

	Audit and Standards Advisory Committee 27 July 2026
	Report from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources
	Lead Member - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care (Councillor Muhammed Butt)
Emergency Planning & Resilience – Annual Update	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Not Applicable
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	One Appendix 1: Delivered / Planned Training and Exercising
Background Papers:	None
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1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Council's emergency planning, resilience and business continuity arrangements since July 2025. During the reporting period, the Council has continued to strengthen its preparedness and response capability through increased training and exercising activity, enhancements to business continuity planning, improvements to emergency response arrangements, and active engagement with borough, London-wide, and community resilience partners.
- 1.2 The Council has responded to a number of significant incidents, including residential fires, utility disruptions, severe weather events, and evacuations,

providing valuable opportunities to test arrangements and identify areas for further improvement. Progress has also been made in enhancing on-call capacity, developing Member awareness, preparing for the requirements of Martyn's Law, and improving support available to residents affected by emergencies.

- 1.3 While overall assurance remains positive, further work is required to increase resilience in some emergency response roles, complete outstanding business continuity plans, continue to enhance preparations for emerging risks such as cyber disruption and extreme heat, and implement the requirements of Martyn's Law.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the report and to consider whether there are any areas where the Committee require further information or would like to explore further.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Contribution to Borough Plan Priorities & Strategic Context

- 3.1.1 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, emergency services, voluntary and community sector organisations, and other resilience partners to strengthen the borough's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and disruptive events.
- **Thriving Communities** – Supporting the creation of a safer and more resilient borough through proactive emergency planning, business continuity management, community resilience initiatives and interventions designed to reduce the impact of emergencies on residents, businesses and local communities.
- **A Cleaner, Greener Future** – Contributing to the Council's preparedness for the increasing impacts of climate change, including extreme heat, flooding and severe weather events, and supporting the development of arrangements that help communities adapt to and recover from climate-related incidents.

- 3.1.2 The work outlined in this report contributes to the Council's statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and supports the delivery of wider organisational resilience objectives. It also demonstrates the Council's commitment to continuous improvement through learning from incidents, exercises, external assurance reviews and emerging risks, including cyber security threats, climate change and counter-terrorism requirements.

3.2 Background

- 3.2.1 Local authorities are designated as Category 1 Responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA). As such, the Council has a statutory duty to assess local risks, maintain emergency plans, establish business continuity arrangements, warn and inform the public, and work in partnership with other responding organisations to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. These duties are delivered through local, sub-regional, and London-wide resilience arrangements, ensuring a coordinated multi-agency approach to managing incidents that may affect residents, communities, and critical services.
- 3.2.2 The Council's emergency planning and resilience arrangements are further informed by the Resilience Standards for London, which provide a consistent framework for assessing and improving preparedness across London's local authorities. The standards set expectations across a range of areas including governance, emergency response, business continuity, training and exercising, community resilience and recovery planning. The Council undertakes periodic self-assessments against these standards and uses the findings, together with lessons identified from incidents, exercises, and external reviews, to drive continuous improvement.

3.3 On Call Arrangements

- 3.3.1 A key component of the Council's emergency planning and resilience arrangements is the maintenance of robust on-call arrangements, ensuring that a sufficient number of appropriately trained officers are available to sustain an effective response to emergency incidents. The London Resilience Standards require boroughs to maintain adequate numbers of staff across core emergency response roles to support operations for a minimum of 48 hours. Officers undertaking these roles must be suitably trained, equipped and empowered to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.
- 3.3.2 Over recent years significant emphasis has been placed on strengthening the training, exercising, and development of officers who undertake these critical functions. *Appendix 1* provides a summary of the training courses and exercises delivered or attended since the previous update in July 2025, as well as those planned before the end of the year. Table 1 below also shows the number of officers who have been trained in key roles.
- 3.3.3 The Council currently operates a weekly standby rota, with volunteer officers providing cover for the Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO) and Emergency Centre Manager (ECM) roles. Responses to incidents, including the fire in Elm Road (January 2024), the gas leak in Malvern Road (January 2024) and the fire at Tillet Close (May 2025), demonstrated that whilst the Council was able to mobilise an initial response effectively, there was limited resilience within the rota to sustain a prolonged response beyond the first operational shift. Although officers consistently demonstrate a strong commitment and willingness to support incidents beyond their scheduled hours, reliance on this approach is not sustainable and can create welfare and resilience risks during extended emergencies.

