

## London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 15/01/2024

**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, Director of Public Protection

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### 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 dynamic work plan for the forthcoming year.

Due to reporting period covered for this Cabinet report the year being reviewed are the 12 months from 01 October 2022 to 30 September 2023. The report highlights areas of work for the current financial year to ensure continuous improvement in the service.

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### Recommendation

1. That Cabinet notes the report which looks back on work undertaken over the last 12 months (running 01/10/22 to 30/09/23) and the dynamic work plan for the remainder of 2023/2024.
  2. To note that there are no actions requested of Cabinet in this report.
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**Wards Affected:** All

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## H&F Values

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Priorities
Creating a compassionate council	The care and welfare of our residents, especially in emergencies, is at the top of our agenda. We work to ensure that our approach - in times of crisis - supports our residents, businesses, and VCS organisations.
Building shared prosperity	Emergency Planning and Business Continuity response requirements are vital to maintaining a safe and resilient environment for the local community, its businesses, and visitors. We are continuing to expand and enhance our networks to ensure communities and businesses in H&F will continue to thrive.
Doing things with residents, not to them	Building Community Resilience is a priority for H&F to ensure our 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.
Taking pride in H&F	Emergency planning and resilience arrangements in H&F are of vital importance. We want to ensure that H&F continues to be the best borough in London to live and work.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	We operate one of the most thorough preparedness, training and exercising programs across the capital with a streamlined staff compliment to maximise

	output within a strict financial envelope.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Recognising the Climate Crisis and the impacts on the world we exercise and prepare, rehearsing our response to climate change events - for example, flooding, and heatwave - via our annual exercise programmes.

## **INTERNAL IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENT**

### **Financial Impact**

3. Hammersmith & Fulham have not had to deal with any large-scale major incidents in the reporting year but have responded to smaller local incidents throughout the year as detailed in this report.
4. The reporting period crosses two financial years. For the financial year 2022/23, the Emergency Planning Service managed within its service budget. The service is also on track to do the same in the financial year 2023/24, with a controllable budget of £350,000.
5. It is to be noted however that the reactive nature of this service in responding to large scale incidents 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.

*Kellie Gooch, Head of Finance (Environment), 28 September 2023.  
Verified by: Andre Mark, Head of Finance, 29 September 2023*

### **Legal Implications**

6. 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.
7. The strategic priorities and work plans set out in this report enable the Council to comply with these statutory duties.

*John Sharland, Senior solicitor (Contracts and procurement), 29 September 2023*

### **Equality Implications**

8. There are no negative impacts on any groups that share protected characteristics, under the Equality Act 2010, from Cabinet accepting this annual Emergency Planning Report.
9. Individuals who require additional support, including those with protected characteristics, may be less able to help themselves in an emergency than non-vulnerable people.

10. Those who require additional support will vary depending on the nature of the emergency, but where appropriate plans should consider issues such as those with mobility impairments; those with mental health issues; those with language barriers and others who are dependent, such as children.
11. 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.

*Yvonne Okiyo, Strategic Lead Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion 20.10.23*

### **Risk Management Implications.**

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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.

15. 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, 10 October 2023*

### **Other Implications**

16. 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 and reassurance efforts.
17. 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023*

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

None

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### **WHAT IS EMERGENCY PLANNING AND THE COUNCIL'S OBLIGATIONS TO DELIVER?**

18. 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.
19. The Council is subject to the full set of civil protection duties under the Act and is required to:
- a. Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform our contingency planning.
  - b. Put in place emergency plans and business continuity management arrangements.

- c. 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.
  - d. Share information and co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.
  - e. Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.
20. Annually the Council is also required to undertake a self-assessment to evidence work and assurance.
21. 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.

### **Our emergency response and strategic priorities**

22. 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. Assist the return to 'normality'.

23. 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.

