

## London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date** 05/12/2022

**Subject:** Annual Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Report

**Report of:** Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion & Community Safety

**Report author:** Denise Prieto – Emergency Planning & Resilience Manager

**Responsible Director:** Matthew Hooper, Chief Officer Safer Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services

---

### Summary

The Council has responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to plan and respond to emergencies and to have business continuity arrangements in place to reduce the risk of service disruption.

This annual report provides an overview of activity over the previous year and the priorities and work plan for the forthcoming year. The report highlights areas of work for the new financial year to ensure continuous improvement in the service.

---

### Recommendation

That Cabinet notes the report which looks back on work undertaken over the last 15 months (running 01/07/21 to 30/09/22) and the work plan for the remainder of 2022/2023.

---

**Wards Affected:** All

---

### H&F Values

<b>Our Values</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the H&amp;F Priorities</b>
Creating a compassionate council	<i>The care and welfare of our residents especially in emergencies is at the top of our agenda.</i>
Doing things with residents, not to them	<i>Building Community Resilience is a priority for H&amp;F to ensure our</i>

	<i>communities are prepared and can respond and recover quickly in times of emergency. We want to ensure that our communities can help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements emergency services and reduces the impact of an emergency on our community both in the short and long term.</i>
--	---

## **Financial Impact**

Hammersmith & Fulham have not had to deal with any large-scale major incidents (other than the Covid-19 pandemic) since June 2018 but have responded to smaller local incidents throughout the year as detailed in this report.

For financial year 2021/22, the Emergency Planning Service was able to manage within its service budget of £338,000. This included additional investment in the service of £50,000 awarded as part of the Council's medium term financial planning process from 2021/22. This ongoing additional investment should ensure that the service work plan can continue to be effectively delivered within the approved budget. As such, there are no expected financial pressures for 2022/23, but the reactive nature of this service can result in unplanned and unexpected expenditure. The budget will continue to be monitored, reported and managed as part of the Council's corporate revenue monitoring process.

*Nizar Lalji, Senior Accountant, 30 June 2022*

*Verified by: Sukvinder Kalsi, Director of Finance, 31 October 2022*

## **Legal Implications**

Section 2 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires the Council as a category one responder to carry out risk assessments, and to complete emergency plans and business continuity arrangements.

*John Sharland, Senior solicitor (Contracts and procurement), 28 June 2022*

---

## **Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report**

None

---

## BACKGROUND

The council has a robust suite of emergency plans in place, and these were activated several times over the previous year. There are national and regional frameworks in place that govern how local plans are produced.

Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and supporting regulations and statutory guidance establish a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at the local level. The Act divides local responders into 2 categories, imposing a different set of duties on each. The Council, as a Category 1 responder is at the core of the response to most emergencies in the borough.

The Council is subject to the full set of civil protection duties under the Act and is required to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform our contingency planning
- put in place emergency plans and 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 in the event of an emergency
- share information and 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

## H&F's EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. The Council's Strategic Priorities for any **emergency response** are to:
  - a) provide support to incident responding agencies as required.
  - b) support the vulnerable.
  - c) maintain continuity of council service provision.
  - d) provide assistance and information to Hammersmith and Fulham's communities and businesses
  - e) provide community leadership.
  - f) and assist the return to 'normality'.

