergency Planning. Of those, 11 caused the Silver (senior manager) level to be notified. 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 4 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 below:

DATE	INCIDENT TYPE	LOCATION	ROLES ACTIVATED / INFORMED (A/I)									KEY ACTIONS
			Duty Officer	Silver	LALO	Surveyor	Rest Centre	Red Cross	GOLD /CMT	Comms	Other	
04/01/2019	Residential Fire	Windmill Court, NW2	A	A	A	A	A		A	A	BHM, Housing Needs	Attended scene. Established Rest Centre, multi-agency liaison, sourced standby emergency accommodation, repairs, site survey
26/01/2019	Residential Fire	26 Keswick Gardens	A									Liaised with landlord re alternative accommodation
27/01/2019	Industrial Units Fire	Park Royal Studios, NW10	A			A						Monitoring of incident, deployment of building surveyor, liaising with LFB
19/03/2019	Fire - Flats (with sprinkler flood)	Unite Students, Wembley	A	I	A				I	I		Attended scene. Multi-agency liaison, liaison with Unite.
15/05/2019	Warehouse Fire	715 North Circular Rd	A	A	A	A	A		A	A		Attended scene. Rest Centre at Civic. 21 Evacuees accommodated in local hotel. Provided structural advice. Transport for evacuees. Comms provided info re road closures on social media etc.
17/05/2019	Flat Fire - Venice House	Hatton Rd	A	I	A		A		I	I		Attended scene, opened RC in anticipation of a substantial evacuation (ultimately not required), LALO to scene, structural advice, comms re road closures

06/07/2019	Gas Leak - Morritt House	1 Talbot Rd	A	I	A		A		I	A		Rest Centre for evacuees, liaison with emergency services, comms updating social media re road closures
23/08/2019	Arson	High St Harlesden	A								Private Housing	Attended scene with Housing Inspector. No further EP involvement
30/08/2019	Residential Fire	Harrow Rd, HA9	A	I	A					I		Attended scene. Rehoused one family.
19/10/2019	Fire Backpackers Hostel	Harrow Rd, NW10	A	I	A		A		I	A		Attended scene. Sheltered 250 evacuees. Liaison with Emergency Services and hostel owners
26/11/2019	Residential Fire	34 Grasmere Ave	A	A	A		A		A	A	Private Housing , Welfare	Attended scene. Sheltered evacuees. Purchased new clothing for them. Emergency cash grant given to each. Hotel accomm. Referral to Housing Needs for ongoing support with housing
03/12/2019	Residential Fire	6-8 Kingsway	A	I	A	A			I	I		Attended scene. Liaised with LFB and police and homeowners. Surveyor arranged
03/12/2019	Residential Fire	Denzil Rd	A			A						Surveyor requested and attended. Rehousing arranged privately, not required from council
05/12/2019	Residential Fire	10 Greenwood Terrace	A	I					I	I	Private Housing	Patrol team attended scene. EP Liaison with landlord. Believed unlicensed HMO. Referred to PHS. Accom sorted privately
07/12/2019	Residential Fire	60 Austen House	A	I	A				A	I	BHM, ASC, Care Agency	LALO attended scene. Accommodated 1 elderly gent. BHM arranging repairs - substantial rewire needed. ASC sorting care visits to hotel and liaising with family

3.7 Initiatives

- 3.7.1 Community Engagement is an area that progressed since the last report. A Community Resilience training package has been developed and is ready to deliver to community groups accompanied by a proposed refresh of our web pages and redesigned Community Resilience Guide.
- 3.7.2 The faith sector is an important community partner in the response and recovery to incidents. Regional promotion via London Faith Networks has resulted in local faith groups making contact and expressing an interest in being part of the arrangements. Brent Emergency Planning intends to further develop this network, offering training and cultivate good working relationships with our faith partners – using the “Every Place Ready” theme promoted via London Faith Network.
- 3.7.3 Resilience for schools has recently been promoted via a schools newsletter and as a result a number of local schools have been assisted with Business Continuity Planning with 2 emergency exercises arranged with local schools in January 2020.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Nil

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 Nil

6.0 Equality Implications

- 6.1 Nil

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 N/A

8.0 Human Resources/Property Implications (if appropriate)

- 8.1 N/A

Report sign off:

Amar Dave

Strategic Director of Regeneration
and Environment