

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2015

Subject: Wiltshire Council Integrated Emergency Management Plan

**Cabinet member: Keith Humphries
Health (including Public Health) and Adult Social Care**

Key Decision: Yes

Executive Summary

This report outlines recent improvements and proposed future work to enhance the resilience of Wiltshire Council and the wider community.

In order to capture learning from recent incidents and streamline the authority's response, three existing plans; the Major Incident Plan, Business Continuity Plan and Recovery Plan have been combined into a proposed new single Integrated Emergency Management Plan.

As Wiltshire Council has continued to become more efficient, the Emergency Planning function has evolved to reflect our new structures and to increase our resilience.

This new Integrated Emergency Management Plan is presented to Cabinet for approval, and will require adoption by Full Council, in line with the Council's Constitution. The Overview and Scrutiny has been consulted as part of this process.

In addition to improving the council's level of preparedness, the Emergency Planning Resilience and Response Team has been integral in improving the county's community resilience. This paper therefore also outlines the breadth of work that they have undertaken to achieve this.

Proposals

- 1) The Cabinet is requested to recommend the Integrated Emergency Management Plan for approval by Full Council**
- 2) The Cabinet is requested to note the progress made by the Emergency Planning Team in increasing the resilience of Wiltshire Council and local communities.**

Reason for Proposal

This proposal seeks to formalise and reinforce Wiltshire Council's commitment to continual improvement in response during emergencies, and to support communities becoming stronger and more resilient. The Integrated Emergency Management Plan is a best-practice approach to preparing for emergencies, which will assure partners and communities that Wiltshire Council has planned and prepared for major incidents.

The new Plan replaces three previous documents, and will align the organisation to the highest national and international standards for Major Incident Response, Business Continuity and Recovery.

Maggie Rae
Corporate Director

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

13 October 2015

Subject: Wiltshire Council Integrated Emergency Management Plan

**Cabinet member: Keith Humphries
Health (including Public Health) and Adult Social Care**

Key Decision: Yes

Purpose of Report

1. This is a key decision, as in line with the Wiltshire Council Constitution, Emergency Planning policies must be agreed by Full Council, and has been the subject of consultation with overview and scrutiny.
2. Wiltshire Council has a number of statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 ('The Act'). In summary, The Act requires Wiltshire Council to work collaboratively with specified partners to put in place plans and to respond to all stages and types of emergencies.
3. The Council has in place Major Incident, Business Continuity and Recovery Plans in place, this report introduces a single new Wiltshire Council Integrated Emergency Management Plan (Appendix 1). The new plan clearly details the Council's Policy on Emergency Planning, and how the Council will discharge its duties under The Act with respect to Major Incidents, Business Continuity and Recovery.
4. This report also summarises how the Emergency Planning function in the Council has been strengthened and embedded throughout the organisation, with partners, and directly with the community. Examples of good practice are highlighted in Appendix 2.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

5. A major aim of the Wiltshire Council Business Plan is to create safe and resilient communities. The Integrated Emergency Management Plan and new approach to resilience directly helps to deliver this aim by putting in place plans and structures which enable the county to respond effectively in the event of an emergency.

Main Considerations for the Council

6. Wiltshire Council currently has in place a Major Incident Plan (approved by Full Council in November 2012), a Recovery Plan (approved by Full Council in November 2012) and an implemented Corporate Business Continuity Plan.
7. The introduction of an Integrated Emergency Management Plan ('The Integrated Plan') is a major advance in the county's emergency preparedness. It not only

updates and simplifies three critical existing plans but also aligns the authority with recognised international best practice and the learning and experience from recent local incident response such as the widespread flooding in 2014.

8. The Integrated Plan meets statutory duties that are set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (The Act). In particular, the statutory duty under section 2 (1) (d) to maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs, the Council is able to perform its functions so far as to prevent the emergency, or to reduce, control or mitigate its effects.
9. Part 2 of The Integrated Plan addresses the duty in section 2 (1) (d) with an enhanced Major Incident section, which clearly defines triggers and points of escalation.
10. There is a further statutory duty to have business continuity plans in place under s2 (1) (c) of The Act.
11. Part 3 of The Integrated Plan addresses section 2 (1) (c) with a proportionate and streamlined approach to refresh existing business continuity arrangements. The new approach concentrates effort on the highest priority services, and has a 'light-touch' approach to services that are not immediately required in the first few days after a business disruption.
12. Finally, the local authority is the agency responsible for planning for the recovery of the community following any major emergency, as stated in the Emergency Response and Recovery Non Statutory Guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, published by the Cabinet Office.
13. Part 4 of The Integrated Plan addresses this recommendation in non-statutory guidance by putting in place a simple framework for Wiltshire Council to lead the recovery phase of an incident.

Background

14. Wiltshire Council has been incrementally improving its ability to respond to emergencies over the last 2 years. The appointment of new Emergency Planning professionals, integrated within the Public Health and Public Protection team has enabled the delivery of a strategic vision which has vastly increased the authority's overall resilience and sustainability.
15. Changes have concentrated on the key areas of emergency response, community resilience and business continuity.

Emergency Response

16. When our communities need us most, emergency planning is everybody's responsibility. At every level of the organisation, we are applying this cultural shift through our work, and as part of this, a programme of training is being delivered from the strategic level right through to inclusion in every new starter's induction.
17. Emergency response requires a resilient command structure that has a well-trained group of managers. The current command structure at Wiltshire Council has been

improved to include all Corporate Directors and Associate Directors on a strategic (gold) rota, and over 50 Heads of Service on a tactical (silver) rota.

