

# Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework

REVIEWED JULY 2017

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of the Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning Framework is to determine the future focus for Gateshead Council working in collaboration with partners and the community. This will ensure that we continue to have robust arrangements in place to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Cabinet originally approved the Resilience Strategy in 2010, with reviews undertaken in June 2013 and March 2015. Progress has been monitored on a six monthly basis by the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee throughout this period.

The framework contains background information; statutory legislative requirements and the national context; the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum; Gateshead Council Emergency Response Arrangements; Training and Exercising; Council Liability; Emergency Response to incidents and pre-planned operations; Local Governance Arrangements; Emerging Issues; Strategic Vision for Resilience and Emergency Planning; Future Focus; Service Key Objectives; Priorities and; Quality Assurance.

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## 2. Background

Resilience is the ability to anticipate risk, limit impact, respond and recover quickly and effectively from emergencies and disruptive events that affect organisations, businesses, individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities.

Emergency planning should aim where possible to prevent emergencies occurring, but when they do occur, good planning should reduce, control or mitigate the effects of the emergency. It is a systematic and ongoing process which should evolve as lessons are learnt and circumstances change.

Resilience is the joint responsibility of all officers within Gateshead Council. The emphasis of this framework is to continue the sustained development of a network of competent officers who will respond to emergencies and carry on embedding resilience into all aspects of service delivery.

### **3. Statutory Legislative Requirements and National Context**

All local authorities are classed as 'Category 1' Responders in the event of an emergency/major incident under the **Civil Contingencies Act (2004)**. The Act requires all Category 1 Responders to undertake these wide ranging statutory duties to help to protect the population within their boundaries. The duties include:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- put in place emergency plans
- put in place business continuity management arrangements – this is undertaken by the Council's Internal Audit and Risk Team in Corporate Resources
- 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 with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- 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 (local authorities only)

Within Gateshead we continue to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) but also a host of other government policy, legislation and associated guidance.

This includes:

- **Emergency Preparedness** – this is statutory guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- **Emergency Response and Recovery Guidance** – this is non-statutory guidance which describes the multi-agency framework for responding to and recovering from civil

emergencies but also aims to establish good practice based on lessons identified from responding to and recovering from emergencies

- **National Recovery Guidance** – this primarily aimed at local responders and developed in line with the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) on recovering from an emergency in the UK
- **National Resilience Capabilities Programme (NRCP)** [February 2013] – the NRCP aims to increase the capability of the United Kingdom to respond to and recover from civil emergencies. It does this by building capability to deal with the consequences that are common to most types of emergency, regardless of whether those emergencies are caused by accidents, natural hazards or man-made threats.
- **National Risk Register and National Risk Assessment** [March 2016] - this is the government's assessment of the likelihood and potential impact of a range of different civil emergency risks (including naturally and accidentally occurring hazards and malicious threats) that may directly affect the UK. It also provides information on how the UK and emergency services prepare for these emergencies and understands what capability is needed.
- **CONTEST** [July 2011] – the United Kingdom's Strategy for Countering Terrorism. There are four main work streams with Resilience and Emergency Planning leading on Protect - to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack; and Prepare - to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.
- **JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme)** [July 2016] – has been established to address the recommendations and findings from a number of major incident reports. JESIP complements Emergency Response and Recovery by focussing on the interoperability of the emergency services and other responder agencies in the response to an incident and incorporates the Joint Decision Model [JDM] which is common to all those involved in emergency response.
- **Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience** [October 2016] - this framework explores the role and resilience of individuals and communities before, during and after an emergency.
- **Human Aspects Guidance** [October 2016] - This guidance provides information and advice and support for stakeholders involved in planning and co-ordinating frontline

activities to address Humanitarian Assistance in response and recovery following an emergency.

This national context will continue to form our themes, priorities and objectives at a local level.

#### **4. Northumbria Local Resilience Forum**

Local Resilience Forums [LRF] are bodies which were developed under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, to co-ordinate the actions and arrangements between Responding Bodies in the area to provide the most effective and efficient response to Civil Emergencies when they occur. The LRF is not a responder during an emergency, but has the responsibility to plan for emergencies to ensure preparedness from responders when an incident occurs. The Northumbria LRF consists of organisations and agencies involved with emergency response to enable the co-ordination of the most effective and efficient response in our communities across the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear area including Gateshead Council.

As of July 2017, Gateshead Council currently chairs and leads the Northumbria LRF Training and Exercising and Communities Groups, whilst also being Vice Chair of the LRF Tactical Business Management Group.

