

SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 3 – EMERGENCY PLANNING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY

MINUTES

Thursday 2nd February 2017

PRESENT: Councillors: Anthony Young (Chair), *Munir Ahmed* (Substitute for Chris Summers), Kieron Gavan, *Penny Jones* (Substitute for Simon Woodroofe), Anthony Kelly (Vice-Chair), Tariq Mahmood, Gurmit Mann and Mohinder Midha

LBE Officers Present:

Harjeet Bains	- Scrutiny Review Officer
Lynne Duvall	- Housing Consultant
Simon Freeston	- Emergency Management Officer
Mike Ibbitson	- Director of Business Services Group
Lee Teasdale	- Democratic Services Officer
Jeremy Welburn	- Head of Audit & Investigations
Mark Wiltshire	- Interim Director of Safer Communities & Housing
Donna Wootton	- Head of Emergency Management

External Attendees:

John Barradell	- Town Clerk & Chief Executive, City of London Corporation
Mark Sawyer	- Emergency Planning Team, London Fire Brigade

1. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Andrew Steed

Apologies were also received from Councillor Swarn Kang whom the Panel was informed was in hospital, the Panel wished to express their best wishes to Councillor Kang for a speedy recovery.

Councillor Chris Summers was substituted at the meeting by Councillor Munir Ahmed and Councillor Simon Woodroofe was substituted at the meeting by Councillor Penny Jones.

Due to other commitments, apologies were also tendered on behalf of Lord Toby Harris of Haringey who had been invited to speak to the Panel regarding the recent Independent Review of London Preparedness.

2. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 2)

There were none.

3. Matters to be Considered in Private
(Agenda Item 3)

There were none.

4. Minutes (06.12.2016)
(Agenda Item 4)

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Panel which had taken place on 6 December 2016.

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Panel held on 6 December 2016 be agreed as a true and correct record.

5. Organisational Resilience and Business Continuity
(Agenda Item 7)

Due to time constraints, the Chair agreed to consider the IT resilience section of Agenda Item 7 as the first item at the meeting. The Chair invited Mike Ibbitson (Director of Business Services Group) to make a presentation to the Panel on Ealing Council's IT resilience.

Current Status

The Panel were advised that the Council's network currently operated within a 'hub and spoke' model. All Council owned buildings were connected to Perceval House as the central hub, some larger sites also connected to the Greenford Business Centre. All internet connectivity was via Perceval House, as was Office365. Most other sites only had low speed connections.

The Council's telephone system was located in Perceval House and Greenford with connections from both sites to the telephone network. Fixed line connections ran from both sites to the KCOM exchange. Mobile telephony ran on an O2 infrastructure which had a very high availability and resilience.

Email had operated in Office 365 (cloud-based) since 2012 and could be accessed from any device including mobile phones, and could be accessed externally from any location.

With regards to applications, 80 major business systems were supported by ICT, with around 90 further desktop applications supported, most of these were ran from servers based in Perceval House. All Perceval House based applications were backed up to disk at site and at Greenford Business Centre.

With regards to cyber security, a multi-layered firewall defence was in place at Perceval House protecting the network. This was of an aged design now, providing a passive defence. Onsite web security gateways controlled access to the internet; this was also of a passive design. A software security gateway with intrusion protection was configured to protect the Council's websites.

Monthly security vulnerability testing was conducted by an external security company. Yearly internal and external penetration testing was also conducted.

In Progress

During 2017 a new cloud based London Grid (LG) network connections network was being installed, all buildings would connect to this LG cloud. Larger sites would have resilient dual circuits to the LG cloud and Office 365 accessed directly, and all sites would have large increases in network speed and improved Wi-Fi.

The telephony system was also being updated during 2017 and would be located in the cloud (Microsoft Skype for Business, Cloud PBX). The Contact Centre service would also be cloud based (Netcall Liberty Cloud product).

All e-mail, collaboration, video conferencing, messaging etc. would be cloud based and not reliant upon London Borough of Ealing servers to operate. A dedicatee 'express route' would provide high speed connectivity to Office365 from the Ealing network via the LG cloud.

The entire application estate was also under review to ensure future availability and resilience.

With regards to cyber security, new generation firewalls in the cloud would provide an active defence against threats, these threats being automatically sent for analysis by security vendors. Active Cloud based web gateways would control access to the internet, automatically analysing risky sites.

