

Aberdeen City Council Generic Emergency Plan

September 2024



Table of Contents

Section Number	Section Heading	Page Number
1	Introduction	4
2	Scope	4
3	Legislation and Guidance	5
4	Supporting Procedures and Documentation	7
5	Partnership Structure	7
6	Aberdeen City Council Emergency Response Structure	11
7	Generic Emergency Plan Performance	15
8	Housekeeping and Maintenance	15
9	Communication and Distribution	16

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of Plan

This Generic Emergency Plan (“the Plan”) has been created to document the Aberdeen City Council (“the Council”) emergency response structure. The Plan also outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Council as required as a Category 1 Responder as defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and accompanying amended Regulations for Scotland (2005 and 2013) and other compliance legislation. The Plan facilitates an appropriate, integrated and proportionate response by the Council to meet the needs of any incident or emergency, contributes to the prevention of escalation and disruption caused by such incidents, and enables the Council to maintain delivery of normal services as far as is reasonably practicable as well as compliance with statutory requirements.

1.2 Objectives of Plan

- Define the Council’s responsibilities in an emergency, in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other relevant legislation and guidance;
- Outline the Council’s emergency response capabilities;
- Define the roles and responsibilities of the Council in incident response;
- Describe how and when the Plan will be activated;
- Detail the roles and responsibilities of Incident Management Teams and process for activating and deploying services;
- Outline the Command and Control structure for the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (GLRP) and;
- Provide a generic plan linking emergency and business continuity plans and frameworks within the Council and the GLRP.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Plan applies to all emergencies which could occur, and which may affect or threaten the Council’s ability to deliver critical functions. The Plan also acts as a guide for managing incidents which are not serious enough to require a strategic response. This Plan can be scaled up or down in relation to any incident which the Council could face. The Plan is not intended to operate as a procedural guide and is supported by several supplementary procedures and plans, as set out in section 4.

3. Legislation and Guidance

3.1 Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (“the Act”) and its accompanying amended Regulations for Scotland (2005 and 2013) (“the Regulations”) place statutory obligations on Category 1 Responders to prepare for emergencies.

An emergency is defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Part 1, Section 1 as:

An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare or the environment in a place in the United Kingdom, or war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom and which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more Category 1 Responder.

The Act delivers a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom by setting out:

Part 1 - Local arrangements for civil protection

Part 2 - Emergency Powers for UK Government and devolved administrations

Under the terms of the Act, seven duties are placed on Category 1 Responders:

- Duty to assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
- Duty to maintain Emergency Plans;
- Duty to maintain Business Continuity Plans;
- Duty 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;
- Duty to share information with other local responders to enhance coordination;
- Duty to cooperate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and
- Duty to promote Business Continuity by providing advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations on Business Continuity Management.

The full Civil Contingencies Act 2004 can be viewed [here](#).

The Regulations and Guidance can be viewed [here](#).

3.1.1 Definition of a Major Incident

For the purpose of shared understanding and awareness, the definition of a major incident as used by the emergency services and recognized by Grampian Local Resilience Partnership is:

An event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency.

This may include –

- The initial treatment, rescue and transport of a large number of casualties.
- The involvement either directly or indirectly of large numbers of people
- The handling of a large number of enquiries likely to be generated both from the public and news media, usually to the Police.
- The need for the large scale combined resources of two or more of the category 1 and 2 Responders.
- The mobilisation and organisation of the Emergency Services and supporting organisations to cater for the threat of death, serious injury or homelessness to a large number of people

It is important to note that some incidents may attract a co-ordinated multi-agency response but may not be declared as a major incident but can apply to any incident requiring multi-agency co-ordination whether or not the circumstances meet the criteria for declaring a major incident (or emergency).

While some other Category 1 responders recognise and use the declaration of a *Major Incident* in their language, planning and structures as this allows them to access additional resources or make organisational decisions they otherwise would not be able to , **Aberdeen City Council DOES NOT USE Major Incident in any of its emergency response plans and treats all potential incidents under the CCA 2004 definition of an emergency.**

3.2 Preparing Scotland

Following the introduction of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and its amended Regulations for Scotland, the Scottish Government launched ‘Preparing Scotland’.

Preparing Scotland is not intended to be an operation manual, but is instead guidance to responders assisting them assess, plan, respond and recover. It establishes good practice based on professional expertise, legislation and lessons learned from planning for and dealing with major emergencies at all levels.