- 3.3.4 Whilst maintaining sufficient resilience remains challenging during holiday periods and bank holiday weekends, the number of trained officers available to support emergency response activities has continued to increase over the past year. This improvement has been supported by the successful review of standby payment arrangements, resulting in a more consistent approach across the Council and helping to support recruitment and retention within the pool of emergency response volunteers.
- 3.3.5 To further support consistency and fairness, Human Resources have recently completed an evaluation of the Emergency Response Officer role, which encompasses both LALO and ECM responsibilities. This review has assessed the appropriate grading for overtime payments, ensuring that all officers undertaking these duties are rewarded on a consistent basis.
- 3.3.6 Partnership working with the London Fire Brigade has also strengthened the capability of the emergency response cohort. During the year, officers attended two visits to a local fire station, including briefings on the growing risks associated with lithium-ion battery fires and the Council's role in supporting recovery and disposal arrangements. This is an increasingly important area of resilience planning given the rise in e-bike and e-scooter battery-related incidents across London.
- 3.3.7 Further work is required to increase the number of trained Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officers (HALOs) and Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) staff. Two existing HALOs are scheduled to attend refresher training to maintain competence, and at least one additional officer has been booked onto a future training course. Opportunities are also being explored for additional members of the Adult Social Care management team to undertake HALO training, recognising the critical role they play in supporting vulnerable residents during emergencies.
- 3.3.8 In July 2026, a further six officers completed Silver Command training, significantly increasing the Council's command and control capacity. This enhanced resilience provides greater flexibility within the Silver rota and will enable officers with both Silver and HALO qualifications to focus on humanitarian assistance responsibilities where required during a response.
- 3.3.9 To support the long-term sustainability of the Council's emergency planning arrangements, emergency management responsibilities are now explicitly referenced within all newly created Hay-evaluated senior management roles. Role profiles include the following statement:

The position is expected to be part of the Councils' emergency planning and resilience arrangement, including being on call Gold/Silver, and to demonstrate a commitment to embedding ownership throughout of this being everybody's business.

Table 1: Key On-Call Role Training Completion (Last 3 Years)

Role	Numbers trained in last 3 years
▪ Gold / Strategic	9
▪ Silver / Tactical	16
▪ Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officer	3
▪ Resilience Advisors	7
▪ Emergency Response Officer (Trained as both LALO and ECM – On the rota)	23
▪ Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALO)	16
▪ Emergency Centre Manager (ECM)	9
▪ Emergency Centre Officer (ECO)	28
▪ Loggist	29
▪ Humanitarian Assistance Officer	15
▪ Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) Staff	17

3.4 Business Continuity

- 3.4.1 Business Continuity continues to be a key priority for the Emergency Planning and Resilience Team, informed by the Council's self-assessment against the Resilience Standards for London, the findings of the external assurance review undertaken in 2023, and the growing range of risks that could disrupt service delivery. These risks include cyber incidents, extreme weather events, supply chain disruption, utility failures, workforce challenges, and increasing global geopolitical instability. Collectively, these threats reinforce the importance of ensuring that the Council can maintain or rapidly recover critical services during periods of disruption.
- 3.4.2 As part of the Council's ongoing programme of improvement, the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) *templates* used by services have been further enhanced. This has included the incorporation of additional considerations recommended by Procurement colleagues, strengthening the Council's understanding of key supplier dependencies and supply chain risks. The team is also supporting services to migrate their plans into a revised format designed to improve accessibility, usability, and consistency across the organisation. The new format will make plans easier to navigate during an incident and provide a more practical document for both electronic and printed use.

- 3.4.3 Following challenges in securing timely plan reviews and updates across all services during 2025, the annual review process commenced earlier this year, with all services asked to complete a full review of their Business Continuity Plan and contact lists, undertake a team-based exercise to test their arrangements, and obtain Director approval by the end of June. This earlier commencement has provided services with additional time to complete the process and embed lessons identified through exercising activity.
- 3.4.4 While the majority of services have completed the required actions, a number of plans remain outstanding. The Emergency Planning and Resilience Team is continuing to provide targeted support to these services to ensure that all plans are completed and approved as soon as possible.
- 3.4.5 To ensure the quality of the plans, the team has scheduled a dedicated review exercise at the end of July to assess all submitted plans for accuracy, completeness, and consistency. This review will help identify good practice, areas requiring further development and any common themes that may require a corporate response.
- 3.4.6 As part of this exercise, the team will also collate and review the recovery objectives identified by services for their critical IT systems. This information will be assessed collaboratively with colleagues from Shared Technology Services (STS), Information Technology, and Emergency Planning to ensure that recovery expectations are realistic, achievable, and aligned to technical recovery capabilities. Where recovery objectives are found to be overly ambitious or unsupported by existing arrangements, services will be provided with advice on alternative mitigation measures and additional recovery strategies to strengthen their resilience and reduce the risk of prolonged service disruption. This work will provide a stronger evidence base for future investment and resilience planning, whilst ensuring that business continuity arrangements remain proportionate to the risks faced by individual services and the Council as a whole.
- 3.4.7 To continue to improve assurance around business continuity arrangements, opportunities are being explored to work more closely with Internal Audit in reviewing Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) within high-risk service areas. To support this, the Deputy Head of Resilience and the Deputy Head of Assurance are scheduled to meet in July to review the annual audit plan and identify opportunities to incorporate targeted BCP assurance activity where appropriate.

