



**Audit and Standards Advisory
Committee**
23 July 2025

**Report from the Corporate Director
of Finance and Resources**

**Lead Member -
Deputy Leader and Cabinet
Member for Finance & Resources
(Councillor Mili Patel)**

Emergency Planning & Resilience - General Update

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not Applicable
List of Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	<p>Melissa Brackley Deputy Head of Resilience 020 8937 1767 melissa.brackley@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Darren Armstrong Deputy Director Organisational Assurance and Resilience 020 8937 1751 Darren.armstrong@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on recent key activities and outlines current priorities in relation to the Council's emergency planning and resilience responsibilities.
- 1.2 A central focus continues to be the implementation of actions identified through the analysis of the Grenfell Inquiry report, which highlighted several areas requiring improvement. While progress in some areas has been affected by competing priorities, our ongoing collaboration with other boroughs and participation in the wider London Resilience Partnership remain instrumental in identifying best practices and further opportunities for enhancement.
- 1.3 In recent weeks, the Emergency Planning and Resilience team has concentrated efforts on the response to the fire at Tillet Close. This incident has already revealed several areas for improvement, and the ongoing debrief

process is expected to highlight additional lessons. Notably, the incident has reinforced the importance of the Council's role in supporting recovery efforts following major emergencies.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report.

3.0 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

The update provided in this report aligns with the following relevant priorities and outcomes within the Borough Plan:

- Prosperity and Stability in Brent - Building stronger partnerships with local organisations and supporting our community in the context of Emergency Planning and Resilience.
- Thriving Communities - Helping to support the creation of a safer borough through proactively planned interventions to reduce exposure to Emergency Planning and Resilience related risk.

3.1 On Call Arrangements

- 3.1.1 The Council continues to strengthen the resilience of its on-call arrangements. So far this year, four new individuals have been trained for the Gold role and 16 for the Silver role, with 12 of those now actively participating in the Silver rota. This brings the current totals to nine on the Gold rota and 21 on the Silver rota. An additional Silver training session is planned later this year for those who were unable to attend previous sessions. Work is also underway to introduce the BECC Manager role, which will be implemented following the next Silver training.
- 3.1.2 Silver training was also extended to two individuals involved in the Council's event arrangements, supporting ongoing efforts to strengthen the link between event planning and emergency preparedness.
- 3.1.3 The interim pay arrangements for Emergency Response Officers (LALOs and Emergency Centre Managers) and Resilience Advisors have had a positive impact. Three previously inactive individuals have returned to the rota, and nine new individuals have joined, with further expressions of interest received.
- 3.1.4 Training for other key roles is progressing well. Notably, Housing's commitment to training all staff in Emergency Centre operations has significantly increased the number of trained personnel. The table below reflects Emergency Centre training figures up to the end of March 2025. An update from the British Red Cross is expected at the end of June, and we anticipate further positive progress.

Role	Numbers Trained
Emergency Centre Officer	49 (Up to end of March 2025)
Emergency Centre Manager	25 (Up to end of March 2025)
Loggist	20
BECC Officer	12
HALO	4
HAC Officer	20
STAC Rep	2

3.2 **Team Updates**

- 3.2.1 Following the departure of a team member (Emergency Planning and Resilience Officer) in June, the position has been offered internally to one of our Resilience Advisors, who previously served as an Emergency Response Officer. A start date is yet to be confirmed.

3.3 **Business Continuity**

- 3.3.1 Business Continuity remains a key priority for the team, driven by the Council's self-assessment against the Resilience Standards for London, the external review conducted in 2023, and an increasing range of emerging threats. These include cyber-attacks, extreme weather events, supply chain vulnerabilities, and global geopolitical instability—all of which present significant risks to the Council's ability to maintain service delivery.
- 3.3.2 Following recent updates to the Business Continuity templates, all managers have been asked to review and update their plans by the end of August. To support this process, they are encouraged to complete one of the "Off the Shelf" exercises developed by the team, which are designed to enhance planning and promote team engagement.
- 3.3.3 A briefing session delivered to SMG on 9 June was well received and identified further areas for development, particularly in supporting services with business continuity planning and assessing supplier resilience.
- 3.3.4 Progress has also been made in expanding the use of the telesolutions system. A refresher session was held for the Communications team, and a new user group has been established for all staff on the system. A message circulated in May generated 296 responses, which the team is currently processing and uploading. In preparation for the annual system test scheduled for September, efforts are underway to ensure all contact information is up to date.

3.4 **Incidents**

- 3.4.1 The team have continued to respond to range of incidents, which have included fires (including repeated incidents in the old job centre on Cambridge Ave); a prolonged heating failure in a council block during January and February; IT disruption and a hazardous materials (HAZMAT) incident in Hassop road. Learning from each incident is now incorporated into the lessons and recommendation tracker, initially established to monitor the Grenfell progress, but now a consolidated place for all learning and actions.
- 3.4.2 The most significant incident in recent months was the fire at Tillet Close on the 24th May. Residents were initially supported in a Rest Centre at the Civic Centre, before accommodation was arranged by the Council or appropriate landlord. On Monday 26th June, the Family Wellbeing Centre was opened as an assistance centre supported by the British Red Cross, the centre remained open until Friday 30th.
- 3.4.3 The debrief process for the fire at Tillet Close is not yet completed, but initial lessons identified include:
- Increased limits on their procurement cards – to support accommodation bookings.
 - More flexibility in the financial support available to provide residents. Access to the system and training is being arranged currently.
 - Identification of some additional equipment that would be useful to have in our rest centre kit – additional charging facilities / blankets.
 - Ensuring all those trained have shared their contact details.
 - Limited understanding of the Council's role in the recovery phase. We have therefore arranged a study day in October, being delivered by Professor Lucy Easthope, who is a lead adviser in emergency planning and disaster recovery.

