

Title: Update on Emergency Planning and Business Continuity

Portfolio	Community
Ward(s) Affected:	n/a

Purpose

To receive a report on the Council's preparedness and resilience to respond to emergencies and fulfil its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Background

1. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on the Council to ensure critical services are resilient in order to respond to disruptive events. This involves ensuring both Emergency and Business Continuity Plans are in place.
2. In order to ensure compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Council employs the services of Applied Resilience Limited, to ensure that the following objectives are met:
 - a. A planning process is in place that encompasses anticipation, assessment, prevention and preparation, so that we are ready to deal with rapid increased demands for services caused by emergencies.
 - b. Surrey Heath Borough Council responds to these increased demands for service efficiently and effectively,
 - c. Surrey Heath Borough Council will have a business continuity process in place to enable critical services to be maintained in the face of a serious and/or widespread disruptive incident, including disruption to services during an emergency,
 - d. Surrey Heath Borough Council will have in place business continuity plans to ensure that critical service provision can be maintained to a pre-determined level during an incident or disruption,
 - e. Surrey Heath Borough Council maintains training and exercising programme for staff to ensure effective implementation of procedures.
3. In Surrey, a planning, training and response framework exists under which, the emergency services, county council, local authorities,

government agencies, health services and other statutory, commercial and voluntary organisations work together, to deliver good practice when responding to emergencies. The Surrey Local Resilience Forum (SLRF) was formed to co-ordinate the response of Surrey's emergency services, local authorities and other Category 1 Responders (as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) to major incidents.

Current Position

4. The main focus of work for the past 6-months at Surrey Heath Borough Council has been on:
 - a. The Borough Emergency Centre
 - b. Business Continuity
 - c. Incident Liaison Officer Recruitment

Borough Emergency Centre

5. Although Surrey Heath Borough Council had existing arrangements for the 'Control Centre', Applied Resilience had concerns that these arrangements could not be scaled to appropriately respond to all levels of incident, up to and including a Major Incident.
6. New arrangements have been devised utilising best practice and knowledge from Applied Resilience, which have been captured in a new Borough Emergency Centre Plan. Key components of this plan include a 'cell structure', whereby dedicated staffing will be available to respond to specific aspects of an emergency using suitably skilled staff.
7. Training will be made available to all staff, and delivered throughout the summer and autumn of 2017 to develop widespread awareness of and preparedness for working in the Borough Emergency Centre.
8. To fill a vital role in the newly developed arrangements, a number of Borough Emergency Centre Coordinators are being recruited by training existing suitable members of staff. A specific job description and person specification has been used as part of a recruitment process whereby the most suitably skilled staff have been identified, with a view to training these individuals in tandem with the all staff Borough Emergency Centre training.

Business Continuity

9. With existing service level business continuity plans in place, Applied Resilience are working with the Business Continuity Champions group to make these plans operationally capable of functioning during a business continuity event. This work is ongoing, and includes the streamlining of

the service level plans, as well as greater integration of these plans with the planning assumptions obtained from Surrey Heath's IT department.

10. As part of the development of a Corporate Business Continuity plan, a Business Continuity exercise will be held to test the existing procedures, and thereby inform the planning process for improved arrangements.

Incident Liaison Officer Recruitment

11. To ensure effective communication between Surrey Heath Borough Council and other responding agencies and emergency services during an incident, the Council maintains a list of Incident Liaison Officers. Applied Resilience felt that greater organisational resilience could be achieved through having more Incident Liaison Officers available.
12. As an out of hours role, a new approach for remuneration of Incident Liaison Officers has been agreed by CMT based on best practice and advice provided by Applied Resilience.
13. With these new arrangements, the role of Incident Liaison Officer has been advertised to staff by Human Resources, and a number of applications have been received.
14. Upon closure of the application window in July, applicants will receive in-house training delivered by Applied Resilience in autumn, and will also attend multi-agency training and exercises.

Resource Implications

15. The council directly employs the services of Applied Resilience Limited to deliver emergency and business continuity planning, including supporting the role of Tactical Lead during an emergency incident in Surrey Heath.
16. The Council also employs an Environmental Health administrator to assist with the maintenance of the Council's emergency plans and policies, including the Council's Emergency Contacts Directory, which is vital in sustaining internal communications and those of the Council with other Category 1 responders.

Recommendation

17. It is recommended that the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee note that:
 - a. The Borough Emergency Centre Plan has been developed and approved by CMT.

- b. Service level Business Continuity arrangements have been reviewed, with Corporate Level arrangements to be exercised and then updated based on the discovered outcomes.
- c. The Council's resilience and capacity to respond to incidents in Surrey Heath is being developed through the recruitment and training of Incident Liaison Officers from internal staff.

Annexes: Nil

Background Papers: Nil

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