

APPENDIX 1:

BOLTON COUNCIL

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESILIENCE AND RESPONSE (CIVIL CONTINGENCY)

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act (2004) provides a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom (UK). Part 1 of The Act (2004) establishes a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparedness and response at the local level. The Act divides local responders into two categories, Category 1, and Category 2, imposing a distinct set of duties on each. Those in Category 1 are organisations at the core of the response to most emergencies. Local authorities along with emergency services and NHS bodies are Category 1. It is important to note that the Civil Contingencies Act is due for renewal this Autumn 2022, and any implications on the local authority's responsibilities will be advised by GM Resilience Unit and respective local authority legal teams at the time of publication of the new legislation.
- 1.2 As a Category 1 responder, Bolton Council is subject to the full set of civil protection duties set out in the statutory guidance [Emergency preparedness - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61221/emergency-preparedness-guidance-for-civil-protection-responder.pdf) and required to:
- I. assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
 - II. put in place emergency plans
 - III. put in place business continuity management arrangements
 - IV. 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
 - V. share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
 - VI. co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
 - VII. provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only)
- 1.3 In April 2021, corporate responsibility for the civil contingency agenda within Bolton Council transferred from Place Directorate to the Public Health Directorate. Business continuity arrangements continue to be led by Chief Executive Directorate and are not covered in this report.
- 1.4 The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities GM Resilience Unit (formerly the Civil Contingency Resilience Unit or CCRU), provides a tool for assessing and monitoring the status of local authority contingency arrangements which require ongoing maintenance at a borough level. An annual assessment of Bolton Council's Civil Contingency arrangements is carried out jointly with GM Resilience Unit using this tool and recommendations arising from the assessment will be included in Bolton Council's Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response (Civil Contingency) annual report.

- 1.5 This paper presents an overview of the arrangements in Bolton Council for meeting these duties and includes governance and assurance processes, the local resilience partnership with GM Resilience Unit and highlights key developments since the transfer of the portfolio to the Public Health Directorate.

2 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 “Emergency” is defined in Part 1 of The Act (2004) as: an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK.

3 GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

- 3.1 Bolton Council’s Emergency Management Plan sets out the arrangements for robust and resilient response to major incidents, civil emergencies, and business continuity issues. This overarching plan is supported by seven Functional Plans (listed below) which align to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and can also be activated during an emergency if required. The functional plans are held on the Bolton Council Civil Contingency SharePoint site and reviewed annually.
- i. Alternative Accommodation
 - ii. Emergency Transport
 - iii. Highways and Engineering
 - iv. Media and Warning & Informing including Elected Member Liaison
 - v. Emergency Welfare
 - vi. Neighbourhood Services
 - vii. Multi-Agency Flood Plan
- 3.2 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires responders to work together to ensure they can respond effectively. To do this they have a requirement to plan, prepare, train, exercise and respond to incidents as a multi-agency partnership, known as a Local Resilience Forum.
- 3.3 The Civil Contingencies Act is due for renewal this Autumn 2022. Any implications for the local authority’s responsibilities will be advised by GM Resilience Unit and respective local authority legal teams following publication of the new legislation.
- 3.4 The Local Resilience Forum covering the Bolton local authority area is the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum (GMRF). Its purpose is to ensure that there is an appropriate level of emergency preparedness to enable an effective multi-agency response to emergency incidents which may have a significant impact on the communities of Greater Manchester. The GMRF is attended by strategic representation from all Category 1 and Category 2 responding agencies and

organisations, working together to agree and determine the strategic direction for emergency preparedness, resilience, and response across Greater Manchester.

- 3.5 A short guide to the work of the GM Resilience Unit is available at: [Resilience - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/resilience)

4 CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS - INCIDENT RESPONSES AND RECOVERY, 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022