A new stealth networking security solution was designed to secure critical services against unauthorised access by both external and internal parties. Even the network monitoring would need to be authorised to see the secured services.

Questions

The Chair thanked Mr Ibbitson for his presentation and invited Panel Members to comment and ask questions.

Councillor Gavan asked about whether the risks in moving towards more dependence upon cloud systems had been fully considered.

It was advised that many documents were backed up on paper documentation kept in secure warehouses, and adequate safeguarding was felt to be in place.

Councillor Gavan queried whether the Council could fully trust being so dependent upon Microsoft, would they have any 'rights' over the Council data?

It was advised that the Council was the absolute and only controller of all its data. Microsoft gave many assurances about the viability of their cloud package. Moving towards cloud systems was absolutely integral to their business strategy and they could not afford for it to fail. It had been widely adopted, not only in local government, but in central government as well.

Resolved: That the presentation providing an overview of IT resilience in the Council be received by the Panel.

6. Future of Emergency Planning (Agenda Item 5)

The Chair invited Donna Wootton (Head of Emergency Management) to introduce an item on the future of emergency planning in the borough. The item incorporated three documents for the Panel's consideration:

- **An Independent Review of London's Preparedness to Respond to a Major Terrorist Incident** – A review led by Lord Toby Harris, commissioned by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan in May 2016 and published in October 2016.
- **Recommendations for Local Government Emergency Planning and Resilience for the 2020s** – A review led by Mark Sawyer and commissioned by the Local Authority Panel to assess the status of local authority emergency planning in London.
- **West London Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Hub Model** – Ealing Council's proposal for the provision of a local authority shared emergency planning and business continuity hub for West London, produced in July 2016 and circulated to relevant West London directors and chief executives in August 2016.

An Independent Review of London's Preparedness to Respond to a Major Terrorist Incident

John Barradell (Town Clerk & Chief Executive, City of London Corporation) was then invited to address the Panel on the Independent Review of London's Preparedness to Respond to a Major Terrorist Incident.

Mr Barradell stated that it was imperative that local authorities were able to show that they could support the community when they most needed them. Therefore the importance of good officers, good scrutiny, good plans and good testing of those plans to a local authority could not be overestimated.

It was important that the key role of local government in getting services effectively up and running normally again following an incident was recognised. Every authority needed to be in a position where they could give the public full assurance that a senior officer was in place at all times to respond accordingly to an emergency situation.

Testing for potential incidents was a vital part of future planning. An exercise had taken place in which a train crash scenario was replicated underneath part of Waterloo Station. Lessons learnt from this four day exercise were then fed into a report on readiness.

One of the most likely, yet least understood threats going forward was that of cyber-attacks. For local authorities this was not so much a theft of data risk, but rather, the potential for highly confidential individual records being accessed on matters such as

social care, which could be very damaging if taken. A new strategy had been put in place to encourage further cyber resilience.

Questions

The Chair thanked Mr Barradell for the presentation of the report and invited Panel Members to comment and ask questions.

The Chair opened the questions by asking about limited DCLG budgeting for local resilience teams. Did this lead to a scenario where some local authorities were lacking in appropriate levels of emergency planning staff?

Mr Barradell stated that this was often the present perception. He stated though that policies were in place that allowed for efficiencies without a reduction in quality. Discussions had taken place around cross-border sharing of emergency planning, there were concerns however around the officers having the necessary knowledge of the local community required to operate most effectively. Testing was done on the appropriate number of emergency planners; however it was at the discretion of the local authority to make the judgement call.

The Chair shared the concern around practical difficulties in cross-borough planning.

Mr Barradell stated that if there was to be movement in that direction there would be a need for greater standardisation of emergency planning practice, of predictable and core elements, together with the regular sharing of expertise across sub-regions.

Councillor Mahmood asked if new ways of committing acts of terrorism were anticipated and accounted for.

It was answered that a civil risk register was in place that was constantly reviewed and evaluated to measure likelihood vs impact of a wide range of possible scenarios. This was done at a national level, London level and sub-regional level, with the connecting threads found between all.

Recommendations for Local Government Emergency Planning and Resilience for the 2020s

The Chair then invited Mark Sawyer (Local Authority Panel Secretariat) to make a presentation on the paper Recommendations for Local Government Emergency Planning and Resilience for the 2020s.

Mr Sawyer stated that the report introduced a number of steps that if followed would result in the strengthening of individual and collective resilience.