3.5 **Grenfell Actions**

- 3.5.1 The team continues to progress actions identified from the review of the Grenfell Inquiry report. Although progress has been impacted by staff absences and internal changes, additional resources have been brought in to support key areas—particularly around information on vulnerable people and supplier resilience.
- 3.5.2 In recent months, the primary focus has been on actions related to rest centre management. Good progress has been made in training new Emergency Centre Officers and updating relevant processes and procedures. A live exercise held on 11 June provided trained staff with an opportunity to apply their learning and test recent updates to the registration process. The exercise was supported by the British Red Cross, Rapid Relief Team, Metropolitan Police, and Emergency Planning colleagues from Harrow and Ealing Councils. Next steps include finalising the updated procedures and formalising the agreement with ICAB. Given the positive feedback from participants—who appreciated seeing the arrangements in action—the team plans to run further exercises in this area.

3.5.3 Progress is also being made in collaboration with the Learning and Development team to develop an e-learning package for all staff. An initial review of commercial options found none that fully met the Council's needs, leading to the development of a bespoke in-house solution. This approach offers several advantages:

- Cost-effectiveness
- Faster delivery
- Customisation, including the promotion of internal volunteering opportunities

3.5.4 While a London-wide package is under consideration by the Standardisation Board, timelines remain uncertain. In the meantime, development of the internal package is moving forward.

3.5.5 The Learning and Development team has requested guidance on whether the e-learning package should be mandatory for all staff or targeted to specific groups. Emergency Planning recommends making it mandatory, in line with the Grenfell recommendations and to reinforce the principle that resilience is everyone's responsibility.

3.6 **Other Priorities**

3.6.1 *Martyn's Law* - The forthcoming legislation, commonly referred to as "Martyn's Law," aims to enhance public safety by ensuring better preparedness for and protection against terrorist attacks. It will place proportionate requirements on those responsible for certain premises and events, with obligations varying by venue capacity. The Civic Centre will fall within the top tier of the proposed framework. The Emergency Planning and Resilience team has been supporting the Sales and Marketing Manager in reviewing current arrangements and identifying necessary improvements to ensure future compliance. This has included delivering training opportunities and engaging with key suppliers involved in on-site events.

3.6.2 *Counter Terrorism* - In collaboration with Police colleagues, the team is reviewing the transition to the critical action card and exploring opportunities to deliver additional ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) and SCaN (See, Check and Notify) training.

3.6.3 *Joint Working with the Events Team* - The EP&R and Events teams have strengthened collaboration in recent months to ensure effective information sharing and a smooth transition from event delivery to emergency response when required. This has already proven beneficial, with recent incidents on event footprints being promptly communicated to the duty Resilience Advisor. In February, an internal exercise was held, and EP&R also participated in a stadium exercise. Shadowing opportunities have been offered to some staff, with plans to extend these to all Gold, Silver, and Emergency Response Officers (EROs). Staff involved in event delivery are also being included in emergency planning training, including Emergency Centre Officer and Silver-level training. Discussions are ongoing regarding a joint exercise with the stadium team.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 None

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 None

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The Civil Contingencies Act provides the primary framework for dealing with large-scale emergencies under UK law and, Part 1 concerns the responsibility of various public bodies and certain private bodies (e.g., energy suppliers or telecommunications providers) to undertake contingency planning for emergencies.

6.2 The Act recognises an emergency as an event or situation that threatens damage to human welfare for the purposes of The Act only if it may cause:

- loss of human life
- human illness or injury
- homelessness
- damage to property
- disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel
- disruption of a system of communication
- disruption of facilities for transport, or
- disruption of services relating to health

6.3 It is apparent that the definition of 'emergency' under the Act is capable of covering an extremely broad range of circumstances, ranging from disasters that are life-threatening and large-scale (e.g., a hurricane, major earthquake or nuclear attack), to relatively small-scale, discrete events that cause 'disruption' rather than outright damage a fuel strike or power failure affecting telephone lines.

6.4 Emergency planning should aim where possible to prevent emergencies occurring, and when they do occur, good planning should reduce, control or mitigate the effects of the emergency. It is a systematic and ongoing process which should evolve as lessons are learnt, and circumstances change.

6.5 According to the Cabinet Office guidance, Category 1 responders are required to:

- Put in place emergency plans business continuity management arrangements informed by risk assessment.

- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public concerning civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.
- Co-operate and share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.

6.6 Local authorities are also expected to provide advice and assistance about business continuity management to businesses and voluntary organisations.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.

7.3 There is no prescribed manner in which the council must exercise its public sector equality duty but having an adequate evidence base for its decision is necessary.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

8.1 None

9.0 Human Resources Considerations

9.1 None

10.0 Communication Considerations

10.1 None

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director of Finance and Resources