ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Public Protection Committee
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REPORT TITLE	Resilience Annual Report
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/226
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1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide assurance on the Council's resilience arrangements in fulfilment of its duties as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

2.   RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1   That the Committee notes the progress made in developing the Council's organisational resilience arrangements during 2020.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   The Council has emergency planning responsibilities to fulfil as a Category 1 responder, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This report provides an annual position statement on our activity and preparedness in the areas set out in the Act, including details of further planned improvements to ensure that the Council is in as strong a position as possible to respond to emergencies and incidents affecting the public.

3.2   Officers reported to the last meeting on 7 October 2020 on the COVID-19 rescue, recovery and transition stages of our emergency response, which were based on the activation of our Generic Emergency Plan. To recap, our responsibilities under the 2004 Act are as follows:

- To **assess the risk of emergencies occurring** and using this to inform contingency planning;
- To maintain **emergency plans** and **business continuity plans**;
- To **inform the public** about civil protection matters and to maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- To share information with other **local responders** to enhance coordination, and to co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and
- To promote business continuity by providing advice and assistance to **businesses and voluntary organisations**

3.3　The Committee has oversight of the following areas, which are covered from paragraph 3.4 below:
- Our compliance with the Council's duties relating to resilience and local emergencies, including staffing arrangements and systems for incident management;
- Our approach to maintaining and reviewing Business Continuity Plans in accordance with the priorities allocated to them;
- Recommendations in response to local, regional and national lessons learnt reports in respect of emergency planning matters and monitoring their implementation; and
- Our response to the National CONTEST strategy and associated plans relating to Counter Terrorism.

Assessment of Risks

3.4　Management of risk relating to COVID-19 has been a continual feature of the Council's duties as a Category 1 responder since March 2020. Services have assessed risks arising from the pandemic and managed these through the appropriate governance routes. Risk registers and scenario plans have provided the structure required and at the height of the pandemic these were reviewed weekly by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and the Incident Management Team (IMT). The strength of our Generic Emergency Plan and associated procedures was reported to the previous Public Protection Committee meeting.

3.5　The risk of concurrent events or incidents has been overseen by the Organisational Resilience Group (ORG) and Duty Emergency Response Coordinators (DERCs), with support from the Assurance Team which incorporates emergency planning, health and safety and risk management. Officers have benefited from participation in regular meetings with resilience colleagues in other authorities, where risk assessment of concurrency has been a standing agenda item. This has included the risks associated with EU Exit.

3.6　The Council is monitoring the risks associated with EU Exit through the Risk Board and EU Exit Group. In addition, the specific risks associated with supplies and services was recently reported to a joint meeting of the Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire and Highland Council Procurement Board. The Council is contributing to EU Exit risk management at a multi-agency level through the

Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (GLRP) to ensure cross-system visibility of risk and mitigation. Risk registers have been in place for two years at both internal and multi-agency levels and are updated regularly in accordance with National Planning Assumptions. It is likely that the risks associated with EU Exit will be a key focus of civil contingencies activity during the remainder of 2020 and into 2021.

3.7 The City has over more recent months responded to a number of concurrent weather-related incidents and effectively managed these through the Incident Management Teams and subsequent de-briefs. Improvement actions are identified and overseen by the Council's Organisational Resilience Group (ORG). This acts as a continual assessment of the risks posed to us by climate change, both institutionally and as a city. A summary of the types of improvements is below:

Incident	Improvements identified	Status
Printfield Fire Aug 2020	Introduction of duty Tactical Lead to support Aberdeen City Council's response to incidents and emergencies.	Complete. Staff identified, briefed, and incorporated into emergency plans from November 2020. Review scheduled February 2021.
Printfield Fire Aug 2020	Emergency contact details updated to reflect organisational changes and current roles and responsibilities.	Complete.
Flash Flooding Aug 2020	Reception centre arrangements to be reviewed and list to be expanded to include ALEO and partner facilities.	Complete. ALEO venues added to list of possible reception centres where appropriate, risk assessments completed, Reception Centre Handbook in place.
Flash Flooding Aug 2020	Rest Centre Manager (RCM) pool to be expanded, training to be rolled out for new and existing volunteers, and out of hours activation protocols to be developed.	Complete. Pool expanded and training provided. Materials available to continue this on a rolling basis.
Flash Flooding Aug 2020	Grab boxes to be made 'Covid secure', and access arrangements for Tactical Leads and RCMs to be incorporated into activation plans	Complete.
Flash Flooding Aug 2020	Mapping of vulnerable areas of the city, including vulnerable people, homes, residential homes and streets.	Underway. Between Data & Insights and Roads, with input from Emergency Planning to plot reception centre locations.
Flooding (Alert) Oct 2020	Protocol for handling, and escalating, SEPA flood alerts to be developed and briefing prepared for DERC & Tactical leads	Complete.