3.5 Borough Resilience Forum

- 3.5.1 Following concerns raised by Brent regarding the effectiveness of Borough Resilience Forum (BRF) arrangements, particularly in the context of lessons identified following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, the Council has been actively engaged in the London Resilience Governance and Accountability Strategy Working Group. This group has been exploring opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness, consistency, and impact of Borough Resilience Forums and sector panels across the London Resilience Partnership.

- 3.5.2 Over recent months, a number of alternative approaches have been piloted to improve engagement and collaboration between partners. These have included the introduction of sub-regional meetings, themed BRF sessions focused on specific risk areas, and the use of online forums as an alternative to traditional meetings. As part of this programme of work, Brent will host a themed BRF meeting later this year focused on Mass Evacuation and Shelter arrangements, providing an opportunity for partners to review current capabilities, explore emerging challenges, and strengthen multi-agency preparedness.
- 3.5.3 The Brent BRF delivered its annual multi-agency exercise in February, based on a large-scale power outage scenario. The exercise provided valuable assurance regarding existing response arrangements whilst also identifying a number of areas where plans, procedures, and supporting documentation could be strengthened. Work is underway with relevant partners to address these findings and further enhance preparedness for prolonged utility disruption incidents.
- 3.5.4 In March, the BRF hosted a Community Resilience Event funded through the London Resilience Trailblazer Programme. The event brought together almost 30 organisations from across the borough to share learning from funded projects, explore what community resilience looks like in practice, and discuss the role that community groups can play in supporting preparedness, response and recovery activities. The event demonstrated a clear appetite for stronger collaboration between community organisations and statutory responders, with many participants expressing a preference for ongoing engagement through the BRF rather than through a separate advisory group structure.
- 3.5.5 Discussions also explored how resilience arrangements can better reflect the needs of Brent's diverse communities, particularly those residents who may experience barriers in accessing information or support during emergencies. Participants highlighted the important role that voluntary, community, and faith organisations play in reaching vulnerable groups, providing culturally appropriate support, and helping statutory responders understand emerging community impacts. At a practical level, this included discussion regarding the new Resilience Hub website developed by CVS Brent. Participants emphasised the importance of ensuring information is available in a range of languages commonly spoken across the borough and noted that there are opportunities to further strengthen the accessibility and inclusivity of the site as it continues to develop.
- 3.5.6 As a result, a number of organisations that participated in the event have been invited to attend future BRF meetings to broaden community representation and strengthen local resilience networks. Participants also suggested the creation of a BRF WhatsApp group to enable more timely sharing of information regarding incidents, emerging risks, and community impacts. This proposal will be considered at a future BRF meeting as part of wider discussions on improving communication and information-sharing arrangements between partners.

- 3.5.7 Whilst there is broad support for greater information sharing, some Category 1 responders have raised concerns regarding the dissemination of sensitive or operationally restricted information to a wider group of stakeholders who do not have statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. To address these concerns, the Emergency Planning and Resilience Team is exploring the establishment of separate communication and distribution channels. This would enable statutory responders to continue sharing information required for emergency planning and response purposes, whilst facilitating appropriate engagement with voluntary, community, and faith sector organisations and other local partners. This approach seeks to balance the benefits of greater collaboration and situational awareness with the need to maintain appropriate information governance and security arrangements.
- 3.5.8 The continued development of the BRF remains an important element of the Council's wider resilience agenda, helping to strengthen relationships across the borough, improve multi-agency preparedness, and ensure that local communities play an active role in building resilience to future emergencies.

