

Cabinet

13 October 2015

**Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
Report on the Integrated Emergency Management Plan**

Purpose of report

1. To feed back to Cabinet and Full Council a summary of the main issues discussed at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 8 September 2015.

Background

2. It was stated that the draft Plan consolidated the existing Major Incident, Business Continuity and Recovery Plans, as well as reflecting the organisational changes in the past few years to further embed the responsibilities of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 across all services of Wiltshire Council.
3. Details were provided on the Local Resilience Forum, Chaired by the Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police and Vice-Chaired by Maggie Rae, Corporate Director, Wiltshire Council, which brings together 'Category 1' responders¹, 'Category 2' responders² and other responders³ to prepare for emergencies within Wiltshire based on the National Risk Register, and creating plans for specific local risks so that services are maintained and communities protected.
4. Although the number of dedicated officers assigned to Emergency Planning had been reduced as part of organisational restructuring, it was clarified that the responsibility had been broadened to cover all senior officers which included an on-call rota for all Corporate and Associate Directors, and to embed the responsibility across services rather than a single centralised team.
5. It was also emphasised the Plan would be a 'live' document, periodically reviewed on a schedule but also in response to any emergency events that occurred, to ensure it remained fit for purpose.

Main issues raised during questioning and debate

6. The Committee discussed how military assistance was built into the plan, and it was stated that Wiltshire had very close working arrangements with the Military and sites such as Porton Down in relation to specific risks, although as military protocol required requests for civil assistance to be approved by High Command, military assistance could not formally be guaranteed.

¹ Emergency Services, Local Authorities, NHS England Team, Public Health England, Environment Agency

² Utilities, Telecoms, Transport, Met Office, Highways England, HSE

³ Including military, voluntary sector, coastguard, media outlets, community groups

7. Details were sought on how the effectiveness of the Plan would be monitored internally and by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and it was stated representatives from the DCLG attended Local Resilience Forums to monitor them, as well as annual capability surveys providing benchmarking of Plan effectiveness and indications of perceived gaps.
8. The effectiveness of the Plan was raised in response to comments there were not formal powers to enforce the Plan amongst partner bodies, which is why it was stated creating close working relationships such as through the Local Resilience Forums, which included bodies beyond that required by statute to be involved in Emergency Planning, was so important.
9. The Committee sought details on the roles elected representatives had within the Plan. Councillors would be expected to lead on consultation and assessment if long-term impacts on their community, and help identify gaps in service provision. The Committee considered that utilising Area Boards as a hub for wider community areas to improve preparedness and risk assessment should be emphasised, and noted that the existence of Plans still relied heavily on effective communication to and ability of local responders. It was also agreed a requirement to brief all councillors on major events be included within the Plan, to enable councillors to communicate that information to the community areas.
10. In response to queries it was stated around 1/3 of Town and Parish Councils in Wiltshire had associated Emergency Plans, but that this represented an increase on the past and a move in the right direction, though further work was required to encourage Parishes to complete these.
11. The Committee requested further details of how the responsibility toward Emergency Planning was being embedded with council staff, and it was stated the requirement was now included a part of induction training, targeted work with specific teams was undertaken, and many more service teams consulted and engaged around events, such as a member of the Schools team being present in the Emergency Planning room during the response to the 2014 floods.
12. Details were sought on ensuring the appropriate officers and teams were adequately resourced for the work required, and it was stated that a general fund existed to cover all emergencies to ensure adequate resourcing. It was also stated ensuring contracts with service providers and contractors took account of responsibilities or expectations in the event of emergency events was a vital part of ensuring business continuity and a key part of the Plan.
13. The ongoing Middle Eastern-European migration crisis was raised as an example of a national concern which might, in time, impact upon Wiltshire, and it was stated the Council had been working with partner agencies to discuss what role Wiltshire could and should have in such an issue.
14. The Committee accepted as stated in paragraph 5 that the Plan would be reviewed in response to emergency events so that lessons would be learned immediately, but queried the timescale of the document in the event no such events occurred, and

were informed the document had been designed to cover a maximum of a 2 year period before being re-evaluated in its totality.

15. The Committee considered how Scrutiny could add value to the development and monitoring of the Plan, and considered that as it was an evolving document, it would be beneficial for each Select Committee to consider the plan at some point with a focus on their specific remit, and forward any comments and conclusions to the Cabinet Member.
16. The Committee also acknowledged the excellent work of the team preparing the Plan, noting the significant improvements in the council's operations and planning as presented at the meeting, and hoped further improvements would build upon that work.

Conclusion

17. **That Cabinet and Council take into account the comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in considering the draft Integrated Emergency Management Plan.**
18. **To recommend all Select Committees consider including relevant assessment of the Integrated Emergency Management Plan on their Forward Work Programs and in order to further embed the Plan into the work of the Council and partner services.**

Councillor Simon Killane

Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

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