

**Public**  
**Key Decision – No**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Title/Subject Matter:** Emergency Planning - Development & Progress Report

**Meeting/Date:** Corporate Governance Committee 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

**Executive Portfolio:** Cllr S Ferguson

**Report by:** Community Resilience Manager – Rob Mitchell

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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### **Executive Summary:**

This report details the arrangements that have been implemented for the District Council's response to incidents of Emergency Planning. The changes were proposed in July 2024 and implemented over the course of the year.

The changes were implemented to ensure the District Council has a resilient structure and is able to respond to Emergency planning incidents. This included strengthening our ability to respond to incidents, implementing the Strategic Gold and Tactical Silver rota with additional resources and introducing an Operational Bronze resulting in a robust three tier incident response structure.

Our new structure and processes have been tested on an internal annual exercise, several minor incidents and a declared Major Incident following the Huntingdon Train stabbing in November 2025.

There has been a higher turnover of staff within the organisation resulting in the need for a dedicated budget for Emergency planning. This was to allow initial and refresher training to ensure the council remains prepared.

As LGR progresses and new authorities are agreed; it is recognised that dedicated time from the Emergency Planning Team will be required to develop new structures and merge processes.

### **RECOMMENDED**

To comment on and note the current position provided in the report.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides Governance Committee with an update on the revised Emergency Planning operating model, detailing service delivery improvements and clarifying the Council's statutory duties and expectations as a Category 1 responder in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 sets out specific duties for Chief Executives, as outlined in the 2018 guidance for Local Authority Chief Executives. These duties form the basis for how we assess and test our emergency preparedness and include:

- Plans for emergencies
- Understands its own capabilities to respond to an emergency and how it could access or provide mutual aid.
- Trains and exercise.
- Is an active member of the of the local resilience forum.
- Undertakes local risk management with their local resilience forum
- Is ready to provide advice before, during and after an emergency
- Is effectively represented at a senior level at a strategic coordinating group and the recovery group
- Is ready to provide community leadership
- Has plans in place for assessing the impacts of an emergency
- Has plans in place to manage the recovery from a major emergency

- 2.1 The Chief Executive identified the need for a robust and resilient structure that could operate effectively across the organisation, involving all levels of the Council from Directors through to officers. Subsequently, in 2024, relevant staff were consulted on a revised Emergency Planning structure developed in response to new requirements. This consultation, which engaged Heads of Service and I grade officers, proposed their inclusion in an 'oncall' Duty Officer rota to ensure the Council continued to meet its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 by providing an effective first response to incidents.
- 2.2 These changes were implemented in April 2025 with a new structure of Gold – Strategic, Silver – Tactical and Bronze – Operational. This three Tier structure demonstrated resilience across the Council and ensured that HDC would be represented at all levels during an incident.
- 2.3 The new Structure allows the Council to respond with wider internal support and clear roles and responsibilities in times of an incident, allowing officers to represent the Council at the right level on wider partnership meetings and within the community. The levels implemented allow the Council to offer support and resource as required in a time of need.
- 2.4 As part of the agreement there is an allocated budget for Duty officers for their time on Rota. They are committed to 6 weekly duties per year.

- 2.5 There is also a budget for Operational call out for out of hours work.
- 2.6 Any response to an emergency incident within core business hours, including any resource impact, are expected to be covered by HDCs business continuity plans and processes.

### **3. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

- 3.1 Local Government Reform will lead to a different Emergency Planning model; during the transition HDC needs to ensure residents and communities have the same levels of support as currently offered.
- 3.2 In order to address this, early meetings are taking place at a County level to ensure planning for new structure are considered as soon as the notification of areas are shared. Other Local Authorities are also strengthening their structures and response with the intention of providing alignment.
- 3.3 The Emergency Planning team are reviewing the current on call rota system after the first 12 month in operational. This review will consider feedback from officers and actions highlighted from the Major incident debrief.  
Any recommendations for changes will be presented to the Corporate Leadership Team.

### **4. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 The structure has been in place for 12 months with slight amendments to improve delivery and support across the council.
- 4.2 Annual Emergency Plan reviews are set and presented to Corporate Leadership Team.
- 4.3 Continued training and exercising plans are developed and overseen by the Emergency planning team.

### **5. LINK TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE FUTURES, THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 5.1 This report supports Priority 3: Doing our core work well, by reviewing and strengthening the Council's ability to meet its statutory duties in emergency planning and ensuring resilient, effective core services.

### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The Council has statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA 2004) as a designated Category 1 responder. These duties include assessing risk, maintaining emergency plans, ensuring business continuity arrangements are in place, and cooperating with partner agencies. The revised Emergency Planning operating model strengthens the Council's ability to comply with these legal obligations.

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Finances are already allocated within the budget, this covers rota cover, training and equipment. This budget is allocated for the foreseeable future and will be a consideration for LGR.
- 7.2 Majority of resource comes from officer time linked to their role within the Emergency Planning Structure. Any officers committed to an incident will be covered via their service area Business Continuity Plans.
- 7.3 Continuous support offered by the council's Emergency Planning Team and the wider Local Resilience Forum
- 7.4 Emergency Planning budget allocated per annum to cover on call requirements, training and equipment to support officers and community.

## **8. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The structure ensures capacity to respond to a health-related incident should it occur, similar to what was necessary following the outbreak of Covid-19.

## **9. ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Incidents of flooding and severe weather are a regular occurrence and place our communities and some of our most vulnerable residents at risk of harm. The EP structure and approach that has been implemented to enables us to respond appropriately when needed.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 10.1 Implementing the updated arrangements strengthens organisational preparedness by ensuring that trained, competent officers are available through an appropriate duty rota system. This enhances the Council's capability to coordinate and lead response activity in line with legislative obligations and sector best practice.

## **11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – EP Training Program

### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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