The aim of the review had been to look at the establishment of a corporate resource of professional advice, support and oversight. It sought to strengthen collaborative working so to better utilise local expertise.

It also sought to support a more cost effective and efficient service, increase opportunities for sharing increasingly scarce resources and establish a more robust and meaningful assurance process to improve corporate oversight.

This resulted in a series of 14 recommendations in the report which covered areas such as corporate policy, governance and planning, Duty London Local Authority Gold Arrangements, borough response capability and assurance.

Questions

The Chair made reference to the Duty London Local Authority Gold Arrangements, and the basis on which Chief Executives were assigned to the Chief Lead and Deputy Chief Lead roles. Were protocols in place to ensure that the two roles were not filled by Chief Executives from neighbouring boroughs at any given time?

Mr Sawyer advised that no such protocol was in place; however it was hoped that with 33 to select from, that sensible choices would be made with regards to who to partner in the roles at any given time. If a scenario were to arise in which neither the Chief Lead nor the Deputy Chief Lead were available, there was sufficient confidence that other members would stand up and be available at short notice.

Mr Barradell stated that the report addressed the possibility of using a pool of fewer Chief Executives who were instead trained to a higher standard. Chief Executives needed to fully understand the implications of all the decisions they took as lead as the strength of the local authority response was critical in ensuring a return to 'normality'.

The Chair made further reference to the standardisation of procedures, how would the standard be established?

Mr Sawyer stated that five core response capabilities were in place, each of these was currently under review on achievability in both the short and long term. Standardisation would also be sought on the level of training received and the number of staff available.

Councillor Kelly asked if there were any recent examples of Chief Executives being called into action through the gold arrangements.

It was advised that for gold arrangements to come into place it needed to be an incident where value would be demonstrated through a co-ordinated local authority response. One of the last times this was clearly required was during the period of significant snowfall seen in the winter of 2009/2010. Recent events where there was a possibility of 'scaling up' if events had further continued included the recent Northolt 'Siege', the Croydon tram crash and the North Greenwich bomb threat. Frequent attention was given to 'increased community tensions' in light of the London riots of 2011.

West London Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Hub Model

The Chair then invited Donna Wootton to give a presentation to the Panel on the West London Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Hub Model.

The purpose of the proposal had been to highlight a vision for new ways of working at the sub-regional level to deliver excellent standards of resilience for local authorities and for their local communities. This would have also provided excellent value for money and a consistent strategic buy-in across all participating authorities.

The report was presented to West London chief executives in summer 2016, some interest was shown in the recommendations highlighted in the report, but ultimately the report was not taken further. However, the report was being ‘kept on the table’ as it was felt that it offered a strong direction of travel for future.

Questions

Councillor Kelly asked whether the Emergency Management Team had ever taken advantage of the Council’s apprentice scheme. It was advised that the team did like to get involved and had made use of interns as well, often drafting them to provide administration assistance which allowed more time for officers to concentrate on the drafting of plans.

The Chair asked whether, in light of the lack of interest from others, it was worth progressing with the continuity model as a single authority. It was stated that this was being considered.

Mr Barradell stated that it was unfortunate that many other boroughs did not appear to be showing such an interest and that in three years in his current role, Ealing was the first authority he had come across whose scrutiny process had considered emergency management.

The Chair then thanked all officers and external attendees who had contributed and drew the item to a close.

Resolved: That

- (i) the presentation providing an overview of An Independent Review of London’s Preparedness to Respond to a Major Terrorist Incident be received by the Panel;
- (ii) the presentation providing an overview of the Recommendations for Local Government Emergency Planning and Resilience for the 2020s be received by the Panel; and
- (iii) the presentation providing an overview of the West London Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Hub Model be received.

7. Rehousing Arrangements for Emergency Evacuees (Agenda Item 8)

Following on from the previous meeting of the Panel, Mark Wiltshire (Interim Director of Safer Communities & Housing) and Lynne Duvall (Housing Consultant) were invited back to the Panel to provide further feedback on the Council’s rehousing arrangements for evacuees in the event of an emergency situation in the borough. Included within the latest report was a flowchart indicating proposed arrangements and several options for improvements in the event of a civil emergency.

Current arrangements for dealing with emergency re-housing relied on the routine arrangements in place to provide emergency accommodation for homeless households, meeting the Council’s statutory duty.