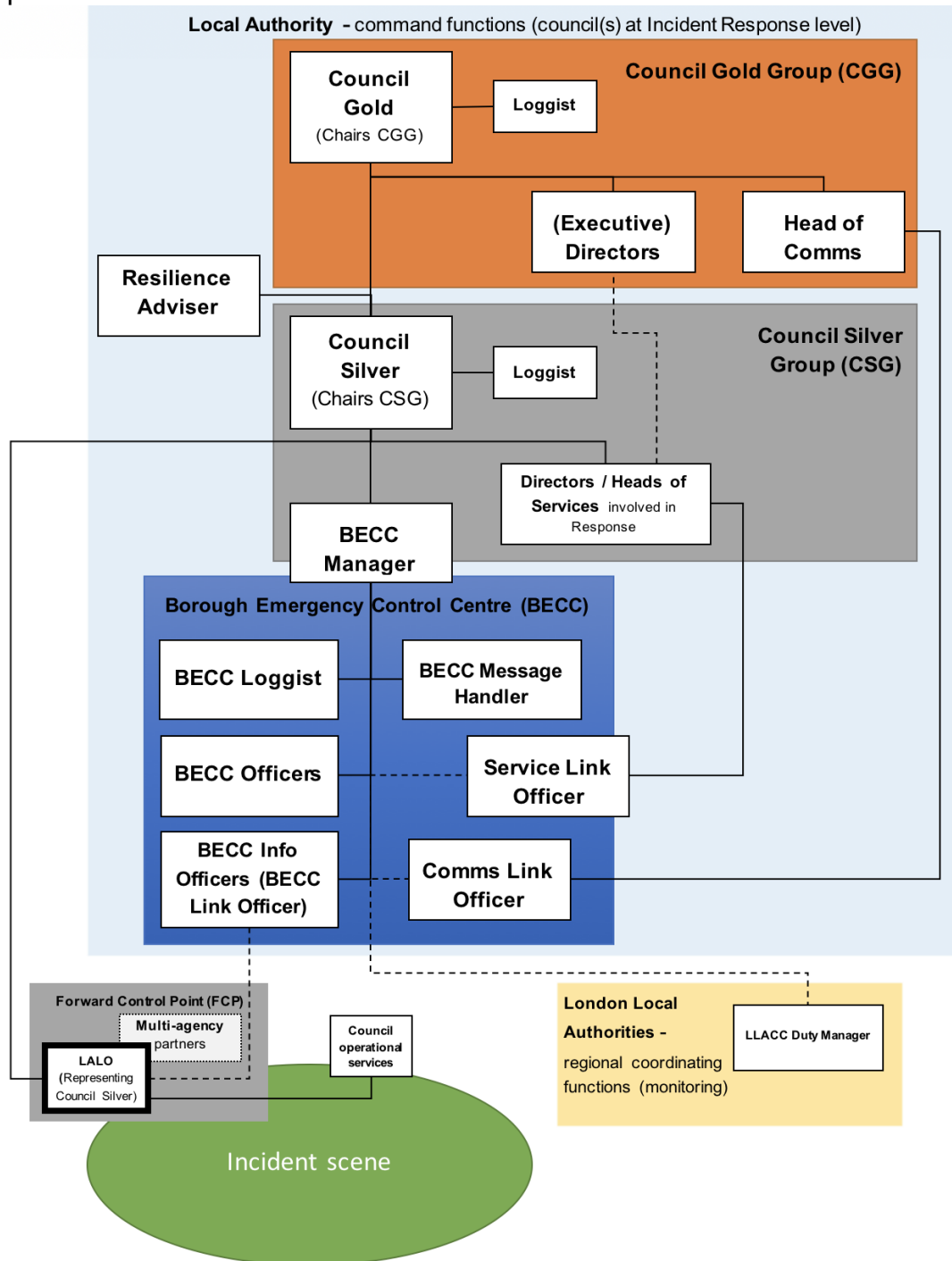
The Council's Strategic Priorities for **recovery from an emergency** are to:

- a) provide strong and visible leadership during the recovery phase.
- b) support the health and welfare of the borough's communities.
- c) assist in the restoration of the built and natural environment.
- d) assist communities and business to return to normality.
- e) monitor financial matters and pursue funding and other assistance.

Building Community Resilience to ensure our communities are prepared and can respond and recover quickly in times of emergency is a priority for the borough.

## EMERGENCY PLANNING RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS

2. The emergency planning procedures in H&F are quite clear. This is set out in the following diagram. In this structure, Gold is the strategic lead (selected from an established rota of trained staff on call), Silver the tactical lead (selected from an established rota of trained staff on call) and Bronze the operational lead.



3. The emergency services may ask a council to provide care to members of the public who have been evacuated from their homes and require temporary accommodation/shelter. Such care can be provided at emergency reception centres set up for that purpose. There are arrangements in place to use St Pauls Business Centre, the Lyric Theatre and QPR football club as emergency reception centres. We also have community halls across the borough that can be utilised as emergency reception centres.