18. The flooding of 2014 lasted over three months in duration, and stretched the ability of Wiltshire Council to respond over a long period of time. Training more people to be able to respond in an emergency has the advantage of being more resilient, with knowledge spread across the whole organisation and crucially, the ability to provide a sustained response during a prolonged incident.
19. Wiltshire Council takes the lead on engagement with the voluntary sector. The Emergency Planning Team has built excellent relations with regional voluntary groups, chairing a revitalised Voluntary Agency Group as part of the Local Resilience Forum. This has been very useful during incidents, when the assistance of the voluntary sector has been requested. For example, during a case of suspected human trafficking, the British Red Cross were central in setting up a reception centre for housing and caring for the victims.
20. Emergency response is predicated on having effective plans in place. The Emergency Planning Team works closely with the Local Resilience Forum to review risks and to put in place plans to prepare for risks that are relevant for Wiltshire.
21. Plans in the past have concentrated on being comprehensive to the detriment of being user-friendly. After a thorough review, the Emergency Planning Team has introduced a new style of simplified plan which is focused on what to do in an emergency situation. The new style plans have been well-received, and adopted by the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum.
22. An important facet of emergency response is to anticipate potential problems. The Emergency Planning Team now provides more comprehensive support to large events, by coordinating the Council's response to identified risks such as child protection, severe weather and highways network management. This approach has increased the safety of high profile events such as the Tour of Britain, Magna Carta pageant and Summer Solstice.

Community Resilience

23. A strategic community resilience programme has been developed through Community Area Boards, to increase the ability of local town and parish councils to better cope during emergency incidents.
24. In the past, individual parish and town councils have been approached by a range of council teams to prepare a variety of plans, such as flood plans, snow plans and emergency plans.
25. A new approach has been pioneered by the Emergency Planning Team, where key Council Departments and the Emergency Services guide the local community on key local risks and how to prepare for them. 6 community area boards have been engaged in the first year of the programme, with training provided to over 50 town and parish councils.

Business Continuity

26. Business continuity is the process of making an organisation resilient, enabling it to continue to operate key services during a disruption. Therefore, in the event of heavy snow, widespread staff sickness or IT failure; essential services to the most vulnerable members of the community will be maintained.
27. The Emergency Planning Team has introduced a new corporate business continuity process that improves the current system by being simpler and proportionate. As a result priority services, such as social care, have put in place more comprehensive plans than less critical services that do not need to be restored immediately.

Safeguarding Implications

28. Any safeguarding issues will be managed through existing safeguarding procedures for children and adults.

Public Health Implications

29. Emergencies threaten the health of our population and can cause both direct or indirect public health risks. The effects on health are extensive and significant, ranging from death and injuries from accidents or injuries, pollution, extremes of heat or cold, to infectious diseases and mental health problems.

Corporate Procurement Implications

30. There are no procurement requirements to implement the Integrated Emergency Management Plan.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

31. The Plan will be applied having regard to equalities legislative duties, council policy and other relevant officer Codes of Conduct.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

32. The world's climate and weather patterns are changing. Global temperatures are rising, causing more extreme weather events, such as flooding - (DEFRA Policy). This trend also increases the probability of storms, flash floods, heatwaves and severe cold, making it vital for the council to be as well prepared as possible. The council is also working with partners to improve the county's long term energy resilience in order to reduce power failures.

Risk Assessment

33. The need for a simple, easy to follow Integrated Emergency Management Plan will provide greater confidence to responders, and therefore better outcomes to the public. The adoption of The Plan will significantly improve command, coordination and response arrangements at the Council, thereby reducing the risk of the Council being unable to provide a satisfactory response to any incident that occurs.

34. The new plan accurately reflects the current procedure for responding to both external and internal emergencies. If the plan is not adopted, there will be a dichotomy between practice and existing plans.

Financial Implications

35. There are no financial implications arising directly from the adoption of the plan, although there is mention of training requirements - these will be absorbed within existing budgets.

Legal Implications

36. The Plan is the over-arching plan that documents the council's duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Through the Local Resilience Forum, Wiltshire Council considers relevant risks and has in place plans to control or mitigate disruptive challenges caused by a variety of risks.

Options Considered

37. Because of the extensive learning from previous incidents, and changes to the organisation, making no change to the current plans was not considered to be a viable option.

Overview and Scrutiny Consultation

38. The Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee received the draft Integrated Emergency Management Plan and covering report at its meeting on 8th September 2015. Deborah Haynes, Consultant in Public Health gave a presentation to the committee focussing on the policy aspects of The Plan, its links to the Business Plan and relevance to the local communities of Wiltshire. The outcome of the meeting is reported in Appendix 3.

Conclusions

39. Wiltshire Council works collaboratively with responders to prepare for and mitigate against serious risks that can affect the county's people and places. It is by having in place a simple and effective plan that the County will be able to coordinate successful responses to future incidents.
40. The new plan takes learning from previous incidents, and puts in place clear triggers for actions. Roles and responsibilities are defined, and a command and control structure now aligns with internationally recognised best practice.
41. The new Integrated Emergency Management Plan will be fully implemented. After 12 months and following each major emergency incident, the plan will be reviewed. If there are any significant amendments, The Plan will return for an appropriate level of overview and scrutiny.

Maggie Rae
Corporate Director

Report Author: Deborah Haynes

Public Health Consultant
October 2015

Background Documents - None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Integrated Incident Management Plan

Appendix 2 – Examples of Emergency Planning Team good practice

Appendix 3 – Overview and Scrutiny Report