

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 6 October 2020

Concurrent Risks Resilience Planning

Item number
Executive/routine
Wards
Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee members are asked to note the latest position with regard to resilience planning.
- 1.2 Committee members are asked to note the update on resilience planning for concurrent risks.
- 1.3 Committee is recommended to refer this report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

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Concurrent Risks Resilience Planning

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In response to the current civil contingencies risk landscape, this report outlines the latest position with regard to the Council's approach to resilience planning, which is being adapted following lessons learned from Covid-19 and the need to plan for a number of concurrent risks. This includes the introduction of a number of new resilience documentations and processes that have been developed.

3. Background

- 3.1 The current resilience risk landscape is unparalleled in recent times in its complexity and potential impact on the Council and the City. As there is a high risk of having to respond simultaneously to multiple incidents over the next twelve to eighteen months, potentially for an extended period, a clear need has arisen for a new all-risks approach focused on interdependencies, best use of limited resources and governance, that also ensures those involved in any Council incident response are clear about what they need to do to respond to and recover from incidents.
- 3.2 There are a number of resilience scenarios that have a relatively high risk of occurring over the next twelve to eighteen months, including:
- further waves of Covid-19 or an associated strain;
 - No-Deal Brexit;
 - periods of severe weather with associated disruption to the council, critical infrastructure and the city; and
 - an incident involving direct care for people, such as a fire, flooding or other cause leading to displaced people.
- 3.3 The council's approach to resilience planning has traditionally been plan-based, either 'generic' (the Council Emergency Plan and the Council Business Continuity Plan), 'scenario-specific' (Severe Weather Resilience Plan, Covid-19 Resilience Plan, Brexit Resilience Plan, etc), or statutory (Dalmeny Off-Site Emergency Plan).
- 3.4 This approach has meant that the Resilience service has developed and maintained a large number of plans. As they are designed to be standalone, they tended to be

lengthy, somewhat repetitive and took a single, rather than a concurrent, risk approach.

- 3.5 Plans often did not take cognisance of potential multiple incidents occurring simultaneously. Although the Council has responded to situations where more than one incident type has occurred at once, for example, systems interruptions during 'Beast from the East' (February to March 2018), these have been relatively modest and short-lived disruptions.
- 3.6 Although the current resilience landscape is very challenging, it has provided an opportunity to enhance the council's resilience processes and adaptiveness.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The reasons for shifting the Council's approach to resilience planning from a plan-based approach to a protocol-based approach (with supporting additional documentation) include the following:
 - 4.1.1 previous plan methodology did not take cognisance of multiple incidents occurring simultaneously;
 - 4.1.2 previous plans, which were designed to be standalone, contained large amount of information that was repeated across all plans;
 - 4.1.3 there was a demonstrable need for easy-to-follow, practical protocols and decision-making frameworks that are straightforward to use in an incident response situation;
 - 4.1.4 maintenance of the previous suite of more than 50 plans and protocols was overly bureaucratic, resource intensive and confusing to users; and
 - 4.1.5 there was a clear need for a more flexible, adaptive approach to incident management which would enhance the Council's resilience.
- 4.2 Debriefs provided important feedback, which supported the evolution of resilience planning. This information indicated that most target users of the Council's previous resilience plans benefited most from practical elements, eg protocols, decision-making tools and specific procedures about how to respond. This was a key factor in moving to a protocol-based approach.
- 4.3 In addition, the interim debrief for Covid-19 highlighted a number of aspects, with the Council's incident response indicating high approval, including existing incident management structures. These lessons identified have been incorporated into the new approach to resilience planning for a range of concurrent risks, including Covid-19.
- 4.4 The new approach has several benefits, as it will:
 - 4.4.1 build on the council's current resilience governance and key workstreams;
 - 4.4.2 align with the priorities of the Adaptation and Renewal Programme;

- 4.4.3 enable a flexible approach that can adapt to services contracting and expanding their service delivery levels in response to incidents;
 - 4.4.4 provide chief officers, senior managers, Resilience and other responding officers the information and tools to better enable efficient, coordinated incident management;
 - 4.4.5 prioritise the concurrent risks the council is likely to face over the next twelve to eighteen months; and
 - 4.4.6 provide a clear and transparent audit trail of the council's preparations for each resilience risk / scenario.
- 4.5 The Council Leadership Team (CLT) agreed the new approach to concurrent resilience risks on 8 July 2020, with Covid-19 work to be prioritised, followed by No-Deal Brexit planning.
- 4.6 Since July, the Council's Resilience service, with key officers, has adapted its approach to resilience planning and response, including documentation and processes to enable it to flexibly and more efficiently respond to current challenges by undertaking concurrent resilience risk planning based on protocols, scenario planning and decision-making frameworks.