The emergency accommodation needed to be affordable to the Council and therefore usually involved the use of nightly-paid bed and breakfast facilities. All of the establishments used were inspected by housing staff before coming into use. These were also followed up with scheduled spot-checks to ensure that the minimum standards continued to be maintained. Setting the Standards (STS) was an automated system administered by the GLA that assisted boroughs in complying with the code of practice.

Where a customer needed to be accommodated outside of office hours they were dealt with by emergency services delivered through GDIT (General Dynamics Information Technology), the contracted corporate out of hours provider. There was an escalation procedure in place when GDIT were unable to access suitable accommodation via the emergency call-out officer. The call-out officer was authorised to agree higher cost accommodation under certain circumstances.

In December 2016, 32 emergency out of hours placements were arranged, many of these were for a single night. Customers placed by the emergency service were told to attend an assessment interview the next working day; though not all did so. On average, the normal working hours operation arranged 82 emergency placements for each month in 2016.

A number of concerns had been raised following the Northolt incident, some accommodation used was felt to be unsuitable for the type of households placed within them. B&B arrangements were cited for a number of reasons, including cleanliness, location, treatment by other guests and lack of flexibility in terms of check-out times. Nevertheless, B&B accommodation remained the most affordable housing alternative given the escalating cost of accommodation in London. B&B providers were also experienced in dealing with clients in emergency re-housing situations.

The government document 'Evacuation and Shelter Guidance' (January 2014) provided best practice advice which focussed upon short-term (up to 72 hours) and medium-term (weeks or months) arrangements. This guidance had been used to help inform a Council flowchart proposing emergency arrangements for evacuees.

The proposed arrangements in the flow-chart included:

- Short-term arrangements – opening a rest centre.
- Exploring friends and family options
- Exploring insurance cover arrangements
- Medium-term placements
- Large-scale, medium-term accommodation

Actions had been identified for helping to deliver an improved emergency response. These included:

- Identifying potential centres across the borough and access arrangements for emergencies. Telephone and internet access would be essential, as well as basic sanitation capacity.
- Costing the rest centres to facilitate swift and cost effective decision making.
- Exploring options for households to be accommodated with friends or family at an early stage.
- Identifying support organisations that could be called in to assist.
- Developing assessment criteria where B&B's may be deemed unsuitable
- The consideration of block booking an annual number of commercial hotel beds and whether funding could be made available.

Questions

The Chair then invited Panel Members to comment and ask questions.

Councillor Mahmood made reference to a recent incident in Perivale where three houses suffered fire damage. In such a scenario, where it was found that the occupant had no insurance cover arrangements, what were the Council's liabilities?

It was advised that if the occupant had lost their home they would be presented as homeless and their level of need would be approached within that context (that of the 'Statutory Duty of Homelessness'). Officers tried to deal with every case within its own specific context, however, the offer could only reflect what was available on that day.

Councillor Jones asked whether extra support and provision was in place for dementia patients or residents with mental health issues.

It was advised that such issues would be quickly picked up as part of the registration process at rest centres. Social Care had a 24/7 on call service in place and a relevant officer would be requested to appear on site as soon as possible.

Councillor Jones stated that staff involved in front line services were now undertaking 'Dementia Friends' training. Was this also arranged for emergency housing staff? Lynne Duvall stated that whilst staff did undertake mental health training, they had not had similar training for dementia, and that this would be taken forward.

The Chair expressed concern around the short-term use of B&B's, Had the possible usage of airport hotel accommodation been researched any further?

It was advised that as part of the report, further options for improving the current offer had been looked at, with the possibilities around block-booking a location for a number of nights, such options would be further considered going forwards. However, it was noted that vacancies in airport hotels were also surprisingly limited at all times of year.

Councillor Gavan stated that he understood the wish for compassion in such scenarios, but there needed to be consistency in the offer of emergency accommodation regardless of the context. If the accommodation is considered appropriate, then it should be considered appropriate for all.

Officers assured the Panel that the best possible outcome for people at that given moment was always sought. Assessment of individual need was paramount to ensure that people were sent to suitable accommodation.

The Chair thanked the officers for the update and drew the item to a close.

Resolved: That

- (i) the update on the Council's rehousing arrangements for evacuees in the event of an emergency situation be received; and
- (ii) officers be asked to implement dementia friends training for officers involved in the arrangement of emergency accommodation.

8. Verbal Update on Current Emergency Incidents in the Borough (Agenda Item 6)

Simon Freeston (Emergency Management Officer) provided a brief update to the Panel on recent emergency incidents in the borough. It was advised that five incidents had required call-out since the last panel meeting. Two of these were specifically highlighted to the Panel.