It reflects a process which prepares for emergencies from the identification of a risk to the completion of the recovery process. It is intended to be a flexible and responsive document, able to respond to new hazards and threats. The guidance is designed to be able to integrate new practices established through innovative thinking or the incorporation of lessons identified. It encourages training and development of those involved and lays out structures to assist in this. Whilst some development is in response to legislative duties, other programs are continuously launched in response to stakeholder requirements.

The full Preparing Scotland Guidance can be viewed [here](#).

4. Supporting Procedures and Documentation

4.1 This Plan is designed to function as a foundation to the Council's response to an emergency and will ensure that it interlinks with several supporting procedures and documents, including:

- Supporting procedures and documents for the Duty Emergency Response Co-ordinator;
- Supporting procedures and documents for the Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership Senior Manager On-Call;
- Operational procedures which support delivery of the Council's statutory obligations as a Local Authority, including procedures for standing up Support Centres;
- Grampian Local Resilience Partnership Generic Response & Recovery Arrangements;
- Relevant Grampian Local Resilience Partnership Site and Hazard Specific Plans; and
- National and Regional plans.

5. Partnership Structure

5.1 Resilience Partnership Structure

In the North of Scotland (Tayside, Grampian, Highland and Islands) the North of Scotland Resilience Partnership (NoSRRP) provides a strategic forum for the co-ordination of emergency planning and response. Within Grampian the local level of planning and response is coordinated by the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (GLRP). There are two tiers of the GLRP:

- Strategic;
- Tactical.

The Strategic tier of GLRP is made up of the Strategic Leads of each Category 1 Responder agencies who ensure that Regional requests are implemented, and to agree local resilience priorities. The Strategic Local Resilience Partnership meets twice a year.

The Tactical tier of GLRP is made up of emergency planners, civil contingencies advisors and equivalent roles from each of the Category 1 Responder agencies who implement the requests of the Strategic tier and work collaboratively on multi-agency plans. The Tactical tier meets as the GLRP Working Group every 6 weeks. Category 2 Responders are also routinely invited to participate in the GLRP meetings.

The main purpose of the GLRP and Working Group at local level is to ensure that all Category 1 Responders can effectively and efficiently discharge their duties as defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The GLRP routinely activates at the Tactical tier as the primary forum for multi-agency emergency response, with officers acting under delegated powers for their agency, emergency planners, civil contingencies advisors and equivalent roles providing

regular updates to Strategic Leads. The GLRP would activate at Strategic tier in the event of a Regional or National wide emergency which was out with the capability of the Tactical tier response.

5.2 Category 1 and 2 Responders

The Category 1 Responders as defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 are:

- Local Authorities;
- Integrated Joint Boards;
- Police Scotland;
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service;
- Scottish Ambulance Service;
- National Health Service Grampian;
- Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA); and
- Scottish Environmental Protection Agency.

The Category 2 Responders as defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 are:

- Utilities Companies;
- Transport Authorities; and
- The Health and Safety Executive.
- The Coal Authority
- The Met Office

There are several organisations who may have a role in responding to an emergency that do not have specific duties as defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. These organisations may be represented at any or all the Strategic, Tactical or Operational levels of an emergency response. These organisations may be involved in relevant sub-groups established during an emergency response, such as Scientific and Technical Advice Cell, Care for People or Committees established to provide specific capabilities or co-ordinate specific elements of an emergency response. The following list acknowledges some of the common response organisations not defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004:

- Her Majesty's Armed Forces;
- Voluntary Organisations;
- Animal Health Agency;
- Food Standards Scotland;
- Faith Organisations;
- Scottish Natural Heritage;
- Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service; and
- Commercial Organisations.

The Scottish Government is not classified as a Category 1 or 2 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This is to ensure that in the event of an emergency occurring which

should impact Scotland nationally, there remains one neutral overall coordinator. Any emergency deemed as requiring the Scottish Government to take primary lead will be coordinated via the Scottish Government Resilience Room with the conduit to the Local Resilience Partnerships being provided by the Scottish Government Civil Contingencies Liaison Team.

