



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Meeting of the **COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** will be held in David Hicks 1 - Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN **MONDAY 4 MARCH 2024 AT 7.00 PM**

Susan Parsonage
Chief Executive
Published on 23 February 2024

The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to provide independent “critical friend” challenge and to work with the Council’s Executive and other public service providers for the benefit of the public. The Committee considers submissions from a range of sources and reaches conclusions based on the weight of evidence – not on party political grounds.

Note: Non-Committee Members and members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting or participate in the meeting virtually, in line with the Council’s Constitution. If you wish to participate either in person or virtually via Microsoft Teams, please contact Democratic Services. The meeting can also be viewed live using the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/live/LVMbfy2i0qE?feature=shared>

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Our Vision
<i>A great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business</i>
Enriching Lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Champion excellent education and enable our children and young people to achieve their full potential, regardless of their background. • Support our residents to lead happy, healthy lives and provide access to good leisure facilities to enable healthy choices for everyone. • Engage and empower our communities through arts and culture and create a sense of identity for the Borough which people feel part of. • Support growth in our local economy and help to build business.
Providing Safe and Strong Communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and safeguard our children, young and vulnerable people. • Offer quality care and support, at the right time, to reduce the need for long term care. • Nurture our communities: enabling them to thrive and families to flourish. • Ensure our Borough and communities remain safe for all.
Enjoying a Clean and Green Borough
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play as full a role as possible to achieve a carbon neutral Borough, sustainable for the future. • Protect our Borough, keep it clean and enhance our green areas for people to enjoy. • Reduce our waste, promote re-use, increase recycling and improve biodiversity. • Connect our parks and open spaces with green cycleways.
Delivering the Right Homes in the Right Places
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer quality, affordable, sustainable homes fit for the future. • Ensure the right infrastructure is in place, early, to support and enable our Borough to grow. • Protect our unique places and preserve our natural environment. • Help with your housing needs and support people, where it is needed most, to live independently in their own homes.
Keeping the Borough Moving
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve our roads, footpaths and cycleways. • Tackle traffic congestion and minimise delays and disruptions. • Enable safe and sustainable travel around the Borough with good transport infrastructure. • Promote healthy alternative travel options and support our partners in offering affordable, accessible public transport with good transport links.
Changing the Way We Work for You
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be relentlessly customer focussed. • Work with our partners to provide efficient, effective, joined up services which are focussed around our customers. • Communicate better with customers, owning issues, updating on progress and responding appropriately as well as promoting what is happening in our Borough. • Drive innovative, digital ways of working that will connect our communities, businesses and customers to our services in a way that suits their needs.
Be the Best We Can Be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an organisation that values and invests in all our colleagues and is seen as an employer of choice. • Embed a culture that supports ambition, promotes empowerment and develops new ways of working. • Use our governance and scrutiny structures to support a learning and continuous improvement approach to the way we do business. • Be a commercial council that is innovative, whilst being inclusive, in its approach with a clear focus on being financially resilient. • Maximise opportunities to secure funding and investment for the Borough. • Establish a renewed vision for the Borough with clear aspirations.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillors

Chris Johnson (Chair)
Catherine Glover
Charles Margetts

Peter Dennis (Vice-Chair)
Norman Jorgensen
Alistair Neal

Laura Blumenthal
Pauline Jorgensen
Marie-Louise Weighill

Substitutes

Jane Ainslie
Clive Jones
Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey

Andy Croy
Stuart Munro
Alison Swaddle

Phil Cunnington
Caroline Smith
Shahid Younis

ITEM NO.	WARD	SUBJECT	PAGE NO.
99.		APOLOGIES To receive any apologies for absence.	
100.		MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2024	5 - 12
101.		DECLARATION OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest.	
102.		PUBLIC QUESTION TIME To answer any public questions. A period of 30 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions submitted under notice. The Council welcomes questions from members of the public about the work of this committee. Subject to meeting certain timescales, questions can relate to general issues concerned with the work of the Committee or an item which is on the Agenda for this meeting. For full details of the procedure for submitting questions please contact the Democratic Services Section on the numbers given below or go to www.wokingham.gov.uk/publicquestions	
103.		MEMBER QUESTION TIME To answer any member questions.	
104.	None Specific	SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE To scrutinise the Executive report which sets out proposals for establishing a Shareholder Committee for the Council's local housing companies.	13 - 26
105.	None Specific	HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT - CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENTS	27 - 38

To consider a presentation on Highways and Transport's Continuous Improvements Programme.

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|-------------|---------------|--|----------------------|
| 106. | None Specific | EMERGENCY RESPONSE FRAMEWORK AND ADVERSE WEATHER PLAN
To scrutinise the Council's Emergency Response Framework and Adverse Weather Plan. | 39 -
118 |
| 107. | None Specific | WORK PROGRAMME
To consider the Committee's work programme for 2024/25. | |
| 108. | None Specific | ACTION TRACKER
To consider the regular Action Tracker report. | 119 -
126 |

Any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent

A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2024 FROM 7.00 PM TO 10.05 PM

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Chris Johnson (Chair), Peter Dennis (Vice-Chair), Laura Blumenthal, Catherine Glover, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, Charles Margetts, Alistair Neal and Marie-Louise Weighill

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: David Hare, Imogen Shepherd-DuBey and Stephen Conway

Officers Present

Neil Carr (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist), Narinder Brar (Head of Enforcement & Safety), Graham Ebers (Director, Resources & Assets), Kajal Patel (Finance Specialist), Karen Howick (Head of Operations - Loddon Homes Limited), Liam Oliff (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist) and Simon Dale (Managing Director - Loddon Homes and Berry Brook Homes)

84. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

85. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19 December 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

86. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

87. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

88. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

89. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING COMPANIES

The Committee considered a report, set out on agenda pages 11 to 44, which was a high-level review of Wokingham Borough Council's Local Housing Companies.

Stephen Conway (Executive Member for Housing) attended the meeting supported by Simon Dale (Managing Director, Loddon Homes and Berry Brook Homes).

The report stated that three primary strategic options had been identified. Option 1 was to merge the companies into a more streamlined group structure based around Loddon Homes and Wokingham Housing Ltd. Option 2 was to absorb the company assets into the Council's HRA and close the companies. Option 3 was to sell the companies as assets owning going concerns. The report highlighted some key issues for the housing companies such as changes in market conditions, more Section 106 agreements, changes in political leadership and steady turnover of elected WBC Members. Simon Dale added that the relationship between the housing companies and the Council was currently the

best it had been. The report also discussed the idea of a Shareholders Committee, within the housing companies, that would be tasked with providing a strategic direction.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and questions.

Members questioned the idea of Option 3 because it would make no sense selling the companies and would not help residents. Stephen Conway responded by assuring Members that Option 3 was off the table.

The structure of the proposed Shareholders Committee was discussed, specifically whether such a committee would be the best way to make strategic decisions. What checks would there be to say the committee could and could not do things? It was confirmed that the Council would still set the strategic direction for the companies, and that the role of the Shareholder Committee was to oversee what was happening. Decisions made by the companies would still come to Overview and Scrutiny before consideration by the Executive and Council.

Concerns were raised over 3.2.2 in the report (page 22) which stated that ‘the companies do not seem to have any clear growth or investment strategy’ and 3.2.3 which mentioned that the pipeline was diminishing. Simon Dale commented that the companies went through a significant period of change, with interest rates rises, changes to Section 106 agreements and turbulence at the companies themselves. He reassured the Committee that the companies had the mandate to re-establish the pipeline and to provide a financial plan. Work was underway to address these issues.

Para 5.1.2 of the report (page 37) referenced a breakdown in trust between the housing companies and the Council. This was a reflection of a historic situation when the companies did not feel the support by the Council. It was confirmed that the relationship was the best it had been and that the companies existed to meet the Council’s objectives.

Would having Members on the boards make WBC an outlier? It was explained that there has been a churn of WBC Members which meant that expertise could not be developed. Best practice was for politicians not to sit on the company boards.

Was the vision to build bespoke homes for children, or to alter existing homes? It was confirmed that, at the moment, the companies were looking at existing houses. The current priority was to get people into accommodation in the short term in order to address the Adult Social Care and Children’s Services budget challenges.

What was the future-proofing in this strategy with the potential of a change of Government in the near future? It was explained that the Council was keen to grow the HRA. If a new government made this easier, then that would be a positive. It was added that there was nothing in the strategy that would be incompatible if a new structure was to allow for more council houses.

In the short term would Berry Brook Homes and Loddon Homes stay separate? It was confirmed this was the case.

When would the companies be in a position to come back to the Committee with more information? It was explained that progress could come back to scrutiny on a regular basis. The Chair added that it would be useful if the companies could get in touch with Democratic Services when they have information to share with the Committee.

Stephen Conway conveyed his thanks to the officers of the companies and WBC, for their efforts on this issue.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Stephen Conway and Simon Dale be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;
- 2) updates on the Council's housing companies be reported to the Committee as and when necessary;
- 3) further details on the proposed Shareholders Committee be submitted to the Committee in due course;
- 4) officers of the housing companies and WBC be commended for their work in supporting progress made to date.

90. VAWG STRATEGY UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out on Agenda pages 45 to 54, which provided an update on the Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) Strategy, progress against the VAWG Action Plan and the Anti-Abuse Charter. The VAWG Strategy supported the strategic priority of providing safe, strong communities.

David Hare (Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adult Services) attended the meeting supported by Narinder Brar (Head of Enforcement and Safety).

The report highlighted a number of key priorities reflected in the VAWG Strategy and Action Plan:

- Putting the victim/survivor at the centre of service design and delivery.
- Taking a strategic, system-wide approach to commissioning.
- Having a clear focus on perpetrators and holding them to account.
- Safeguarding and supporting individuals and victims at every point with a strong emphasis on early identification and help.
- Raising local awareness of the issues and involve, engage, and empowering communities to seek, design and deliver solutions.
- Changing inappropriate attitudes and behaviours of men and boys.

In the ensuing discussion, Members raised the following points and questions.

It was stated that, in September 2022, the Committee were told that the VAWG Action Plan would include smart outcomes but that this was not visible in this current action plan. How would the Action Plan measure progress? It was explained that many of the actions within this plan have detailed measurements which fed directly into it. The VAWG Action Plan was more of a summary plan with more detailed plans underneath it.

Why were the more detailed action plans not reported to the Committee? It was confirmed that the detailed action plans could be circulated to Members outside the meeting.

Did officers benchmark against neighbouring authorities, for example Reading Borough Council's achievement of Safer Streets funding? It was confirmed that WBC did not qualify

for the latest round of Safer Streets funding because WBC had already received funding for Anti-Social behaviour activities. It was further explained that WBC also did not qualify for the Safer Streets funding because the number of recorded incidents was too low.

What were the plans to engage with residents and victims? It was confirmed that car parks would be a good opportunity to start this work. It may have been better to start with action rather than starting with data gathering. It was confirmed that the majority of car parks in the Borough had the Park Safe award, were floodlit and had CCTV.

The Chair commented that the officers should look to bring forward smart objectives possibly to the Committee's meeting in July 2024, with details of the supporting action plans to be circulated after the meeting.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) David Hare and Narinder Brar be thanked for attending the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions;
- 2) a further update on the VAWG Action Plan, including SMART targets and outcomes, be submitted to the Committee's meeting in July 2024;
- 3) details of the action plans underpinning the VAWG Action Plan be circulated to Members after the meeting;
- 4) the report to the Committee in July 2024 include an update on the Anti-Abuse Charter.

91. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024-27

The Committee considered a report, set out in the Supplementary Agenda, which provided a summary of the latest MTFP Revenue and Capital position, incorporating the outcome of the Local Government Finance Settlement and revisions made to bids following previous reports to the Committee.

Councillor Imogen Shepherd-Dubey (Executive Member for Finance) attended the meeting supported by Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive and Director, Resources and Assets).

Members were informed that there was a gap in the Revenue budget for 2024/25 (£4.7m) and that the gap would be bridged from WBC's reserves. The previous gap in the Capital budget had been closed. Significant financial challenges in Children's services would continue over the MTFP period. A significant saving would come from reducing staffing costs, with departments holding vacancies and carrying out in year reviews. Headcount at WBC would be reduced by 9% over two years with an ongoing focus on reducing the use of agency workers.

Graham Ebers summarised the different parts of the report and concluded by emphasising the challenging situation that WBC were in:

- Difficult and challenging times lay ahead.
- The 2023/24 Revenue Budget included the delivery of £11.8m savings.
- The proposed 2024/25 Revenue Budget included a savings target of £12.6m, of which £3.5m related to staffing.

- The projected Revenue Budget gap for 2025/26 already stood at £8.8m.
- The Capital Programme gap over the three year MTFP stood at £8.5m.

In the ensuing discussions, members raised the following points and questions.

In terms of staffing changes, could Members assume that natural wastage would happen in the right areas? It was stated that natural wastage will not always come in the right areas. The process would require effective management. It was important, however, to make sure that the workplace remained flexible.

How would reserves be used to fund the £4.7m Revenue gap in 2024/25. It was explained that £1.5m came from the Council Tax Collection Fund (this was the current surplus), and that £3.2m came from the Fair Funding Review reserve, which reduced the balance from £19m to £16m.

Re the £1.4m of reserves used to fill the Revenue gap in 2023/24 – Waste Equilisation Fund – was this reserve being topped up? It was confirmed that the £1.4m was an ongoing challenge in the proposed MTFP.

Adult Social Care inflation had increased by £0.4m. What was the split between price and volume? It was explained that this increase was all price.

Looking at the Capital summary on pages 14-16, carry forwards had been included on page 14 but not on page 16. Would that be updated in the MTFP? Officers noted this point and stated that it should be included if possible.

In terms of changes from the previous version of the MTFP presented to the Committee in October 2023, how could Members understand what had been taken out from the Capital budget in the previous version? It was confirmed that the intention was to focus on the impact of schemes in terms of changes in one table to another, it wasn't intended to be a full reconciliation.

What was the reason for the £1.53m retained business rate income benefit? It was mentioned that page 21 showed the £1.53m whilst page 22 showed the retained business rate credit. It was explained that £1.53m of ongoing business rate credit came from an increase in business and an increase in the business rate multiplier.

Officers were asked to clarify comments made on the Household Support Fund and whether it was going to continue. It was revealed that officers had not been notified of the continuation of the fund, but also had not received a definitive no.

Relating to ongoing significant growth in Children's Services spending, could officers reassure Members that the forecasts were robust, that the growth was under control and not running away? It was commented that Children's Services was the biggest area of concern. It was added that if the Council had no growth in Children's Services, then it would be in a much more comfortable position. It was mentioned that most time spent at the Council's Corporate Leadership Team meetings was on home-to-school transport and SEND areas, looking at how the Council could intervene earlier to stop issues and cost escalating.