- Health Emergency – An outbreak of Influenza A had taken place in care homes across London. Emergency Management staff were in position to coordinate and support the Health Investigation Unit if escalation had been required.
- Fire at the Aeronaut Pub, Acton – On New Year's Eve/early hours of New Year's Day a serious fire had broken out at the Aeronaut Pub in Central Acton. Luckily no bystanders were hurt, though two policemen were checked for smoke inhalation. The pub was gutted; therefore a temporary structure licence was required for hording to surround the remains.

One family was evacuated as a precaution, and due to the proximity to the venue, Acton Police Station, including all in custody had to be evacuated, which caused some logistical issues for the Police during such a busy period, when many officers were called away tending to New Year activities in Central London.

Resolved: That the verbal update on current emergency incidents in the borough be received.

9. Organisational Resilience and Business Continuity (Agenda Item 7 cont.)

The Panel returned to the conversation on organisational resilience and business continuity.

The Panel were advised that each year the Business Continuity Institute produced the 'Horizon Scan' which highlighted changes in top perceived risks and emerging trends. As of 2012 the top threat was perceived to be unplanned IT and telecom outages, by 2016 the top threat had changed to cyber-attacks.

The Chair asked if appropriate steps were being taken by the Council on cyber security. The Emergency Management Officer advised that close work took place with IT, and national incidents were responded to appropriately. For example a recent attack in Lincoln had resulted in the banning of zip files (which had been the source of the Lincoln breach) and the quarantining of suspect items.

Risk Management

Jeremy Welburn (Head of Audit & Investigations) was invited to address the Panel on risk management procedures.

Risk management was in place to identify, evaluate and prioritise possible and probable uncertainties over, threats to, and opportunities for the achievement of corporate objectives.

It was also used to implement mitigating strategies to control, minimise or eliminate and monitor uncertainties and threats, or to maximise the realisation of opportunities.

In order to be successful, it relied upon a cohesive and co-ordinated approach involving managers and staff who acted as the front-line for recognising and evaluating risks, specialist and generalist risk functions who defined and advised on the management requirements for certain cross-organisational risks, and internal audit who provided independent assurance on the effectiveness of the risk management process.

The risk management process had seen an overhaul in November 2016. Prior to this, possible impacts and likelihood of identified risks were scored on a 4x4 scale. Risks were identified at a service level, and those risks deemed by directorates to be strategic were escalated to the Corporate Strategic Risk Register reviewed by the Corporate Board and Audit Committee.

The drawbacks to this approach were that the Strategic Risk Register led to silo working and cross-organisational risks were fragmented or not fully reflected within escalated directorate risks. Also, there was no guidance on what levels of residual risk were acceptable and there was poor progression continuity in the definitions of the various impact levels.

Post November 2016, gross and residual impacts and likelihood of identified risks were now scored on an impact-weighted 5x5 scale supported by improved definitions for various impact levels.

Only high gross risks at service level were escalated for inclusion in the Directorate Risk Register. Strategic risks that were included in the Corporate Risk Register were determined independently by Executive Directors. In so doing, the Corporate Board was able to take a view on how effectively cross-organisational risks were being managed. Only risks with a low residual score were deemed to be at an acceptable

level; all other risks needed to have their mitigating strategies enhanced unless, for medium residual risks, such enhancements would not be cost-effective.

The Chair asked about the reporting method used. It was advised that quarterly updates on risk management were taken to the Corporate Board.

The Chair then drew the item to a close, thanking officers for their contributions.

Resolved – That the presentations providing overviews of organisational resilience and risk management in the Council be received by the Panel.

10. Panel Operations and Updated Work Programme (Agenda Item 9)

The Chair advised the Panel that two training events were forthcoming, which all Panel Members were invited to attend.

- SaferCity – A pan-London exercise to be held from 10am on Thursday 9 February 2017 in the Perceval House Emergency Control Centre.
- Ealing Borough Resilience Forum – To be held on Friday 17 March 2017 from 10am in Room M5.12 on the 5th floor of Perceval House.

The next meeting of the Panel would be the final meeting and would consider the draft final report.

Resolved: That the updated work programme be received.

11. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 10)

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting of Scrutiny Review Panel 3 would take place on Tuesday 11 April 2017.

Councillor Anthony Young, Chair.

The meeting ended at 8.55pm.