

CABINET
20 JULY 2017**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS, RESILIENCE, RESPONSE
AND RECOVERY**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr J H Smith, CMR for Health and Wellbeing

Relevant Officer

Dr Frances Howie, Director of Public Health

Recommendation

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Wellbeing recommends that Cabinet:**
 - (a) notes the structures of the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and County Council representation and participation;**
 - (b) notes the multi-agency suite of emergency plans for responding to emergencies;**
 - (c) endorses the arrangements for humanitarian assistance;**
 - (d) notes the Emergency Planning service level arrangements that the Council has in place with the southern District Councils;**
 - (e) notes the regular training of County Council staff and exercising of plans; and**
 - (f) notes the Emergency Planning Critical Incident in Schools provision.**

Background

2. Following the recent tragic fire in the Grenfell Tower high rise block of flats in Kensington and Chelsea Borough, London, the role and response of local authorities to such major emergencies has been brought into sharp focus. As the investigation continues into determining the details behind the emergency response at Grenfell it is not appropriate to comment on the potential failures that led to this tragedy. However, this incident does provide an opportune and timely reminder that a local authority such as the Council has very clearly defined statutory duties and responsibilities in responding to civil emergencies such as the Grenfell tower fire.

3. Cabinet members attention is drawn to the Local Government Association's document 'A Councillors Guide to Civil Emergencies' (May 2016) which explains and details the expectations placed on all local authorities in meeting their responsibilities for statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) available at <https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/councillors-guide-civil-e-745.pdf>

4. Risk management and resilience including response to an emergency is governed by the CCA. The CCA confers legal duties on a range of organisations including Police, Fire, Ambulance, Environment Agency, NHS and Local Authorities (both the County Council and District Councils), and these agencies are collectively referred to as Category 1 Responders.

West Mercia LRF

5. To further support and embed multi-agency cooperation, partnership and interoperability, the CCA mandated the creation of Local Resilience Forums. Based on Police Force areas, the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum covers the Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire administrative areas.

6. The County Council recognises the statutory requirement to have in place adequate emergency response arrangements to civil emergencies, and works closely with its partners in the West Mercia LRF through contributing as following to its work:

- Chief Officer Group attended by the Chief Executive or his nominee, the Director of Public Health
- Business Management Group attended by the Emergency Planning Manager
- Tactical Co-ordinating (Planning) Group attended by the Emergency Planning Manager and Heads of Service and
- A sub-group structure to develop and deliver specific work streams such as Risk Assessment and Media Communications.

7. Through this structure the Council works closely with partner organisations in the drafting of multi-agency plans and procedures. As a key member of the WMLRF the Council delivers its duties through partnership, as opposed to individual duplication.

Statutory Duties

8. As a Category 1 responder the Council has statutory responsibilities to:

- Assess the risk of an emergency occurring in Worcestershire,
- Maintain plans to ensure that in the event of an emergency, or the likelihood of an emergency, the Council is able to:
 - i. Prevent the emergency
 - ii. Reduce, control or mitigates its effects, or
 - iii. Take other action in connection with it
- Maintain business continuity plans to ensure the continuity of the Council's critical services should an emergency to occur that impacts on service delivery

- Maintain arrangements to warn the public, and to provide information if an emergency is likely to occur or has occurred
- Cooperate and share information with other responders
- Promote business continuity management to the local business community and voluntary sector.

9. The Council's Directorate of Public Health Emergency Planning Unit provides the focal point for emergency preparedness planning, ensuring that the Council is ready to meet its commitments, via a single or multi-agency response, to any emergency that could occur within the County and impact on the citizens of Worcestershire.

10. The Council must therefore ensure its organisational preparedness to deal effectively with the full range of emergency situations from localised incidents such as flooding of property through to catastrophic emergencies such as a major industrial incident.

11. The Council meets this obligation through its Corporate Emergency Response Framework, which details a structured approach to enable the Council to prepare for and respond to an emergency situation.