Looking at previous MTFP on page 19, the three year growth figure for Children's Services was £8m and in the revised MTFP it was £12m. With decisions being made today taking

time to take effect, when would did the Council expect to see growth coming back down? It was explained that there was confidence in the forecast in this current version of the MTFP. It was projected that growth would be more modest in future years.

Had officers carried out benchmarking on Children's Services, including neighbouring councils? It was confirmed that expenditure on Children's Services was in the lowest quartile in the country, but looked at per head, it would be highest in Berkshire. It was added that this was down to lack of self-provision and that the Council aimed to become more self-proficient with solutions such as building SEND schools and purchasing a care home.

Re the online survey with 488 responses, did this lead to any changes in the MTFP? It was explained that it focused the thinking and did lead to discussion on the projects residents wanted the Council to deliver.

Were there areas of the Budget that were dependent on grants? It was explained that big areas were wrapped up in Local Government Finance Settlement with the New Homes Bonus included in that. It was added that if settlement criteria was calculated by deprivation then the Council would continue to suffer. It was also mentioned that all future grants would suffer unless the Council could convey an argument that, in addition to deprivation, need was driven by affluence, for example the growth in demand for Education, Health and care Plans in more affluent areas in the Borough.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Imogen Shepherd-Dubey and Graham Ebers be thanked for attending the meeting to present the updated MTFP, 2024/27, and answer Member questions;
- 2) the imperative for responsible financial management in the current unprecedented financial circumstances be supported;
- 3) Member comments and questions be fed into the development of the MTFP for 2024/27, prior to its submission to the Executive and Council;
- 4) the Committee agree a report on the Budget Scrutiny process for 2024/25, to be submitted to the Executive and Council as part of the MTFP reports;
- 5) the Committee, along with the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, monitor the financial position and budget pressures in Children's Services during 2024/25.

92. WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of 2023/24 as set out at Agenda pages 55 to 56.

Members were reminded that the Litter Bins Task and Finish group was waiting for one more Member to be appointed before it could commence its meetings.

Members requested detailed information on how adverse weather was dealt with when discussing Flood Risk Management item at the meeting on 4 March 2024.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's work programme, as amended, be noted.

93. ACTION TRACKER

The Committee considered the regular Action Tracker report, as set out on Agenda pages 57 to 64.

Members suggested that, when an item was three months away from being submitted, officers check that it was on track so the Committee knew that sufficient information was being included.

RESOLVED: That the Action Tracker, as amended, be noted

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TITLE	Shareholder Committee
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community & Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 4 March 2024
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Graham Ebers, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources & Assets
LEAD MEMBER	Stephen Conway, Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing

PURPOSE OF REPORT

At its meeting on 14 March 2024, the Executive will consider a report proposing the establishment of Shareholder Committee to oversee the governance of the Council's local housing companies.

A draft of the 14 March Executive report is appended to this covering report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

1. Consider the attached Executive report on establishing a Shareholder Committee;
2. Make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Executive at its meeting on 14 March 2024.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The attached Executive report sets out proposals for establishing a Shareholder Committee for the Council's local housing companies.

Members are requested to scrutinise the attached report and make recommendations, as appropriate, to the Executive. Any recommendations from the Committee will be reported to the Executive at its meeting on 14 March 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Set out in the attached Executive report.		
Next Financial Year (Year 2)			
Following Financial Year (Year 3)			

Other Financial Information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
Set out in the attached Executive report.

Cross-Council Implications
Set out in the attached Executive report.

Public Sector Equality Duty
Set out in the attached Executive report.

Climate Emergency
Set out in the attached Executive report.

Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session
None

List of Background Papers
Executive Report 14 March 2024

Contact Andrew Moulton	Service
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Date 22/2/24	Version No.1

Appendix

TITLE	Shareholders Committee
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 14 March 2024
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Housing - Stephen Conway

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

Authorisation to form a Committee of Executive to act as Shareholder representative to enhance governance for housing companies owned by Wokingham Borough Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive:

- 1) Approves the creation of Shareholder Committee as detailed in this report to ensure that its housing companies act in the interests of the Council as shareholder and /or lender and contribute to the Council's objectives.
- 2) Notes the draft Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 1 and delegates approval of final terms to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources & Assets in consultation with the Leader of the Council.
- 3) Delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Resources & Assets to agree final terms and enter into each Memorandum of Agreement with each relevant company.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Wokingham Borough Council is committed to maintaining strong and robust governance to ensure the decisions that are taken are made in conjunction with, and in the best interests of, the communities it serves. As part of this commitment, the Council regularly reviews its governance arrangements alongside learning best practice with other authorities to ensure the Council continues to meet its statutory obligations in the most effective way.
2. The Council owns four local authority trading companies covering housing services (Wokingham Housing Ltd (WHL), Loddon Homes Limited (LHL) and Berry Brook Homes Ltd (BHL)) and adult social care services (Optalis Ltd – jointly owned with Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead). A holding company (Wokingham Holdings Ltd) is in place to provide oversight of the trading companies.

3. Oversight of companies has, historically, been exercised through councillors being appointed as non-executive directors to the companies with regular public reports being presented to Executive and statements to full Council.
4. In 2023, Wokingham Holdings Ltd commissioned an independent review (“the Altair review”) of its local housing companies to assess overall governance arrangements and reinforce best practice to deliver statutory arrangements. The review recommended that, “the Council reconsiders board composition and the role of and location of councillors in providing oversight of the companies. The Council may also consider the terms of reference, membership and role of a strengthened shareholder committee.”
5. The latest best practice guidance on local authority trading companies also indicates that the most effective form of governance and control is through the establishment of a Shareholder Committee.
6. It is believed that the recommendations proposed will improve the governance arrangements of the Council’s housing companies and allow the Council to closely monitor its interest with further clarity, transparency, and reporting.
7. The proposed Shareholder Committee will be a sub-committee of the Executive and therefore an Executive decision is needed.

BACKGROUND

1 Current Governance Arrangements

- 1.1 The Council has several companies which it either owns or has an interest in, which were formed to deliver council objectives in a more efficient and effective manner.
- 1.2 The Council owns four local authority trading companies covering housing services (Wokingham Housing Ltd (WHL), Loddon Homes Limited (LHL) and Berry Brook Homes Ltd (BHL)) and adult social care services (Optalis Ltd – jointly owned with Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead). A holding company (Wokingham Holdings Ltd) is also in place to provide oversight of the trading companies.
- 1.3 All Wokingham companies currently have their own company boards in place to manage the activities and performance of each subsidiary. The boards comprise company directors made up of Councillors, Officers, and independent persons.
- 1.4 The Council wants to ensure that good governance and accountability is in place with respect to its Council owned housing companies and it is keen to learn from other local authorities' experiences. Recent public interest reports from external auditors highlight where, governance arrangements were not strong enough and the recommendations in this report are aimed at covering these areas of risk.
- 1.5 Oversight of companies has, historically, been exercised through councillors being appointed as non-executive directors to the companies with regular public reports being presented to Executive and statements to full Council.
- 1.6 In addition, Wokingham (Holdings) Limited has been established to ensure the operation of the Council's companies is conducted in an efficient manner, and coordinated as a group.

2 Proposals

- 2.1 In 2023, Wokingham Holdings Ltd commissioned an independent review (“the Altair review”) of its local housing companies to assess overall governance arrangements and reinforce best practice to deliver statutory arrangements. The review recommended that, “the Council reconsiders board composition and the role of and location of councillors in providing oversight of the companies. The Council may also consider the terms of reference, membership and role of a strengthened shareholder committee.”
- 2.2 Apart from Optalis Limited, the Council is the sole shareholder in its subsidiaries and should be kept informed of each of its subsidiary's operations and performance. To support the Council in carrying out its role as a shareholder it is proposed that a Shareholder Committee should be established to perform the shareholder function on behalf of the Council across its housing companies.
- 2.3 The general legal concept is that shareholders own the company (such as the Council in respect of Council owned companies), whilst directors run companies. The directors of companies are empowered to run the relevant company so long

as they do so in accordance with its company constitution and in line with their directors' duties. (Some activities, such as amending the constitution of a company, will always require the input of shareholders, by virtue of the Companies Act). If the shareholders do not like how the company is being run by the directors, then it is open to them to remove the directors and replace them with others; directors are required to act independently of the shareholders and utilise their independent judgement to take decisions as to how the company is run.

3 Shareholder Committee

- 3.1 The shareholder committee will perform the shareholder's function and lender scrutiny on behalf of the Council for its housing companies. This committee will consist of 5 Councillors made up of elected Executive members, 1 non-voting opposition member, with Council officer advisors as required.
- 3.2 Executive is being asked to delegate specific powers to the Shareholder Committee by way of a terms of reference (Appendix 1) to be included within the constitution. It is currently envisaged that the Shareholder Committee will be convened at least three times a year to provide direction and scrutiny of the housing companies' business plan, annual reports and performance. The committee will also refer any significant issues of concern for Executive consideration and determination as required.
- 3.3 It is recommended that reports from the housing companies are considered by the Shareholder Committee at general intervals such as a mid- year report and at the end of financial year full report of all the Council owned companies. Executive will retain responsibility for the following functions in relation to the Council's companies:
 - The establishment of any new company or entity
 - The decommissioning/winding up of existing companies or entity
 - Scheme of delegations to the Shareholder Committee
 - Subject to approval of this report, the determination of for the provision of investment of funds or assets or any lending facilities from the Council to the Council's companies will be determined by Executive Member for Finance and Governance.
- 3.4 Shareholder Committee Membership to be set with four Executive Members comprising of the Leader (as Chair), Deputy Leader, Executive Member for Business & Economic Development, and Executive Member for Finance. In addition, a non-voting member of the opposition will be invited to join the Committee. This will be kept under review and can be amended as appropriate.

4 Memorandum of Agreement

- 4.1 In addition to the establishment of a shareholder committee, it is recommended as good practice that a Memorandum of Agreement is drafted and will apply to all Wokingham companies. The agreement should contain core terms which could be applied to all the Council's companies and how the Shareholder Committee will interact with the housing companies but may well need to contain additional

bespoke or modified terms for each company depending on what the company is doing (i.e. what business it is in / markets it trades in etc.) and its size etc.

- 4.2 The Memorandum of Agreement will contain a list of "reserved matters" which the company agree will not go ahead without the consent of all the shareholders; these reserved matters will be dealt with by the Shareholder Committee or Executive, where Executive has retained responsibility for specific matters, as set out in paragraph 3.3 above). This agreement involves the company agreeing to limit their authority to take decisions without input from the company's owners.
- 4.3 It is expected that each housing company will enter into a form of agreement with the Council (whether as owner, controller or lender) setting out the basis of the relationship between them.
- 4.4 Delegated authority is sought in this report to agree the final terms of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Some of the key terms of this are broadly summarised below:

a) **Business/Conduct of the Company:** provides that the Business of the company (including its objectives) will be as set out in the Business Plans as approved by the Council and that the company will carry out its business in accordance with the MOA, the Business Plans and other parameters agreed with the Council

b) **The Board:** will set out broadly how the Board will operate on a day-to-day basis. The Council (as Shareholder) will have the power to appoint and remove members of the Board in all of its companies

c) **Policies:** various policies will be required in order for the operation of the company to be effective; for example where there are potential conflicts of interest a policy can be adopted to provide clarity; the shareholder will also include a requirement for adoption of a remuneration policy;

d) **Council Reserve Power:** as well as the specific matters which are always reserved to the Council to decide and which will be set out in a schedule to the MOA, the MOA gives a general power to the Council (as Shareholder Committee) to direct the Board to take action or refrain from taking any action

e) **Scheme of Delegation:** sets out how decisions will be made. This will be a separate schedule setting out which decisions will be reserved to the Council as Shareholder and which by the company's Board (and which by the company's management, if applicable)

f) **Business Plans:** requires the company to be run and financed in accordance with the Business Plan and sets out how they will be prepared, approved and updated. Each MOA will describe the Business Plan which are to be produced by the company, which will vary depending on the nature of the subsidiary. The MOU will also refer to how performance will be monitored against Business Plans with key trigger events which will require a review of the relevant Business Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	Yes	Revenue
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	Yes	Revenue

Other Financial Information

The proposals set out in this report seek to strengthen and consolidate the financial monitoring undertaken in terms of the Council's housing companies. Key financial monitoring information will be brought together for the Shareholder Committee. This will provide a regular snapshot of the financial performance of each housing company and the group to support wider decision making. It will also help to raise early concerns about the financial position of any of the subsidiary housing company and where necessary discuss and agree appropriate actions.

Legal Implications arising from the Recommendation(s)

The proposal to set up a Shareholder Committee, the Terms of Reference as set out, and the ancillary arrangements outlined in this report will ensure that the Council not only acts lawfully but also that current guidance and good practice recommendations are followed. The proposals will ensure improved governance of housing companies or bodies set up by the Council.

The Executive can delegate its functions to a Committee via paragraph 5.4.1.1(a) and to Executive Members and Officers via sub-paragraphs (c) and (d) respectively.

Paragraph 5.2.6.17 will have to be deleted / amended to reflect the change in relationship of the Leader to the Companies, and the Constitution amended to reflect the creation of the Committee and its functions and responsibilities, most likely by an addition to 5.7

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

No public consultation is required for this decision.

Public Sector Equality Duty

An equalities assessment is not required for this decision.

Climate Emergency – *This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030*

There are no specific implications of this decision relating to the Borough achieving carbon neutrality.

Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session

Not applicable.

List of Background Papers

Contact Andrew Moulton

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Service Governance

Email

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APPENDIX 1

To be incorporated in Section 5.7 of the Constitution

DRAFT

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 The Shareholder Committee forms part of the overall governance arrangements for Wokingham Borough Council ("**the Council**") in relation to housing companies and other legal entities which are wholly or partly owned or controlled by the Council (including where such control comes about indirectly, such as via a loan agreement) (each a "Subsidiary" and together the "Subsidiaries").

2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 The voting members of the Shareholder Committee will be set to 4 Executive Councillors consisting of:
- 2.1.1 the Leader (as Chair).
 - 2.1.2 Deputy Leader.
 - 2.1.3 Executive Member for Business & Economic Development; and
 - 2.1.4 Executive Member for Finance
- 2.2 Each Shareholder Committee member may nominate an alternate Executive Member to attend a meeting in their place.
- 2.3 An opposition member will be invited to join the Committee as a non-voting member.
- 2.4 The Shareholder Committee will be supported by Council officers as required.
- 2.5 The Shareholder Committee will appoint the Leader as Chair of the Shareholder Committee. If the Chair is not present at the start of a meeting of the Shareholder Committee, those members present will appoint one of the members present to chair that meeting.
- 2.6 Additional advisors, who do not need to be officers or members of the Council, may be invited to attend the Shareholder Committee as required.

