



City of Westminster

Westminster Scrutiny Commission

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Title: Emergency Preparedness Update

Report of: Sara Sutton: Director Public Protection & Licensing

Cabinet Member Portfolio: Public Protection and Licensing

Wards Involved: All

Policy Context: City for All

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report provides an update for the Westminster Scrutiny Commission on the following items:

- Overview of current activity
- Raising awareness of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity
- Key areas of ongoing work:
 - Standardisation of emergency response capabilities in London
 - A review of Humanitarian Assistance provision
 - Interim Assurance Processes
- Role of Elected Members in Emergency Preparedness

2. Key Matters for the Commission's Consideration

2.1. The Commission are asked to note the contents of this report and provide feedback on the following questions:

- Is the Commission satisfied with receiving an update annually?

- Is there a specific area of focus that the Commission would like a more detailed report?

3. Introduction

- 3.1. An update was provided to the Scrutiny Commission in 2017 on the council's response to the Grenfell Tower Fire and also the terrorist-related incidents that took place in 2017.
- 3.2. The report also highlighted particular areas of learning that had arisen from those incidents and the response to them. These areas of learning are being progressed, with some being completed, such as updating the disaster mortuary, others being tested and explored such as cascade communications to staff and others, for example around Borough Emergency Control Centre operation being scheduled for delivery through EP2020 (see below)
- 3.3. This report addresses specific areas of interest to the Commission: the role of elected members in emergency preparedness and current activity to raise awareness of emergency planning and business continuity with residents and businesses. This report also provides an update on the implementation of measures to improve resilience and preparedness across London and locally.

4. Overview of current activity

- 4.1 The table below highlights some of the core business as usual activity that the Emergency Planning team undertake. Of note are the 17 incidents responded to which include fires and gas leaks as well as the terrorist incident at the Palace of Westminster.

Performance Indicator	2017/18 Total	2018/19 Qtr 2 Update	Comments
ACT Awareness Sessions delivered	9	5	Primacy for coordinating the delivery rests with the police. Internal training will be scheduled early 2019
Argus Sessions delivered	20	Internal 3 External 8	Primacy for coordinating external delivery rests with the police. Internal Council sessions arranged monthly
Incidents Responded to	24	17	BECC activation for Palace of Westminster incident
Emergency Planning Tests or Exercises	8	1 control room exercise 8 Event Tabletops 6 Other external	NYE exercise to be planned
Business Continuity Tests or Exercises	7	0	Service areas are responsible for arranging tests of their internal plans, supported by corporate BC Internal cascade training took place in Q3
Training Sessions Delivered	4	1 LALO 1 Silver 1 Gold 1 Loggist	Further training will be delivered as part of EP2020 implementation

4.2 Significant activity also goes in to planning for and testing ahead of events, including the POTUS visit and Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting.

5. Raising awareness of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity

5.1 One of the duties that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places on the council is to

- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations regarding business continuity management.

5.2 The Council's Contingency Planning team provide advice to businesses in relation to emergency planning, the Council's role within it and also emphasising the importance of business continuity planning. In the financial year to date, 13 such sessions have been delivered and business continuity input provided at a further 8 Project Argus Counter-terrorism Awareness sessions.

5.3 These sessions are typically delivered through Business Improvement Districts or at the request of large organisations. It is recognised that such an approach will often miss many of the City's small and medium sized businesses and organisations. As such, an engagement plan will be written in order to improve the council's awareness raising activity in this regard.

5.4 Information is currently provided on the council's website, including signposting to residents and visitors to advice on preparing for an emergency and tips for recovering from one. The site also includes details of how to report an emergency and contact numbers for both emergency services and utilities.

5.5 The site also includes advice to businesses on the importance of business continuity planning, including contact details for the council Contingency Planning team and other online resources.

5.6 The content and location of this advice will be reviewed in line with the engagement plan above in order to ensure that it is accurate and fit for purpose.

6. Review of Emergency Planning Arrangements in London

6.1 The Local Authorities' Panel commissioned a review of London's local authority (LLA) emergency planning arrangements early in 2016, the review set out a series of recommendations which are designed to ensure that local authorities can continue to provide strong emergency planning services that deliver individual and collective leadership on resilience into the 2020s.