## **RESOURCES**

4. The Emergency Planning Team for H&F currently consists of three members of staff. One full time Emergency Planning & Resilience Manager, one full time Emergency Planning Officer and one full time Business Continuity Manager.
5. The wider emergency response team is made up of officers across the council who are trained in emergency response roles. On-call Gold, Silver, Welfare Bronze, Reception Centre Manager, Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO) and Communications are specific roles that are in operation 24/7,365 days a year.
6. The Emergency Planning team circulates a confidential **Weekly Orders** document to selected officers. The document sets out the rotas for officers that are responsible for different levels of command and control in the event of an emergency incident and includes key contact numbers.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE & RECOVERY PLAN, PARTS 1, 2 & 3**

7. These documents assist in the event of an emergency to provide relevant operational information regarding roles, departments and partner agencies so that the correct tactical decisions can be made, and the correct resources applied/deployed. The documents are reviewed every year or following any major emergency or major service disruption.
8. During an emergency or a major business continuity disruption, several Council meetings may be called to support decision making and response activity at strategic and tactical levels. The key groups which may need to convene are the Gold Strategic Group, the Silver Group, the Service Resilience Group (SRG), and the Recovery Coordination Group. The roles of these groups are detailed within the Emergency Response & Recovery Plan.
9. The Council holds quarterly Borough Resilience Forum meetings chaired by the Interim CEO. These meetings bring together our multi-agency partners responsible for emergency planning to share information and discuss issues. The attendees include the blue lights, MPS, LFB and LAS, our health partners, utility representatives, voluntary organisations, the Environment Agency, Ministry of Defence and the Met Office. H&F have held 2 meetings this year, the next one will be held in July 2022

## **BOROUGH EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE, (BECC)**

10. This acts as the hub for managing and coordinating activities during an incident by gathering, verifying, displaying and sharing intelligence/information from the Council and other partners. The BECC team will operate and support SLT, SRG, Silver, Departments and outside agencies.

## **MUTUAL AID ARRANGEMENTS**

11. Under London's Local Authority Gold arrangements, any borough can request mutual aid when facing an emergency incident. A request is submitted to the London Resilience Group (LRG) and signed off by London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) The process for submitting a request is outlined in the London Mutual Aid Agreement.
12. There is also a West London Mutual aid agreement. Establishing mutual aid agreements between Boroughs is an effective way of ensuring we can practically support each other equitably during periods of disruption. This includes any borough that may require assistance affecting their capacity and capability in which to respond. This could include staffing, specific expertise (subject matter experts), project leadership/management support and physical resources.

## **ENSURING PREPAREDNESS**

13. The London Resilience Group (LRG) are the overarching body responsible for resilience arrangements adhered to by the 33 London Boroughs, after the Civil Contingencies Act was made law in 2004.
14. All London Boroughs were asked to complete an assurance checklist, Part 1, considering learning from the Grenfell Tower Fire (based on recommendations from the Phase 1 Inquiry Report) and Part 2, Winter Preparedness (based on the Resilience Standards for London). We submitted our return to the London Resilience Team on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Our return, based on the set Red, Amber and Green status, was 100% Green for Part 1 and, for Part 2, under a different set of headings of "Developing, Established or Advanced" we returned with a 100% Established across all categories. **Please see Appendix 2.**

## **INCIDENTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH – 01/07/21 to 30/09/22**

15. As referenced above the borough have not had to deal with any large-scale major incidents (other than the Covid-19 pandemic) since June 2018 but have responded to smaller local incidents throughout the year. It is also conscious of the previous terror threats that took place in London, one at Parson's Green, and the tragic fire at Grenfell.

16. The borough's emergency responders dealt with a diverse range of incidents during the year including serious fires, road traffic collisions, flooding, power outages, serious violence and COVID related incidents amongst others
17. There have been incidents requiring emergency planning deployments and response(s) by the council to support our emergency response colleagues the most notable of these were:
  - a. 12/07/21 flooding event where a number of H&F basement flats were affected,
  - b. 18/02/22 and Storm Eunice
  - c. Fire at Stebbing House on 21/06/22
  - d. Fire at Fraser Court 07/08/22

Each of these incidents, and our responses, are explained further below:.

**18. Flooding Event – 12/07/21 and 25/07/21.**

19. In summer 2021 there were two significant surface water flooding events with the borough particularly affected by the one on the 12/07/21.

No significant impacts were experienced from the flooding event on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July. On-call Duty Gold held a number of meetings with Silver and Bronze operational staff and the CEO during the event to ensure that we were responding effectively.

The Novotel Hotel was identified as a rest centre and was staffed by the on-call rest centre manager and officers in case there was a need for residents to seek shelter. This subsequently was not required.

15 households were placed into temporary accommodation while damage to their properties was assessed, and subsistence given.