- 4.1 **Incident Responses** – there were 37 emergency incidents in the borough between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022. None of these incidents were declared as major incidents. A Forward Incident Officer was deployed on 19 occasions, Tactical Officer nine times, and Strategic Officer three times. Neither the Emergency Control Centre nor Reception Centre/s were activated for any of these incidents. The incidents varied widely in nature and included: flooding and notably Horwich and Lostock Floods on 16th May 2021; and Storm Franklin on 21st to 22nd February 2022; power outages; hazardous material (petrol); general flooding; landslip; homeless vulnerable person; explosives; Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) incident; public disorder; residential and commercial; vehicle crash; protests.
- 4.2 **Learning from incidents** - After each incident, the responding officers submit a detailed decision log and situational report (sit rep). A post incident briefing is held to capture and share lessons learned and to identify areas for improvement. Operational procedures are amended and updated accordingly, including functional plans. Lessons learned are incorporated into routine update training for emergency on-call responders partnership exercises planned with other Category 1 responders as appropriate.
- 4.3 **Example of lessons learned** – a recovery group convened following the Horwich and Lostock Floods on 16th May 2021, has identified the opportunity for development of specialist ‘communities preparedness training,’ building on the Covid-19 Community Champions initiative. This project will see community volunteers trained to assist in emergency response incidents such as floods and support an enabling and empowering approach to community recovery. The same incident also triggered a [Section 19 Flood Investigation Report](#) under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act.
- 4.4 **Note on classification of a major incident** - A major incident is defined as an “event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency.” (Source: JESIP – Working Together, Saving Lives; www.jesip.org.uk). A major incident is beyond the scope of business-as-usual operations, and is likely to involve serious harm, damage, disruption or risk to human life or welfare, essential services, the environment, or national security. A major incident is typically declared by one or more of the emergency services Incident Commanders at Strategic Officer Level.

- 4.5 **Greater Manchester Resilience Unit (GM Resilience Unity) and Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP) Collaborative working** - During Covid-19 health, care and wider Council services have contributed significantly to the incident management required to lead outbreak management across the borough and the governance for this lies with the Bolton Health Protection Board.

5. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS - ON-CALL ROTA

- 5.1 Bolton Council has an emergency response (civil contingency) on-call rota system in place providing cover 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, for each of the three levels of response:

Operational (bronze) – Forward incident officer (FIO)

Tactical (silver) – Tactical officer (TO)

Strategic (gold) – Strategic officer (SO)

- 5.2 Officers are on-call 24/7 for the duration of their rota slot from 08:00 Friday to 08:00 the following Friday to provide response for events or situations as per the definition of emergency in 3.1 above. The provision of out of hours cover for the delivery of routine services and events is out of scope for the emergency response (civil contingencies) on-call rota.
- 5.3 The on-call rota arrangements at the time of transfer to the Public Health Directorate were previously set out in a paper provided to Director of Place CLT and Chief Executive's DLT (Directorate Leadership Team), on 8 January 2020.
- 5.4 The current arrangements see the on-call rota operate with a total of 54 responders across the roles of forward incident officers, tactical officers, and strategic officers. There is no currently established number for the optimal number of officers to staff the rota, that balances the frequency of activity with maintenance of competence. Furthermore, there is an identified need to provide for the rotating of staff during an emergency response should the duration of an incident require this.
- 5.5 Arrangements for the rotating of staff during an active and prolonged response will be developed. Further reviews of the on-call arrangements may be required in response to recommendations that may arise from the GM Resilience Unit Review of LA Emergency Planning arrangements, any implications that may arise from anticipated changes to Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and the expected Protect (Counter Terrorism) legislation.

6 COMMUNICATION and INFRASTRUCTURE CHECKS

- 6.1 Resilience Direct is the national protected communication website for officers to access and manage information regarding incidents.
- 6.2 Cascade communication test exercises take place during the year to ensure that information is received and acted upon. Bolton Council's response has been compliant with all Cascade communication exercises during the year.

- 6.3 Met Office National Severe Weather Warning Service provide weather alerts to officers on the on-call rota.
- 6.4 'One Voice' on-call reporting system support the co-ordination of the on-call rota and the management of incidents.
- 6.5 Mobile Telecommunication Privileged Access Scheme (MTPAS): All on-call officers and appropriate support officers e.g., Security and Response and Functional Leads, are signed up to the MTPAS system which is a British procedure for priority access to the mobile telephone networks for privileged persons during a period of business continuity/ major incident management.
- 6.7 Emergency Control Centre sites: the two sites have been reviewed during the year including checking of all accessibility, communication, and IT equipment during the last year, to ensure that all necessary equipment is in good working order. Both sites are compliant and will be tested out during emergency response exercises planned for in Autumn 2022.
- 6.8 Bolton Emergency Resilience Group: this group operated prior to the Covid-19 response and met on a regular (quarterly) basis to review lessons learned from incidents, share best practice and inform future emergency planning across the Bolton partnership of Category 1 responders and partnership. We will work with GM Resilience Unit to develop new arrangements for a partnership group by Autumn 2022.