5.3 Roles and Responsibilities of Category 1 Responders

Police Scotland

- Co-ordinate the activities of local responders and others acting in support at the scene of an incident except when MCA co-ordinate search and rescue in a maritime incident;
- Treat the affected area as a crime scene, the requirements for which must be considered in parallel to the general response, unless it is obvious that the emergency is caused by a natural event;
- Act under the direction of the Procurator Fiscal and, where appropriate;
- Facilitate the inquiries conducted by bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive, Rail, Air or Marine Accident Investigation Branches of the Department for Transport;
- Process casualty information including the identification of deceased; and
- Removal of the dead on behalf of the Procurator Fiscal who has the legal responsibility for investigating the cause and circumstances of deaths in Scotland; and
- As host force, co-ordinates the response to, and investigation of major accidents on the rail network in Scotland.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

- The saving of life through search and rescue;
- Firefighting and prevention of fire spread;
- Rendering humanitarian assistance;
- Protection of property and the environment;
- Management within the inner cordon;
- Managing incidents involving hazardous materials; and
- Qualified scientific advice in relation to HAZMAT (hazardous materials) incidents and damage control; and mass decontamination of casualties following a Chemical, Biological, Radioactive, Nuclear incident.

Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS)

- Save life and provide immediate care for patients at the scene of the incident and in transit to hospital;
- Alert hospital services and other relevant NHS agencies;
- Manage decontamination of people affected by hazardous substances prior to evacuation from the scene;
- Evacuate the injured from the scene in order of medical priority;
- Arrange and ensure the most appropriate transport for the injured to the receiving hospital;
- Supply patient care equipment to the scene of an emergency;
- Transport vital medical staff and their equipment to the scene of an emergency;

- Alert the Red Cross and St Andrew's Ambulance Association and coordinate their work in support of SAS; and
- Provide and maintain communications equipment for medical staff and voluntary organisations at the scene of an emergency; and restore normality.

National Health Service Grampian

- The National Health Service may provide a role at the scene of an incident in addition to its role of receiving sick and injured persons at its hospitals.

Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA)

- Directorate of Operations includes HM Coastguard (responsible for civil maritime search and rescue) and Counter Pollution and Response Branch;
- Initiates and co-ordinate civil maritime search and rescue by mobilising, organising and dispatching resources to assist people in distress at sea, in danger on cliffs or shoreline and in certain inland areas;
- National coordinator of all civil maritime Search and Rescue activities by utilising its own facilities and those made available by others (e.g. military helicopters and Royal National Lifeboat Institute lifeboats) but will also seek assistance from any source likely to make an effective contribution;
- MCA may, if specifically requested, assist emergency services and local authorities during emergencies, such as flooding;
- The Counter Pollution and Response Branch deals with pollution at sea and assists local authorities with shoreline clean-up and; and
- The Secretary of State for Transport's Representative (SOSREP) is collocated with the MCA. The SOSREP is empowered to intervene on behalf of the Secretary of State for purposes relating to the safety of ships or pollution from ships, offshore oil or gas installations. SOSREP has the power to give directions.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

- Responsible for environmental protection in Scotland;
- Powers to prevent, minimise and reduce pollution and enforce environmental legislation;
- Advise the emergency services on the protection of water, land and air environment; and
- Responsible for regulating and monitoring discharges to water, the storage of waste and emissions to air.

Aberdeen City Council

- Support the emergency services and those assisting them;
- Provide a variety of support services for the local and wider community;
- Maintain normal services at an appropriate level;
- Provide a wide range of social care and welfare services, working alone or with public, private and voluntary organisations. Services include care for people, support centres, temporary accommodation, re-housing and practical support for victims;
- Access a wide variety of specialist, scientific, environmental and communications expertise;

- Represent the diverse interests of local people and, in so doing, maintain close links with communities through elected members, Community Councils, Community Planning and other formal partnerships;
- Have powers to take action to preserve community wellbeing; and
- Lead the longer-term recovery and regeneration of affected communities.
- Communicate with arms-length external organisations (ALEOs) to ensure an understanding of the need to support the Council in delivery of its Category 1 obligations.

Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership

- Support the emergency services and those assisting them;
- Provide a variety of support services for the local and wider community, specifically in relation to community health and social care matters;
- Maintain normal services at an appropriate level;
- Provide a wide range of health and social care services, working alone or with public, private, and voluntary organisations, including taking a lead with Aberdeen City Council on care for people matters; and
- Lead the longer-term recovery and regeneration of affected communities.