Covid-19 Future Waves, Restrictions and Outbreaks

- 4.7 The Council's incident management structure was activated on 3 February 2020 and the Council Incident Management Team (CIMT) continues to meet twice a week.
- 4.8 Using lessons learned from an interim council debrief, scenario planning, good practice from other local authorities and scenario planning to anticipate potential risks, a suite of protocols, action checklists and supporting information for Covid-19 future waves / potential restrictions and lockdown have been developed:
- Building Manager Action Checklist
 - Notification and Escalation of Council Covid-19 Cases Protocol
 - Excess Deaths / Mortuary Arrangements Protocol
 - Further Wave Potential Settings
 - Health Incident Management (Covid-19)
 - HR (FAQs, Advice and Guidance)
 - Mobile Testing Unit Protocol
 - Procurement Protocol
 - Strategic and Tactical Action Grid (Covid-19)
- 4.9 The Resilience service has developed a series of Scenario-Based Action Plans, based on Covid-19 related incidents that have occurred in other local authority areas. These are:
- partial city area / sectoral shutdown;
 - school(s) closure;

- movement restrictions;
- full city lockdown; and
- temporary cessation / impact on Council services.

Restrictions may be a combination of the above.

- 4.10 Each Scenario-Based Action Plan details relevant scenario-specific risks, considerations and opportunities as well as suggested scenario-specific actions.
- 4.11 Lessons identified, including from other local authorities in Scotland, where available, have been incorporated.
- 4.12 Generic response actions and considerations are also provided and these include:
- response phases, triggers and actions, including council and council involvement in multi-agency incident management groups;
 - generic risks associated with a Covid-19 response;
 - strategic recovery principles, as agreed at the time of the initial UK lockdown; and
 - a Resilience Hub on MS Teams, which includes the council's agreed Covid-19 protocols.
- 4.13 Risks, controls and actions have been aligned with those included in the Covid-19 Risk Management Plan.
- 4.14 All scenarios and associated information has been discussed and agreed at a meeting attended by key council specialists from across the Council, along with Health Protection Lothian.
- 4.15 The scenarios, along with other relevant council Covid-19 documentation, was tested at a multi-agency workshop hosted by NHS Lothian on 16 September 2020.
- 4.16 A scenario planning challenge session to test the council's Covid-19 preparations and resilience documentation, took place at the Council Leadership Team on 30 September.

No-Deal Brexit

- 4.17 The current governance arrangements for Brexit planning include an Officers' planning subgroup of the Council Resilience Group and a Cross-Party Brexit Working Group, chaired by the Council Leader. It is recommended that the latter group ceases and, pending approval by Elected Members, that planning is taken forward through the Council Resilience Group and the Adaptation and Renewal all Party Working Group to ensure an all-risks concurrent planning approach.
- 4.18 Building on the significant work to date, particularly with regard to people and supply chains, planning for a No-Deal Brexit is being accelerated and undertaken

against the backdrop of likely Covid-19 scenarios and impacts to ensure that planning is fully integrated.

- 4.19 The Council Leadership Team is considering Brexit as a standing agenda item alongside the Covid-19 response updates.
- 4.20 Officers continue to monitor the negotiations closely and the cross-council officers' Council Resilience Group Brexit Resilience Subgroup is reviewing current risks, relevant audit actions and considering actions before submission to the Council Leadership Team later this month.

Contingency Governance Arrangements

- 4.21 The Policy and Sustainability Committee on 6 August 2020 agreed to request a briefing in September clarifying the process for a possible phased reduction in Committee activity, making clear how any decisions would be taken, who would take those decisions, and under what circumstances.
- 4.22 The paper sets out the proposed arrangements, including decisions that would be taken by both elected members and officers.

