

Report of Head of Democratic Services

Report to Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources)

Date: 9th September 2019

Subject: Resilience and Emergency Planning – formal response to scrutiny recommendations

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

1.1 This report presents a formal response to the recommendations arising from the previous Scrutiny review around resilience and emergency planning.

2. Background information

2.1 The Council's city-wide resilience and emergency planning functions fall within the remit of the Council's Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board and last year the Board agreed to undertake further scrutiny of current resilience and emergency planning arrangements in Leeds, particularly in light of good practice and learning stemming from local incidents and emergencies, but also in the context of other national major incidents and events.

2.2 The Board decided to consider this matter via a working group meeting, which took place on 28th February 2019. The findings of the working group informed a formal Statement of the Scrutiny Board, which was agreed in April 2019 [\(Link to Statement\)](#)

3. Main issues

3.1 In accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, a formal response to the recommendations arising from this Scrutiny inquiry has been provided by the relevant Directorate for Members' consideration (see Appendix 1).

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Details of those engaged in the Scrutiny Board's inquiry when compiling the recommendations are set out within the Board's Statement.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 Where consideration has been given to the impact on equality areas, as defined in the Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme, this will be referenced within the Scrutiny Board's Statement and also as part of the formal response outlined in Appendix 1.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 Effective management of the range of risks that could impact upon the city and the council supports the delivery of all Best Council Plan outcomes and priorities.

Climate Emergency

4.3.2 Any associated implications surrounding climate related issues will be referenced within the Scrutiny Board's Statement and also as part of the formal response outlined in Appendix 1.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.4.1 Any financial implications associated with the implementation of the relevant recommendations will be reflected as part of the formal response in Appendix 1.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 This particular scrutiny review supports the Council's Risk Management Policy, with particular attention given to how the Council is meeting the duties of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

5 Conclusions

5.1.1 In accordance with the Council's Scrutiny Board Procedure Rules, a formal response to the recommendations arising from the previous Scrutiny review around resilience and emergency planning has been provided by the relevant Directorate for the Board's consideration.

6 Recommendation

6.1 Members are asked to consider the formal response to the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny review last year around resilience and emergency planning.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix 1 – Response to the Scrutiny recommendations around resilience and emergency planning.

Scrutiny Recommendations	Directorate Response
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>That the Director of Resources and Housing takes the lead in exploring additional ways of proactively disseminating key information and guidance, such as the ‘home emergency kit’, ‘preparing your household’ and ‘useful contacts’ more widely to local residents. Linked to this, particular consideration should be given towards potentially maximising existing systems and processes within the Council, such as the Council Tax notification process.</p>	<p>There are several publications available both in hard copy format all electronically accessible from www.leeds.gov.uk/prepared. The publications offer guidance and advice on how to plan for emergencies. Guidance for domestic properties includes ‘Your Household Emergency Plan’, ‘Home Emergency Kit’ and ‘Preparing Your Household’. Hard copies of these documents are printed A4 size and unsuitable for inclosing in Council Tax billing. However, these plus other guidance could be signposted from an insert included in the Council Tax bill. The feasibility of using the Council Tax notification process is being pursued with the Council Tax & Benefits Team within the Communities & Environment Directorate.</p> <p>The Council has also produced a quantity of ICE cards (In Case of Emergency) which are handed out to the public at events etc. The ICE Cards contain very brief guidance on what to do in an emergency situation along with some key partner contact numbers as well as a blank space for the card holder’s next of kin/guardians contact details to be included. The cards also include the www.leeds.gov.uk/prepared link to access further information including the publications noted above.</p> <p>During the Storm Eva severe weather event in 2015, spontaneous volunteers from the local community and beyond proved a valuable resource particularly during the recovery/clean-up phase. In conjunction with Open Source Arts, LCC has provided input into developing a ‘Spontaneous Volunteers Toolkit’ to help co-ordinate the volunteers. Whilst further work is still required surrounding the development of this toolkit, it aims to contain guidance and resources for communities in the safe and effective management of a spontaneous volunteer response to an emergency incident.</p>