6. Aberdeen City Council Emergency Response Structure

6.1 Emergency Response Structure

A Duty Emergency Response Co-Ordinator (DERC) will co-ordinate the response to an emergency on behalf of the Council. Chief Officers of the Council operate as DERCs on a rota basis. In this capacity, they act on behalf of the Chief Executive in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Governance.

The DERC is supported by a Council Incident Officer and Support Centre Manager who also operate on a rota. Trained Loggists are available to support Incident Management Teams.

The Council operates a three-tier emergency response structure: Strategic, Tactical and Operational:

- **Strategic:** The Strategic level applies to all emergencies that could affect or threaten the Council's ability to deliver critical functions.
- **Tactical:** The Tactical level is activated where Operational resources need co-ordination to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. At this level, the Incident Management Team, if activated, will support the DERC and the Council Incident Officer in the response.
- **Operational:** The Operational level manages the immediate 'hands-on' work that is undertaken at the scene of the incident. At this level the response is service led.

The response to any emergency that could affect or threaten the Council's ability to deliver critical functions will be coordinated by the DERC in the first instance. In such circumstances, the DERC will lead the response and chair the Incident Management Team if activated. If the DERC deems that the incident is not an emergency that could affect or threaten the Council's ability to deliver critical functions, and does not require Strategic co-ordination, the Council Incident Officer will coordinate the response.

Duty Emergency Response Coordinators, Council Incident Officers, Support Centre Managers and Loggists are trained and exercised regularly by the Emergency Planning and Resilience team.

6.2 Aberdeen City Council Emergency Response Roles and Responsibilities

The DERC will provide **Strategic** response to an emergency by:

- Activating the Council's emergency response, determining whether to activate this Plan, another Council emergency plan or to recommend the activation of a GLRP plan;
- Considering the emergency in its wider context;
- Deciding whether to activate an Incident Management Team and chair IMT;
- Determining whether to request activation of the Local Resilience Partnership should the response to an emergency be out with the capability of the Council;
- Determine long term and wider impacts and risk with strategic implications;
- The DERC should consider whether to set strategic objectives at the start of an emergency, and subsequently communicate the overarching strategy and objectives for the emergency response;
- Establish the parameters for Council Incident Officers to operate in the management of an emergency; consult closely with Council Incident Officer
- Monitor risks, impacts and progress towards defined objectives;
- Determine whether it is necessary to put in place a dual DERC rota, for instance if the incident is likely to be protracted and have a significant impact on the delivery of critical services.
- Prioritise the requirements of the Tactical tier and allocate personnel and resources to manage the incident accordingly;
- Formulate and implement media handling and public communication plans, potentially delegating this to Corporate Comms or to another Category 1 responder agency if appropriate. The DERC should consider development of a Communications Plan to co-ordinate internal and external communication during the management of a situation or incident is likely to last more than a few days;
- Assess the need to adjust normal business priorities in the light of competing resource demand created by the incident;
- In liaison with the relevant services and partners, coordination of the move through the Response stage, Consolidation stage to the Recovery stage.

- Ensure the Chief Executive and elected members of Aberdeen City Council are informed, and regularly updated as appropriate. The role of elected members should be considered and determined in the context of the incident or emergency; and
- Operate with the powers of the Chief Executive under the Powers Delegated to Officers, including the authorising of spend.

The **Council Incident Officer** , supported by the IMT, will provide the **Tactical** level of response to an emergency by:

- Determining the extent of the emergency;
- Deem if there is an existing emergency response plan appropriate for the handling of the incident and advice on implementation;
- Ensure a continuous flow of information between the DERC, Tactical, Operational teams and multi-agency partners;
- Attend at the scene of an incident or emergency as the Council representative and liaise with emergency services, other responders, and participate in at scene multi-agency meetings as required;
- Ensure actions taken at the operational level are coordinated, coherent and integrated to maximise effectiveness and efficiency;
- Plan and co-ordinate how and when tasks will be undertaken in partnership with the DERC and Local Resilience Partnership partners;
- Determine priorities for allocating available resources in partnership with the DERC and Local Resilience Partnership partners;
- Obtain additional resources if required with approval from the DERC and in partnership with relevant Local Resilience Partnership partners, community groups and suppliers. This may also include the use of arms-length external organisations and any resources they have available which can support the response;
- Assess significant risks and use this to inform tasking of operational responders;
- Mitigate risks to the Health and Safety of the public and personnel;
- Activate incident specific plan, scaling up or down to fit with the scale of the incident;
- Advice on DERC strategy and implementation;
- Initiate response, agreeing local actions and monitor response in partnership with the Emergency Planning & Resilience team . ;
- Prepare to take over the emergency response co-ordination role after the on-scene responders have concluded their part in the incident response;
- Provide regular briefings to DERC, requesting authorisation to spend;
- Record all costs associated with the incident response.