#### **5. Gateshead Council Emergency Response Arrangements**

The Emergency Response Process is Gateshead Council's arrangements for responding to emergency situations or a major incident. The process was endorsed by Cabinet in April 2014 and is activated in support of the Emergency Services and/or when the required response is beyond normal operational capacity. This enables the Council to adapt its response to a wide range of possible scenarios. Gateshead Council manages emergencies and incidents on a three tier approach:

- Strategic [Gold] – Chief Executive and Strategy Group supported by the Incident Control Team

- Tactical [Silver] – Incident Controllers lead the Tactical response linking in with Chief Executive and Strategy Group supported by HQ Co-Ordinators, HQ Support Officers and geographical based Site Incident Officers
- Operational [Bronze] – the Virtual Support Team (Council Services)

Gateshead Council has an Emergency Response Team [ERT] consisting of council officers from a range of different services who perform specialist roles during an emergency situation or major incident. The team consists of volunteers (at July 2017 circa 50+) prepared to respond when the need arises with the support of other Council services/officers feeding into this process when required. Care Call are the first point of contact – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and collate and assess the key information received before contacting a member of the team who will make the decision to escalate arrangements if not already requested by the Emergency Services. Supporting the process are a suite of actions cards, protocols and flowcharts, key contacts, a SharePoint site and the Major Incident Room located within the Civic Centre.

The Incident Control Team [ICT] is responsible for the implementation of the Emergency Response Arrangements. The Incident Controller [IC] (Service Director and above) will lead the Council's tactical response during an emergency or major incident working with the ERT and is responsible for the overall decision making during the emergency or incident which may be in support of the emergency services. This ensures there is a clear link with Strategy Group, elected Members when issues require escalation for a strategic direction which may impact on the Council's reputation or affect the ability to continue to provide critical services. Partner organisations will also be contacted and informed. All decisions made maybe subject to scrutiny by a public enquiry post incident.

Gateshead Council use Resilience Direct which is a Cabinet Office secure web-based platform for the resilience community to share information amongst all emergency responders and agencies for planning, response and recovery. A mapping facility allows responders to produce and share real time maps showing cordon areas, locations of reception centres and addresses affected. The system provides a secure information-sharing platform.

## **6. Training and Exercising**

Gateshead Council's Emergency Response Arrangements are regularly tested via real incidents and a series of exercises. Each incident or exercise is followed by a debrief process to identify areas of good practice and any lessons learned. This robust process, combined with adherence to national guidance and learning identified from others, results in a constant review process and subsequent strengthening of our response plans. The programme of extensive training, mentoring and exercising takes place to ensure the experience, knowledge and expertise of current team members is shared with all volunteers to ensure that processes, protocols and procedures are operational.

## **7. Council Liability**

As with all organisations the Council faces exposure to a number of external and internal events that could impact on the availability of the resources needed to perform its critical functions. In addition, there could be events that affect the wider community which the Council has a duty to support.

The failure to provide a response during a Major incident or business interruption affecting availability of the Council's resources and impacting on ability to deliver critical services or an impact on a community is recognised as a key risk to the Council, and included on the Strategic Risk Register.

Any emergency or major incident, whether an accident, natural hazard or act of terrorism; could potentially affect the safety, health, welfare, security and prosperity of the people of Gateshead.

## **8. Emergency Response to incidents and operations**

Over the last twelve months the Emergency Response Team has responded to a number of incidents and issues. As at July 2017, we have worked with our partners and communities in relation to:

- Power Outage [31 July 2017] – a power cut that affected 4 multi-storey blocks within the central area of Gateshead for a sustained period of time
- Operation Kestrel [24 July 2017] – a pre-planned Northumbria Police operation to target foreign nationals criminals operating within the Gateshead area which looked at potential victims of modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation
- Barry Street Incident [15 July 2017] – a suspect package was found within the street and an evacuation of the immediate area was undertaken.
- Grassbanks Incident [13 July 2017] - a suspect package was found within the rear of a garden shed and a cordon of the immediate area
- Avenue Road, Bensham Incident [4 July 2017] – a domestic incident involving a residential property and a cordon of the immediate area
- Bensham Court Tower Block [2 July 2017] – a communications issue that affected all community alarms and contact with Care Call for vulnerable tenants which was not operational for a period of time
- Operation Bridler [19 June 2017] - a pre-planned National Crime Agency led operation involving victims and offenders of modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation
- Jeremy Corbyn visit [5 June 2017] – a pre-planned visit by the Labour Party Leader in Performance Square on the Gateshead Quays
- Severe Weather Issues [21<sup>st</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2016]
- Operation Border [18 October 2016] - a pre-planned police led operation involving victims and offenders of modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation
- Operation Jessop [4<sup>th</sup> October 2016] - a pre-planned police led operation involving chemical substances found in a property
- A Sink Hole on the A1 [26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016]