The H&F Flood page on the website was reviewed and updated to ensure the information was comprehensive and useful for residents before, during and after a flood. The H&F Extreme Rainfall Plan was also updated to take into account information gathered from a subsequent debrief meeting.

A Flood Mitigation Steering group was also set up which looks at the wider issues around potential flooding in the borough and how to mitigate these where possible. H&F also have a Multi-Agency Flood plan which was updated and submitted to Defra in November 2021.

A multi-agency flooding exercise was also held in January 2022. The aim of which was to test a multi-agency response to a flooding incident in the borough. For more information, please see paragraph 41 of this document.

20. **Storm Eunice - 18<sup>th</sup> February 2022** on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2022 an amber weather alert was issued by the Met Office, warning of strong and disruptive winds which could lead to a possible danger to life, disruption to transport, fallen trees and damage to structures on the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 2022.

H&F stood up its emergency response arrangements and asked teams to

mitigate and monitor potential issues, putting in place extra resources (in house and outsourced) to deal with housing repair calls, fallen trees, debris flying around structural damage and other building control issues.

During the storm, H&F responded to numerous Highways requests, road closures due to obstructions on the Highway. Waste management contractors cleared up fallen debris. The arboriculture service responded to at least 28 incidents of fallen trees / limbs. Building control were called out numerous times to assess structural damage to buildings. Housing arranged temporary accommodation for evacuated households. Members were updated with a summary of actions around to borough taken before Storm Eunice hit and actions taken during Storm Eunice.

A debrief meeting was held to discuss any issues arising from the response, what went well, what could be improved. This information has contributed to the creation of a Response to High Winds plan which is now included in our suite of severe weather plans.

21. **Stebbing House Flat Fire – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2022** A residential fire occurred on the 12<sup>th</sup> floor of a 21-storey high rise building on Queensdale Crescent, Hammersmith W11. The fire was quickly brought under control by the fire brigade. H&F set up an emergency reception centre in a local community hall.

Housing personnel and emergency response officers were also in attendance providing assurance.

Displaced residents affected by the fire were provided with alternative accommodation. Two residents were taken to hospital with minor injuries and smoke inhalation. The fire was thought to be caused by an e-bike battery being charged in the flat which subsequently caught fire.

H&F held a debrief meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July to discuss any issues arising from the response and to identify any lessons learned.

Housing have been and continue to offer support to any residents affected by the fire.

The majority of residents who were offered temporary accommodation are back in their homes. Relevant members and portfolio holders were continually updated during and post incident re actions being taken.

22. **Fraser Court Flat Fire, Heathstan Rd – 7<sup>th</sup> August 2022** A residential fire occurred in a block managed by the Peabody Trust in W12. The fire started on a balcony caused by a disposable barbeque. The fire was brought under control by the fire brigade. H&F set up an emergency reception centre in a local community centre to assist The Peabody Trust.

H&F housing personnel and emergency response officers were also in attendance providing assurance.



H&F held an internal debrief meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of August to discuss any issues arising from the response and to identify any lessons learned.

A meeting was also held with the Peabody Trust to seek assurance that residents were being supported and their needs were being catered for post incident

The majority of residents who were offered temporary accommodation are back in their homes. Relevant members and portfolio holders were continually updated during and post incident re actions being taken.

### **23. Heatwave 8<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

Yellow Heatwave alerts were received by the Met Office and cascaded to all departments. The H&F Heatwave plan was activated and circulated to SLT. Proactive measures were put in place to ensure vulnerable residents were kept safe.

Adult Social Care carried out in person and telephone welfare checks for sheltered housing residents and gave them advice about the high temperatures and the need to take extra care.

Beat the Heat posters were displayed in all sheltered Housing schemes.

Housing Officers checked on all their vulnerable residents. Adult Social Care staff contacted their vulnerable clients and carried out visits, checked on hydration and their home environment.

Fans were purchased for distribution to vulnerable residents were needed and bottled water was provided.

Advice and guidance was published on the H&F website and social media, including information regarding the location of cool spaces where residents could seek respite from high temperatures.