The Incident Management Team in conjunction with Team Leaders will co-ordinate the **Operational** response to an emergency by directing on the ground Aberdeen City Council responders to:

- Take immediate steps to assess the nature and extent of the problem as identified by Council Incident Officer;
- To cooperate and share information with LRP partner agencies;
- Concentrate efforts and resources on specific tasks within areas of responsibility;

- To ensure an integrated effort by allowing temporary transfer of one LRP organisation's personnel or assets to the control of another to mitigate the effects of the incident;
- Implement the Tactical response requests from the DERC, Council Incident Officer or the IMT; and
- Co-ordinate health and safety requirements on-scene.
- Liaison with the Council Incident Officer.

The Council's Emergency Planning and Resilience team will provide Civil Contingencies advice to all three tiers of the response structure during an emergency where available.

6.3 Recovery

Recovery is a complex and long running process that will involve many more agencies and participants than the response phase. (Phases noted below)

1. Initial Response
2. Consolidation
3. Recovery
4. Restoration of normality

Recovery is defined as the process of rebuilding, restoring, and rehabilitating the community following an emergency, but it is more than simply the replacement of what has been destroyed and the rehabilitation of those affected.

Local communities may also look upon an emergency as an opportunity to regenerate an area. Regeneration is about transformation and revitalisation.

In developing and instigating the recovery phase from an emergency the Council will put communities at the heart of the process and will engage and involve all aspects of those communities – residents, businesses, industries, partners, and stakeholders that live and work in our area.

The **recovery phase should begin at the earliest opportunity** following the onset of an emergency, **running in tandem with the response to the emergency**. It continues until the disruption has been rectified, demands on services have returned to normal levels, and the needs of those affected (directly and indirectly) have been met. While the response phase to an emergency can be short, the recovery phase may endure for months, years or even decades.

We must act flexibly and adaptively to the phasing of an emergency whilst also being mindful of the human, financial and reputational impact across our City.

As we navigate through an emergency from Response to Recovery the organisation will adhere to the principles of Integrated Emergency Management:

Focus on consequences, not cause

- Adaptability
- Direction

- Subsidiarity
- Continuity
- Responsibility
- Integration
- Communication

The Aberdeen City Council Managing the Recovery and Restoration of Normality Phase of an Emergency should be read in conjunction with Grampian LRP Response and Recovery Arrangements.

6.4 De-briefing Process

For emergency planning and response to evolve within the Council, the organisation conducts internal de-briefing and produces incident reports following every emergency. The purpose of debriefing is to assess which elements of the emergency response worked well, and to identify lessons from elements of the emergency response which could have been improved.

De-briefs and incident reports are conducted by the Emergency Planning and Resilience team. Incident reports, actions and recommendations are recorded on the Emergency Planning & Resilience Action Tracker – Place Based Risks Register to ensure the implementation of any agreed actions and learning within the organisation. Any identified gaps which require additional mitigation or pose risk to Aberdeen City Council are escalated to the Corporate Management Team.

7. Plan Performance

- 7.1 The effectiveness of the Plan and supporting procedures will be determined by the reduction or elimination of the negative impacts of unplanned incidents which could damage citizens, staff, assets, finances, reputation, or service delivery. Data will be collected from the debriefing process.

8. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- 8.1 The Plan and supporting procedures and documentation specified within this plan will be reviewed and updated after any emergency.
- 8.2 Unless otherwise required, the Plan will be subject to a planned annual review.

9. Communication and Distribution

- 9.1 This Plan and supporting documentation will be shared directly with the Chief Executive, Extended Corporate Management Team, and the wider emergency response teams.
- 9.2 The Plan will be available for review on the Council's shared areas on the network.