3.6 Member Training

- 3.6.1 One of the requirements within the Resilience Standards for London relates to political leadership and the role elected members play in supporting effective emergency preparedness, response and recovery arrangements. Previous self-assessments identified that additional training would further strengthen Members' understanding of these responsibilities. In light of the local elections, it was recommended that emergency planning and resilience form part of the Member induction programme.
- 3.6.2 A dedicated emergency planning and resilience briefing was delivered in June, providing Members with an introduction to the Council's emergency planning arrangements and the important role elected representatives play before, during and after an incident. The session covered the Council's statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, how emergency planning and response arrangements operate at both borough and London-wide levels, and the processes that are activated when a major incident occurs. The briefing also explored the role Members can play in supporting residents, communicating local concerns, and providing community leadership during emergencies.
- 3.6.3 A consistent theme emerging from the session was the desire for improved communication with Members during incidents. Members highlighted the importance of receiving timely and relevant information to enable them to support affected residents and respond to enquiries from their communities. While the immediate priority during any incident will always be the safety of residents and the coordination of the operational response, there is an opportunity to further strengthen arrangements for keeping Members informed. To address this, the Emergency Planning and Resilience Team will work with Member Support and Communications colleagues to review current arrangements and develop a communication approach that is both

proportionate and effective. The aim will be to ensure Members receive appropriate updates during significant incidents without creating additional pressures on operational responders during the critical stages of an emergency.

- 3.6.4 The session also reinforced the important role that Members can play in identifying and escalating incidents affecting their communities. Members were therefore encouraged to report any incidents or emerging concerns of which they become aware to the on-call Resilience Advisor via the Council's switchboard. This will help ensure that relevant officers are notified promptly, situational awareness is maintained, and any necessary response actions can be considered and implemented at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.6.5 Overall, the session was positively received and represented an important step in strengthening the Council's political leadership capability, further embedding resilience as a shared responsibility across the organisation.

3.7 Counter Terrorism

- 3.7.1 In response to the introduction of Martyn's Law and the continued rollout of the Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) for Local Authorities programme, the Emergency Planning and Resilience Team has continued to facilitate cross-service discussions on the Council's preparedness, identifying areas for improvement and strengthening organisational resilience to terrorist threats and hostile acts.
- 3.7.2 The national threat environment remains a significant consideration within the Council's resilience planning. Following the increase in the UK National Terrorism Threat Level from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE on 30 April 2026, the Council reviewed its preparedness arrangements and associated response procedures. This included a review of the Council's Move to Critical Action Card and further discussions with Facilities Management colleagues regarding the practical measures that may need to be implemented in response to an elevated threat level. These discussions have helped to ensure that responsibilities are understood and that arrangements remain aligned with the current threat picture.
- 3.7.3 To support organisational awareness and preparedness, the borough's Counter Terrorism Protect Officer (CTPO) has continued to deliver specialist training and engagement activities. To date, officers have received one ACT Awareness session and two See, Check, and Notify (SCaN) sessions, with further training events scheduled later in the year. Details of all completed and planned counter-terrorism training activities are provided in *Appendix 1*. These sessions have helped improve staff awareness of hostile reconnaissance, suspicious behaviour, and the actions that can be taken to identify and report potential threats.
- 3.7.4 The CTPO is also currently developing a Hostile Information Plan (HIP) for the Civic Centre, with completion anticipated by the end of July. The HIP will assess how the Council can further strengthen its resilience against hostile

reconnaissance and other security-related threats. Given the Civic Centre's proximity to Wembley Stadium, counter-terrorism considerations were incorporated into the building's design and construction, with advice provided at the time by a Counter Terrorism Security Adviser (CTSA). However, threat profiles evolve over time, and the HIP will provide an updated assessment of risks, together with recommendations for any additional protective security measures that may be appropriate. Consideration is also being given to whether similar assessments should be undertaken for other key Council buildings.

- 3.7.5 The publication of guidance supporting the implementation of Martyn's Law has provided greater clarity regarding the responsibilities of organisations operating qualifying premises. The guidance confirms that the responsible person may be an organisation rather than an individual. However, for premises falling within the Enhanced Tier requirements, such as the Civic Centre, the legislation requires the responsible person to designate a senior individual responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act. Whilst operational tasks can be delegated, the designated individual retains overall accountability for meeting the organisation's statutory obligations.
- 3.7.6 A key next step for the Council will therefore be to identify and formally designate the senior individual who will oversee compliance with Martyn's Law. Establishing clear leadership and accountability arrangements will be essential to ensuring that compliance activity is effectively coordinated and embedded across the organisation.
- 3.7.7 Further statutory guidance and supporting information from the Security Industry Authority (SIA) is still awaited. The Emergency Planning and Resilience Team will continue to monitor developments, assess the implications for the Council and coordinate the work required to ensure compliance with the new legislative requirements as additional guidance becomes available.