The Severe Weather Protocol (SWEP) was activated by the Homeless Service to accommodate rough sleepers in the extreme heat. The Street Outreach Team carried out welfare checks on people sleeping rough, giving out sun cream and water and advising them where they could seek respite from the heat during the day. Emergency beds were opened and arrangements were put in place for temporary accommodation if required

### **24. Operation London Bridge (Death of Queen Elizabeth II) 8<sup>th</sup> September. Funeral 19<sup>th</sup> September**

The council had an established protocol in place which outlines all the plans and procedures that would be put in place in the event of the death of a senior royal. This protocol was activated when the announcement of the Death of Queen Elizabeth II was announced.

Council services, Waste Management, Highways, Civic Services and Emergency Planning, to name a few, came together to ensure that H&F

looked its very best on the day of the funeral as the cortege made its way from Westminster to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea through H&F via the A4 to Hounslow on the way back to Windsor.

The A4 looked spotless and graffiti free. The resilience and security arrangements were second to none. Over 70 H&F staff volunteered to act as way finders and stewards on the day of the funeral. H&F worked incredibly hard to prepare and to keep residents safe.

**25. Lickey House Flat Fire - West Kensington Estate 22<sup>nd</sup> of September**

One fatality in the flat where the fire started. Cause of fire still under investigation.

A rest centre was opened in case residents needed assistance. This was subsequently not needed.

H&F housing personnel and emergency response officers were also in attendance providing assurance to residents.

4 families were decanted into hotels. They returned to their properties on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September.

## **SERVICE CONTINUITY INCIDENTS**

26. Since the publication of the previous Cabinet report the **COVID-19 Pandemic** and subsequent lockdowns was, and continues to be at a lesser extent, a significant Service Continuity incident. There have been no other service continuity incidents of note. The service is always aware of any cyber based threats that emerge, mitigated by our IT service.

## **BUSINESS CONTINUITY**

27. The Council purchased Business Continuity software called Clearview which was rolled out across the organisation this year. This software will allow plans to be automated, available in soft and hard copy and allow owners to access their plans via their mobiles.
28. A Corporate Business Continuity Strategy covering the period 2019-2022, approved by SLT in July 2019, defining the Council's approach to Business Continuity. The Strategy defines roles and responsibilities for Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) of individuals and groups within the Council. This is now being reviewed, due to the implementation of Clearview.

## **TRAINING AND EXERCISING.**

### **Business Continuity**

29. A training programme for all service plan owners and deputies is in place to accompany the roll out of Clearview, the new Business Continuity software

which is reaching completion. Business Continuity self-tests and exercises form part of the Service Owners responsibility on their Services to make sure they are fit for purpose and approved at Director level. This process is ongoing.

### **Emergency Planning**

30. Emergency planning staff attended London Resilience workshops / briefings throughout 2021/2022. These included briefings on mutual aid, a London Power Supply disruption workshop and a sub-regional workshop re joint preparatory response to a flood event.
31. Emergency Planning staff also attended a number of Met Office briefings. Subjects included summer preparedness, winter preparedness and a briefing on the web-based Met Office Hazard Manager system.
32. **Exercise Safer City - 11 November 2021** Emergency Planning participated in a London Wide exercise run by the London Resilience Group designed to evaluate the London Local Authority Gold arrangements and to test co-ordination and communication between Borough Emergency Control Centres (BECCs) and the London Local Authority Co-ordination Centre. The scenario was based on a structural collapse of a residential block in a neighbouring borough. A number of emergency response officers participated as well as Building Control and the Comms team.
33. **Exercise Hermes – 15 November 2021** A virtual exercise co-ordinated by the Emergency Planning team, based on a marauding terrorist attack at Westfield shopping centre. 76 representatives from 28 organisations participated, including the emergency services, football clubs and other large venues, e.g., Olympia. The aim was to bring together multi-agency partners to enhance their understanding of each other strategic, tactical and operational roles in the response and recovery phase of a terrorist attack.
34. **Exercise Counters Creek – 10 January 2022** A virtual workshop co-ordinated by the Emergency Planning Team with Highways as the subject matter experts. It was an opportunity from multi-agency partners to investigate the management of a multi-agency response to a large number of properties flooding from surface water flooding / sewer surcharge build up in the borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, the scenario was based on the flooding events in July and October 2021
35. **Illegal Encampment Exercise - 20 June 2022** A face to face workshop co-ordinated by the Emergency Planning team attended by representatives from H&F services and the MPS. This was designed to test and review the H&F Illegal Encampment Protocol and to understand partner's roles and legal responsibilities when dealing with an incident of this nature.
36. H&F took part in a London Fire Brigade training exercise on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022. A simulated fire evacuation of a tower block in Northwest London (building already decanted for demolition) designed to test best practice and current

protocols. There is a similar exercise planned for the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 which will also be attended by representatives from H&F.