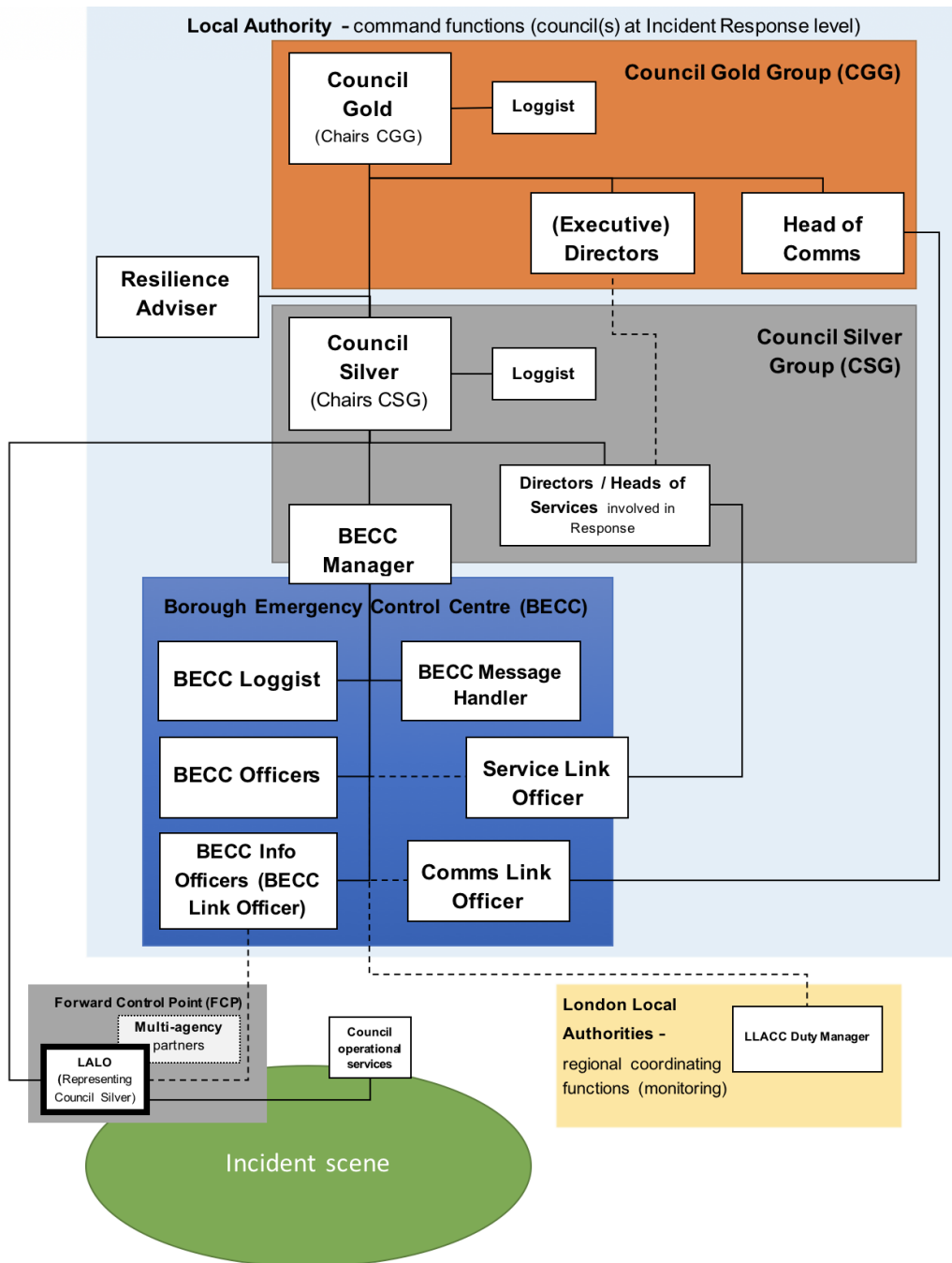
24. Building Community Resilience to ensure our communities are prepared, can respond, and recover quickly in times of emergency, are priorities for the borough.

### **EMERGENCY PLANNING RESPONSE ARRANGEMENTS**

25. The emergency planning procedures in H&F are clear and well established.

26. Our Command-and-Control approach 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.

27. All officers have clear remits, responsibilities, and accountabilities and, working together, we ensure that our response to an emergency is timely, accurate and proportionate to the matter at hand.



28. 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.

29. 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**

30. 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.
31. 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.
32. 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 and recovery plans**

33. To ensure that the Council is ready to respond and recover from an emergency event a suite of plans is prepared and stored.
34. 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.
35. 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.
36. The Council holds quarterly Borough Resilience Forum meetings chaired by the H&F Chief Executive. 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.
37. H&F have held three meetings this year, the next one will be held in December 2023.

## **PREPAREDNESS**



38. A response to an emergency is dependent, in many ways, on the preparedness of the borough to respond. We ensure that we are as prepared as possible by delivering the following:

### **Borough Emergency Control Centre, (BECC)**

39. In times of emergency need the BECC 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.

40. The BECC team will operate and support the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Service Resilience Group (SRG), Silver, Departments and outside agencies if required.

### **Mutual aid arrangements**

41. 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.

42. In addition, here is a Northwest London Mutual aid agreement between Hammersmith & Fulham, Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Westminster and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

43. 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**

44. 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.

45. All London Boroughs are asked to complete a yearly assurance document called the **Resilience Standards for London**.

46. The Resilience Standards are designed to help boroughs assess their current levels of resilience and develop their work to improve while supporting compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

47. The assessment asks boroughs to evidence their work against the headings of "Developing, Established or Advanced". The West London Borough's returns on this self-assessment are then discussed in a West London self-

assessment workshop, also attended by members of the London Resilience Team. There were no changes or amendments to be made to H&F's assessment resulting from this workshop.