3.8 Training and Exercises

- 3.8.1 As detailed in *Appendix 1*, a substantial programme of training, exercising, and professional development activity has been delivered or attended since the previous update in July 2025. This investment continues to strengthen both individual capability and organisational resilience, ensuring that officers across a range of services are better prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies. Further training and exercising priorities have also been identified and are being incorporated into work programmes for 2026 and 2027.
- 3.8.2 Two particularly valuable exercising activities during the reporting period were the Climate Change Exercise, coordinated by the Climate Action Team in March, and Exercise Sentinel, delivered by London Resilience to test the London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) arrangements through a cyber incident scenario.

Climate Change Exercise

- 3.8.3 The Climate Change Exercise provided an opportunity to explore the Council's preparedness, response, and recovery arrangements for the impacts of extreme weather, particularly prolonged periods of extreme heat. The post-exercise report has recently been received and identified a number of actions where the Emergency Planning and Resilience Team can support further organisational preparedness. These recommendations include:
- Strengthening documented arrangements for extreme heat incidents, with greater emphasis on preparedness, mitigation, and recovery activities.
 - Ensuring that services consider prolonged periods of extreme heat and other climate-related risks within their Business Continuity Plans.
 - Developing a coordinated communications plan to provide consistent, accurate, and tailored messaging for staff, partners, and residents during periods of extreme weather.
 - Working with key partners to establish a borough-wide approach to extreme heat preparedness, response, and recovery.
- 3.8.4 The exercise also highlighted the importance and complexity of identifying and supporting vulnerable residents during periods of extreme heat. Participants considered the potential impacts on a wide range of groups, including older people, disabled residents, children, those with long-term health conditions, people living alone, and residents living in poor-quality or insecure housing. Discussions reinforced that vulnerability is not static and can increase as incidents progress, with residents' health and circumstances deteriorating over time.
- 3.8.5 The exercise identified opportunities to strengthen arrangements for identifying residents who may not already be known to services, including those who are socially isolated or otherwise at risk of "slipping through the net". It also highlighted the value of community intelligence from voluntary, community, and faith sector organisations, commissioned providers, and local networks in identifying emerging vulnerabilities. In response, colleagues from Public Health, Social Care, and the Climate Action Team are developing a coordinated approach to identifying and supporting residents most vulnerable to extreme heat, including the use of service-level data, community intelligence, and agreed processes for monitoring changing vulnerability during prolonged heatwave events.
- 3.8.6 Since the exercise, the Council has responded to both a Red Heat-Health Alert issued by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and a Red Extreme Heat Warning issued by the Met Office. These incidents provided a valuable opportunity to assess how services responded in practice compared with the assumptions made during the exercise. They also enabled further discussions with services and partners regarding lessons identified and additional measures that could be implemented to strengthen preparedness for future extreme heat events. This real-world experience has reinforced in some areas

the importance of integrating climate resilience considerations into both business continuity and emergency response planning.

Exercise Sentinel

- 3.8.7 Exercise Sentinel was coordinated by London Resilience and primarily designed to test the operation of the London Local Authority Gold arrangements during a significant cyber incident. The exercise also provided a valuable opportunity to involve Adult and Children's Social Care colleagues in a realistic scenario examining the impact of a prolonged loss of IT systems and digital services. Emergency Planning deliberately included disruption to Mosaic, enabling participants to consider the implications for residents who rely on care and support services, and to explore how vulnerable residents would continue to be identified, prioritised, and supported during a prolonged technology outage.
- 3.8.8 The exercise highlighted that the implications of an extended technology outage had not always been fully reflected within existing business continuity arrangements. Discussions explored how critical services would continue to operate if access to core systems was unavailable for a prolonged period and identified opportunities to strengthen resilience planning in this area. Particular focus was given to maintaining support for vulnerable residents, including how services would access key information, prioritise welfare interventions, manage safeguarding concerns, and identify emerging risks where normal digital systems were unavailable.
- 3.8.9 One positive outcome of the exercise was the identification of a report routinely produced by Adult Social Care for operational purposes, which could also provide critical information on vulnerable residents during a cyber incident. Consideration is now being given to how this information could be made available during periods of system disruption, ensuring that vulnerable residents continue to receive appropriate support even where access to core systems is unavailable.
- 3.8.10 The exercise also highlighted the value of learning directly from organisations that have experienced significant cyber incidents. Participants identified an opportunity to engage with London boroughs that have been affected by recent cyber-attacks, including Hackney, Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, to better understand the operational challenges and lessons identified by frontline services. While considerable learning has already been shared through IT and emergency planning networks, there is particular value in hearing directly from specialist service areas such as Adult Social Care and Children's Services regarding the practical impacts of cyber disruption on service delivery. The Emergency Planning and Resilience Team will seek to progress this work through London resilience networks and explore opportunities to facilitate wider learning across boroughs. This will help ensure that business continuity planning continues to evolve based on real-world experiences and emerging threats.