12. The measures that the Council sets in place to be ready to respond to an emergency may be summarised as:

- Maintaining a single point of contact for fellow responding agencies to contact the Council 24/7 through the Emergency Planning duty officer
- Maintaining an on call rota of trained and knowledgeable senior staff at Strategic (Gold) and Tactical (Silver) levels ensuring that the Council is able to respond to an emergency 24/7
- Maintaining its statutory and critical services during an emergency
- Supporting the emergency services and other organisations involved in the immediate response. This would typically involve:
 - Identification and collation of vulnerable people data
 - Management and restoration of highways incl. emergency signage and road closures
 - Assistance in the evacuation of displaced communities
 - Co-ordination of premises for the provision of an emergency mortuary, and family and friends reception centres
- Providing support services for the community and others affected by the emergency including:
 - Support for emergency rest centres set up by a District Council
 - Provision of Crisis Support services
 - Provision of a Humanitarian Assistance Centre
 - Taking an overview of NHS measures to control the spread of disease
 - Provision of an emergency help line facility
- Establishing Community Information Points for the dissemination of information for those affected by the emergency.
- Co-ordinating the contribution of the Voluntary sector and their range of services
- Co-ordinating the Recovery process to enable the impacted community to return to a new normality as soon as possible.

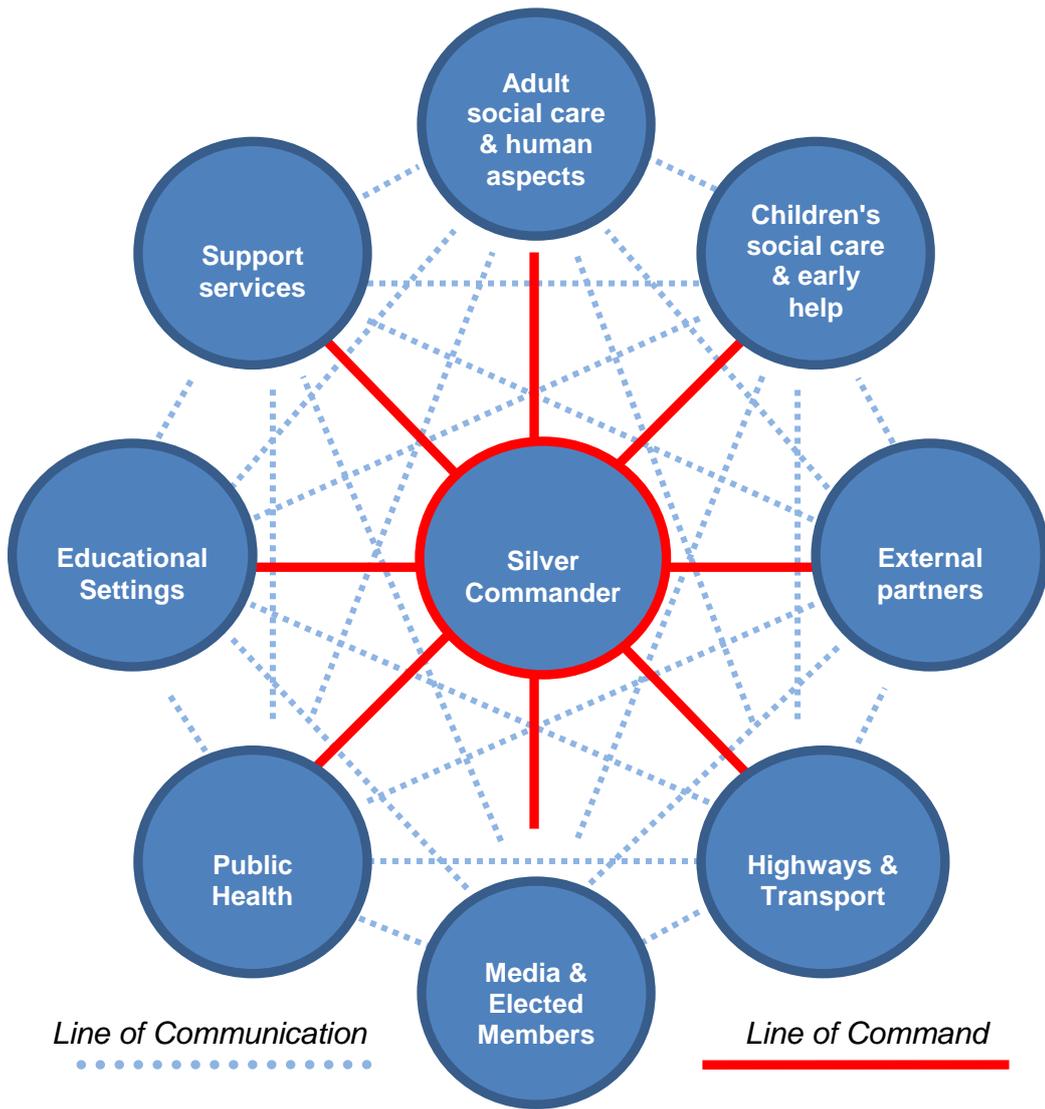
12. Worcestershire is two tier and in places a three tier local governance area with County, District, Parish and Town councils. Consequently, some responsibilities including re-housing of those made homeless, the inspection of and carrying out emergency repairs to housing and Environmental Health are delivered by the six District Councils:

- Bromsgrove District Council
- **Malvern Hills District Council***
- Redditch Borough Council
- **Worcester City Council***
- **Wychavon District Council***
- Wyre Forest District Council.

(*Emergency Planning Service Level Agreement Members)

The highlighted District Councils have signed a Service Level Agreement with the County Council for the provision of an emergency planning advisory service. This service is contracted to support the planning, training and exercising functions of the Districts, and the County Council also provides specialist advice and support to SLA members. The 3 northern District Councils operate a shared service arrangement for the provision of their emergency planning function.

13. The Corporate Emergency Response Framework adopts a matrix functional team response structure to deal with a major emergency as follows:



Humanitarian Assistance

13. Appendix 1 details the response structures that would be set in place in response to an emergency similar to that experienced with the Grenfell tower fire. The Police, local authorities and voluntary agencies all have important roles in providing help and support to victims caught up in an emergency.

14. 'Human Aspects' refers to the impacts on individuals during and after an emergency. It may also refer to the activities carried out to support those affected.

15. Addressing Human Aspects in any emergency will comprise a broad range of activities, some of which may continue long after the incident occurred. These may include:

- emotional support
- first aid
- shelter, food, clothing
- information updates about the incident and individuals directly involved
- advice and support on financial, legal and insurance issues
- support to restore social networks
- opportunities for remembrance/memorials
- input into any evaluation process following the emergency (for example a public inquiry).

16. The provision of multi-agency support to a local community is managed through several defined plans and processes depending on the emergency in hand. This may include Rest Centre, Humanitarian Assistance Centre, Friends and Family Reception Centre and Crisis Support service. Appendix A outlines the timeline for key plans and processes set up in response to an emergency under the responsibility of key agencies including a local authority (Human Aspects in Emergency Management, Cabinet Office, October 2016).

Training and Exercising of key staff members

17. Staff training and exercising is provided for Council staff expected to contribute towards an emergency response including Gold and Silver Commander roles. The Gold and Silver cadre is trained on a rolling programme to ensure that appropriate skills and knowledge is maintained.

18. All Council-trained staff are encouraged to participate in the LRF training and exercising programme and a major LRF wide Animal Health exercise is scheduled to take place in March 2018.

Critical Incident in Schools

19. The Emergency Planning team offers a specialist support service to schools for coping with a critical incident / an emergency. The Critical Incident Response Service Level Agreement is marketed to all schools and to date over 60 have signed up to receive the service. The service provides schools with a 24/7 advisory service and response, provision of psychological support, advice on preparing an emergency plan, service continuity and training and exercising of response arrangements.

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

20. In the event of a major emergency incident the government has discretion under the Bellwin scheme to provide financial assistance to public agencies. Bellwin grant reimburses local authorities for most costs incurred on, or in connection with, their immediate actions to safeguard life and property or to prevent suffering or severe inconvenience as a result of a disaster or emergency in their area.

21. The standard Bellwin scheme provides for reimbursement of eligible costs at 85% above a threshold of 0.2% of the authority's net revenue budget. The threshold recognises that councils have a long-established responsibility to prepare cover for unforeseen events. However, beyond that level, the Government may implement the Bellwin scheme. Cabinet Members will recall that the Council benefited from this scheme following the severe flooding of summer 2007.