3.8   An exercise in Winter Preparedness was held on 26 October 2020, drawing together colleagues from the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) alongside the Council's strategic and tactical staffing layers, the Scottish Government and Police Scotland. As a Category 1 responder we have not only tested our structures, capability and capacity to respond to winter weather incidents, but ensured that all those involved in the exercise are fully aware of and prepared for this risk as the winter months approach. In addition, DERCs have participated in two large scale exercises prior to Offshore Europe at P&J Live, as well as a number of "no notice" test activations of the GLRP.

3.9   A Resilience Hub has been built within Microsoft Teams, providing a catalogue of emergency plans, procedures and plans. All relevant staff have access to the Hub 24/7 which allows response to be managed through a combination of remote participation (strategic and tactical) and "on the scene" support (operational).

3.10   Risks are also assessed and monitored through the GLRP. GLRP membership includes all Category 1 responders within the North East of Scotland, with attendees being the strategic leads within the organisation they represent or a deputy with delegated authority to agree policy, strategy and to commit financial and other resources. The GLRP supports multi-agency incident planning and response in the region, monitors key and emerging risks, approves regional emergency plans, and monitors their implementation. The Council held chair positions on both the GLRP and the GLRP working group until early 2020, and has continued to participate as a member since this passed on rotation to other partners.

3.11   The Council's corporate risk register, monitored by the Risk Board, reports on the management of civil contingencies risks and is being expanded to include all operational civil contingencies events. This will help to ensure that the required controls are in place for each scenario and will complement the scrutiny of risks at the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership. This will be overseen by the ORG.

Emergency Plans and Business Continuity Plans

3.12   Committee approved a Generic Emergency Plan (GEP) in December 2019 which was activated at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was the subject of a report to the 7 October 2020 meeting. The GEP has been augmented over the year with a suite of supporting documentation to ensure a robust activation of the Plan:

- Activation packs for the Duty Emergency Response Co-Ordinator (DERC)., providing a guidance on required actions and factors to consider during an emergency response:
    a. DERC Generic Activation
    b. Activating the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership
    c. Activating a Reception Centre
    d. Oil Pollution Activation

e. Flooding Activation

- Reception Centre Handbook to guide the activation of a rest centre, family and friends centre or survivor centre, depending on the type of emergency.

- Review of reception centre locations, risk assessments, and guidance. Additional staff have volunteered to join a rota of Reception Centre Managers and a programme of training is underway. This has been adapted to build in controls around COVID-19, for instance through the use of Personal Protective Equipment if a centre is established.

3.13 The GEP has been amended to reference the addition of a layer of Tactical Leads. Their role will be to support the DERC with the strategic response, manage the initial rotation of operational staff if the incident is protracted, ensure that any health and safety risks to public and staff are mitigated, and make recommendations to the DERC in respect of any decisions required under emergency powers and standing down or further escalating the incident. This is a key role in the management of emergency response and has been effective since 2nd November 2020. It will boost the Council's tactical capability and ability to discharge the role of the tactical response layer as set out in the GEP.

3.14 The GEP has also been updated to take account of lessons identified during the COVID-19 response and recovery periods, as reported to the October meeting of the Committee:
- The benefit of setting strategic objectives at the start of a major incident or emergency;
- Recognising the stages of Rescue, Recovery, Transition;
- Consideration to be given to the use of dual DERC rotas during significant and extended emergencies;
- Clarity on when the Plan may be activated; and
- The addition of reference to the role of elected members in the Plan.

3.15 The Council has in place a schedule of other emergency plans which are developed and reviewed in conjunction with partners on the GLRP and with peer review from colleagues in other local authorities. These include:
- "Blackstart"
- Coastal pollution plan
- Fuel plan
- Care for People Plan
- Move to Critical Plan
- Flooding Response Plan
- Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC) activation and management plan
- Pipeline activation pack
- Plans covering other events and ceremonial occasions

3.16 The Council established the Business Continuity Sub-Group in January 2019 to provide assurance to the Organisational Resilience Group that:

- Critical Service/Functions have plans in place;
- Plans are maintained and reviewed;

- Plans are tested in accordance with the testing schedule; and
- Good practice and improvement activities can be shared and communicated with other plan holders across the organisation.