3.9 Incidents

3.9.1 The Emergency Planning and Resilience Team has continued to support the Council's response to a range of incidents over the past year, providing coordination, advice and operational support to services, partners and affected residents. This report highlights some of the more significant incidents managed during the reporting period, together with key learning identified. The team has also continued to draw on lessons from incidents affecting other local authorities, most notably the Tri-Borough cyber incident in November 2025, to strengthen local preparedness and resilience arrangements. Significant incidents responded to during the reporting period include:

- **Thames Court Fire (July 2025)** – A Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO) was deployed to support residents displaced by the fire. Following assessment by the out-of-hours repairs service, the property could not be made safe enough for residents to return. Emergency hotel accommodation was arranged for a small number of affected residents by the Resilience Advisor, with transport provided to ensure their immediate welfare needs were met.
- **Christchurch Avenue Fire (September 2025)** – An emergency Rest Centre was established at the Civic Centre to support six residents from four affected flats. The Rest Centre provided a place of safety and welfare support while temporary accommodation arrangements were made with Housing Needs.
- **Flooding at William Dunbar House (November 2025)** – A LALO attended the scene to support affected residents. The Resilience Advisor arranged emergency hotel accommodation for four families displaced by the flooding, while repairs and recovery issues were escalated to the out-of-hours Housing Repairs Team to expedite remedial action.
- **Chamberlayne Mansion Fire (November 2025)** – Following a request for accommodation support, a LALO attended the incident. On arrival, it was confirmed that affected residents had already arranged alternative accommodation. Outstanding repairs and recovery issues were escalated to the out-of-hours Housing Repairs Team for follow-up.
- **Multiple Burst Water Mains (January–February 2026)** – Emergency Planning liaised with Thames Water and Highways colleagues to maintain situational awareness. Adult and Children's Social Care teams were asked to review records for vulnerable residents living within the affected blocks. Whilst Adult Social Care identified no residents requiring intervention, Children's Social Care identified vulnerable families and undertook welfare calls. Local schools were also contacted to ensure they were aware of potential disruption and able to implement any necessary contingency arrangements.
- **Kingsbury High School Incident (February 2026)** – Emergency Planning supported Strategic (Gold) Coordinating Group meetings throughout the incident and facilitated specialist recovery advice from Professor Lucy Easthope for the Director leading the Recovery Group.

- **Unite Student Accommodation Evacuation (May 2026)** – Following initial confusion among partner agencies regarding the availability of the Civic Centre as a Rest Centre, a LALO was deployed to the scene. Alternative arrangements were coordinated with a local hotel, providing students with a safe and comfortable location while awaiting further information and updates.
- **Atlas Business Centre Fire (June 2026)** – A LALO was deployed to the scene and an Emergency Centre Manager mobilised to open a Rest Centre for evacuated residents. Due to the original venue needing to resume business-as-usual operations, the Rest Centre was relocated to the Civic Centre the following morning. Hotel accommodation was arranged by the Resilience Advisor for those with children. As the damage was confined to the business centre and did not affect neighbouring residential properties that had been evacuated, residents were able to return home the next day.
- **Heatwave Response (May–June 2026)** – Emergency Planning coordinated the council's response to two Amber Heat-Health Alerts and one Red Heat-Health Alert, the latter being a particularly rare occurrence. During the period leading up to and throughout the Red Alert, Strategic (Gold) meetings coordinated key messaging to managers and staff, monitored operational impacts across services, and facilitated additional support where required to maintain service delivery and protect vulnerable residents.