3. ROLE OF THE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE

- 3.1 The Shareholder Committee will have a role in ensuring proper governance of the Council's housing companies, such role to include:
 - 3.1.1 monitoring information from each Subsidiary, in particular on financial and other risks and escalating such risks within the Council as appropriate.
 - 3.1.2 exercising decisions relating to the Council's role as shareholder, member, owner, lender, or other position of significant control over the Subsidiary, where those decisions have been delegated to the Shareholder Committee; and
 - 3.1.3 making reports and recommendations to the Executive on areas outside of the Shareholder Committee's delegated authority.
- 3.2 It is expected that each housing company will enter into a form of agreement with the Council (whether as owner, controller or lender) setting out the basis of the relationship between them (each a "Memorandum of Agreement").
- 3.3 A detailed description of the Shareholder Committee's role in relation to each housing company will be set out in the relevant Memorandum of Agreement.
- 3.4 Authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council is delegated to the Shareholder Committee for each housing company as follows:
 - Altering in any respect the articles of association of a Subsidiary
 - Altering the rights attaching to any of the shares in a Subsidiary
 - Permitting the registration of any person as a shareholder or member of a Subsidiary
 - Nominating directors to be appointed on the board of a Subsidiary and notifying a Subsidiary to remove directors from its board
 - Increasing the amount of a Subsidiary's issued share capital
 - Altering the name of any Subsidiary
 - Adopting, reviewing or amending a Subsidiary's Business Plan Where a Subsidiary fails to produce a Business Plan as required by its Memorandum of Agreement, producing that Subsidiary's Business Plan
 - Directing the board of a Subsidiary to take or to refrain from taking a particular action
- 3.5 Any Memorandum of Agreement entered into with a housing company may identify additional decisions which are delegated by Executive to the Shareholder Committee in relation to that Subsidiary only.

- 3.6 Decisions which are not delegated to the Shareholder Committee in accordance with 3.4 above will be taken through the usual decision-making processes in accordance with the Council's governance and constitutional framework. This will include decisions relating to the issue of loan capital in relation to any Subsidiary and to any approvals relating to any intra-group loans.

4. OPERATION OF THE SHAREHOLDER COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The Shareholder Committee will meet three times per year, or more frequently if required.
- 4.2 The quorum for a meeting of the Shareholder Committee is a minimum of 2 members.
- 4.3 Meetings will be held in public or otherwise in line with the Council's democratic meeting protocol. There may be particular matters or agenda items which are required to be considered in private due to commercial confidentiality, and these will be handled in accordance with the Council's usual democratic protocol.
- 4.4 Minutes and agendas will be managed and published in accordance with the Council's usual democratic protocol.
- 4.5 The Shareholder Committee shall make its decisions as follows:
- 4.5.1 At meetings of its members by consensus of those present, unless any member of the Shareholder Committee requires a vote, in which event a majority decision will be taken with each member of the Shareholder Committee present having a single vote. Advisors and officers present to support the Shareholder Committee will not have a vote. The Chair of the meeting has a casting vote in the event that there is no clear majority; or
- 4.5.2 In cases of urgency, by a decision made by the Leader or by an alternate Executive Member nominated by the Leader.
- 4.6 After each meeting, the Chair shall approve the minutes and authorise the implementation of the Shareholder Committee's decisions, including where relevant the signature of any documents by appropriate Council signatories.
- 4.7 The Shareholder Committee will review the Terms of Reference annually and make any necessary recommendations to Executive.

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Highways & Transport

Continuous Improvement

Improvements to communications and resident satisfaction

Overview and Scrutiny Meeting
March 2024



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Overview

We are responsible for all adopted roads and footways across the borough, as well as asset management, transport planning, streetworks, traffic management, highway planning, active travel and corporate transport.

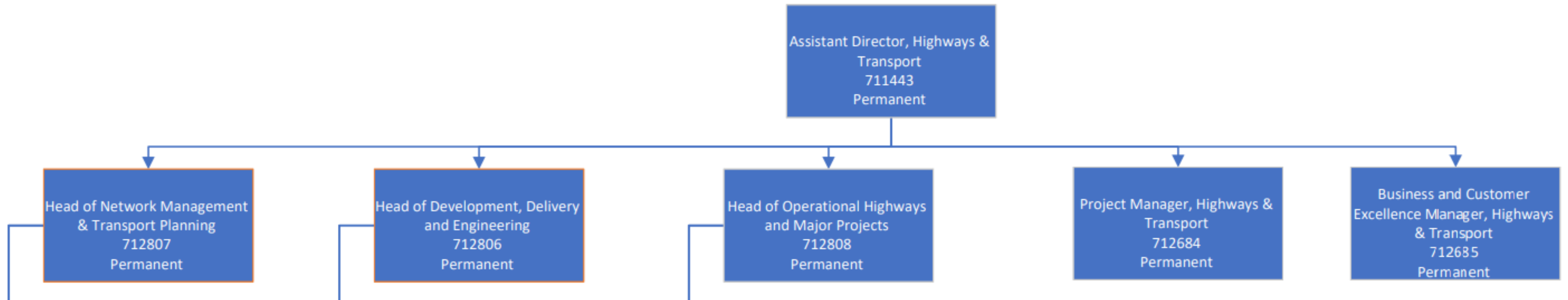
VolkerHighways are the council's main contractor for highways and are responsible for the maintenance of our highways network.

The safety of our residents is our main priority and scheduled safety inspections are carried out regularly to ensure our road network is kept safe. However, residents have the ability to report issues online or on the phone if they have any concerns. They can also contact us to ask a question about anything highways related.

Asset Group	Description
Roads and footways	725 km of roads (including 9 km of motorway) 829 km of roadside footways 5 km of linking footpaths 53 km of off-road cycleways 9 km of on-road cycleways 35,000 Road Gullies 4,500 manholes
Structures	243 structures (including 85 bridges, 77 footbridges, excluding earthworks/VRS system)
Street lighting	16,953 lighting units 2,152 lit signs and traffic bollards Various other associated equipment
Street furniture	Signs, fencing, bins, bollards, benches, street name plates, cycle stands, etc.



Restructuring the department – Phase 1



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As a universal service used by all Wokingham Borough residents, there has always been a huge demand on the Highways and Transport Department.

In 2023 it was agreed the volume of calls and emails were becoming unsustainable which was affecting the quality of the responses and the time in which it takes for a resident to get a response.

It was decided that a restructure and a more proactive approach to customer excellence from within the department was required to reduce enquiries and complaints to improve the customer experience.

In September 2023, a Project Manager and a Business and Customer Excellence Manager joined the department, closely followed in October by a Contract Manager.



New and improved CRM system

Google analytics to shape website updates

Structure review and recruitment

KPI review / change

Call listening and scoring

Review of front and back end of current systems

3C's Training

Improved contract management

New pothole reporting system

Cross directorate working

Review processes to improve what we do and how we do it collectively

Track a fault

Traffic and Travel newsletter and bespoke newsletters for major projects

Continuous Improvement Programme

Training

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Traffic and Travel social media

Update template responses

Empower VolkerHighways team to answer all H&T queries

Gov metrics analysis

Regular meetings with WBC and VolkerHighways customer services

NSL to manage PCN calls

Support improvement where systems are used by other P&G officers

Website updates and improvements

New Microsoft Team chat – H&T Hub

Helping shape the messaging going out via CEM team

Move VolkerHighways to Netcalls

Policies, plans and strategies



Examples of improvements in action

Good Afternoon Alistair,

I hope you are well.

I understand that there was a request at the O&S meeting on Monday to update the website so that the 'report it' system referenced footways as well as roads.


I just wanted to advise that this amend has been made and thank you for your suggestion.

<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roadworks-and-outdoor-maintenance/report-problem-roads-and-streets>

Kind regards,
Jo

Jo Hinton
Business and Customer Experience Manager

Highways and Transport Department
Wokingham Borough Council
Email: joanne.hinton@wokingham.gov.uk
Website: www.wokingham.gov.uk



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Report a problem with roads and streets

Report potholes, road damage, faults and more

In this section

Report flooding and problems with drainage	Report potholes and road/footway damage	Report problems with street lights	Report problems with traffic lights
Report broken or missing signs	Report problems with road markings	Report problems with public rights of way	Report problems with manhole covers
Report debris or obstruction in the road/footway	Request dead animal removal	Report an abandoned vehicle	Report a problem with litter bins

We take onboard feedback from residents, local businesses, councillors, town and parish councils and partners to continuously improve the customer journey. There is a significant amount of work being carried out to improve our website to allow people to self-serve 24/7.

Examples of improvements in action

Comment

On the new website, I can find no record of my expired permits or more importantly, my current country park permit.

Apply for a car park permit

| How to apply

| [Parking permits for school drop off and pick ups](#)

| [Parking permits for market stall holders](#)

| [Parking permits for country parks](#)

| [Season ticket parking permits](#)

| [Terms and conditions](#)

New parking permit system

A new online parking permit system went live in September 2023, offering drivers more control and flexibility, as well as providing reduced waiting time for renewals and new applications.

If you currently have a parking permit that hasn't reached its expiry date, then it is still valid and you can continue to use this permit until it is due to expire.

You will then need to apply for a new permit through the new system. You will not receive a physical permit as all permit information will be stored online with parking inspectors having access to all valid permit information electronically.

[Apply for or renew permit](#)

We experienced an increase in calls and some negative feedback on gov metrics after the launch of the new parking permit system.

As a result, we updated the website with information about [on street parking permits](#) and [car parking permits](#) to make the process clearer.

Further discussion have been had since the launch in August and lessons learnt about ensuring information is communicated in advance of future launches.



Examples of improvements in action

Response – Southern Gas Network (SGN)

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention.

Our team have visited the site and carried out a safety inspection.

We have been in contact with Southern Gas Network (SGN) who are responsible for the maintenance of this apparatus to update them on our findings. We have high expectations of companies working on our road network and our streetworks inspectors are in regular contact to ensure that they are working efficiently and safely across the borough.

We thank you again for making us aware of this situation and we will liaise with our contacts at SGN to ensure they get this resolved. Should you wish to discuss this further with SGN, you can contact them directly on 0345 454 1111

Wokingham Borough Council Highways Team.

Residents can report issues through our ‘report it system’ on our website and we have updated our responses to provide relevant information including reasons why we sometimes do not carry out works after inspection.

We have also upgraded the ‘track a fault system’ to allow residents to track the progress of their issue by simply typing in the reference number of their enquiry.

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Reason - No Repair Required

Thank you for bringing this issue to our attention.

We have carried out a safety inspection of the issue you reported and upon investigation and the issue has been found not to be safety critical at this time.

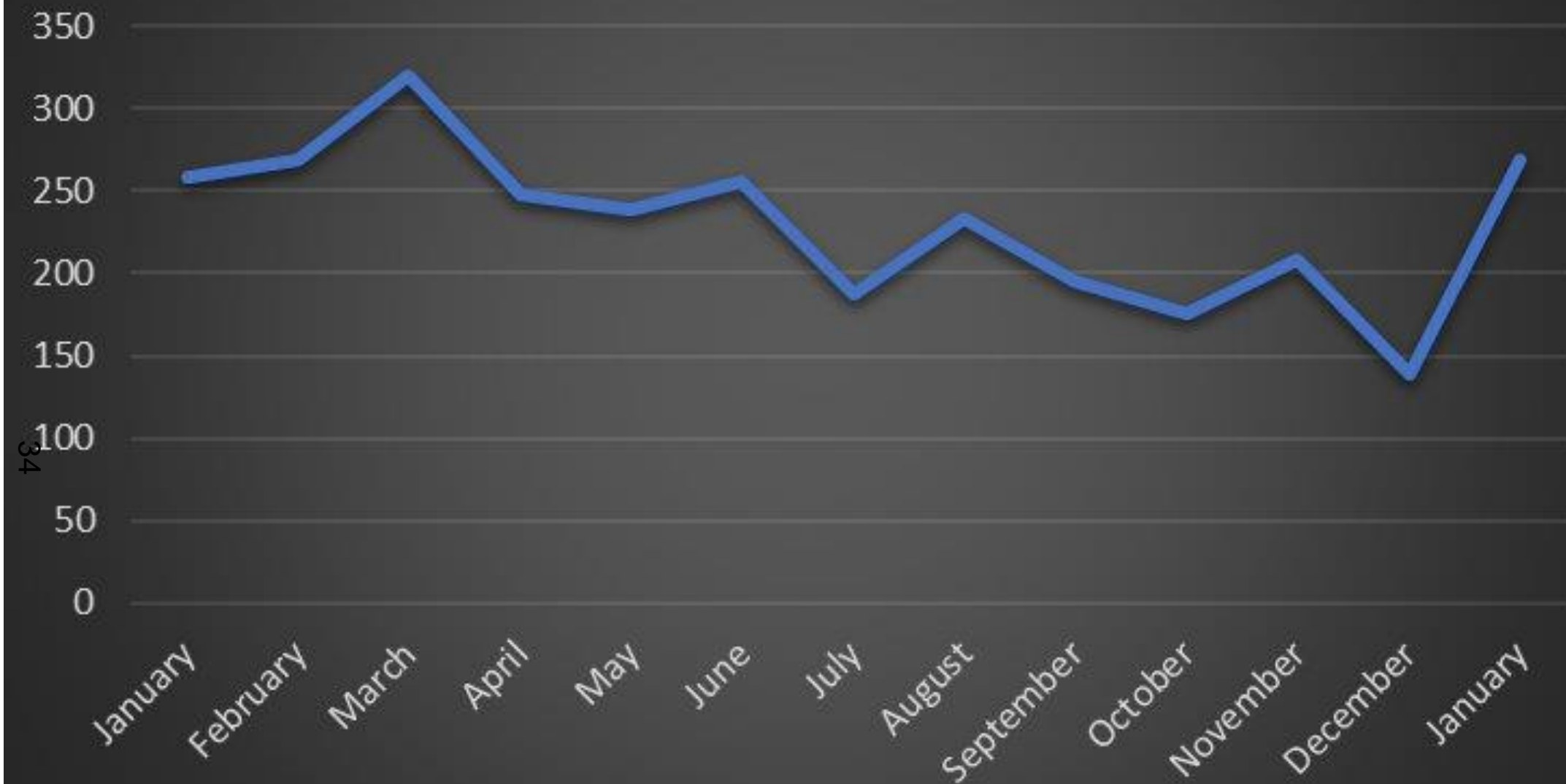
However, we want to assure you that all roads and footways across the borough are regularly inspected by our highways team. Further information about the frequency of our safety checks can be found in our [Highways Maintenance Management Plan](#) on our website.

During our scheduled checks, we will monitor the issue you have raised and carry out any necessary works to ensure it remains safe. If you feel in the future that it has become a safety issue, please do not hesitate to get in contact via our [reporting system](#) on our website quoting the reference number for this case and we will arrange for a site visit to take place.

Our [Highway Network Maintenance Plan](#) is available on our website where you can find out more about how we determine if something is safety critical.