## **9. Local Governance Arrangements**

Within Gateshead we have well established and robust arrangements in place along with strong relationships with multi-agency partner organisations which have enabled us to respond effectively to emergencies. This includes:

The Gateshead Multi-Agency Resilience and Emergency Planning Group is a statutory partnership and include representatives from Gateshead Council, Northumbria Police, North East Ambulance Service, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, the Environment Agency and Health partners. This group ensures that all organisations are brought together to discuss emergency preparedness, response and resilience issues, and that Gateshead is adequately prepared to respond to disruptive challenges.

The Resilience and Emergency Planning agenda sits within the Leader's Portfolio of the Council and the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Six month updates are presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on progress and issues, with ad hoc reports presented to the Leader's Portfolio and other relevant portfolios as and when required.

### **10. Emerging Issues**

The following emerging issues have increased the demand on the Resilience and Emergency Planning function:

- Increased coordination of emergency responses to incidents and issues
- Co-ordination of pre-planned operations led by the emergency services on broad range of subjects
- Coordination of responses to modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation issues
- Increased scrutiny of event plans to ensure compliance with both resilience and crowded places guidance
- Increased tension and apprehension around the terrorism agenda and events
- Ongoing work to understand the implications of an increase in the terrorism threat level

## **11. Vision for Strategic Resilience and Emergency Planning**

The strategic vision for Resilience and Emergency Planning is 'to ensure that Gateshead is a safe and resilient place to live, work and visit'.

## **12. Future Focus**

Within Gateshead we need to continue the work undertaken to be ready and able to deal with potential emergencies and disruptive events. This ranges from natural disasters like flooding or heavy snow to deliberate acts such as terrorism attacks, major fires or issues with modern slavery. Crises can happen suddenly or develop gradually.

The future focus for Resilience and Emergency Planning will be to continue to work in collaboration with partners and our communities to ensure that we have the robust arrangements in place to anticipate, assess, prevent, prepare, respond and recover from emergencies ensuring a resilient Gateshead.

This approach establishes the vision, which will help us to continue to develop and deliver these arrangements within our own organisation; with partner organisations; businesses; and within our communities. It has been developed to ensure that Gateshead is continuing to work within a structure that is compliant with our statutory requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and it's associated legislation and guidance.

The focus has been on a transformational approach of mainstreaming resilience and emergency planning into the core business of Gateshead Council to ensure a more efficient and effective way of working. This has resulted in the constant review of our plans, preparations with continued training, exercising and awareness-raising not only with our own employees and chief officers within Gateshead Council, but our multi-agency partner organisations.

## **13. Service Key Objectives**

As part of Gateshead Council's Business Planning process, overarching service key objectives have been developed to ensure there is compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and help achieve the strategic vision:

**Table 1 - Resilience and Emergency Planning Service Key Objectives**

Service Key Objectives				
Objective	Measure	Target	Responsibility	Activity
Reviewing and developing strategies/plans and to co-ordinate policy in relation to Resilience, Emergency Planning and Response	<p>Effective and efficient Emergency Response Plans developed based on a risk analysis approach on emergencies and situations that could happen within Gateshead</p> <p>Assurance that there are robust arrangements to mitigate, to prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager</p> <p>Resilience and Emergency Planning Officer</p>	<p>Implement identified gaps from the National Risk Planning Assumptions and Community Risk Register to ensure strategies, plans and policy is developed</p>
Working with a range of partner agencies to promote the Resilience, Emergency Planning and Response working with public, private, Multi-Agency and voluntary sector organisations.	<p>By continuing to work in collaboration with our partners and communities to continue to ensure that we have robust arrangements in place to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Service Director – Commissioning and Business Development</p> <p>Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager</p> <p>Resilience and Emergency Planning Officer</p>	<p>Continue to co-ordinate in the Multi-Agency Resilience and Emergency Planning Group</p> <p>Engagement and lead of Themed Areas within the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum [LRF]</p> <p>Vice Chair Role in the Tactical Business</p>