37. Further training and exercises are planned and included in the work plan, **Appendix 1**, for the forthcoming year.

38. **H&F Multi-Agency Power Outage Exercise - 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2022** will be taking place. The aim of which is to identify and address issues that will arise in this type of scenario including any impacts on vulnerable residents and how they will be addressed.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

39. For 2022/2023 the focus for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity is to continue to embed emergency response, planning and resilience arrangements throughout the organisation. Training and conducting exercises with staff and external organisations throughout the year.

40. The London Resilience team created a standardisation programme for emergency roles and across London. This was highlighted as an issue following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. H&F are working with London Resilience and other boroughs to ensure our plans and training fit with the new standardised processes and training packages as they go live.

## **Equality Implications**

41. There are no negative impacts on any groups with protected characteristics, under the terms of the Equalities Act 2010, from Cabinet accepting this annual Emergency Planning Report.

42. Vulnerable people, including those with protected characteristics, may be less able to help themselves in an emergency than non-vulnerable people. Those who are vulnerable will vary depending on the nature of the emergency, but where appropriate plans should consider issues such as those with mobility difficulties; those with mental health difficulties; those with language barriers and others who are dependent, such as children. The Council has a rota of on-call staff whose remit is to identify and deal with any of the above issues as and when they arise in an emergency.

*Denise Prieto, Emergency Planning & Resilience Manager, 20 June 2022*

## **Risk Management Implications.**

43. The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity response requirements are vital to maintaining a safe and resilient environment for the local community, its businesses and visitors. Failure to have an effective and efficient Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service may severely impact on the safety and welfare of people, continuity of services, physical assets, information we process, finance, the built and natural environment and the reputation of the Council, Members and Officers.

44. Risks can never be eliminated entirely but proportionate and targeted action can be taken to reduce risks to an acceptable level. Council resilience and Cyber incidents are standing corporate risks that most councils will need to manage. Since early 2020, the Council's emergency planning and business continuity arrangements have been activated and implemented at various times as the Council responded to the Covid pandemic. During the period of reporting the Service and Business Continuity Manager have been involved with several high-profile programmes to provide additional assurance to residents and local businesses including but not limited to;

- *the planning and preparation required for exiting the European Union.*
- *reporting to London Resilience on preparations relating to the above.*
- *updating Members on resilience plans in regular Brexit updates.*
- *planning for and ensuring that local elections were carried out well.*
- *preparing for the moves out of the Town Hall and Town Hall extension.*
- *leading the review of Business Continuity Plans and Planning arrangements supporting the council's response to Covid-19.*
- *supporting the development of local Outbreak Control plans in collaboration with Public Health.*
- *supporting the Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager in the preparation of plans associated with the threat of terrorism; and*
- *supporting Digital Services in the response to the potential and ongoing threat of Cyber risks.*

45. The council's technology infrastructure and resources have stood up well, enabling up to 1,700 members of staff to work remotely. The Council's ability to quickly assemble a team of officers to deal with a major disruption event alongside partner organisations continues to be demonstrated.

46. Having effective emergency planning and business continuity arrangements in place is vital, particularly during periods of significant national and global uncertainty. The Council will need to support residents and businesses as inflation and interest rates continue to rise, as the cost of living crisis impacts on more families and vulnerable residents, as high energy costs and a cold winter coincide, as potential for utilities shortages (such as power outages) become more likely and funding of public services comes under increasing pressure.

*David Hughes, Director of Audit, Fraud, Risk and Insurance, 20 October 2022*

### **Other Implications**

47. In the wake of a terrorist attack in the United Kingdom, London Local Authority Prevent teams undertake local community tension monitoring and increasing community engagement efforts. The Prevent team will provide bespoke, tailored resources, support and advice to schools and the community to tackle any tensions arising, to safeguard our community.

*Aysha Esakji, Prevent Co-ordinator, 29 June 2022*

**List of Appendices:**

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Document Title</b>
<i>Appendix 1</i>	<i>Emergency Services Workplan 2022/2023</i>
<i>Appendix 2</i>	<i>LAP Assurance Checklist January 2022</i>