Privacy and Public Health Impact Assessments

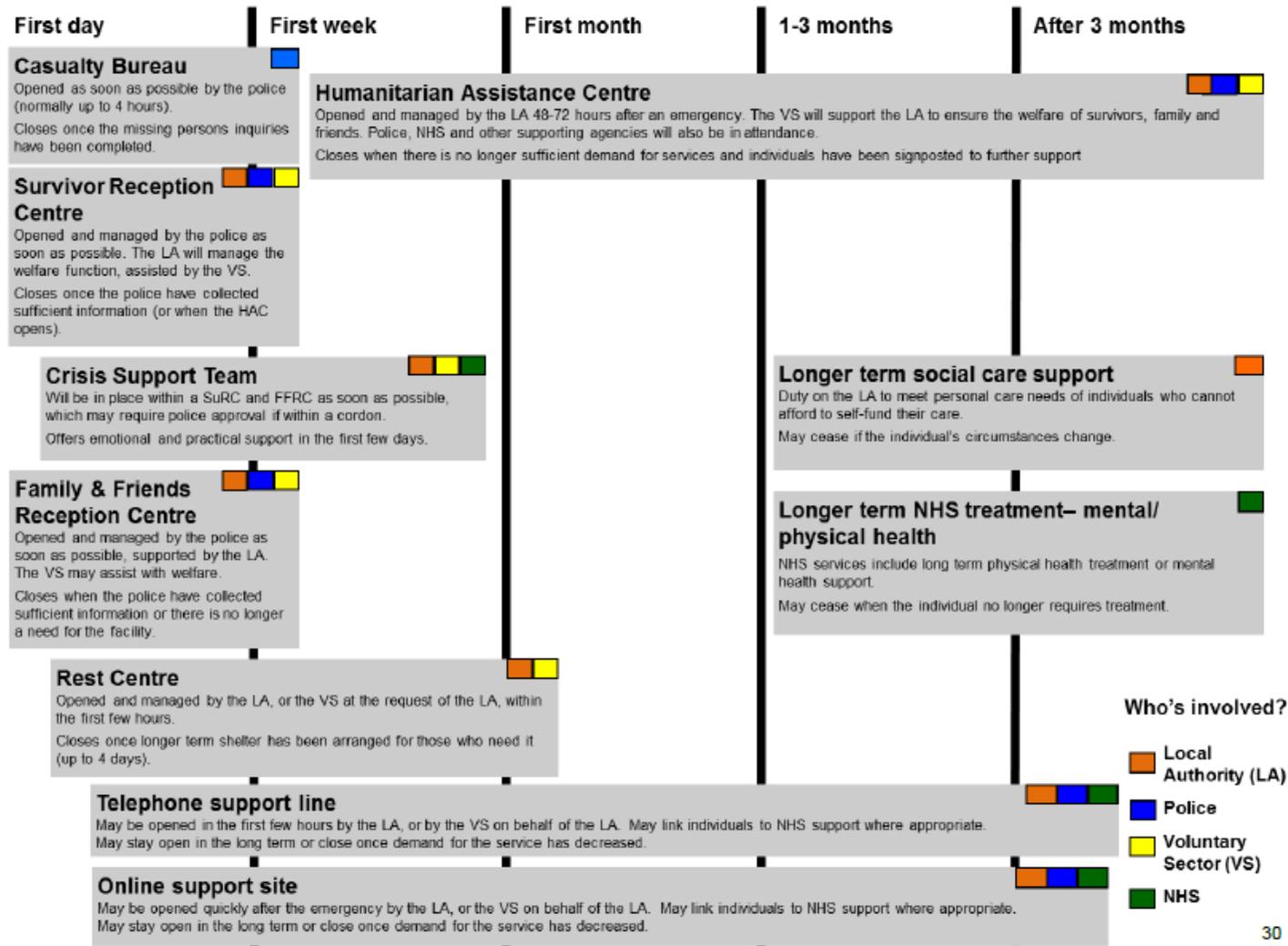
22. The emergency planning arrangements detailed above are in place to mitigate the Public Health impact of emergency events. If these robust systems were not in place, the risk of significant public health harm would be unmanaged and real. In particular arrangements for identifying vulnerable people and managing displaced people should be noted in this regard.

Equality and Diversity Implications

An Equality Relevance Screening has been carried out in respect of these recommendations. It identified that further equality impact analysis may be required in respect of Rest Centre arrangements and the provision of religious and faith requirements of the local community impacted by an emergency.

Supporting Information - Appendix A

Human Aspects in Emergency Management



Contact PointsCounty Council Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Public Health) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

- WCC Corporate Emergency Response Framework V.3 (2014)
- LGA A Councillors Guide to Civil Emergencies (May 2016)
- Cabinet Office Human Aspects in Emergency Management, (October 2016).