

BRIEFING PAPER FOR IMPROVING PLACES SELECT COMMISSION

1.	Date of meeting:	14th September 2016
2.	Title:	A review of the Resilience and Emergency Planning Shared Service Arrangements
3.	Directorate:	Regeneration and Environment

1. Background

Emergency Planning Shared Service Rotherham and Sheffield Councils

The Emergency Planning Shared Service was established in June 2011 to oversee the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity functions of both Rotherham and Sheffield Councils. It comes together to deliver a joint resilience service to both councils.

This combined service shares resources, knowledge, skills and expertise to ensure that the Councils meet the responsibilities placed on them through the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004ⁱ. This, in summary is to plan, prepare, respond and recover from a wide spectrum of emergencies or disruptions that affect the Council's ability to deliver its services including natural or man-made disasters, exotic diseases or failure of utilities.

As a Category 1 responder under the CCA the Council is required to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- put in place emergency plans
- put in place business continuity management arrangements
- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management

Underpinning this shared service is the joint legal agreement which provides an overview of the obligations of both councils on aspects such as commencement and term of the agreement, representation on outside bodies, fraud and irregularity, withdrawal and termination. The agreement also contains provision for a joint committee to be in place for the duration of the agreement. This agreement is attached at Appendix A. Committee business is detailed within the current Terms of Reference contained at Appendix B. At present the Joint Committee is scheduled to meet twice per year, but provision does exist for additional meetings or briefings to be called if deemed appropriate. Essentially this committee is responsible for:

- Overseeing the implementation, development and operational performance of the Service in accordance with the terms of the agreement, including monitoring effectiveness of the service
- Achieving consistent and standardised service standards across the Councils
- Ensuring that the Service is delivered in accordance with agreed national, regional and local priorities.
- considering and approving the “submitted accounts” of the shared service; representing the financial position. The latest set of approved accounts are attached at Appendix C
- Consider options for the proposed revenue and capital budget for the following financial year
- Consider the council risk assessment or review of internal audit reports
- Cooperate with overview and scrutiny of either the committee or service, and discharge any conclusions and recommendations
- Approve a service business plan. The latest business plan is attached at Appendix D

Rotherham MBC - Existing Internal Governance Structure

To support the resilience agenda within the Council, there are currently a number of groups responsible for the governance and assurance (during non-emergency times) as detailed below. These mirror the traditional Gold (strategic), Silver (tactical) and Bronze (operational) hierarchy commonly recognised in command and control structures.

Senior Emergency and Safety Management Team - Responsible for demonstrating sponsorship at a strategic level and setting direction across the Council. Draft revised Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix E for consideration. Note this forum has a remit for both corporate Resilience and Emergency Planning and Health and Safety.

Director Resilience Management Group- Supports the Emergency and Safety Management Team at a tactical level, ensuring compliance with the Council’s statutory functions and making recommendations for strategic approval regarding the Council resilience agenda and preparedness. Terms of Reference are attached as Appendix F for information.

Directorate Resilience Representatives – Within each Directorate a network of individuals is in place, with the responsibility for being a single point of contact for the respective Directorate for issues such as consultation on corporate emergency plans, ensuring resilience arrangements are in place within respective Directorates and liaison with the corporate team to ensure the interests of the Directorate are represented in corporate exercises.

Existing Emergency Response Arrangements

Should an emergency occur, the Council’s response is built on the mechanisms and arrangements as outlined within the Council Borough Emergency Plan. This provides details of internal response arrangements and how these would integrate with a wider, multi agency response, should the incident be of sufficient scale to require this. This planning document is currently being updated, not least to reflect changes to the Council structure, but will also encompass any changes required as a consequence of the content of this report.

Internally, in terms of command and control, the basis is again the traditional Gold, Silver and Bronze hierarchy and utilises a Council Emergency Operations Room, supported by Directorate specific control rooms, if deemed appropriate and proportionate. With the Emergency Planning Shared Service providing support at all levels.

This current approach is illustrated at Appendix G, with the prominent roles highlighted below. Although the shared service sits across both Rotherham and Sheffield Councils, the roles outlined below are fulfilled by Rotherham officers, for and on behalf of Rotherham Council only. There is no expectation to perform the these duties on behalf of Sheffield Council (who have their own arrangements in place). Any cross council working or support would need to be instigated through normal mutual aid arrangements should the need arise.

Borough Emergency Coordinator (BEC) – Currently the Borough Emergency Coordinator is responsible for the control and coordination of the Council’s emergency response to a major incident and as such will be responsible to the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. This duty is discharged on a rota basis, operating 24/7 which ensures that strategic on-call leadership is available should a major incident or emergency occur. The BEC function is currently covered by all permanent Strategic and Assistant Directors (with a few exceptions e.g. Legal Services). At present, fourteen officers fulfil this role. Additionally, the BEC, may be required to fulfil the strategic multi-agency lead for the Council, if multi-agency command and control arrangements are instigated.