7 TRAINING and DEVELOPMENT

- 7.1 Training and development are provided to all officers taking part in the emergency response on-call rota. All officers on the on-call rota have attended required training to enable them to carry out their duties. In addition, further enhanced training is offered via the GM Resilience Unit on an annual basis and bespoke exercises, e.g., a multi-agency exercise is planned for Autumn 2022.
- 7.2 It is expected that the training required is undertaken during the day and as emergency response is a corporate responsibility, there is an expectation that this time is included in the normal working day of the officer. Substantive managers will be given prior notice of at least two weeks any training required of the officer.
- 7.3 After an emergency incident, officers are asked to consider lessons learned and future learning /training requirements which are captured within their incident notes sent to the civilcontingencies@bolton.gov.uk inbox, and included in future training events to ensure a continuous cycle of learning.
- 7.4 An example of the minimum requirements for the FIO role is provided below:

Having the necessary knowledge and skills is important in ensuring an effective and consistent response to major incidents, therefore, candidates need to be able

to commit to basic training and continuous professional development by completing;

- *Introductory e-learning course.*
- *FIO Training Session*
- *Introduction to Civil Contingencies taught course*
- *Regular FIO meetings and training.*
- *Participation in civil contingencies exercises.*
- *Participation in other multi-agency events as they arise.*

7.5 All current 54 officers on the rota are compliant with the standards of training as recommended by GM Resilience Unit. A summary matrix of the current Bolton officers on the 'on-call rota' and training completed is saved on the Bolton Council SharePoint site for all officers and is reviewed quarterly.

7.6 In addition, each year the GM Resilience Unit provide a local resilience forum training programme which all emergency Category 1 responding officers across the GM resilience forum are invited to attend. This includes police, fire, ambulance, NHS, local authorities and specialist agencies e.g., Ministry of Defence. These take the form of a combination of training and exercises and are run at central locations across Greater Manchester. This GM Resilience Unit training plan is provided to all on-call civil contingency officers via regular internal communication and updates (at least quarterly).

8 HORIZON SCANNING and 2022 WORK PLAN

8.1 **Greater Manchester Emergency Planning Support – Local Resilience Forum:** At Greater Manchester level, the Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP) led by NHS colleagues have played a significant role in providing advice, information, and guidance plus outbreak management across the region. During the year, alongside the reconfiguring of Clinical Commissioning Group governance, there will also be a reconfiguration of Greater Manchester Local Health Resilience Partnership (LHRP) and GM Resilience Unit operating procedures and structure to ensure that learning from both teams and collaborative working built up during Covid-19 is cemented for the future. This GM Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response re-design will ensure that added value is provided to the local GM partnership arrangements and the range of expert advice provided to local authorities.

8.2 **The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities Civil Contingency Chief Officers Group** (COG), have committed to understand how local partnership arrangements of the LRF add value to the civil contingency responsibilities of each local authority (LA) within the GM region, and how local authorities and GM Resilience Unit are working together across the region. This is expected Autumn 2022.

8.3 **Impacts of Climate Change:** Given the varied and often unpredictable nature of emergency incidents, the scope and extent of recovery actions and the associated costs are difficult to predict and are subject to considerable uncertainty. However, we are seeing increased frequency of severe weather events including storms and floods. The Met Office have noted an emerging pattern of more extreme temperatures and

more extreme rainfall, with the Councils Climate Change Strategy noting that 2020 was the UK's fifth wettest year on record and six of the ten wettest years have been since 1998 ([State of the UK Climate - Met Office](#), 29th July 2021). Bolton's response to the climate emergency is set out in the Climate Change Strategy and key actions include a focus on adaptation (to protect both communities and natural habitats), as well as efforts to mitigate. Acting collaboratively across the Council, our partnerships, businesses, and communities will remain key however, there is a clear need for a sustainable approach to planning and budgeting for emergency incident recovery work as access to finance for recovery work is currently an identified risk. Attempts to claim financial assistance via the governments scheme of emergency financial assistance (known as Bellwin) for work related to the response to the flooding in Horwich in 2021 were unsuccessful.