6.2 Alongside this, the Lord Harris review of London preparedness was also published in 2016. The Local Authority Panel considered Lord Harris' report and reported that the concerns of substance outlined by Lord Harris – in terms of local authority operational resilience and capacity to respond - largely match the concerns addressed by the Local Authority Panel's own review.

6.3 Details of these reviews were previously provided to the Scrutiny Commission. A programme of standardisation of emergency response capabilities across London Local Authorities has been developed from these, commonly referred to as EP2020.

7. Westminster EP2020 Implementation

7.1 The aim of EP2020 is to standardise LLA response capabilities across six areas of work: Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC); Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO); Rest Centres; Friends and Family Reception Centres; Survivor Reception Centres and wider Humanitarian Assistance. This includes standardising ways of working (Concept of Operations), roles and staff training.

7.2 The Council has committed to participating fully in this standardisation process.

7.3 A pan-London implementation plan has been developed with a target for completion of implementation of CONOPS, BECC and LALO by May 2019 and for Emergency Centres of September 2019. An implementation plan for Westminster has been written with a view to implementing in advance of these deadlines.

7.4 Implementation will include changing and updating current processes within the council's emergency plan; reviewing staffing levels; delivering updated staff training and then validating implementation through testing and exercising.

8. Humanitarian Assistance

8.1 A review of humanitarian assistance arrangements across Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster is being undertaken by Adults Social Care & Health, Children's Services and Housing services.

8.2 The aims of the proposal under consideration are to:

- ensure consistency in the planning and provision of humanitarian or welfare assistance in major incidents across the two boroughs
- rationalise the training and support of responders on a Bi-borough basis
- ensure resilience for all welfare response roles.

8.3 The aim of this proposal is to improve consistency across the two boroughs; rationalise the training and support of responders and provide greater resilience for all Welfare Response roles.

8.4 The proposal is under consideration. Any changes will be compliant with and delivered in conjunction with EP2020.

9. Interim Assessment Process

- 9.1 An externally commissioned report, (Sean Ruth Report, February 2018) identified the need for London Local Authorities (LLAs) to enhance the assurance of their preparedness and capability to provide a response in support of members of public to, and lead the recovery of the community from, emergencies.
- 9.2 In response, the Local Authorities Panel approved significant changes to the current Minimum Standards for London and set in motion a process to replace them with Resilience Standards for London by the autumn of 2019.
- 9.3 Whilst these new standards are being consulted upon and developed over an 18 month period, there is an interim assurance process (IAP). The aim of the IAP is to help boroughs transition to the new resilience standards and to help verify progress towards standardisation.
- 9.4 The IAP consists of a self-assessment against 32 standards followed by a peer challenge process held at a sub-regional level. The outcomes are then discussed at a Chief Officer level with a combined pan-London report compiled.
- 9.5 The self-assessment for Westminster has been completed and peer challenge is scheduled for late November 2018. The self-assessment identifies three broad areas of development:
- Borough Emergency Co-ordination Centre staffing and training will be improved through the EP2020 implementation process.
 - There are likely to be some challenges around staffing and resourcing rest, reception and humanitarian assistance centres which will be addressed through joint planning with People's Services as part of the second stage of EP2020 implementation, as outlined above.
 - A plan needs to be developed around engaging and working with the community and voluntary sector to work effectively and collaboratively in response to emergencies.

10. Role of Elected Members in Emergency Preparedness

- 10.1 While it is not the role of a member/ward councillor to get directly involved in the delivery of the strategic, tactical or operational coordination elements of the response or recovery, elected members have an important role to play in emergency planning.
- 10.2 This is not just being involved in response and recovery but also through engaging with planning and preparation to ensure resilience and readiness. This involves being aware of the responsibilities of the council, being aware that appropriate plans are in place and in fulfilling their role as civic leaders through providing reassurance to the community. Members can also assist by providing relevant local knowledge and helping to identify the needs of individuals and the wider community. Conversely, they can communicate information to the public and media as required by the local authority Gold.

- 10.3 It is the responsibility of local authority Gold to notify elected members of an incident or emergency and to provide any appropriate updates. This may be done directly or through the council's communications team. Enquiries or information in relation to the incident should be communicated back in to the council through the communications team.
- 10.4 A more detailed report for elected members introducing key elements of emergency planning and their role within it accompanies this report.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the
Background Papers please contact Mark Chalmers x6032
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Overview of Westminster and pan-London Emergency Planning Arrangements: A guide for elected members

BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A