



Audit and Standards Advisory Committee

1 August 2022

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: <small>(If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)</small>	Open
No. of Appendices:	0
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): <small>(Name, Title, Contact Details)</small>	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 the forward plan to be discussed annually going forward. This report briefly outlines the progress made since the 2021 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 Emergency Shelter & Accommodation

- 3.1.1 Since the last report in July 2021, Brent has stood by an emergency shelter (Rest Centre) for persons displaced from emergencies on 5 occasions; proceeding to full activation for 4 of these incidents with a total of 56 residents supported. This is slightly fewer full activations than the typical annual average however, due to the pandemic and the risks of co-mingling households in a communal venue (although permissible by law in an emergency), the decision to avoid opening a rest centre where at all possible

and instead place affected homeless residents directly from the scene into hotel accommodation was seen as prudent. No difficulties in securing an emergency shelter venue, arranging transport to and from the venue and calling out response staff were encountered.

- 3.1.2 Securing alternative emergency accommodation (hotels) has proved difficult in 2 of these incidents with a number of hours spent trying to find available rooms, although ultimately available rooms were found in the local area. These delays have coincided with major sporting events in Wembley and London where rooms have been booked by event-goers. To avoid this situation in future, Emergency Planning is considering enlisting the services of a specialist accommodation bureau who provide accommodation availability and booking services to councils, housing associations, airlines and insurance companies as their core business, 24/7.

3.2 Emergency Response Staff

- 3.2.1 Emergency Response Officers are volunteers drawn from staff across the organisation. Currently there are 23 staff who undertake duties according to a call out rota (down from 30 a year ago). A recruitment campaign will commence shortly to bring the numbers back to full strength.

3.3 Enhancement of contact arrangements

- 3.3.1 The council has the ability to put in place a dedicated emergency helpline during incidents as an adjunct to the routine 24/7 in and out of hours contact arrangements. This helpline may take a few hours to arrange in terms of staffing etc. Something more rapidly deployable is needed in the first few hours, particularly in "wide area"/rapid onset emergencies, where there are multiple incidents/occurrences over a large area (e.g. surface water flooding, severe weather etc) and where the council is unable to attend each individual occurrence to assess the situation and link in with residents to provide advice or further support.
- 3.3.2 Based on experience during the flooding events of July 2021, routine telephonic contact arrangements of all the emergency services, including the council, quickly become overwhelmed by the volume of calls. This hinders the response time since issues can only be passed to the team dealing as quickly as they can be taken by the call handlers. To simplify the contact arrangements, avoid long call queuing times and allow direct contact with the team dealing, a Resident Assistance Request Form has been developed with the intent that the link to the form will be published on line during an emergency, inviting self-reporting of an issue and, on submission by the reporting party, is automatically sent directly to the Borough Emergency Control Centre for action. It is acknowledged that residents who are not digitally enabled will still have to rely on telephonic reports and use of an electronic form will not reduce the number of reports in total (however the speed at which they reach the team dealing is much reduced). A team of volunteer staff are currently being trained on this new methodology to enable swift triage of these electronic reports and to make call backs with further signposting/offers of support to residents who make contact this way.

3.4 Incidents

- 3.4.1 There have been 17 incidents since the last report (not including the pandemic) that have warranted a response by Emergency Planning. Of those, 13 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 5 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:

05/08/2021	Burst pipe - single dwelling flood	Lexington Key Worker Block	Liaison with 2 residents affected - arranged hotel for both temporarily. BHM to deal with repair etc to allow reoccupation
12/08/2021	Fire - restaurant & hotel	529 High Rd, Wembley	Attended scene and liaised with emergency services. RC opened at nearby church. Accommodated 8x persons from hotel until arrangements were made the following day via insurance
18/08/2021	Fire - shop with flats above	383 High Rd, Wembley	Attended scene and liaised with emergency services. RC stood by nearby. Social media info posted re road closures. Residents allowed to return once fire on ground floor shop extinguished and checks made. Referred to PHS as possible HMO discovered above shop.
18/08/2021	Fire - single flat	2 Grand Parade, Forty Ave, Wembley	Attended scene and liaised with emergency services. Fire confined to single flat on first floor. Landlord and managing agent in attendance and will deal with any accommodation needs and repairs. NFA
11/09/2021	Flood (plumbing)	Manor Court, Wembley	Liaised with Residents Assoc chair once notified. Rehoused 1x family of 5 in hotel for the night. Liaised with BHM re repairs and restoration of electrical supply (interruption approx 12-18 hours). Power restored following day. Passed to BHM to continue support to residents.
20/10/2021	Amber Warning Rain	London & SE	Severe Weather Group placed on alert and warnings issued, stood by Silver, CCTV, OOH call centre. Monitored alerts and retweeted warnings
Oct/Sep 2021	National Fuel Disruption	Nationally	Business Continuity Plans activated. Demand calming measures activated. Local Fuel Plan activated. Daily ring round of petrol stations and notification to services re availability via live tracker.
06/11/2021	Pump failure-water outage	South Kilburn	Liaison with BHM and call centre. Arranged delivery of pallets of bottled water and stood by a council team for distribution door-to-door. Stood down before deployment due to confirmation that water had been restored
23/12/2021	Lyon Park	Wembley	Attended scene. Rest Centre opened for 6 people. Emergency Accommodation arranged for those unable to return. Liaison with BHM and insurer regarding repairs and ongoing alternative accommodation via insurance policy
07/02/2022	Willesden High Rd	Willesden	Attended scene, liaison with emergency services. Hotels arranged for 9 households accommodation overnight. 8 households allowed to return following day. 1x remaining household significant damage referred to Housing Needs service for accommodation support
16/02/2022	Storm Eunice	Nationwide	Opened BECC. Distributed weather warnings. Coordinated and plotted responses to fallen trees and damaged property. Reporting to LLACC accordingly

28/02/2022	Preston Rd Fire	Wembley	Attended scene, liaison with emergency services. Opened RC for 30. Most person allowed home. Rehoused via referral those who could not return (2x households)
11/03/2022	A406 fatal RTA	Neasden	Attended scene, liaison with emergency services. Crime scene in situ. Property unlikely to be habitable due to structural damage. Opened RC for 9. Hotels for all affected until new accommodation arranged privately approx. 10 days post-incident
20/04/2022	Fire - Mitchell Way	St Raphs	Attended scene-liason with Emergency Services and Family. Arranging own accomm. Remained with minors until family members arrived as parents taken to hosp
07/05/2022	Fire - 45 Braemar Ave	Wembley	NHP attended scene. EP assisted ASC place 2 vulnerable persons (MH) in local hotel and ensured follow up by ASC on the Monday.
16/05/2022	Fatal gas leak 340 High Rd	Willesden	Attended scene. Crime scene in place. Offered accomm to affected tenant- accepted, housed for 6 nights in hotel until alternative offer via Housing Needs. Liaison with police, HSE and Private Housing due to crime scene and investigatory requirements around safety of appliances.

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:

Alan Lunt

Strategic Director of Regeneration
and Environment