- 8.4 **Protect Duty Legislation:** The Government is proposing to introduce a new Protect Duty from Autumn 2022 as announced in the Queen's speech earlier this month (10th May 2022), subject to recent national consultation with key partners and the public. This legislation, and the changes it brings will enhance the protection of local and the UK's publicly accessible places from terrorist attacks and ensure that businesses and organisations are prepared to deal with such events. A publicly accessible location, has been defined by the government as:

'Any place which the public or any section of the public has access, on payment or otherwise, as of right or by virtue of express or implied permission.'

The main elements of the current draft bill are:

- Establishing a new requirements framework which requires those in control of certain public locations and venues to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures
- Delivering an inspection and enforcement regime, which will seek to educate, advise, and ensure compliance with the Duty.
- The introduction of the Protect Duty will require joint working between emergency, preparedness, resilience and response, place-based teams, event teams, alongside local businesses, sports stadiums, high streets, retail centres, parks, transport hubs and places of education to implement a joined-up approach to the Protect Duty across the borough. As such, the authority on advice of a GM Resilience Unit task group will take steps to prepare plans for implementation of The Protect Duty over the next months including any financial and on-call rota implications.

- 8.5 **The Bolton Council Civil Contingency Workplan for 2022** includes the following key activities:

- Finalisation of Bolton's Multi-Agency Flood Plan and associated tactical response cards as appendices – completed March 2022
- Bolton's Multi-Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) specific trial exercise with local resilience partnership Category 1 responders – Sept 2022
- Completion of review of all functional plans – due end of May 2022

- Contribution to GM Resilience Unit 'civil contingency role of local authorities review' by Chief Officer's Group – due Autumn 2022
- Contribution to GM Resilience Unit review and on-going discussions at Chief Officer's Group on 'on-call rota review' – due Autumn 2022
- Recruitment of additional civil contingency forward incident volunteer officers to achieve cohort required – by end of May 2022
- Continued delivery of training plan 2021-22
- Community civil contingency volunteers project working alongside AGMA Resilience Unit, National Communities Prepared and Bolton CVS to help recruit and shape the accredited training (these volunteers will also have community champion specialist recognition)
- Establishment of Bolton Resilience Network Group and terms of reference – Autumn 2022
- Issuing of regular lessons learned summary to civil contingency rota staff to capture learning, news and best practice
- Responding to any changes or implications of revised or new legislation- Civil Contingency Act 2004 and introduction of new Protect Duty.

9 RISK ASSESSMENT, RAG ASSESSMENT & BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN/S

- 9.1 Each year the Bolton Council responsible officers for Civil Contingency and AGMA CCRU representatives carry out a Red Amber Green (RAG) assessment of the Civil Contingency work plan which is jointly agreed. As part of this assessment all criteria was graded as green or amber with no criteria assessed as critical or red.
- 9.2 The **Corporate Risk Register** is held within the Business Continuity (BC) Plan portfolio of the Office of the Chief Executives and the lead officers for the BC Plan and Corporate Risk Register have engaged with the Public Health Team to share information on how to assess any corporate risks. During 2022, this work will continue to regularly review any corporate risks in relation to the assurance, governance and operational aspects of the civil contingency on-call rota. Currently, there are two risks identified in relation to civil contingency work and associated mitigations corporately:
- Currently, there is **no consensus on the optimum frequency of participation** and practice required to ensure maintenance of skills of responders. GM Resilience Unit have carried out an initial review of local authorities' emergency on-call arrangements, including the appropriate frequency of participation and practice required to maintain skills of rota participants, across Greater Manchester. There is on-going discussion regarding the implications of the national Civil Contingency Act Review and introduction of Protect legislation which could all have an impact on the recommendations to local authorities for on-call arrangements later in the year (Autumn 2022). Once these recommendations are received, local arrangements will be reviewed if appropriate.
 - **Staff welfare:** officers involved in incident responses may need rest periods and/or time away their primary role, if for example, they are called out to an incident and need to work all night. Proposed arrangements will be worked up for agreement.

**10 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SUPPORTING THIS REPORT AVAILABLE ON
REQUEST TO civilcontingencies@bolton.gov.uk**

Bolton Council's Climate Change Strategy: [Document.ashx \(bolton.gov.uk\)](#)