Highways General Enquiries



Our aim is for our customers to be able to self-serve. Where this isn't possible, it is our aim that all highway enquiries should come in directly via our Customer Relations Management (CRM) system.

The only exception is reporting an issue which can be done via our website.

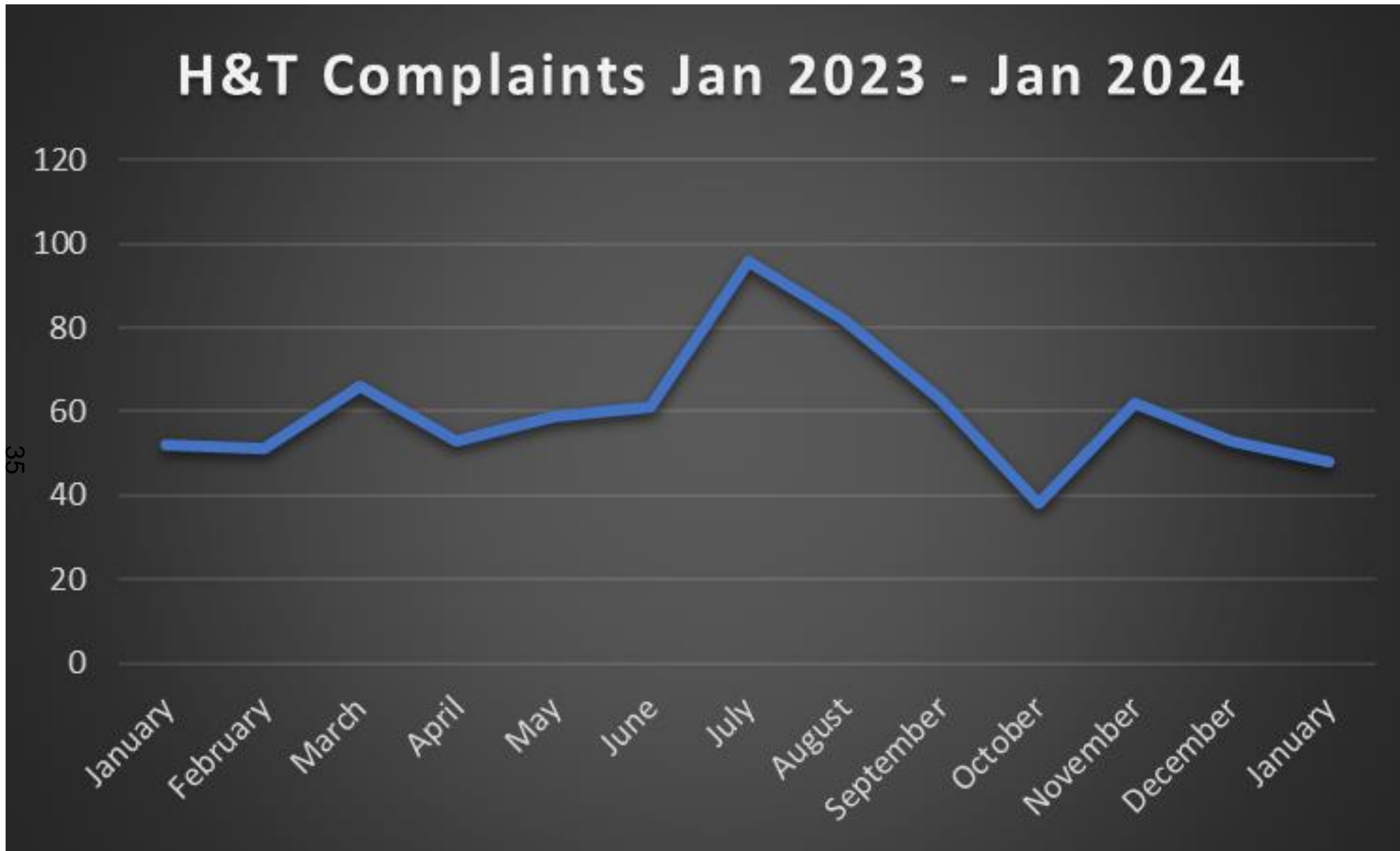
If customer calls or emails in via contact us page, these enquires are then logged onto the CRM system.

Using this system allows us to track the responses and the time it has taken to respond (working successfully to a current 10 working day SLA)

This avoids duplications with emails being sent to multiple members of staff and provides a more efficient service, replying quicker to customers.



Customer Relations Management System - Complaints



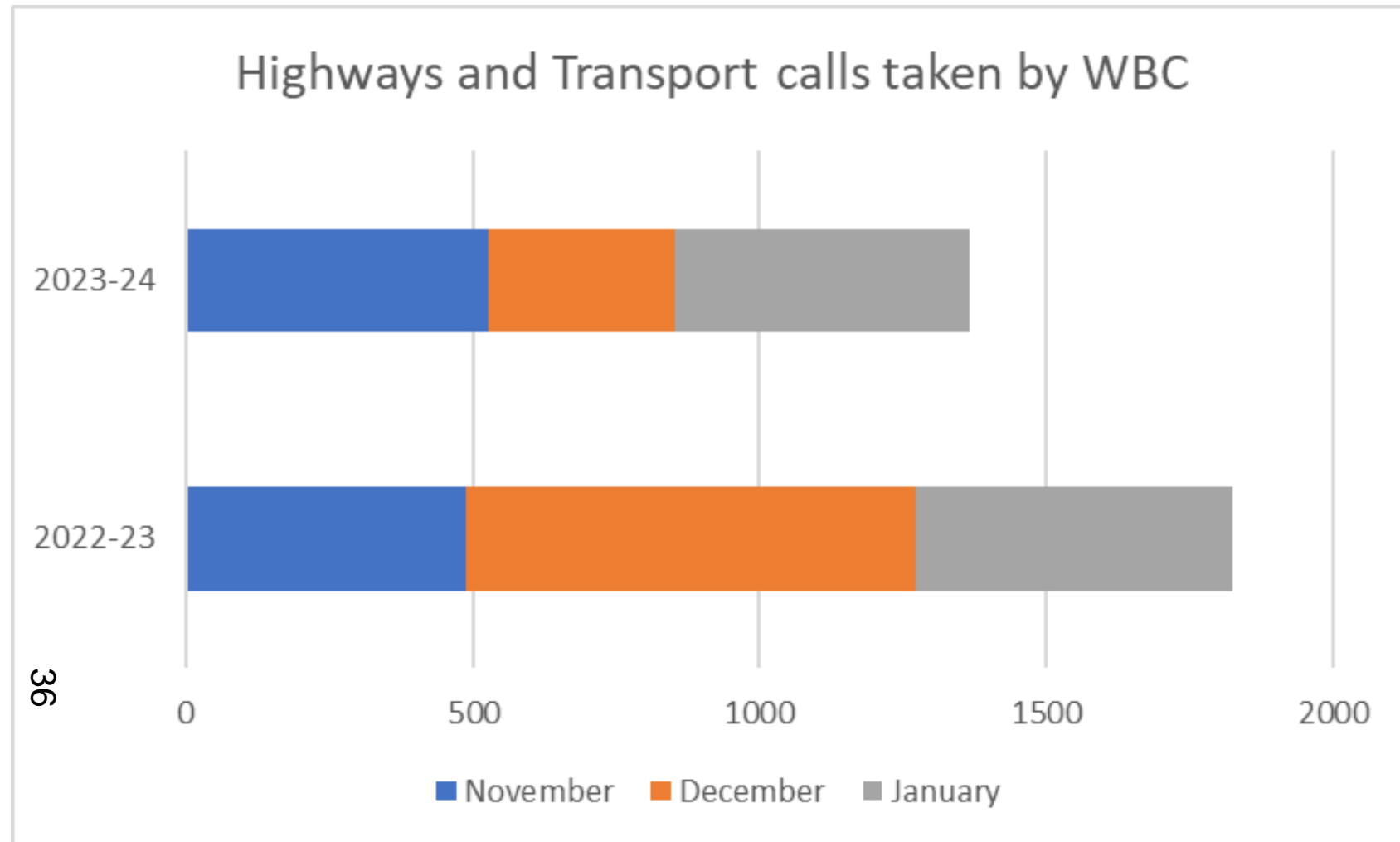
All highways complaints are also logged on our CRM system with a response deadline of five days.

Again, this is to avoid duplications as we have a big problem with complaints being dealt with from the top down.

Issues are being sent to Chief Exec's Office, directors, multiple councillors and MPs at times. These are then forwarded on to multiple officers who are then dealing with the same issue. This delays our response times to enquiries which are then escalated to complaints.

Funnelling all enquiries and complaints into the CRM system avoids people bypassing the system and causing multiple people working on the same issue.





25.3% decrease in H&T calls taken by WBC year on year for November – January

Callers into the council are directed to VolkerHighways when selecting Highways options. However, a high number of callers still select the option to go through to WBC switch board.

November 2023 – January 2024 WBC took 1365 Highways and Transport calls compared to 1827 in the same period last year.

VolkerHighways saw a 9.18% increase in calls compared to the same period last year

This increase could be attributed to the work we have done with VolkerHighways to take ownership of all highways calls and not transfer them back to WBC.

Our long-term aim is to reduce calls coming into both WBC and VolkerHighways by improving the way in which customers are able to self-serve.

Next Steps – Top 5

Increase reach - Traffic and Travel branded communications, both social media and newsletters

Improve website - Continue with website updates and improvements including Highways and Transport A-Z to improve customers' ability to self-serve

Answer questions first time - Continue to support VolkerHighways call centre to own customer service team and increase first fix – call listening and scoring using new KPI scoring system to highlight a focus for training sessions

More efficient service – including new system to report potholes to help reduce number of 'no further action' reports

New Customer Management system – we are continuing to improve how we liaise with our customers and the new system will allow us to build on what we have achieved so far and continue to improve.



Questions?



TITLE	Emergency Response Framework and Adverse Weather Plan
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 4 th March 2024
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Harry Williamson – Emergency Planning Manager
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Ian Shenton

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The Council is required to write and maintain emergency plans under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This report summarises the changes that have been made to two key emergency procedures – the Emergency Response Framework (previously known as the Major Incident Plan) and the Adverse Weather Plan following engagement with key stakeholders. This report is designed to ensure that there is sufficient governance and oversight of these two key plans.

The report also details work that has been completed and remains ongoing to improve the Council's overall preparedness and response to emergencies.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Scrutiny Committee to review and comment on the Emergency Response Framework.
2. Scrutiny Committee to review and comment on the Adverse Weather Plan

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The Emergency Response Framework and the Adverse Weather Plan serve as important documentation as part of the Council's Civil Contingencies Act 2004 duties to be prepared to respond to emergencies.

The Emergency Response Framework is replacing the existing Major Incident Plan, and the Adverse Weather Plan has been updated. The Emergency Planning team have brought these to this committee for consideration following internal liaison and consultation.

This is part of a programme of continual improvement works for the Councils Emergency Planning Team to ensure the Council is meeting its statutory Civil Contingencies Act 2004 duties, as well the National Resilience Standards.

Background

The Emergency Planning team comprises of a manager and an officer, who are tasked with preparing the Council to respond to emergencies, to co-ordinate emergency response, to promote community resilience, and to co-ordinate the Council's business continuity management. It should be noted that the Emergency Planning team plan for and coordinate responses to emergencies using internal resources – i.e. standing up services and responders via the Bronze, Silver and Gold system and by liaison with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum on a regional basis.

The Council has duties as a Category 1 responder, as legislated in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for ensuring the local authority complies with this Act and that the Council can perform its critical functions during and after response.

The Emergency Planning team is in the Enforcement and Safety service, within the Place and Growth directorate. Up until the end of 2021, the Council ran a joint emergency planning service with Reading Borough Council.

Councillors should seek assurances from the Council that it is prepared to deal with emergencies and has appropriate plans and procedures in place to do so. For more information on the Council's responsibilities and the role of Councillor's within this Act, please refer to: [A councillor's guide to civil emergencies | Local Government Association](#).

A duty of the Act is for the Council to assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning and put in place emergency plans. The Council does this by writing and maintaining its own emergency plans based on high risks. We also comply with this by working with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and partner agencies, such as Thames Valley Police, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services and the Environment Agency on multi-agency plans to ensure coordinated response.

Plans should be reviewed every three years, and this report ensures that Plans are updated with appropriate approval. Amendments can be made outside of this period when required. For example, in the event of lessons identified following an incident or exercise, organisational change or a change in legislation. The Assistant Director for Environment and Safety will make the decision on the required consultation and approval process based on the level of these amendments.

The Major Incident Plan is the existing overarching document that sets out how the Council responds to a major incident. This was last updated in 2015, and the Emergency Response Framework has been written to replace the Major Incident Plan. Due to the strategic importance of this plan, it has been brought to this committee for review and comments.

The framework outlines the other supporting plans and procedures that are used to prepare and respond to emergencies, including the Adverse Weather Plan. This plan details the Council's response to adverse weather. As this is one of the Council's most important and frequently activated plans, it has been brought to this committee for review and comments.

Neither of these documents place any additional resource or financial demands on the Council. These documents are created, maintained and exercised by the Emergency Planning team as per the statutory duties placed upon it by the Civil Contingencies Act

2004. Services and contractors come together to respond to emergencies, as defined by their statutory duties, and contracted responsibilities.

Emergency Response Framework

The change from a Major Incident Plan to an Emergency Response Framework is to reflect how the Council should be responding to emergencies in a consistent and defined approach – that is flexible and scalable. This includes but is not limited to major incidents. This aligns us with other local authorities and partners in the Thames Valley.

Essentially, this framework demonstrates how services, contractors and other partners come together to respond to an emergency – within a defined command and control structure. For example, using Gold/Strategic, Silver/Tactical, and Bronze/Operational arrangements.

The framework is approved by the Chief Executive.

Noticeable changes from the Major Incident Plan to the Emergency Response Framework include:

- A scalable framework not limited to major incidents
- Updated lexicon
- Lessons identified from recent incidents and exercises
- Incident levels to ensure a defined and proportionate response
- Greater detail in notification, internal command and control and multi-agency structures
- How we communicate in an emergency
- How we can work with the voluntary sector
- The process of requesting mutual aid from our partners
- A defined debrief process
- Adopting of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum's Recovery Plan and removal of our own
- How we use and share vulnerable data with partners
- In the appendix – a list of the roles and responsibility of Council services in a emergency

Consultation of this plan has taken place with all Council services and duty officers who have emergency response responsibilities. This in addition to Assistant Directors, Directors and the Chief Executive who have responsibilities as Silver and Gold responders respectively.

Once approved, familiarisation training of the new framework will be undertaken for duty officers, key responding services and all borough Councillors. Additionally, the Emergency Planning team will attend a future Big Chat to ensure wider organisational understanding of the framework.

Once approved, a redacted version of the plan will be available on the Council's website.