- 3.9.2 The frequency and variety of incidents continue to demonstrate the importance of maintaining effective emergency response arrangements and ensuring the Council has sufficient trained staff available to respond to both planned and no-notice events.
- 3.9.3 During the year, Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALOs) have been deployed on at least five occasions to support emergency services at the scene of incidents. The Council has experienced a noticeable increase in requests from the London Fire Brigade (LFB) for LALO support. Following discussions with LFB colleagues, it has become apparent that these requests are often made where there is uncertainty about which specific Council service may be required, with the LALO role acting as the default point of contact.
- 3.9.4 To ensure resources are used effectively and that incidents receive the most appropriate support as quickly as possible, Resilience Advisors now seek additional information from LFB representatives at the scene before confirming deployments. This approach helps clarify the nature of the support required and enables the Council to deploy the most relevant service directly, particularly during normal working hours when specialist services are readily available. In many cases, this additional triage process has resulted in a quicker and more targeted response.
- 3.9.5 The Council also established Rest Centres on two occasions during the reporting period to support residents who had been evacuated from their homes. These incidents provided valuable learning and have prompted a review of current arrangements. One area of focus is increasing the number and geographical spread of venues identified as potential Rest Centres. While

the Council has access to several suitable locations, there remain areas of the borough with more limited coverage, and some venues are less suitable during certain periods of the year due to heating, cooling, or operational constraints. Accessibility is also a key consideration when assessing potential venues. Whilst the Civic Centre is often used as a Rest Centre due to its accessibility, step-free access and ability to accommodate a wide range of welfare and support services, this can mean that residents are not always able to remain close to the area affected by an incident. The Emergency Planning and Resilience Team is therefore seeking to identify and assess additional venues across the borough that are both geographically suitable and capable of meeting accessibility requirements, helping to ensure that emergency welfare support remains as local, inclusive and accessible as possible.

- 3.9.6 The team is also exploring the feasibility of pre-positioning small emergency welfare packs at Rest Centre locations. Access to refreshments, toiletries, and other essential items can make a significant difference to residents who have been suddenly displaced from their homes, particularly during the initial stages of an incident. While additional supplies would still need to be sourced as incidents develop, having a small stock of essential items available on site would enable more immediate support to be provided. The viability of this proposal will depend on the availability of secure storage facilities at each venue.
- 3.9.7 A further area of improvement identified through both the Council's review of the Grenfell Inquiry findings and the response to the Tillet Close fire related to the availability and flexibility of emergency financial assistance for affected residents. Previously, limitations associated with procurement card spending thresholds had the potential to restrict the Council's ability to respond quickly to emerging welfare needs.
- 3.9.8 Significant progress has now been made in this area. The spending limit on the Emergency Planning and Resilience Team's procurement card has been substantially increased, providing greater flexibility to meet urgent requirements during incidents. In addition, the team has been working with Finance colleagues to gain access to the Council's pre-paid card system and establish arrangements for cards to be loaded outside normal working hours where necessary. This will complement the existing provision of Tesco vouchers, enabling a broader range of emergency financial support to be provided to residents affected by incidents and ensuring assistance can be delivered more quickly and flexibly when needed.
- 3.9.9 The Council's response to periods of hot weather during May and June 2026 also provided valuable learning which will inform future heatwave planning. Whilst feedback from services and partners is still being gathered, initial findings highlight the importance of services taking earlier and more proactive action when severe weather warnings are issued. This includes making timely arrangements for equipment such as cooling units and fans, as demand across supply chains can increase significantly during periods of extreme heat, affecting availability. Learning has also identified the need to increase the number and geographical distribution of Cool Spaces across the borough. The

Emergency Planning and Resilience Team is working with Climate Action colleagues to support four local organisations that recently applied to participate in a London Resilience programme aimed at expanding the Cool Spaces network. Although none of the Brent applications were successful, opportunities are being explored to identify local support that could help these organisations develop suitable facilities and strengthen community resilience to future heatwave events.

3.9.10 A further emerging issue relates to the increasing number of fires involving lithium-ion batteries, reflecting a trend being experienced across London. Following such incidents, the London Fire Brigade has advised that local authorities are often expected to arrange for the safe collection and disposal of damaged batteries due to the ongoing risk they present. This requirement is not currently included within the Council's existing waste management arrangements and, whilst Veolia is able to provide specialist support, this is subject to additional cost. Work is therefore underway to better understand the potential financial and operational implications of this emerging risk and to identify sustainable arrangements for future incidents.

3.9.11 The team has also continued to engage with colleagues from Westminster City Council, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham following the cyber incident that affected the Tri-Borough partnership in late 2025. Whilst recovery activity remains ongoing, Westminster colleagues have already shared valuable learning from their experience, providing further insight into the scale and complexity of a major cyber response. A key learning point is the importance of ensuring Business Continuity Plans are based on realistic assumptions about the extent and duration of disruption that could result from a cyber-attack. The incident demonstrated that services may need to operate under significantly constrained arrangements for prolonged periods, with substantial backlogs developing across a range of functions. This learning will be incorporated into the planned review of Business Continuity Plans during the coming year.