48. As a borough we submitted our return to the London Resilience Team in January 2023 and, following our self-assessment, we were able to evidence that our work was “Established” in nine categories and “Developing” in the remaining two – these two areas being Community Resilience and Recovery Management.
49. To improve the boroughs resilience in these two areas, as we seek to move towards “Established” in both areas we have undertaken the following.
  - a. We are working with Hammersmith & Fulham Volunteer Centre (HFVC) and Hammersmith BID to establish a communications network with volunteer/community organisations and local businesses. H&FVC has contact with up to 300 organisations in the borough and. Hammersmith BID has a network of local businesses that could also provide support. We are working to raise awareness about what that support and assistance would look like and where their roles fit during a response. We are supporting H&FVC in applying for the GLA's Community Resilience Fund which will provide a financial resource to liaise and collect data about the type of support that organisations will provide e.g., response times for potential volunteers, space for rest centres, catering, support in donation management etc. With this information, we can establish a joint community response plan, shared with these organisations, local businesses, and the H&F BRF to provide further structure in our response during emergencies.
  - b. For our work in regard Recovery Management, we have an MOU with St Pauls Church in Hammersmith that allows us to use their buildings and facilities to set up a humanitarian assistance centre if required. We have developed a plan that outlines how we would set this up in a major incident.
  - c. To further increase our resilience, we are continuing to develop relationships with charitable and private sector organisations - which includes identifying funding streams or other support for community development and other recovery initiatives – as we seek to develop and implement processes to manage and receive support at times of crisis i.e., receiving donations following an emergency using the borough's donations management protocol.

**Business Continuity – How we understand the impact on services in an emergency and ensuring we have plans in place to keep services running.**

50. Business continuity is the advance planning and preparation undertaken to ensure that an organisation will have the capability to operate its critical business functions during emergency events.
51. We saw during Covid how the Council responded to a significant emergency and how services were able to continue to operate and utilise their business continuity plans.
52. A couple of years back the Council purchased Business Continuity software - called Clearview - which has been rolled out across the organisation. This software allows service plans to be automated, available in soft and hard copy and allows owners to access their plans via their laptops and mobile phones.
53. A Corporate Business Continuity Strategy defining the Council's approach to Business Continuity is currently under review. The Strategy defines roles and responsibilities for Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) of individuals and groups within the Council.
54. A new Business Continuity Manager joined the Emergency Planning team in September 2023 and will be continuing to ensure that H&F is discharging its legal responsibilities regarding Business Continuity under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
55. In addition to the London Resilience standards the service has also been subject to independent scrutiny when, on 12/01/23, the emergency planning service was reviewed via the Health and Social Care Policy and Accountability Committee. Attendance at the HSCPAC provided Members, and residents, with an opportunity to understand our emergency planning processes and responsibilities following the heatwaves in 2022 and our proactive measures to prepare for emergency responses in 2023 and beyond.

**EMERGENCY INCIDENTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH – 30/09/22 – 30/09/23**

56. As referenced above the borough has thankfully 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.
57. The borough's emergency responders dealt with a diverse range of incidents during the year including serious fires, power outages, and serious violence amongst others.
58. 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. 22/09/22 – Flat Fire, West Kensington Estate
- b. 10/12/2022 Commercial Fire, Uxbridge Rd, W12

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

60. 22/09/22 - Flat Fire, West Kensington Estate, W14

- a. H&F Local Authority Liaison Officer and on-call Duty Silver and Gold response activated.
- b. Rest Centre Manager, Pinnacle staff and Pinnacle Manager attended. Rest Centre opened initially but not required.
- c. Three households placed into the Holiday Inn nearby as the affected flat was very hot inside and the Fire Brigade were concerned another fire may occur.
- d. LFB remained in situ overnight to ensure everyone's safety.

61. Commercial Fire, Uxbridge Rd W12 10/12/22

- a. Response managed by H&F on-call Duty Silver; Duty Gold informed.
- b. H&F Local Authority Liaison Officer attended the scene, two households placed into temporary accommodation overnight.
- c. Building Control were called out via the H&F Out of Hours Service.
- d. H&F Contractors also attended and gritted the pavement, as water from the incident was freezing on the road, which was creating a potential hazard for vehicles and pedestrians.