3.17   The Sub-Group's activities in 2019 focused on reviewing the organisation's existing list of critical services to establish any gaps and to create additional plans as required. Existing plans were reviewed and updated to incorporate structural and functional changes with the organisation and any other updates required. This enabled the development of a log/list of plans in order to inform a review and testing schedule. The organisation has continued to review its Business Continuity Plan arrangements in 2020 during the critical period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Key activities have included:

- A questionnaire was issued to plan owners in order to review and identify areas of criticality, critical roles, percentages of staff required to provide minimum levels of service and to confirm mitigations and arrangements in place.
- A heatmap was produced and reported to ECMT to identify areas where high percentages of staff are required to provide minimal levels or service, single points of failure and potential resource requirements from other areas.
- Plan holders have been reviewing and updating existing plans to reflect working arrangements during COVID-19 and the responses provided to the questionnaire with progress being monitored and reported to ECMT and the Risk Board.
- The Corporate Risk Lead has been attending workshop sessions with NHS Grampian to collaborate on efforts to establish a Business Impact Analysis Template and Business Continuity Plan Template for use by the ACHSCP. Consistency in approach will help to link plans across both organisations which have interdependences, for instance Care for People.

3.18   Work is currently underway to complete a Business Continuity Plan review and testing schedule for 2021 which will be shared on the Resilience Hub, allowing full visibility across each service areas. The priorities of the testing schedule will be informed by the Critical Service areas identified through COVID-19 Scenario Plans and the Critical Service areas and activities identified via the Heatmap. The progress and outcomes resulting from the plan testing will be reported to the Organisational Resilience Group via the Business Continuity Group. The Council's Business Continuity Policy has recently been updated and will be submitted for approval to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee in December.

Warning and Informing the Public

3.19   The Council's External Communications team operates a 24/7/365 on-call rota as part of which they will inform the public and media of an emergency situation. There is an agreed Emergency Incident Response Protocol which sets out a clear pathway for how the public are informed.

3.20 As part of on-going work developed in the last few years with colleagues in Operational Services to better inform the public, the External Communications team has developed a series of easy-to-understand graphics and accompanying social media posts for on-going resilience incidents such as winter weather and flooding. These include warnings to the public before such an event happens, what the Council is doing during these incidents including working with internal and external partners, and the recovery stages of an incident or an emergency. Information from these social media posts is sent to local media including radio, television, and newspapers to disseminate to as wide an audience as possible either through social media, websites or more traditional media methods.

Working with Local Responders

3.21 The pandemic has tested the resilience partnership structures in place and demonstrated the many benefits of Category 1 and 2 responders working together. Through the GLRP, each partner has benefitted from continuous, holistic oversight of the trends and data affecting the Grampian area, including localised trends in the City. In particular, close working with NHS Grampian and the ACHSCP has been key. Aberdeen Together was established during the rescue stages and has overseen activation of the Care for People Plan.

3.22 A business impact analysis model is being developed alongside resilience colleagues in the Health and Social Care Partnership, which will inform business continuity planning in both the Council and NHS Grampian. The Partnership is a member of the Organisational Resilience Group where civil contingencies risks are kept under review and participates in training and exercising. The strong links in place here will continue to be built upon as we move through the winter period and support one another to respond to the pandemic and any concurrent events. Consultation is on-going presently to categorise Integrated Joint Boards (IJBs) as Category 1 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act, a proposal which is welcomed by both the Council and the Board. Both have indicated their support in responding to the consultation and the GLRP has committed to revising membership to include representation from the IJB.

3.23 Multi-agency exercises have been held in respect of P&J Live, Winter Preparedness and "no notice" activations of the GLRP. DERCs have received training along with the pool of Senior Managers on Call (SMOCs) within the ACHSCP, with SMOCs attending IMTs relating to storms and flooding over more recent months. As outlined above, the GLRP has been extremely active during the COVID-19 response period, demonstrating many times over the benefits to be gained from multi-agency planning, collaboration and response.

3.24 The Prevent strand of the CONTEST Strategy has continued to be delivered as required throughout the pandemic, this has been achieved through the support of digital alternatives such as e-learning and Microsoft Teams sessions. The Multi-Agency Prevent Regional Group has continued to meet and collaborate on progress across all partners. The pandemic has had an impact on some national activity which included a review of the existing training materials. This work was due to be put in place during 20/21 however, the impact of the

pandemic on required resources has pushed this back to 21/22. In the meantime, a review of the existing training package is underway with national agreement that minor modifications can be made to the package to ensure it remain up to date and relevant until the new product can be launched.