3.9.12 The response arrangements established by the affected authorities have also provided useful learning for Brent. In particular, the scale of the response, the length of time organisations remained in formal response structures, and the additional specialist resources required to support recovery have highlighted considerations that are not always reflected in local planning assumptions. The incident also demonstrated the importance of understanding the implications of missed statutory deadlines and regulatory requirements, including areas such as planning applications and other time-sensitive services. A further lesson related to the need for robust prioritisation and risk-based decision-making. Recognising that all services viewed their activities as critical, the authorities established a dedicated group to assess and prioritise competing demands. This enabled technical specialists and system engineers to focus on work according to agreed corporate priorities rather than responding to individual requests as they arose, resulting in a more coordinated and effective recovery effort.

3.9.13 The learning identified from incidents over the past year continues to inform improvements to the Council's emergency response arrangements. The increasing complexity and frequency of incidents reinforces the importance of maintaining strong partnerships, investing in staff capability, and continually reviewing plans, procedures, and resources to ensure the Council remains well positioned to support residents and communities during times of crisis.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

4.1 None

5.0 Financial Considerations

5.1 The Emergency Planning & Resilience service is provided with an annual budget which it is expected to operate within, which it did so in the 2025/26 financial year. The budget has been reviewed and set for the 2026/27 to ensure the staffing budget is sufficient to cover the expected on-call costs for the year.

5.2 Should there be any increased demand or changes required to the way the service operates, then the cost of these changes will need to be reviewed. If they are expected to create a financial pressure, then service will need to be reviewed and possible additional funding sourced.

6.0 Legal Considerations

6.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) 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.
- 6.7 The CCA creates a legal framework for sharing information between responding organisations where necessary for emergency planning and response. This is important because it provides a statutory basis for information exchange that might otherwise be restricted by confidentiality or data protection concerns, provided the sharing is lawful and proportionate.
- 6.8 The CCA creates legally enforceable duties for emergency preparedness and cooperation, provides the Government with exceptional emergency powers in serious crises, and drives resilience and business continuity planning across both the public and private sectors.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The Council, as a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, has a statutory responsibility to plan for, respond to, and recover from emergencies in a way that takes account of the needs of all residents. The activities outlined in this report support the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty by helping to ensure that emergency preparedness, response, and recovery arrangements are accessible, inclusive, and responsive to the diverse needs of Brent's communities.
- 7.2 The continued development of emergency response capabilities, humanitarian assistance arrangements, business continuity planning, and community resilience activities is intended to improve outcomes for all residents during emergencies, with particular regard to those who may be more vulnerable to the impacts of incidents.
- 7.3 The continued strengthening of the Council's resilience arrangements is expected to have a positive impact by supporting equitable access to assistance, information, and services during emergencies and periods of significant disruption.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 Adaptation and resilience to the effects of extreme weather form a key part of the council's Climate and Ecological Emergency programme. A new cross council Climate Wellbeing and Adaptation working group has been set up to underpin this work, which itself reports to the Corporate Sustainability Board. The council adopted its new Climate Adaptation and Resilience Framework earlier this year and has completed a number of actions within this framework in coordination with colleagues from Emergency Planning, which are set out within predominantly within section 3.8 of this report. Risks the borough posed by extreme weather also form part of the council's overarching risk register which is report to Audit Committee. The significance of this agenda to Brent is only going to continue in the years to come, and therefore the key link with Emergency Planning remains crucial to this process.

9.0 Human Resources Considerations

- 9.1 The Council's emergency response arrangements rely on the availability of appropriately trained officers to undertake on-call, command, coordination, humanitarian assistance, and emergency centre roles. Continued investment in training, exercising, and staff development remains essential to maintaining sufficient organisational resilience and ensuring that officers are equipped and supported to respond effectively during emergencies.
- 9.2 Human Resources have recently completed an evaluation of the Emergency Response Officer role, covering both Local Authority Liaison Officer and Emergency Centre Manager responsibilities. This supports a consistent approach to grading and overtime payments for officers undertaking these duties and helps strengthen fairness, transparency, and sustainability within the on-call arrangements.
- 9.3 The report also highlights the importance of embedding emergency planning responsibilities within relevant senior management roles, particularly those involved in Gold and Silver command arrangements. This will help ensure that resilience responsibilities are recognised as part of wider corporate leadership expectations and that sufficient capacity is maintained across the organisation.

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 None

Report sign off:

Minesh Patel

Corporate Director of Finance and Resources