Adverse Weather Plan

This plan details the Council's initial actions and response structures to specific adverse weather triggers. This includes flood alerts and warnings from the Environment Agency,

severe weather warnings from the Met Office and heat-health alerts from UKHSA and the Met Office. This plan is internally approved by the Assistant Director for Environment and Safety, who has requested that Scrutiny review and comment as appropriate to ensure sufficient governance of the plan

The Adverse Weather Plan has been regularly reviewed and updated since 2012. The last formal review was completed in September 2023, with some amendments following recent exercises and incidents.

Changes include:

- Updated lexicon
- Inclusion of new UKHSA heat-health alert definitions and triggers
- Amendments to adverse weather meeting attendance list and agenda following lessons identified
- The addition of a Snow Response Actions appendix

Consultation of this plan has taken place with services that have responsibilities in adverse weather, such as Highways, Public Health, Environmental Services (including Drainage, Countryside, and Tree Management), Customer Services and the Communications team.

This plan has been recently activated during a multi-agency flooding exercise (Blue Nimbus October 2023) and in response to recent storms including Storm Ciaran (October 2023), Storm Henk and recent flooding (January 2024).

Please note there is a separate Flood Plan that contains more detailed information on flooding hotspots, history and actions that is due for review in February 2024.

Emergency Planning – continual improvement

The above is part of a programme of works to improve the Council's overall resilience, preparedness, and response to emergencies, and ensure compliance with legislation.

This includes:

- An Emergency Planning portfolio holder (Cllr Ian Shenton) specific 6 weekly briefing on emergency planning
- development of an annual delivery plan presented to Scrutiny to demonstrate activity and achievements of the previous year and to detail a work plan for the forthcoming year.
- development of a training plan for Gold, Silver and Bronze responders
- development of an improvement plan facilitated by a review conducted by Oxfordshire County Council with the Chief Executive, Director for Place and Growth, Assistant Director for Environment and Safety and one of the Silver Duty Officers.
- a new business continuity programme
- lessons identified from recent exercises (AWE and flooding) and incidents.
- creating a Silver Duty Officer rota, comprised of Assistant Directors (in place since Summer 2023)
- a programme of annual member training (last held 31st October 2023)

Emergency Planning look forward to bringing future information to Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the near future, including the new corporate business continuity plan, further emergency plans, a revision of the sandbag policy and the annual delivery plan for review.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	n/a	n/a	n/a

Other Financial Information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision
n/a

Cross-Council Implications
These are corporate emergency plans and therefore are relevant to the whole Council. Consultations of services and key staff has taken place for both documents (as detailed in the main body of the report). Familiarisation training and exercising of these plans will take place as part of the business as usual work of the Emergency Planning team.

Public Sector Equality Duty
<p>A Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for both documents, with support from the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion and signed off by the Assistant Director for Environment and Safety.</p> <p>The assessment concluded that the creation, maintenance and activation of these plans have a positive impact on our communities, especially those who are most vulnerable. This is because they are disproportionately impacted by emergencies, and without effective and robust plans, they would be at even greater risk.</p> <p>Additionally, individual services retain responsibility for their activities including the deployment of staff and resources as part of the council's emergency response and recovery. These actions follow existing arrangements and procedures, which relate to our statutory duties and are expected to be legislatively compliant. This includes the Equality Duty.</p>

Climate Emergency

The Emergency Planning team work with the Climate Emergency service, due to the connectivity between climate change and the increase in frequency and intensity of climate related emergencies. Having effective and robust emergency plans and procedures in place provide part of the mitigation needed for current and future climate risks.

Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session
None

List of Background Papers
Emergency Response Framework
Adverse Weather Plan

Contact	Service: Emergency Planning
Telephone Tel: 0118 974 6000	Email community.resilience@wokingham.gov.uk harry.williamson@wokingham.gov.uk
Date: 22/02/2024	Version No. 1

Emergency Response Framework



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wokingham Borough Council's Emergency Response Framework describes the procedures and structures the Council will use in response to an emergency. The framework is scalable and generic to ensure it can be utilised in a wide range of emergency situations.

Version: 3

Date: February 2024

Review date: February 2026

Author: Harry Williamson

Approvals obtained:

Contents

[Section 1: Document control and approvals](#)

[Section 2: Summary and purpose of the framework](#)

[Section 3: Emergencies and major incidents](#)

[Section 4: Notification](#)

[Section 5: The role of a Local Authority](#)

[Section 6: Command and control](#)

[Section 7: Multi-agency structures](#)

[Section 8: Communicating in an emergency](#)

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[Appendix 1: Roles and responsibilities in response](#)

[Appendix 2: JESIP](#)

Section 1: Document control and approvals

This framework will be formally reviewed every 3 years by the Emergency Planning team, but amendments can be made outside of this period. For example, in the event of lessons identified from incidents or exercises, organisational change or a change in legislation.

Version	Date	Description
1.0	March 2010	Working draft
1.1	April 2010	Approved Plan
1.2	April 2010	Amendments to GOLD representatives
2.0	April 2012	Review
2.1	November 2012	Update to SILVER – the tactical level
2.2	Dec 2015	Changes to reflect emergency planning shared service
3	February 2024	Change of name from Major Incident Plan. Significant additions to the content, including lessons from incidents and exercises. Removal of outdated terminology and information.

Approvals

As this is the central document to the Council's response in an emergency, it is reviewed and approved by the Chief Executive. It is also submitted to the Environment and Safety Oversight and Scrutiny Committee and Executive approval. Consultation also takes place with relevant internal stakeholders including Directors, Assistant Directors, and the Emergency Response Team Duty Officers.

Title	Name	Date

Exercised

This table shows when and how this framework has been exercised and tested.

Exercise	Description	Date
AldEx23	A multi-agency exercise to test the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan. WBC's Major Incident Plan was also tested in this exercise – lessons were identified and logged for action.	April 2023

Blue Nimbus	A multi-agency exercise to test the Multi-agency Flood Plan. WBC's Major Incident Plan was also tested in this exercise – lessons were identified and logged for action.	October 2023
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Distribution List

This framework is securely stored on the Emergency Planning SharePoint site, where it is accessible to relevant staff.

A redacted version of the framework will also be made available on the Council's website.

Please contact the Emergency Planning team if you have any questions about this document community.resilience@wokingham.gov.uk

Section 2: Summary and purpose of framework

Wokingham Borough Council is a unitary authority and a Category 1, as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. As a Category 1 responder, the Council is expected to fulfil the full set of civil protection duties. These include:

- assessing the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning to
- putting in place emergency plans
- putting in place Business Continuity Management arrangements
- putting 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
- sharing information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- co-operating with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- providing advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management

The aim of this Emergency Response Framework therefore is to demonstrate the procedures and structures necessary to meet our obligations as laid out in the CCA 2004. Specifically addressing the provision, mobilisation and co-ordination of Wokingham Borough Council services and resources when dealing with an emergency.

Objectives

The following objectives have been considered in the creation and revisions of this framework:

1. **Preparedness** - To ensure that Wokingham Borough Council is prepared to provide an effective, co-ordinated, flexible, and sustained response, minimising the impact of any incident to the surrounding communities, environment, and industries.
2. **Integration** - To ensure that Wokingham Borough Council is prepared to support other emergency services at all functional levels.

3. **Co-ordination** - To manage the involvement of voluntary organisations, media-related issues and to co-ordinate cross-boundaries support with neighbouring authorities as agreed in the Berkshire and Thames Valley Memorandum of Understanding.
4. **Flexibility** – To ensure that all aspects within this framework are scalable and flexible due to the unpredictable nature and potential uniqueness of emergencies.
5. **Actionable** – To ensure the framework clearly identifies roles and responsibilities, triggers, mechanisms, structures, and resources, so the framework can be quickly activated and implemented

Section 3: Emergencies and major incidents

This framework should be used by Council staff when responding to an emergency or a major incident, so these are defined below:

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the definition of an emergency is:

- a. an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom, only if it involves, causes or may cause:
 - i. loss of human life,
 - ii. human illness or injury,
 - iii. homelessness,
 - iv. damage to property,
 - v. disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel,
 - vi. disruption of a system of communication,
 - vii. disruption of facilities for transport, or
 - viii. disruption of services relating to health.
- b. an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom, only if it involves, causes or may cause:
 - i. contamination of land, water or air with biological, chemical or radio-active matter, or
 - ii. disruption or destruction of plant life or animal life.
- c. war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.

A major incident is defined by the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles as:

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

Declaring a Major Incident

Any agency can declare a major incident. A major incident requires a response beyond the Council's scope of business-as-usual operations. The severity and longevity of the consequences associated with a major incident are likely to constrain or complicate the ability of responders to resource and manage the incident.

The declaration of a major incident can help the Council in the following:

- Encouraging communities and media to take greater notice of the risks, warnings and actions to follow
- To slow or stop non-statutory or non-business critical work and to redeploy those staff to support in response
- Requesting mutual aid from neighbouring local authorities, as per the agreed Memorandums of Understanding.
- To ask for and receive support from the Government, businesses, the voluntary sector and communities

To assist in the decision-making process in declaring a major incident, the following should be used:

- a. **Triggers in specific plans** e.g., Adverse Weather Plan where there is high likelihood and high impact warning issued, or if triggers are met in the AWE Off-Site Emergency Plan
- b. **Other Agencies** have declared a major incident which has a knock-on effect on the council.
- c. **Major Incident definition has been met or is likely to be met** in that there is a requirement for the implementation of special arrangements by the council. This may be triggered by the need for:
 - i. the initial treatment, rescue and transport of a large number of casualties,
 - ii. the involvement either directly or indirectly of large numbers of people in the community,
 - iii. the handling of a large number of enquiries likely to be generated both from the public and the news media,
 - iv. the need for the large-scale combined resources of two or more emergency services,
 - v. the mobilisation and organisation of the council, to cater for the threat of death, serious injury or homelessness to many people.

The definition of an emergency is broad, and not every incident the Council responds to is major. To provide all staff with a consistent understanding of the level of response required, the following incident categories below should be used:

Incident level	Indicators
Business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident can be managed within business as usual activities.
Limited Incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruption to a singular service which will need limited or no intervention. • No severe impact on health & safety of residents or staff. • Response can be managed by existing Business Continuity arrangements. • Unlikely for the incident to escalate.
Significant incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impacts multiple council services • Activation of emergency plans • External communications to the public required • Bronze Duty Officer is deployed to the scene of the incident • WBC is responding to the incident alongside another Category 1 responders • The Emergency Operation Centre is open to co-ordinate response

Major Incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major incident is declared by a Category 1 responder: An event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responding agencies. • There is a serious risk to life, environment or property. • Large scale co-ordination of internal services, external partners, and/or voluntary sector
Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recovery is the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency – principally in humanitarian (including health), economic, infrastructure and environmental aspects • Consideration of recovery should start at the beginning of an incident and may take a lengthy period dependent on the impacts.

Figure 1: WBC's Incident response levels

Emergency response objectives

The following objectives are commonly used when considering what is to be achieved in the response. Not all may apply to every emergency and more appropriate objectives should be considered at the start of an emergency:

- a. saving and protecting human life
- b. relieving suffering
- c. containing the emergency – limiting its escalation or spread and mitigating its impacts
- d. providing the public and businesses with warnings, advice and information
- e. protecting the health and safety of responding personnel
- f. safeguarding the environment
- g. as far as reasonably practicable, protecting property
- h. maintaining or restoring critical activities
- i. maintaining normal services at an appropriate level
- j. promoting and facilitating self-help in affected communities
- k. facilitating investigations and inquiries (e.g. by preserving the scene and effective records management)
- l. facilitating the recovery of the community (including the humanitarian, economic, infrastructure and environmental impacts)
- m. evaluating the response and recovery effort; and identifying and taking action to implement lessons identified

Section 4: Notification

In the first instance, notification of an incident will likely come in from an emergency service. The notification route will depend on whether it is received within, or out of, normal office hours. See Figure 2. Where notification is received from an emergency partner – it may come in the form of a M/ETHANE report (see Appendix 2).

In hours

Partner agencies are provided with WBC's Customer Services number, so notification in-hours will come in via this route. They in turn will contact the Emergency Planning team. The team will make the initial assessment about the level of response required and will escalate and notify as shown above.

Alternatively, where the incident is isolated to a specific service, direct contact will be made with the relevant Assistant Director at first, before attempting Heads of Service or equivalent.

Notification may also come into the Emergency Planning team directly for example, from an emergency service, neighbouring Local Authority, the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum or a Council member of staff. However, the escalation and notification route to Bronze, Silver, Gold and other services does not change.

Out of hours

Notification out of hours will be through the Council's out-of-hours number (0800 212 111). This line is managed by a contractor that has been retained by the Council to receive calls of an emergency nature and to notify Wokingham Borough Council. They record details of the caller and known circumstances of the incident. If the issue cannot wait until the next working day or be addressed by the out of hours manual service/contractor, the operator will then notify the Bronze Duty Officer, who is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, of the incident. If the incidents warrant it, the Officer will escalate to the Emergency Planning Duty Officer Team and collectively they will notify and call out as judged appropriate:

- the on-call officers, as detailed in the out of hours manual
- Silver Duty Officer
- Relevant services, using emergency contact details held by the team
- Gold

Although notification of an incident should come in through the route highlighted above, incidents can be identified through other means (e.g. on site witness, social media) it is still recommended that notification follows the steps above to ensure accurate recording and reduce chance of duplication of work.

