

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

23 October 2012

Subject: Review of Wiltshire Council's Recovery Plan

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

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary

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

Proposal

That Cabinet:

- a) notes this report;**
- b) approves the Recovery 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 Recovery 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 in assisting communities to recover from major incidents and other significant events.

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 Recovery Plan, and to recommend its approval and adoption to Council.

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 plans that are appropriate, up to date and kept in readiness for responding to incidents.
- 2.2 The Recovery Plan sits alongside the Major Incident Plan which was considered by Cabinet at its meeting in July. It provides a framework for council services to assist communities to return to a state of normality. The design of the plan complies with Government guidance on response and recovery. It is modular in concept so it can be evoked either in whole or in part, and sets out responsibilities for specific service directors and heads of service.
- 2.3 The plan has been the subject of internal consultation. The consultation period lasted from 25 May to 13 July. The plan was sent out to CLT members and all service directors, asking that they pass it on to all relevant heads of service for views and comments.

3. Main Considerations for the Council

- 3.1 The aim of the Recovery Plan is to establish the processes and procedures necessary for any Wiltshire community to overcome and/or adapt to the effects resulting from a significant disruptive challenge, whatever the cause.
- 3.2 The recovery effort will commence as soon as possible after the initial incident. This means that the council will be involved in both response and recovery at an early stage, which is likely to severely test our resilience

and resources. Wiltshire Council will take the lead for the recovery phase following any incident.

3.3 The objectives of the plan are:

- to establish a common set of processes and procedures to cope with the varying scales of any incident which could affect Wiltshire
- to outline the recovery structure and responsibilities for the strategic coordinating board, the tactical recovery groups and the operational recovery teams
- to identify key personnel within the management structures of the local responding agencies to take on management roles within the plan
- to enable engagement with the communities within Wiltshire through the community area boards to contribute to the recovery of their own communities
- to provide firm guidance on the formal handover process from the response phase to the recovery phase with particular regard to the legal requirements
- to compliment and support the arrangements established within local and national plans and guidance in respect of response and recovery arrangements
- at all times to ensure that the religious and cultural rites and customs of any individual affected by the recovery process are taken into account
- at all times to ensure that the requirements of vulnerable members of the affected community are met in a caring and dignified manner.

3.4 The plan would be triggered if one of the following were to occur:

- loss of or severe damage to homes and businesses
- loss of community facilities and/or amenities
- severe damage to the natural environment
- disruption of services to the community
- loss or severe disruption to the supply of essential goods (food, water etc.)
- disruption to utility supplies
- disruption to the infrastructure
- disruption to the economy and businesses.
- Multiple loss of life i.e. pandemic flu

3.5 The Recovery Plan is designed around a set of principles which recognise that recovery is an enabling and supportive process which is best approached on a community development perspective. In order to assist any community in the recovery following an incident it is important for that community to fully engage with the process and to some extent manage its own recovery. To this end training is being arranged for parish and town councils through Area Boards to assist them in emergency planning and community resilience.

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. Following this training an exercise will be held to test the practical implementation of the plan.

4. Environmental and climate change considerations

4.1 The Recovery 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, setting up of temporary shelters or even temporary mortuaries with all the related requirements for heating and lighting.

5. Equalities Impact of the Proposal

5.1 The purpose of the Recovery Plan is to provide support to individuals and communities, assisting their resilience when affected by 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 Recovery Plan is not approved then the council could be criticised for not having an appropriate, up to date plan, which may result in failure to deliver the required services and support following an incident. 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 following an incident or event 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.

8.2 Approval of the Recovery Plan will enable the council to comply with these requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act. 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 Recovery Plan complies with the legal requirements, Government guidance and with the Wiltshire and Swindon LRF procedures, and as such adoption of the revised plan is the best option.

10. Conclusions

10.1. Cabinet is asked to note this report, approve the Recovery Plan and recommends its adoption by Council.

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Background Papers

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None

Appendices

Wiltshire Council Recovery Plan