## **SERVICE CONTINUITY INCIDENTS**

62. Since the publication of the previous Cabinet report there have been no service continuity incidents of note.

## **TRAINING AND EXERCISING**

63. The Emergency Planning service is well developed and always seeks to evolve and improve our knowledge and expertise.

64. To develop staff understanding our EP team attended several workshops / briefings throughout 2022 /2023:

- a. London Fire Brigade - Borough Risk Management Plans - 17 July 2023
- b. Humanitarian Assistance Essentials for HALOs (training workshop) – 05 July 2023
- c. Resilience Direct training – June 2023
- d. Summer preparedness, Adverse Weather Health Plan, and alerts – 28 June 2023
- e. Drought Response briefing – 20 June 2023
- f. Fuel Disruption Protocol briefing – 30 May 2023
- g. LRF and BRF Chairs' Forum – 10 May 2023

- h. LA Mutual Aid debrief - Thornton Heath gas explosion debrief – 14 December 2022
- i. London Tactical Co-ordination Protocol (TCP) briefing – 7 November 2022
- j. London Utility Sector Awareness Day – 11 October 2022: presentations from National Grid, UK Power Networks, SGN (Gas industry) and the waste industry
- k. Met Office Winter Weather Hazards Course – 10 October 2022

## **EXERCISES**

65. As part of our annual offer of training, exercising and delivery, officers attend, plan and run several events to ensure that H&F continues to develop to the standards we expect of ourselves and to the standards that our partners expect.
66. It is important to ensure that emergency plans are activated and tested as part of our resilience work programme. The Emergency Planning team work with the Borough Resilience Forum, London Fire Brigade, Police, and others to ensure that we test our plans against current and/or emerging risk and threat. Over the last year exercises have included:
67. Participation in a London Fire Brigade training exercise on 20<sup>th</sup> October 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.
68. Multi-Agency Power Outage Exercise - November 2022 was a H&F Borough Resilience Forum face to face workshop that took place at Shortlands, W6 on 25 November 2022. 47 representatives from 15 organisations participated. This included a presentation from UK Power Networks. The exercise was well received and there was positive feedback from attendees.
69. The overall aim of this exercise was to bring together partners to address and identify issues that could arise during a power outage scenario whether pre-planned or without warning. A post-exercise report was created by the Emergency Planning team and circulated to the participating organisations.
70. The lessons learned focussed mainly on pre-planning and ensuring that organisations had robust business continuity plans in place to address pre-planned / unplanned power outage incidents to mitigate what could occur in these types of scenarios.

### **Gold & Silver Workshop / Exercise – February 2023.**

71. This was an opportunity for on-call Golds and on-call Silvers to get together, share experiences and to familiarise themselves with each other's roles and responsibilities as well as understanding the differences and connectivity between roles when responding to emergencies.

72. A scenario was worked through based on a suspect package in the Hammersmith Apollo which resulted in an explosion. Working together, Golds and Silvers discussed how to co-ordinate the response and ultimately the recovery from this scenario in the short and longer term.

### **Multi-Agency Heatwave Exercise – April 2023**

73. Ran as a H&F Borough Resilience Forum face to face workshop in Shortlands on 27 April 2023.

74. 44 representatives from 17 organisations participated. This exercise included a presentation from a Met Office Advisor, regarding causes of and impacts from high temperatures and extreme heat and the H&F Assistant Director for Highways, who summarised the impacts of the high temperatures on Hammersmith Bridge in July and August 2022.

75. This was an opportunity for the Council and responding partners to work together in identifying potential issues during a heatwave and extreme heat incident, and how we could mitigate against them to provide an appropriate response, working in partnership when needed. A post-exercise report was created by the Emergency Planning team and circulated to the participating organisations.

76. The lessons learned focussed mainly on pre-planning and ensuring that organisations had robust business continuity plans to mitigate against issues that may occur during this type of incident and the recovery phase.

77. **Exercise Safer City – May 2023** 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 flooding. Several emergency response officers participated as well as Highways and the Comms team.

78. **Exercise Connects – June 2023** Exercise Connects is the annual test of communications methods between the London Local Authority Control Centre (LLACC) and the London Borough Control Centres (BECCs), to ensure they are accurate and fit for purpose.

79. **Multi-Agency Public Disorder Exercise - September 2023** Ran as a H&F Borough Resilience Forum face to face workshop in Shortlands on 26 September 2023.

80. 42 representatives from seven organisations participated. This exercise included a presentation from Superintendent Craig Knight - Metropolitan Police - outlining the causes of and impacts from, Public Disorder incidents.

81. This was an opportunity for the Council and responding partners to work together in identifying potential issues during a Public Disorder incident, and

how we could mitigate against them to provide an appropriate response, working in partnership when needed. A post-exercise report will be created by the Emergency Planning team and will be circulated to the participating organisations.

82. The lessons learned focussed mainly on pre-planning and ensuring that organisations had robust business continuity plans to mitigate against issues that may occur during this type of incident and the recovery phase.
83. Further training and exercises are planned and will be delivered over the next 12 months.

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

84. For the remainder of 2023/2024 the focus for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity services 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.
85. 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.

### **LIST OF APPENDICES**

None