	<p>The West Yorkshire Community Risk Register is available in an interactive e-Book format. The e-Book can be easily accessed by members of the public via a link embedded in partner websites and electronic documents (Link to e-book). The e-Book provides an overview of the four highest risks facing West Yorkshire (severe weather, health pandemic, electricity loss and, malicious attack) and contains a wide range of links to other information and guidance including videos which will help to inform community resilience.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2 That the Director of Resources and Housing works closely with the Director of Communities and Environment in utilising the Community Committee network to engage proactively with all Councillors in generating greater awareness and understanding of the existing local resilience and emergency planning arrangements and the implications and effectiveness of their own role in this regard.</p>	<p>Councillors have key roles and responsibilities for ensuring preparedness and resilience, responding to, and recovering from emergencies. There is a guide published by the Local Government Association entitled ‘A Councillors Guide to Civil Emergencies’ which clearly sets out Councillor roles and responsibilities. Consideration had initially been given to providing a Councillor seminar relating to these key roles and responsibilities. However, the Executive Member for Resources is keen to explore other methods of engagement and to invite the views of Councillors to help inform an effective approach.</p> <p>Linked to the Community Committee network, particular efforts continue to be made towards increasing awareness of the Prevent and Counter-extremism agenda amongst Councillors, with workshops being held to enable Councillors to understand their roles and be introduced to the relevant officer support team should they require further information and advice. Dedicated work is also undertaken with Community Committee Chairs to increase their awareness of these agendas.</p> <p>Throughout the course of each year there are also several opportunities to engage Councillors in matters relating to both council and city resilience.</p>

All Councillors registered with Leeds Alert (a joint LCC and West Yorkshire Police 'warning and informing' system) are invited to the twice yearly Leeds Alert Network Events. The events comprise a programme of guest speakers providing presentations to help build personal and organisational resilience. Also through Leeds Alert, invitations are issued to attend a range of exercises and workshops again covering various themes.

Recent exercises held this year include Exercise Hana Hana.

Hana Hana was a series of three exercises aimed at encouraging businesses and organisations located within the city centre to network with each other and gain awareness of each other's plans and procedures. There was minimal Councillor attendance at the exercises.

There is an 'Annual Business Continuity Report' which is presented to the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee. The report sets out key areas of progress relating to improving council and city resilience along with future plans and initiatives.

There are two corporate risks (Council Resilience and City Resilience) which are reviewed on a quarterly basis. The risks are also reported in the Annual Risk Assurance Report. The annual report provides assurances to the Executive Board, Corporate Governance & Audit Committee and Strategy & Resources Scrutiny Board of LCC's alignment with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The report is published on www.leeds.gov.uk.

Recommendation 3

That the Director of Resources and Housing leads on exploring the feasibility of adopting a universal emergency warning system within all Council owned buildings aimed at enabling all staff, regardless of their usual place of work, and other users of Council owned buildings to be able to instantly recognise and respond accordingly to a particular emergency alert.

After consideration, it is currently thought that a universal emergency warning system within all Council owned buildings covering a range of emergencies would not be feasible. Even the universal warning system and procedures for evacuation due to fire differ slightly from setting to setting, taking into account the nature of the building and occupancy etc. as determined by the Fire Risk Assessment.

For other types of emergencies it is more difficult, as staff would need to respond differently to each type of emergency, and different warning sounds may be confusing.

For example, there may be a range of actions required including lockdown (keeping staff and visitors safe within a building); silent evacuation; invacuation (where staff and potentially some clients or members of the public are asked to come into a building to stay safe); or moving people to certain parts of a building etc. This is one of the key reasons why there are trained Emergency Incident Officers in each building, usually senior members of staff who utilise Fire Wardens to provide instructions regarding the course of action to be taken and effect the correct response required.

However, what Recommendation 3 has raised, is the need for a mechanism to effectively invoke the procedure and ensure staff, visitors, members of the public and other key stakeholders such as Elected Members are aware of the situation and the correct course of action to be taken. Work is also currently ongoing to research 'app' based communication systems utilised via mobile telephones and other devices that would ensure bespoke responses could be communicated and managed effectively.