Service Key Objectives				
Objective	Measure	Target	Responsibility	Activity
				Management Group – LRF
Advise elected members, senior officers and partner organisations on emergency preparedness legislative changes to ensure that they are aware of policy implications	Elected members, senior officers and partner organisations are fully briefed and aware of the current emergency preparedness position	Ongoing	Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager	Attend Strategy Group, Leadership Team, Portfolio Meetings, Corporate Resources OSC and the Multi-Agency Resilience and Emergency Planning Group to present updates
Promote community resilience via the establishment of networks and engagement programmes	Resilient communities who are able to assist themselves in an emergency or major incident	Ongoing	Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager  Resilience and Emergency Planning Officer	Assess risks within areas and develop Community Resilience Plans working directly with affected communities
Contribution to the creation, planning, delivery and evaluation of bespoke emergency planning training and exercising packages to multi-disciplinary staff	Competent and trained employees within all directorates and services  Competent and trained Emergency Response Team volunteers	Ongoing	Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager  Resilience and Emergency Planning Officer	Undertake a training needs analysis then implement a number of be-spoke training sessions to raise awareness and up-skill employees

Service Key Objectives				
Objective	Measure	Target	Responsibility	Activity
Promote Business Continuity guidance to local business and the voluntary sector	Businesses are able to recognise risks within their organisations develop plans and mitigate any risks or threats during an emergency or major disruption to their organisation	Ongoing	Resilience and Emergency Planning Officer	Attendance at the Business Breakfast Forums and engagement with local Business Forums
Incorporate examples of good practice and lessons learned from local, regional and national emergency planning/response incidents, training events and exercises	Implement any examples of good practice and lessons learned into current Emergency Response plans, protocols and arrangements	Ongoing	Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager  Resilience and Emergency Planning Officer	Undertake debrief sessions following local, regional and national emergency planning/response incidents, training events and exercises
Provision of practice guidance, supervision and mentoring to staff involved in the emergency planning/response approach	Competent and trained volunteers  Feedback from Emergency Response Team	Ongoing	Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager  Resilience and Emergency Planning Officer	Ensure volunteers involved in the ERT are continuously supported and mentored in exercise and incidents, and receive the necessary training

## **14. Priorities**

To continue to achieve the service key objectives at a local level the following themes and priorities have been reviewed and specific future actions updated:

**Building resilient and stronger communities** – engaging with businesses, the voluntary sector, partner agencies, communities and individuals to ensure they are better prepared for and able to recover from emergencies. Future actions include:

- Work with partner agencies and local communities to promote community resilience including the pilot of Community Resilience Plans
- Further develop our arrangements for sharing and mapping information about vulnerable people, the use of the Cabinet Office Resilience Direct system, the prioritisation of assistance and identification of support that needs to be provided during and after an incident
- Develop an approach to explore and utilise spontaneous volunteering in an emergency or incident situation
- Continued recruitment and engagement of Community Resilience Wardens across the borough
- Work in partnership with event organisers to promote a consistent approach to ensure compliance with both resilience and the Government's Crowded Places Guidance

**Assessing Risk** – identifying new hazards and threats that may affect Gateshead implementing measures that may prevent an emergency or incident occurring. Future actions include:

- Continue to identify risks and hazards throughout Gateshead and ensure that any new risks and hazards are mapped, mitigated and communicated
- Review and adapt the criteria used to assess critical services within internal business continuity planning in conjunction with the Audit and Risk Team in Corporate Resources

- Undertake work to understand the implications of an increase in the counter terrorism threat level
- Continue to protect the health of the public in relation to preventing threats arising and the assurance of appropriate responses when things go wrong

**Enhancing our partnership arrangements to respond and recover** – the effective response and co-ordination of arrangements in the event of an emergency or incident occurring and achieving a rapid return to normality. Future actions include:

- Continue to collaborate with council services and multi-agency partner agencies to ensure that any emerging themes and issues can be planned for and responded to
- Develop and undertake an awareness raising programmes in relation to the response provided to modern slavery, trafficking and exploitation issues, and counter terrorism issues
- Review our humanitarian assistance arrangements and continue to develop relationships with voluntary organisations and community facilities, utilising the Government’s Human Aspects Guidance
- Continue to develop the use of the Cabinet Office Resilience Direct System as a multi-agency response tool
- Further develop a coordinated approach to the recovery process following an emergency or incident

## **15. Quality Assurance**

The strategic framework and priorities will be reviewed on an annual basis with a regular six month progress update to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Portfolio Holders with ad hoc reports presented to the Leader’s Portfolio and other relevant portfolios as and when required. The performance of the framework will be monitored by the Gateshead Multi-Agency Resilience and Emergency Planning Group, in conjunction with the key priorities and objectives of the LRF Business Plan 2017-2020.

A future peer challenge is to be explored to be able to benchmark with other similar responders.