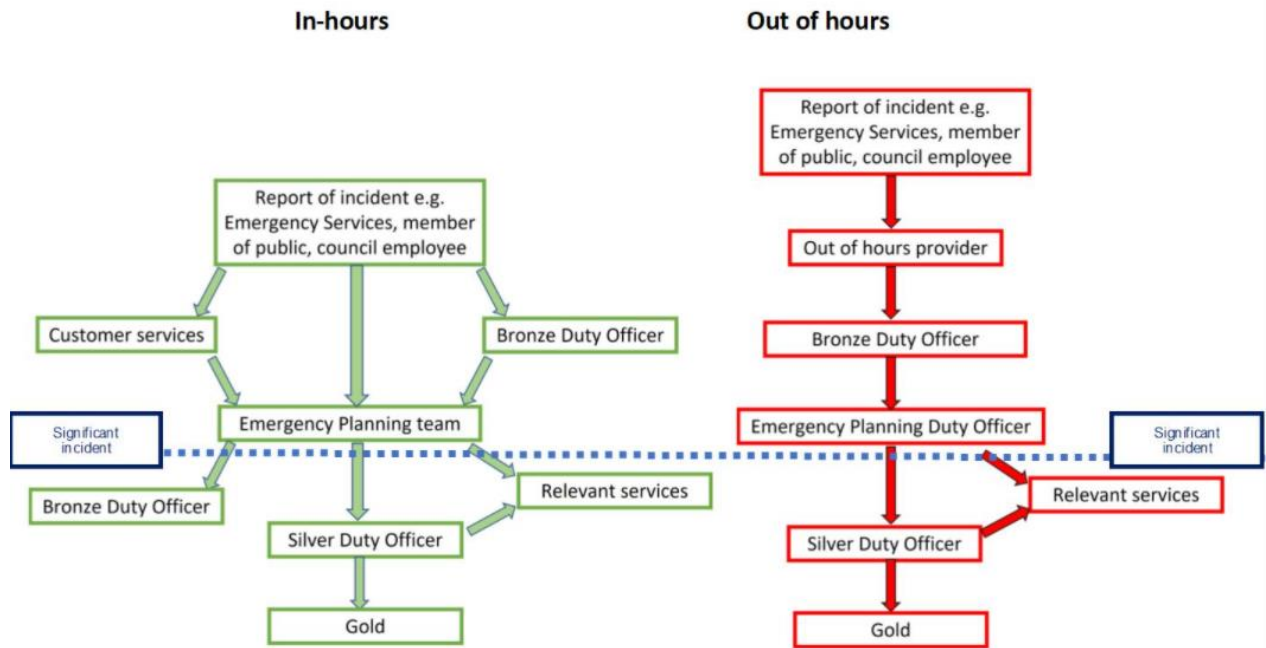


Figure 2: Notification of an incident in and out of hours

Everbridge

The principles of the TVLRF Emergency Response Arrangements (ERA) enable any responder within the LRF to take the decision to notify partners of an incident or request the activation of formal response structures. The LRF may need to be notified for a range of purposes including:

- a) To share relevant information between partner agencies
- b) To initiate a Partners Activation Teleconference to enable the early multi-agency assessment and monitoring of a situation
- c) To declare a Major Incident or Emergency which will involve the participation and input of partner agencies (e.g. to a Tactical / Strategic Coordinating Group).

A system called Everbridge is used to do this by the notifying agency. It can send details of the incident and any actions on partners via SMS, automated phone call and e-mail. Below details how Wokingham Borough Council receives these:

Receiver	Method
<redacted>	<redacted>
<redacted>	<redacted>
<redacted>	<redacted>
<redacted>	<redacted>

Following the Everbridge notification, the usual procedures as detailed above are followed. The TVLRF plans goes into greater detail of this process.

The Council is unlikely to be the first responder to an incident and therefore less likely to notify other partners of an emergency. Regardless the Emergency Planning team are trained in how to do this.

On notification or activation

The Council will:

Notify internal staff to support the response.

- a. Notify other partners including:
 - i. Other key professional partners
 - ii. Town and Parish Councils
 - iii. Political leaders (Leader of the Council and opposition leaders, MPs)
- b. put in place the relevant coordination structures as detailed.

Section 5: The role of the Local Authority

“Local authorities play a critical role in civil protection. They have a wide range of functions that are likely to be called upon in support of the emergency services during an emergency (e.g. social services and housing) and crucially exercise a community leadership role As the emphasis moves from response to recovery, the local authority will take the lead in facilitating the rehabilitation of the community and the restoration of the environment.”

(Local authorities' preparedness for civil emergencies: A good practice guide for Chief Executives - November 2018)

Local Authorities are likely to be the agency most connected to communities and place and should provide that oversight in any response. They should aim to maintain normal public services as far as is possible, whilst supporting communities and emergency partners. After the immediate emergency response, the emergency services may withdraw from the scene of the incident while local authorities continue to assist the community until the situation returns to normal.

The below is taken from the TVLRF's Emergency Response Arrangements, and lists the role of a Local Authority:

- a) Support to the emergency services and other agencies involved in the response
- b) Provide and manage humanitarian assistance, including operating:
 - i. Rest Centres
 - ii. Humanitarian Assistance Centres (HACs)
 - iii. Assistance at Survivor Reception Centres/Friends and Family Reception Centres (SRCs/FFRCs)
- c) Provide specialist assistance such as building control, environmental health and waste management officers
- d) Together with UK Health Security Agency, provide support, advice and leadership to the local community on public health aspects of an incident
- e) Provide temporary mortuary and body storage as requested by the coroner
- f) Coordinate the clean-up and remediation of pollution incidents
- g) Accommodate residents whose homes are rendered uninhabitable as a result of the emergency

- h) Co-ordinate the activities of the voluntary and faith communities
- i) Provide operational and tactical response in relation to local roads, those not covered by the Strategic Road Network (SRN) which is managed by Highways England
- j) Lead recovery and restoration activities
- k) Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) duties responsibilities under the Flood risk Management including for managing the risk of flooding from, surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater.

The roles and responsibilities of individuals, directorates, services, teams and groups are set out in Appendix 1: Roles & Responsibilities In response.

Role of Councillors

Councillors have a vital role in supporting communities and the Council in preparing for, responding to and recovering from an emergency. This is well defined in the Local Government Association's A councillor's guide to the civil emergencies, published in November 2018: <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/councillors-guide-civil-emergencies>

The core principles are:

- Political leadership: ensuring that their council is meeting its obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, in terms of preparing for and responding to emergencies.
- Civic leadership: providing a focal point for the local area during an emergency.
- Community leadership: helping to increase community resilience, and supporting communities' emergency responses and through the period of recovery

Borough Councillors are invited to attend annual training with the Emergency Planning team to refresh them on these duties and provide greater detail on their role.

Before or during an emergency - the Council will communicate to Councillors when they are aware of a risk that might cause harm or disruption to their ward. These triggers will be detailed in risk specific emergency plans. Councillors can support by sharing any warning and informing messages using their channels, and also escalate any issues back to the Council.

Section 6: Command and control

An emergency management structure will be established as appropriate. The principle of subsidiarity should apply in that decisions should be taken at the lowest appropriate level, with coordination at the highest necessary level.

As detailed in Section 4, the Emergency Planning team in hours, or the Emergency Planning Duty Officer out of hours, will make the initial assessment of the incident and the scale of response needed to the Silver Officer.

For all specific roles discussed below, these can be scaled up to have multiple people doing the same role but splitting responsibilities. For example, you may have one Silver Officer attending TCG, and one Silver Officer chairing internal groups.

Figure 3 – shows the information, which is defined below in a flowchart. Dashed line means to work/communicate with, whereas the complete line means report into/command of.

In a major incident, particularly if assessed to be lengthy, it should be considered by WBC Gold if internal cells and working group that report into the Tactical EOC would be more effective.

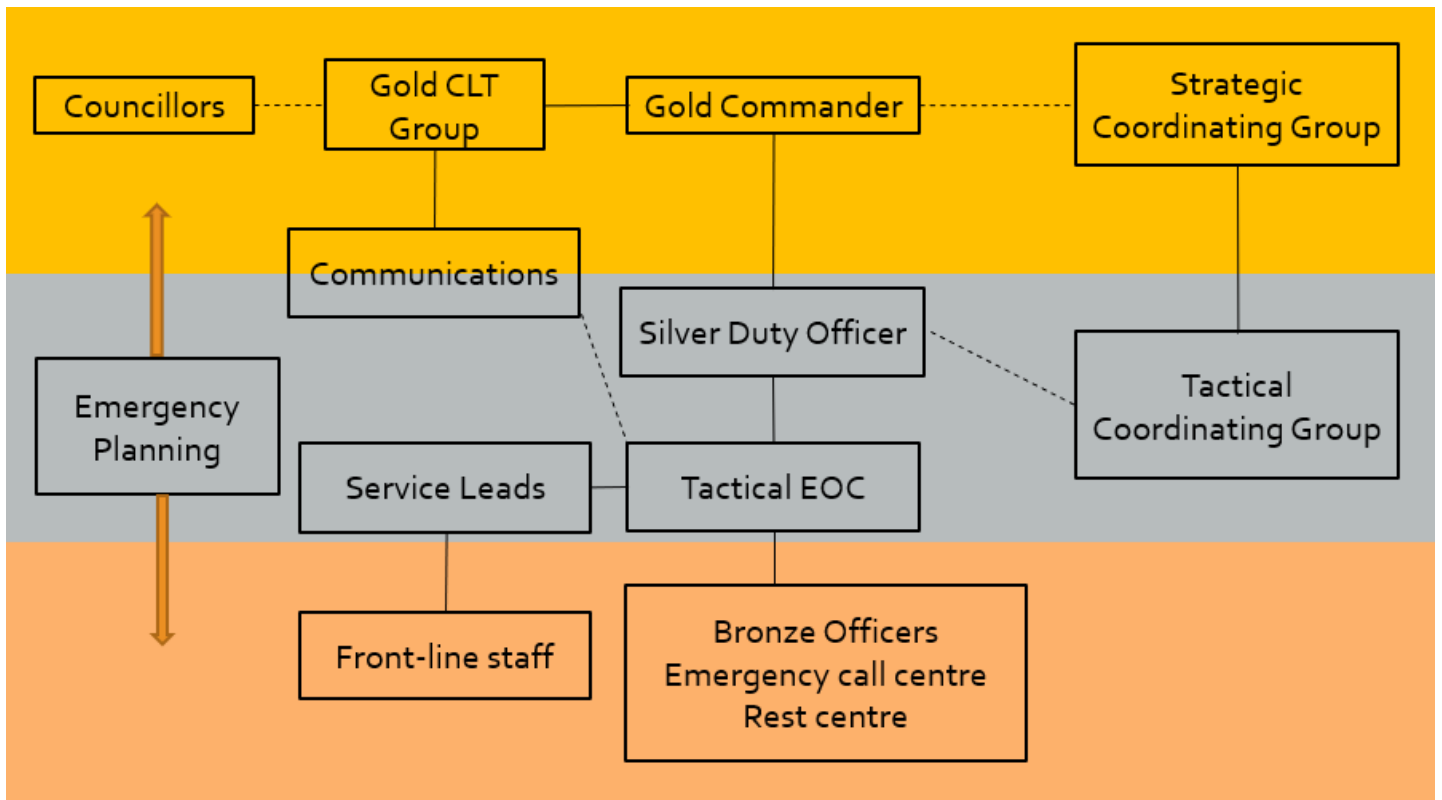


Figure 3: WBC Command and Control structure

Internal roles and structures

Bronze - Operational

Bronze is the operational level of response, in which the "hands-on" work is undertaken, implementing the tactical plan set up by Silver.

The Bronze Duty Officer (BDO) is the first point of contact into the council out of hours, and in most cases can resolve issues without need for escalation or deployment. They report into the Emergency Planning Team (in hours) and the Emergency Planning Duty Officer (out of hours)

When needed, they are deployed to the site(s) of an emergency and may be referred to as Local Authority Liaison Officer by other partners. They are likely to be the first Council employee on the scene, so they will take immediate steps to assess the nature and extent of the problem. In most instances, the first blue light service on site will co-ordinate the operational response at the scene to ensure a coherent and integrated multi-agency response, and for larger incidents, this is led by the police by default. The BDO main role on site is to be the conduit of information between the scene and the council and being the council representative for the public and emergency services on-site.

As well as attending site, Bronze officers can also be used to staff rest centres, the Emergency Operations Centre, and the Emergency Call Centre.

This role is recruited from within the council, specifically targeting staff with operational and out of hours experience. More details on their responsibilities and mandatory training are held within the role profile.

Other members of operational staff and contractors who are frontline can also be referred to as working at the Bronze level.

Emergency Planning

Emergency Planning primarily provides operational and tactical advice to the Bronze and Silver roles, and when Gold is activated, the role will also provide strategic advice.

Emergency Planning are responsible for the initial assessment of the situation and identification of whether it constitutes an emergency or major incident. They use the available resources, such as the Bronze Officer and emergency plans, to develop an understanding of the situation, create an initial plan of action and advise Silver on the appropriate response activities. Emergency Planning support Silver in the activation of relevant services, command and control structures and the sharing and maintaining of situational awareness. Emergency Planning receive updates from Bronze and escalate risks or issues to Silver.

Emergency Planning attends Partnership Activation Teleconferences (PATs) and accompanies Silver and Gold to Tactical Co-ordinating Groups and Strategic Co-ordinating Groups respectively as a tactical advisor, providing technical expertise to support them in their decision making.

Emergency Planning attends internal Silver and Gold meetings and works with the Silver Officer to maintain a register of actions and situation reports (SitReps) that can be used to inform briefings, and submissions into the LRF.

Emergency Planning also have a range of responsibilities in the Emergency Operations Centre, if stood up physically or virtually, including the overall management of the rooms, actioning requests and management of welfare for staff. Further information is highlighted in the EOC Plan.

During working hours, there should always be a member of the Emergency Planning team available, where resource allows. Out of hours, the role of the team is performed by the Emergency Planning Duty Officer.

Silver - Tactical

Silver coordinates the council's overall response in an emergency. They are responsible for interpreting the strategic direction from Gold, who they report into if stood up. They develop and coordinate the tactical plan and response using existing emergency plans, taking on advice from the EPDO, council services and partner organisations.

The primary Silver Officer initially will decide if and how the response to an incident should be escalated, including opening the virtual or physical Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). They will establish and maintain shared situational awareness across the organisation and with responding partners by chairing internal silver response meetings and ensuring Gold and Councillors are briefed as required.

Silver meetings are attended by relevant Assistant Directors, Heads of Services, and subject matter experts to help shape the tactical plan and co-ordinate response. Attendees are expected to detail issues, risks, impacts and updates on action in relation to their service.

The Silver Officer attends Gold meetings to provide tactical updates, escalate strategic decisions and receive strategic direction, which they communicate back to the Silver group.

They also attend Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Tactical Co-ordinating Group (with the support of the EPDO), where they will be expected to provide organisational updates and risks and take tactical decisions and actions on behalf of the council. If the Local Authority is the lead agency, or when the incident transitions to recovery, and tactical multi-agency co-ordination is required, Local Authorities are expected to chair. This responsibility would fall to the Silver Officer.

The Silver Officer works with Emergency Planning to maintain a register of actions and situation reports (SitReps) that can be used to inform briefings, and submissions into the LRF.

The role of Silver Officer can be undertaken by all Assistant Directors as agreed by the Councils Leadership Team in 2022. By default, in hours the lead Silver Officer is the Assistant Director for Environment and Safety. Out of hours, there is a rota.

Gold – Strategic

Gold sets the strategic direction in response to a major incident. Gold considers the organisational requirements needed to respond to the major incident, whilst balancing the ongoing day-to-day continuation of critical council services, and long-term recovery needs. Gold agrees and authorises the activation of actions outside of existing planning arrangements, release resources and authorises large expenditure.

Gold is formed by the Council's senior team, the Council Leadership Team (CLT). This group is chaired by the Chief Executive, or the Deputy in their stead. Meetings of Gold will also include the Silver Officer, Emergency Planning, Communications and any relevant subject matter experts.

One member of CLT may be designated as the Gold Lead or Gold Commander, based on the type of incident. The Gold Commander will attend the TVLRF Strategic Co-ordinating Group (with the support of the EPDO), where they will be expected to provide organisational updates and risks and take strategic decisions and actions on behalf of the council. If the Local Authority is the lead agency, or when the incident transitions to recovery, and strategic multi-agency co-ordination is required, Local Authorities are expected to chair. This responsibility would fall to the Gold Commander. The Gold Commander attends the internal Gold meeting to update on the actions and decisions taken at the TVLRF.