Forward Liaison Officer (FLO) - The BEC role is complemented by the Council FLO role, an operational level 24/7 standby role responsible for representing the Council at the scene of any incident where support is requested by Emergency Services or others. Essentially the FLO will be the first point of contact and “eyes and ears” of the Council and remain in contact with the BEC for strategic support.

Emergency Operations Room staff – At a corporate (Silver) level, the holistic emergency response is based on the concept of an emergency operations room that would be activated should a major incident or emergency occur. Written into the Borough Emergency Plan is the ability to operate this room on a sliding scale, i.e. “fully functional” in the event of a significant disruption, or skeleton staffing of key representatives for smaller scale incidents. This room houses representatives from each Directorate (Emergency Liaison Officers), as well as communication and media staff, an Emergency Operations Room Manager, log keepers, report writers, mapping officers etc. All officers currently fulfilling these roles are volunteers and as such, given the changing architecture of the Council over recent years, the pool of volunteers has diminished despite attempts to encourage engagement and participation.

Directorate Emergency Response Arrangements – Alongside the corporate emergency response arrangements, each Directorate has a specific resilience plan, that details how to access discreet services in an emergency situation. This includes key protocols and activation procedures and, should the situation deem it appropriate, the ability to establish a Directorate specific control room to manage this. Given restructures, this arrangement needs to be reviewed and refreshed across Directorates at present and this presents a risk for the Council.

2. Key Issues

The changes to the Council, both at Senior Leadership Team and across all Directorates has inevitably forced a review of the way in which the Council approaches resilience, both to ensure the statutory requirements under the Civil Contingencies Act continue to be met and that all arrangements remain appropriate and proportionate.

Internal Governance Arrangements

Clearly for any resilience programme to be successful, it requires senior and strategic level buy-in and endorsement, which at present is provided through both the Senior Emergency and Safety Team and the Director Resilience Group. Over recent years this engagement has been variable and, going forward, reliability and stability are required.

Each Directorate has historically provided a single point of contact for Emergency Planning and resilience purposes; this has ensured coordination and effective relationships are maintained; again given recent changes this is not in existence within all Directorates at present and therefore presents the residual and associated risks around control and coordination

Emergency Response Arrangements

Historically, the BEC role, as described above, has been performed by Assistant Directors and Strategic Directors, both fulfilling the strategic lead role for the Council internally, but also in multi agency fora. Given the increased frequency this multi-agency dimension has been called on over recent years; particularly through the multiple protest and demonstrations that have occurred across Rotherham Town Centre, this has highlighted that identification of Gold Level representation has on occasion been an issue and could potentially be increased.

The emergency response arrangements, (with the exception of the FLO and BEC role) has been traditionally based on volunteers however, more recently a the role is included in job descriptions ('all employees will be required to undertake emergency planning duties commensurate with the grade of the post'). This recognises that all staff have a role to play in the event of an emergency, largely this will be an extension of their normal duties, under more pressing circumstances. It does however leave a void in the roles identified within the Council emergency operations room, and the availability of trained response staff. Recognising the reduced staffing numbers across the Council this has depleted over recent years, and requires review.

3. Potential areas for consideration

Internal Governance

- A joint review of the role of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee with Sheffield City Council to ensure that it remains effective and fit for purpose.
- A review of Rotherham Council's entire emergency planning governance arrangements, including meeting structures, attendance and terms of reference to ensure that they are robust, effective, efficient and provide the senior leadership team with the reassurance they require. This should include the engagement of the relevant Cabinet Member.

- A review and refresh of resilience arrangements networked within Directorates. The existing group of Directorate representatives is no longer reflective of the current Council structure. As a virtual forum they have proven invaluable in being a point of contact for the corporate team. These arrangements, however would benefit from a review to ensure that they are modern, effective and fit for purpose.

Emergency Response Arrangements

- Consideration should be given to how the Council would like to approach the issue of ensuring both strategic level officer is available to respond and support the internal response and multi-agency dimension to an emergency situation. The present system of one rota for both internal representation and multi-agency representation has been in place for a number of years, although many of those currently on the rota are new to the organisation. Alternatively consideration could be given to separating the current BEC rota with Assistant Director level BEC's to remain the strategic lead for the internal response, and Strategic Director's to adopt a true multi agency Gold commander role; available to respond 24/7 to both planned and unplanned events requiring a strategic Gold input. Clearly this would require training to be refreshed and updated and factored into the implementation plan.
- Review the requirement for appropriate resilience and emergency planning training across all levels within Directorates. This may include bespoke training for specific roles e.g. loggists. Undertake a training needs analysis to inform this process.
- Review the roles and responsibilities of staff required within the Emergency Operations Room to ensure that sufficient trained staff are available at all times
- Agree a 12 month plan and topics for corporate exercising - to ensure that plans are rehearsed, de-briefs take place and that any issues are logged and actions are monitored.

4. Names of accountable officers:

Karen Hanson Assistant Director, Community Safety and Street Scene
Claire Hanson Emergency Planning and Safety Manager

ⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/preparation-and-planning-for-emergencies-responsibilities-of-responder-agencies-and-others>