Supporting Business and Voluntary Organisations

3.25   The Council's Event Guidance platform includes guidance for business and voluntary event organisers around event planning, risk assessments, adverse weather, budgeting and contingency planning – www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/eventguide

3.26   During the COVID response, Council staff, alongside personnel from the Health and Social Care Partnership, were mobilised to support neighbourhoods and communities.   Neighbourhood leads maintained regular contact with community groups throughout the lockdown period, enabling information from partners to be shared quickly with communities and allowing groups to highlight emerging issues or concerns or to seek support both advice and information as well as practical, such as putting them in touch with additional volunteers and resources or assisting them to develop use of digital tools.

3.27   The Council and the ACHSCP are developing proposals to sustain the neighbourhood lead role and this is considered critical in supporting community resilience during the lifetime of the pandemic and to prepare for any future crisis responses. Furthermore, ACC will work with the British Red Cross to support the delivery of a volunteer strategy and a suite of engagement and exercising tools for community groups.

3.28   Engagement has also recently taken place with Community Councils to offer support from the Council to prepare their own community-led resilience plans which would be activated with the support of our partners, for instance Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The importance of communities developing their own plans and harnessing the support of those living within the community is recognised good practice, ensuring as it does that people feel kept informed during incidents and emergencies and work together to protect vulnerable people and spaces.

3.29   Plans are in work with local businesses, through the Aberdeen Business Group, to promote the advice and assistance which the Council can offer around business continuity management. This will include engagement sessions, as well as updates to the Council's external website to provide generic advice to businesses, with contact email address where specific advice can be provided.

Festive Arrangements

3.30   The extended Corporate Management Team are currently considering any changes which may be required to the festive cover arrangements to reflect the additional challenges facing the public and the local authority this year. We are conscious of the increased risk of concurrent events due to COVID-19, as well the additional support required by some groups such as those who are self-isolating or in receipt of financial support. Once finalised, these arrangements

will be shared with elected members and published on the Council's website when available.

4.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The Council has continually managed financial risks throughout the COVID-19 response and these have been reported to the Urgent Business Committee on 20th March, 6th May and 30th June, all 2020.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The establishment of response structures in accordance with the Generic Emergency Plan has helped to ensure compliance with legislation and guidance.

6.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

6.1   The Council's resilience arrangements rely on a constant cycle of risk management and this is reflected in the Generic Emergency Plan and it's supplementary procedures.

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	Financial risks presented by the pandemic have been documented in reports to the Urgent Business Committee.	M	As outlined in reports to Urgent Business Committee and Council.
Legal	Compliance with statutory guidance and legislation is necessary to ensure the Council is not exposed to legal challenge.	L	The implementation of the generic emergency plan has helped the Council to comply with its civil contingencies duties.
Employee	Risks to staff throughout the pandemic response	M	Managed through the Place Risk Register overseen by the Organisational Resilience Group.

	and through other emergencies.		
Customer	Risk that customers' needs not met and lack of clarity on the availability of services.	M	Managed through the Place Risk Register overseen by the Organisational Resilience Group.
Environment	Risk to the city's external spaces and	M	Managed through the Place Risk Register overseen by the Organisational Resilience Group.
Technology	Risk to digital systems as part of an emergency response or as an emergency itself.	L	Managed through the Place Risk Register overseen by the Organisational Resilience Group.
Reputational	Risk of negative publicity in media/social media around the Council's response to emergencies	M	Managed through the Place Risk Register overseen by the Organisational Resilience Group.

6. OUTCOMES

7.1 The recommendations contained within this report have no direct impact on the Council's Delivery Plan however if emergency response is not effectively managed and risks mitigated, there could be an impact on the delivery of organisational objectives.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Organisational Design	The Council's organisational structure has required to be flexible during the response to manage the impact of the pandemic. For example, some members of staff have transferred from less critical areas to more critical areas to ensure the continued delivery of critical services.
Governance	The Council's governance structure has been tested throughout the emergency response and has proved to be effective. The governance arrangements have

	proven to provide the flexibility needed to manage the impact of a pandemic.
Process Design	The lessons learned section details adjustments to process as a result of this event.
Technology	The Digital Resilience risk workstream established at the outset of the response ensure that our technological capabilities were always at the forefront.
Partnerships and Alliances	The Covid-19 Incident Management Team was attended by our partners in the Health and Social Care Partnership as well as our Arm's Length External Organisations (ALEOs). The Council has played a key role at the GLRP and has introduced multi-agency partners to ACC structures where appropriate.

8.   IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Full EHRIA not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9.   BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

10.   APPENDICES

Appendix A – Generic Emergency Plan

11.   REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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