Emergency Operation Centre

The Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) is integral to the local authority's response to a significant incident (or higher). The EOC hosts an emergency call centre, senior management, relevant service personnel, partner agency representatives and emergency planning. Traditionally, the EOC has been operated out of Shute End, however this can be managed virtually in most cases. Silver or Gold may decide due to the nature of the incident, that staff should be co-located.

EOC - Call Centre

The EOC call centre is purposely set up to divert incident related calls directly into the EOC. This means that customer services can continue their business as usual service and provides the EOC with direct communications with residents, logging their calls and actioning responses as appropriate. This is run by the Emergency Response Team, which comprises of Bronze Officers, Emergency Planning Officers, and Emergency Operation Centre Coordinators.

More information on the EOC and Call centre is within the EOC plan.

Section 7: Multi-agency structures

The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum's Emergency Response Agreements is the framework for managing the local multi-agency response to, and recovery from, emergencies. Any agency may call upon partners for the structures to be set up; however, this more commonly done by Thames Valley Police, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue or the Environment Agency.

The TVLRF does not replace individual agencies' emergency response structures which will continue, but instead complement them to ensure the approach is co-ordinated. All relevant agencies should be represented. The TVLRF and the represented agencies do not have the collective authority to issue executive orders. Each organisation represented retains its own responsibilities and exercises control of its own operations in the normal way.

The structures are detailed in the Emergency Response Framework, but some key aspects have been summarised below. Commonly, the Council will be alerted to the convening of these structures via Everbridge (defined in Section 4). Figure 4 gives an example structure in a diagram.

PAT - Partnership Activation Teleconference

The PAT is activated to share initial risk information when a 'rising tide' incident is predicted (e.g. receipt of a severe weather warning, early warnings of infectious diseases etc.) or in response to a rapid onset incident where the scale and scope of multi-agency involvement is unclear (e.g. waste site fire, evacuation of residents). This enables an early multi-agency assessment, monitoring of the situation and coordination of the response.

The Emergency Planning team or Emergency Planning Duty Officer attends these, feedback to Silver.

TCG - Tactical Co-ordinating Group

Where formal tactical coordination is required, local responders may convene a Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG). The initial meetings are very likely to take place virtually, but physical co-location may be needed for more severe and localised incidents.

The TCG comprises of senior tactical officers/silver commanders of each agency. The TCG will:

- a. Determine priorities for allocating available resources
- b. Plan and co-ordinate how and when tasks will be undertaken
- c. Identify and request any additional resources required to deliver the tactical plan
- d. Assess significant risks and use this to inform the tactical plan and subsequent
- e. tasking of operational commanders

- f. Ensure the health and safety of the public and responders

Due to types of actions and decisions that are taken the Council's Silver Officer attends. However, they are accompanied by Emergency Planning, who act as a Tactical Advisor (TacAd) to support them.

SCG - Strategic Co-ordinating Group

The role of the SCG is to take overall responsibility for the multi-agency management of the emergency, and to establish the policy and strategic framework within which the tactical level of command will work. It will usually be formed in response to a rapid onset emergency or as a result of escalation from the Partner Activation Teleconference (PAT), and it may meet as a physical or virtual meeting.

The SCG has to rely on a process of discussion and consensus to reach decisions at a strategic level, and to ensure that the agreed strategic aims and objectives are implemented at the tactical level. The SCG will:

- a) Agree a Strategic aim and objectives in responding to the incident
- b) Determine policy for implementation at the Tactical level
- c) Assess and arrange for adequate resources
- d) Prioritise allocation of resources to Tactical Commanders
- e) Act as an interface to Central Government
- f) Liaise with neighbouring LRFs or regional partner agencies
- g) Co-ordinate communications internally and to the public
- h) Provide liaison to the media at a Strategic level
- i) Consider military assistance
- j) Make an assessment as early as possible about the timescale and process of recovery

Due to types of decisions and actions taken at SCG, Wokingham Borough Council must be represented by either the Chief Executive or an authorised Director. The attendee is expected to have full and unlimited authority to make decisions and commit expenditure on behalf of the authority.

The Gold representative will be accompanied by Emergency Planning, who act as a Tactical Advisor (TacAd) to support them.

A decision could be taken by the Berkshire Local Authorities for one Gold Commander to attend to represent all the authorities. This should only be considered where an incident is cross-boundary, the strategic issues councils are facing are similar, and there are opportunities for WBC Gold to brief the Berkshire LAs Gold representative beforehand and receive updates and actions after the SCG. This is documented in the Berkshire Local Authorities Emergency Planning Group Memorandum of Understanding.

Additional multi-agency cell structures

The SCG may decide further cells are required to facilitate a more effective multi-agency response. Detailed information on these cells is available on Resilience Direct, but the most common are summarised below:

- **MAIC – Multi-Agency Information Cell**

The MAIC is responsible for forming the Common Operating Picture (COP) using actions reports from PATs, TCGs and SCGs, and situational reports (SitReps) from partners. This is to provide a common understanding of a situation, its associated hazards and risks along with the position of resources and other overlays of information that support individual and collective decision making. The standard convention is for the member agency requesting the multi-agency response to resource the initial MAIC, and subsequently less affected organisation should support.

The Emergency Planning team and the Emergency Operation Centre Coordinators at WBC are MAIC trained.

- **MAC - Media Advisory Cell**

A Media Advisory Cell is established to support the strategic communications lead to produce and review the working communications strategy in response to an incident and in line with the SCG's strategy.

A senior member of WBC's Communications team would represent the Council in the cell. Their contact details are available on ResilienceDirect, so the MAC Chair can contact them directly if the cell is stood up.

For smaller incidents where a full MAC is not required, a rolling email chain may be used to ensure the sharing of consistent warning and informing messages.

- **STAC – Scientific and Technical Advice Cell**

STAC is established where there is significant wider health and environmental consequences, or there is a need for scientific and technical advice beyond the initial front-line response. STAC is comprised of technical experts from those agencies involved in the response who can provide scientific and technical advice into the SCG.

Local Authority Director of Public Health (DPH) in most cases will be invited to attend to provide specialist public health advice to STAC. They also be asked to be the Chair, particularly if the Local Authority is regarded as the lead agency for the incident. In this, it is advisable a delegated Public Health consultant should also attend, to allow the DPH to focus on being the Chair.

United Kingdom Health Security Agency's (UKHSA) Southeast STAC Plan also lists environmental health and structural engineering and building control, as other potential Local Authority attendees, if relevant to the incident.

- **Recovery Coordinating Group**

This group will be setup to facilitate strategic coordination of recovery activities in an incident involving more than one Local Authority geographic area. Local council recovery groups feed into this structure. As local authorities are the lead agency for recovery, and the expectation is for a less affected LA to chair the group.

As the group is strategic, the Chair and WBC's representative should be the Chief Executive or a Director. See Section 10 for Recovery.

- **ResCG - Response Coordinating Group**

This is the term for multi-SCG coordination through the Resilience & Emergencies Division (RED), which is part of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). A ResCG will be established if an incident impacts on more than one SCG area and requires coordination of communications, response capabilities and mutual aid. It can be activated at the request or agreement of SCG Chairs in areas affected by the incident.

- **Other**

Other cells that could be stood up include Evacuation Management Group, Logistics/Mutual Aid Cell, Transport Cell, Excess Deaths Advisory Group, Mass fatalities Coordination Group and Voluntary Agencies Coordination Group.

Where representatives are required from the Council, Gold should assess the need and benefit for the Council to attend in addition to the internal resource demand.

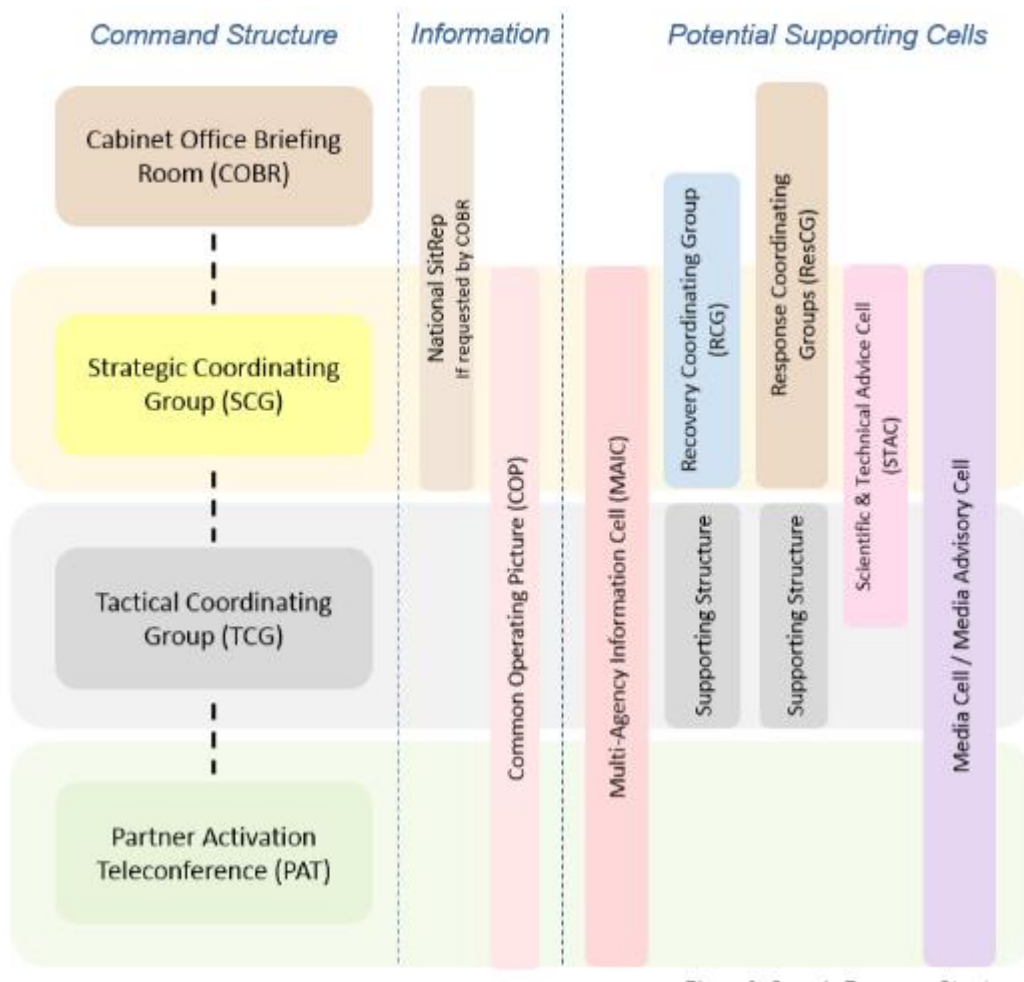


Figure 4: TVLRF multi-agency response structure (source: TVLRF Emergency Response Arrangements)

Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP)

All responders follow the JESIP principles, focusing on working together to share information and create a common picture and therefore agreed actions.

The principles for Joint Working and the Joint Decision Making Model (JDM) can be found at Appendix 2 and [JESIP website](#). Those attending multi-agency response groups should have completed JESIP training and attended SCG and TCG training sessions, as applicable.

Section 8: Communicating in an emergency

The Council has a duty under CCA 2004 to ensure that information is available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.

During an emergency, it is important the Council's uses relevant and timely communication, with diverse methods, to ensure that all stakeholders have the information they need, at the right time – to take appropriate action.

Figure 5 lists the key stakeholders the Council communicates with during an emergency, and the methods which can be used for the different stages of an emergency.

When the EOC is not open, approvals for communications and the methods used, should follow business as usual approvals. When the EOC is open, a specific communication strategy should be coordinated by the lead Comms Officer and signed off by Gold.

Emergency Planning will support services and those in the EOC on when to communicate with stakeholders, based on triggers in agreed WBC and multi-agency emergency plans.

The Council will also widely share partners' information, and signpost stakeholders to the lead agency's communications.

The information we will provide in an emergency will be:

- What has happened, and where
- Who is responding and what actions are being taken
- Any key actions for the stakeholder to take
- How they may be able to help
- What could happen next – if known and relevant
- When more information will be issued
- Who to contact for more information

Stakeholder	Communicated by:		Means of Communication		
	If EOC open	If EOC closed	Before a 'rising tide' Incident	During an Incident	After an Incident
Residents and businesses in affected area	EOC – Comms Officer Signed off by: Gold	CEM team – with support from relevant SMEs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-newsletters • Website • Social media • Sharing partner communications • Customer services and OOHs phone line • Media enquiry (if requested) • Parish and town councils • Councillors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-newsletters • Radio and television broadcasts • Newspapers • Website • Social media • Sharing partner communications • Door to Door Knocking • Loudspeakers • Leaflet drops • Via Parish and Town Councils • Via Councillors • Dedicated EOC phone number • Customer services and OOHs phone line • Media enquiry (if requested) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-newsletters • Radio and television broadcasts • Newspapers • Website • Social media • Door to Door Knocking • Community meetings • Posters and leaflets • Dedicated EOC phone number • Customer services and OOHs phone line • Parish and town councils • Councillors • Media enquiry (if requested)

Stakeholder	Communicated by:		Means of Communication		
	If EOC open	If EOC closed	Before a 'rising tide' Incident	During an Incident	After an Incident
Council staff	EOC – Comms Officer Signed off by: Gold	CEM team and Emergency Planning – with support from relevant SMEs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person Via line manager Emergency meeting Intranet All staff email All staff Teams message All staff SMS Staff e-newsletter (the Download) The Big Chat External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person Via line manager Emergency meeting Intranet All staff email All staff Teams message All staff SMS Staff e-newsletter (the Download) The Big Chat External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person Via line manager Emergency meeting Intranet All staff email All staff Teams message All staff SMS Staff e-newsletter (the Download) The Big Chat External communications
Education establishments	EOC – Education	Education team – with support from Emergency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific establishments Website Customer services and OOHs phone line External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific establishments Website Customer services and OOHs phone line In person/on-site External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific establishments Website Customer services and OOHs phone line External communications
Care providers	EOC – ASC and Childrens Services Leads	Adults and Children Services – with support from Emergency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific providers Website Customer services, EDS, and OOHs phone line External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific providers Website Customer services, EDS, and OOHs phone line In person/on-site External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific providers Website Customer services, EDS, and OOHs phone line External communications
Councillors	EOC – Gold Signed off by Gold	Emergency Planning with agreement from Silver Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific Cllrs Emergency meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Intranet Phone calls to specific Cllrs Emergency meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Intranet Phone calls to specific Cllrs

Stakeholder	Communicated by:		Means of Communication		
	If EOC open	If EOC closed	Before a 'rising tide' Incident	During an Incident	After an Incident
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In person External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community/recovery meeting External communications
Town and Parish Councils	EOC – Gold Signed off by Gold	Emergency Planning with agreement from Silver Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific councils External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific councils In person/on-site Emergency meeting External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific councils Community/recovery meeting External communications
Emergency partners	Silver Officer and Emergency Planning	Emergency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific partners Multi-agency structures (see section X) Customer services, EDS, and OOHs phone line External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific partners Multi-agency structures Customer services, EDS, and OOHs phone line External communications In person/on-site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific partners Multi-agency structures Customer services, EDS, and OOHs phone line External communications
Voluntary agencies	Silver Officer to delegate	Community and Partnerships, with support from Emergency Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific partners Voluntary Sector Action Group meeting External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific partners Emergency - Voluntary Sector Action Group meeting Multi-agency TVLRF structures (see Section X) External communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email Phone calls to specific partners Recovery - Voluntary Sector Action Group meeting External communications

Figure 5: Communication stakeholders and methods

Section 9: Resources and finances

Facilities

Shute End is the default location to act as the physical emergency operations centre. Dependent upon circumstances wider meeting rooms may need to be commandeered.

