

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

24 July 2012

Subject: Review of the Major Incident Plan

Cabinet member: Councillor Keith Humphries – Public Health and Public Protection

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary

The council's Major Incident Plan has been reviewed and extensively amended to reflect council structures following extensive internal consultation.

Proposals

That Cabinet:

- a) notes this report,
- b) approves the revised major incident plan and recommends its adoption by Council, and
- c) agrees that any minor amendments to the plan are delegated to the Corporate Director for Public Health and Public Protection in consultation with the appropriate cabinet member

Reason for Proposal

Approval of the Major Incident Plan will ensure compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and allow subsequent training and exercising on the plan to improve the council's state of readiness and resilience.

Maggie Rae

Corporate Director of Public Health and Public Protection

Wiltshire Council

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1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform the cabinet of the revision of the council's Major Incident Plan, and to recommend its approval and adoption.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Wiltshire Council is designated as a Category 1 responder. As such it is required to develop and maintain emergency plans that are appropriate, up to date and kept in readiness for emergencies. The council works in close cooperation with the other partner organisations of the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum (LRF). Multi-agency arrangements have been agreed by the LRF and internal plans and procedures are designed to work within these arrangements.
- 2.2 The previous plan was out of date and did not reflect the existing council structures. A review was required to make the plan fit for purpose.
- 2.3 The consultation period for the review of the Major Incident Plan started on 5 August 2011 with a kick off meeting, attended by 25 officers from 18 council services. Following a two month period during which services were invited to comment on the plan, the consultation period closed with a review meeting on 14 October 2011.
- 2.4 Through the consultation process a number of issues were identified which affect the council's resilience and ability to respond appropriately and proportionally to a major incident.

3. Main Considerations for the Council

- 3.1 The Major Incident Plan sets out arrangements for the council's response to emergencies within or affecting Wiltshire, and potentially impacts on the entire range of council services. In this context an emergency is defined as

a situation or series of events that threatens or causes serious damage to human welfare, the environment or UK security. This definition covers a wide range of scenarios including adverse weather, severe flooding, animal diseases, terrorist incidents and their impact on essential services and critical infrastructure.

- 3.2 The plan is generic, and provides a mechanism for mobilising staff and resources in response to an emergency and for performing council functions in relation to a wide range of possible scenarios. While it is an internal council plan, it has been designed to comply with the multi-agency arrangements of the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum (LRF).
- 3.3 It is comprehensive, but officers only need to be familiar with the sections that are relevant to their services or particular roles, and are not expected to be conversant with the entire plan.
- 3.4 The key changes to the original plan are:
 - Revised roles and responsibilities for corporate directors
 - Revised management systems and staff roles
 - New major incident callout system
 - User friendly action cards have been incorporated for the following roles:
 - On-call corporate director/ council gold commander (CGC)
 - CLT chair (one of the Corporate Directors)
 - Local authority liaison officer (LALO)
 - Tactical advisor to CGC
 - Local authority incident officer (LAIO)
 - Technical support officer
 - Council intelligence officer
 - Duty emergency planning officer
 - Scientific Tactical Advice Cell (STAC) officer
 - Duty Communication officer
 - Council communications officer
 - CLT communications officer
 - Media handling centre manager
 - Council media officer

The action cards are contained within the plan, which act as easy to use “aide memoir” for staff in the event of an incident.

- 3.5 The plan seeks to implement a command and control structure for dealing with emergencies which is very different to the usual day to day management arrangements and style of the organisation.
- 3.6 Should the plan be approved it will require further training of the corporate leadership team and other senior managers on the new arrangements.
- 3.7 Following this training an exercise will need to be held to test the practical implementation of the plan.

4. Environmental and climate change considerations

- 4.1 The Major Incident Plan provides the framework for the council's response to incidents which may include environmental and climate change issues, such as flooding and severe weather. There will be impacts resulting from the council's response to such events, but these are difficult to quantify due to their unknown nature and frequency. They may however include increased vehicle usage, and setting up of temporary shelters with all the related requirements for heating and lighting.

5. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

- 5.1 The purpose of the Major Incident Plan is to provide support to individuals and communities, assisting their resilience when affected by in difficult scenarios. This support would be delivered to the areas of greatest need and would not discriminate in the way it was provided.

6. Risk Assessment

- 6.1 If the Major Incident Plan is not approved then the council could be criticised for not having an appropriate, up to date plan. This is likely to be seen to be a breach of the Civil Contingencies Act, and as such the council could be failing in its legal duty and open to serious reputational risk.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. The plan has been developed and will be delivered within the 2012-13 approved budget. If it was to be instigated and a major incident declared there is the potential for considerable expenditure to be incurred. Whilst the council holds a general fund reserve to cover risk, contingency and unforeseen events, some of the incurred expenditure may be covered by the Government's Bellwin scheme of emergency financial assistance to local authorities. This scheme provides a level of grant funding for expenditure incurred.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 Section 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires the Council to assess the risk of, and make and maintain appropriate plans for, any emergency which would be likely to seriously obstruct it in the

performance of its functions. It also has a duty to make and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur, and it would be unable to take that action without changing the deployment of resources or acquiring additional resources, it is able to perform its functions so far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of:

- (i) preventing the emergency,
- (ii) reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects, or
- (iii) taking other action in connection with it.

Approval of the Major Incident Plan will enable the council to comply with these requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act.2004. If the plan is not adopted there is a risk of legal challenge, as set out in paragraph 6.1 above.

9. Options Considered

- 9.1 The Major Incident Plan complies with the legal requirements and with the Wiltshire and Swindon LRF procedures, and as such adoption of the revised plan is the best option.

Conclusions

- 14. Cabinet is asked to note this report and approve the Major Incident Plan.

Maggie Rae
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Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None

Appendices

Wiltshire Council Major Incident Plan