Severe Weather Planning

- 4.23 Severe winter weather planning is well underway with relevant council teams, including Roads Services and the wider tactical winter weather planning group.
- 4.24 Rotas for winter treatment and the tactical rota for wider response (eg use of contractors) are being finalised.
- 4.25 Resilience is working with Communities and Families to review and update Ready for Winter planning documents, agree a communications strategy and coordinate requirements of rock salt for schools.
- 4.26 Partnership working is underway to ensure that winter maintenance arrangements are in place for the Covid-19 testing site near Edinburgh Airport.
- 4.27 Winter maintenance plans for priority routes are being finalised.

Other Incident Response Tools and Considerations

- 4.28 All documentation is available on a designated Resilience Hub on MS Teams, to allow chief officers, designated senior managers and officers with a designated resilience responsibility to access information quickly and remotely.
- 4.29 To ensure the new resilience approach aligns with wider strategic transformation, resilience issues are being regularly considered as a standing item at Adaptation and Renewal Programme Boards. This will also ensure that decision-making takes cognisance of resilience matters and interdependencies potentially affecting the council's resilience.
- 4.30 Digital Services is currently testing the Protect Scotland app, with Resilience as test users, for automatically deploying the app to council mobile phones.

- 4.31 The need for a Virtual Command Centre (VCC), which reflects the degree of remote working in the council, was agreed by the Council Leadership Team on 16 September 2020. The VCC would be commanded by a strategic lead, normally by the Chief Executive, his designated deputy, or the Chief Officer On Call, operate at a tactical level out of normal working hours, coordinated by the Resilience service, calling on on-call officers from a range of specialist areas as required. This would complement existing notification and escalation protocols.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 The Resilience service is working with Digital to confirm an Instant Messaging App for notification and updating of officers involved in incident response as part of the VCC protocols.
- 5.2 Resilience data, primarily from Business Impact Analysis (BIAs) is being kept updated as far as current circumstances and resources allow. Data will continue to be input and maintained on Continuity2, the council's agreed and automated Resilience Incident Management System.
- 5.3 Relevant protocols are being shared and publicised through internal channels such as Managers' News, for examples, Notification and Escalation of Council Cases (Covid-19) to ensure consistency of approach and this is being continually reviewed.
- 5.4 The council's Rest Centre Plan is being reviewed to ensure social distancing and other relevant Covid-19 safety measures are incorporated. This is due to be considered at the Council Care for People Group on 6 October 2020.¹
- 5.5 Severe Weather protocols are being developed by Resilience, in conjunction with key officers, and are scheduled for consideration by CLT by 1 November 2020.
- 5.6 A review of planning for No Deal Brexit is scheduled to be undertaken by the Council Leadership Team mid-October to review associated risks, controls, consider scenarios and relevant mitigating action.
- 5.7 Lessons and gaps identified from the challenge session at the Council Leadership Team to test the Council's Covid-19 documentation are being addressed and changes are due to be signed off by CLT on 7 October.
- 5.8 Following good practice, all resilience planning documentation will be kept under continual review, including to incorporate any lessons identified from other local authorities.

6. Financial impact

None.

7. Stakeholder / Community Impact

- 7.1 The scenarios covered as concurrent risks in this report are likely to have a significant impact on a local, and in the case of Covid-19, UK-wide basis.
- 7.2 The Resilience service is working closely with Risk to determine gaps in directorate-level protocols, on a concurrent risk basis. In conjunction with the Resilience service, the weekly Risk Forum is assessing the potential impact of key resilience incidents (including further Covid-19 waves/ local outbreaks; flu epidemic; No Deal Brexit; severe weather; care of displaced people; and civil disorder) that have a high to medium probability of occurrence on the Council's current risk profile. Each directorate is assessing the impact of each event on the Council's nine Covid-19 strategic risks and the twelve risks currently included in the Corporate Leadership Team risk register. The outcomes will be consolidated to present a holistic view of the impact on the Council's risk profile.

8. Background reading/external references

None.

9. Appendices

None.