The Emergency Operation Centre plan details the resources and personnel required to run the EOC, as well as back-up locations.

Information on WBC buildings, and the key holders is maintained as part of the Out of Hours manual.

Equipment

Stock is kept at several locations across the borough. These locations and list of equipment is maintained by the Emergency Planning team.

These include:

- Rest centre kits – including sleeping bags, camp beds, towels, blankets and wash kits
- Personal protective equipment for staff – including masks, gloves, wellies, fleeces, coats, trousers, high-viz clothes
- Emergency lighting, fans, heaters, urns, dehumidifiers and chemical toilets
- A 3.5 Kw petrol generator and three 3 inch water pumps

No perishable items are kept to reduce waste. If the need arises, these can be purchased by members of the Emergency Response Team who each have corporate card.

There will be wide range of equipment and facilities owned by the Council that is not quantified in the list held by Emergency Planning. However, there is an expectation that resources will be shared corporately based on the greatest need in an emergency, and services should come forward with these to support any response.

For specific information on when a rest centre is used, what equipment and resource is required, and how equipment is transported to the location is within the Rest Centre plan.

Additional resources

It is not possible to have enough equipment, facilities and trained staff for all eventualities. Where the Council does not have the resources needed to respond to an emergency mutual aid, voluntary sector support and Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) can be investigated.

Mutual aid

There are mutual aid Memorandums of Understanding in place between the Thames Valley and Berkshire Local Authorities, which are regularly reviewed and signed off by Chief Executives.

This agreement would be activated by a Chief Executive, or an authorised Director. The affected/receiving council is responsible for co-coordinating aid, health and safety of personnel, supervisory control and financial arrangements.

It is possible to request mutual aid from other agencies not listed above, including those outside of the Thames Valley, albeit no formal arrangements are in place. A Thames Valley wide Logistics and Mutual Aid Cell (LMAC) may be put in place to coordinate the requests and support across the area.

Voluntary sector

Under the CCA 2004, the Local Authority has the duty to coordinate the support of the voluntary sector during an emergency. There is a wide range of voluntary agencies who have a high level of training and expertise who may be called upon to support a response. The voluntary agency requested to support will depend on the requirement. Some of the voluntary groups include:

[British Red Cross](#)

[St John Ambulance](#)

[Berkshire Lowland Search and Rescue](#)

[Berkshire and Hampshire 4X4](#)

[RE-Act](#)

[Cowshed](#)

[Rapid Relief Team](#)

The Emergency Planning team holds additional out of hours contact details for some of the organisations listed above.

The Wokingham Voluntary Sector Action Group and other community groups should also be considered for support, but this will depend on the incident. Any requests to the public for support, whether volunteers, resources or donations should be carefully considered before issued.

Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA)

MACA is the help and support provided by the armed forces to civil authorities in the UK.

A request can be made by the council, through the SCG, to the Government for military aid, but this can only be used when all other options are exhausted.

Costs may also be associated with the request.

Local military unit commanders may directly deploy military personnel to an area if there is an immediate risk to life and limb only, otherwise the MACA process must be followed.

More information can be found on the UK Ops: The Defence Contribution to Resilience (JDP 02) including a short video about the process.

Finances

Throughout an emergency, costs must be captured. This can be allocated to a separate emergency cost code, or the Emergency Planning cost code. This should be decided by a Finance Officer allocated to work in the response to capture costs.

Costs in emergencies will normally include:

- Equipment costs – buying or hiring
- Staffing costs for any additional hours worked
- Mutual aid costs
- Clear up and recovery costs

Costs may be recoverable under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, S155 and the Bellwin scheme. This is unlikely to cover all costs associated with the response and normally does not include recovery costs. Before being eligible for grant, an individual authority is required to have spent 0.2% of its calculated annual budget on works that have been reported to the Government as eligible for grant. This amount is the authority's "threshold" and applies to the whole financial year, not to each incident within the financial year. For example, the threshold for Wokingham in 2022 to 2023 was £288,620. More information on the Bellwin Scheme is available [here](#).

Recovery of costs should also be investigated after the incident, where a site or company has caused the incident

Section 10: Stand down, recovery and debriefing

Stand down

The decision for standing down is taken by the most senior responder/structure in place at the time. Internally, this will either be Gold, or Silver. At multi-agency, this will take place at SCG or TCG. Consultation must be taken with services (internally) and partners (multi-agency) to understand the consequences of standing down on all parties.

In larger incidents, the timing of standing down will vary based on the type of incident and the role of the agency. This is exemplified in Figure 6 below, where the Local Authority is needed later and for longer compared to the blue light services.

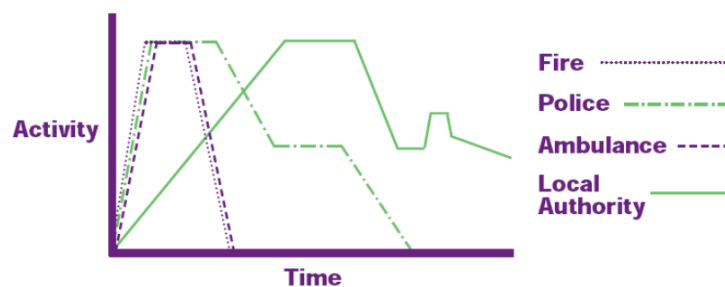


Figure 6: Example of emergency service activity during the course of an incident

Internally, standing down may occur in stages. For example, by following the principle of subsidiarity, where decisions should be taken at the lowest appropriate level, considerations should be given to standing down Gold at a suitable opportunity.

The following list could be used when standing down:

- Consider if partial or full stand down
- Communicate decision to partners

- Communicate decision to Councillors and parish and town councils
- Communicate with the public
- Communication to include any ongoing impacts on business as usual, and immediate advice that should still be followed where there is residual risk
- Remain sighted on TVLRF response if still ongoing
- Remain vigilant to if the incident response needs to be re-activated
- Ensure staff get respite and any support in line with HR procedures (this must also happen throughout the incident)
- Conduct hot debrief
- Begin recovery process
- Ensure all incident information is collated and stored in accordance with our retention policies

Internal debriefing

The debrief process offers an opportunity to evaluate the performance of services, examine response actions and plans, as well as examining underpinning elements such as training.

The process should also compare incident outcomes which were expected to occur with those that resulted. Identifying these differences allows for organisational lessons to be realised.

Debrief should be undertaken when:

- The Council activates an emergency or business continuity plan
- The Council is involved in the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum response structure
- If any service involved in an event or incident requests one
- Following a planned exercise

As trained debriefers, the Emergency Planning team can co-ordinate and facilitate debriefs. Cold debriefs will largely follow the College of Policing method.

An assessment will be taken by Emergency Planning on the level of debrief required based on the incident or exercise that had occurred, and this will be ratified by the Assistant Director and Director responsible for this service. Figure 7 below shows the optimal debrief method.

For large scale incident, debriefing of affected communities should also take place. This could be done via electronic forms, and then community meetings for discussion.

Order	What?	Why	When	How?
1	During the incident	<p>Capturing of lessons during an incident is good practice, as it is still fresh in the minds.</p> <p>It will also help prevent any bad practices from being repeated during the same response.</p> <p>To ensure this, communicating of these lessons should take place at handovers and incident meetings.</p> <p>To inform hot and cold debriefs</p>	During the incident	On a spreadsheet hosted on the Emergency Planning SharePoint.
2	Hot debrief	To capture information in the immediate aftermath of the incident, whilst fresh.	At the end of a shift, when a member of staff is stood down, and immediately after the response	<p>Via an electronic form</p> <p>If conducted verbally with an individual, notes taken, and electronically recorded.</p>
3	Cold debrief	<p>To allow for more considered feedback on areas of the response such as the plans, response structures, staff welfare issues, identification of the effectiveness, positives and negatives associated with the response.</p> <p>Identification of lessons and recommendations are used to inform the debrief report.</p>	<p>After the completion of the hot debriefs.</p> <p>Between 2 weeks and a month following an incident.</p>	In person or virtual meeting facilitated by Emergency Planning.
4	Debrief report	<p>To formally document the identifying of key issues, lessons and recommendations agreed by those who were debriefed.</p> <p>The report should include timescales and prioritisation for the recommendations.</p> <p>As part of the scope of the debrief, the sign-off and circulation of the report should be considered e.g. service level, CLT, Oversight and Scrutiny.</p>	<p>Following the cold debrief.</p> <p>Approximately a month following the incident stand down.</p>	Coordinated by the lead service and/or Emergency Planning.
5	Lessons identified log	A central location for collation of all lessons identified and the resulting recommendations for all incidents and exercises.	Continually monitored and updated following an event and updated following completion of mitigations.	On a spreadsheet hosted on the Emergency Planning SharePoint.

Figure 7: Table showing internal debrief methods

Multi-agency debriefing

Where Wokingham Borough Council is involved in Thames Valley LRF response, we will engage in the debriefing. The process is detailed in the TVLRF Emergency Response Arrangements, but this follows a similar process to Wokingham’s above – with electronic forms and an in-person or virtual session held. Following this, a report is circulated with lessons identified and prioritised for action.

Where capacity allows, Wokingham should always aim to send the individuals involved in the response, not just the Emergency Planning team to these debriefs.

Recovery

Recovery is an integral part of the emergency management process. It is defined as:

The process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency.
 (Emergency Response and Recovery Guidance, HM Government)

Local authorities have a duty to lead on recovery and restoration activities within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The recovery phase should begin at the earliest opportunity following the onset of an emergency or major incident, running in tandem with the response to the emergency.

The decision for developing a recovery strategy and coordinating group will come from the SCG, or from WBC Gold. In some specific site or risk plans, there are defined triggers for automatically setting up a recovery group due to the impacts of that incident.

Figure 8 shows an example of the recovery structure within the Thames Valley, with the LRF’s Strategic Recovery Coordinating Group at the top.

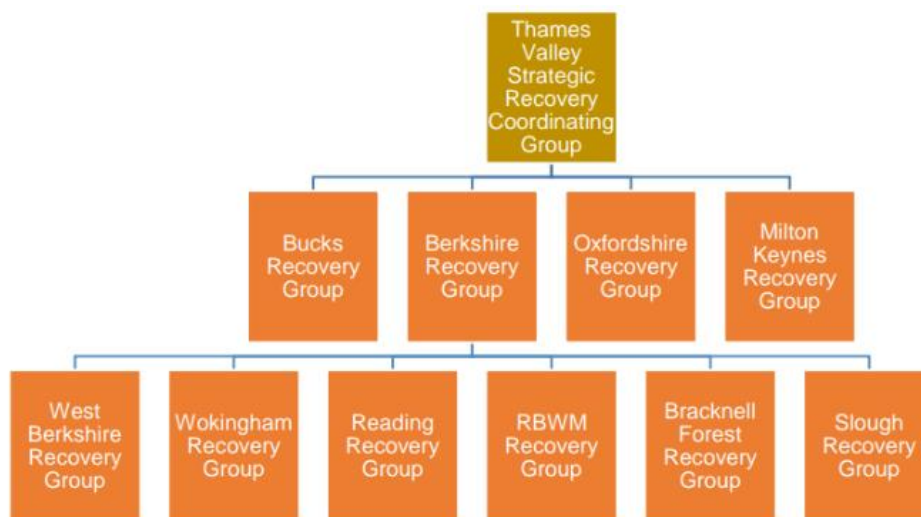


Figure 8: An example structure of recovery groups in the Thames Valley (source: TVLRF Recovery Plan)

Wokingham Borough Council no longer has a recovery plan, instead using the TVLRF’s Recovery Plan. This is consistent with other Local Authorities with the Thames Valley. Within this there is guidance on terms of reference, strategies, initial agendas and considerations for recovery. Gold

should allocate a Strategic Recovery Lead during an incident who will develop a recovery strategy.

Section 11: Risk management and emergency plans

This emergency framework should not be viewed in isolated, as there are other supporting emergency plans, procedures, and risk management structures in place.

Emergency plans should be produced and maintained to mitigate against known high and very high risks within the borough and the Thames Valley. In order to do this, these risks need to be identified and assessed.

Risk management

The [National Risk Register](#) is a public facing document issued by the Government annually, detailing the Government's assessment of the most serious risks facing the UK. Local Resilience Forum's use the National Security Risk Assessment (not available to the public) to create a Community Risk Register taking into account additional local risks. The Thames Valley's is [available online](#).

These are localised further as part of the Berkshire Resilience Forum, a county group that reports into the TVLRF delivery group.

The Berkshire Local Emergency Planning Group assesses if suitable mitigations are in place at the Local Authority, County and Thames Valley level for the high and very high risks.

For Wokingham, major incident response is listed on the Council's Corporate Risk Register, which captures these collective risks. More information on the Council's risk management process is detailed in its Policy and Guidance documents.

Emergency plans

Partners come together as part of the Thames Valley LRF to develop joint plans to ensure there is a well understood, consistent and coordinated response across the region. These vary from being frameworks to set scalable structures and agreed procedures, and other focus on specific high and very high risks as outlined in the TVLRF Community Risk Register. These plans are written by lead agencies, shared with all partners for consultation and approved at the Delivery and Executive Groups.

Single agencies should assess whether having a multi-agency plan is sufficient to mitigate that risk and provides a clear and robust plan for its required response, or if there needs to be an additional localised version.

The below flowchart Figure 9 shows Wokingham Borough Council's emergency documentation. There are other plans led on by other Council services not included here, which Emergency Planning are consulted on these when they are reviewed. These include Highway's Winter Maintenance Plan, IT's Major Event Management Plan, and Public Health's Cold and Hot Weather Plans.

Most of these plans are security marked Official Sensitive and not available to the public. Public redacted versions of plans, where appropriate, can be made available.

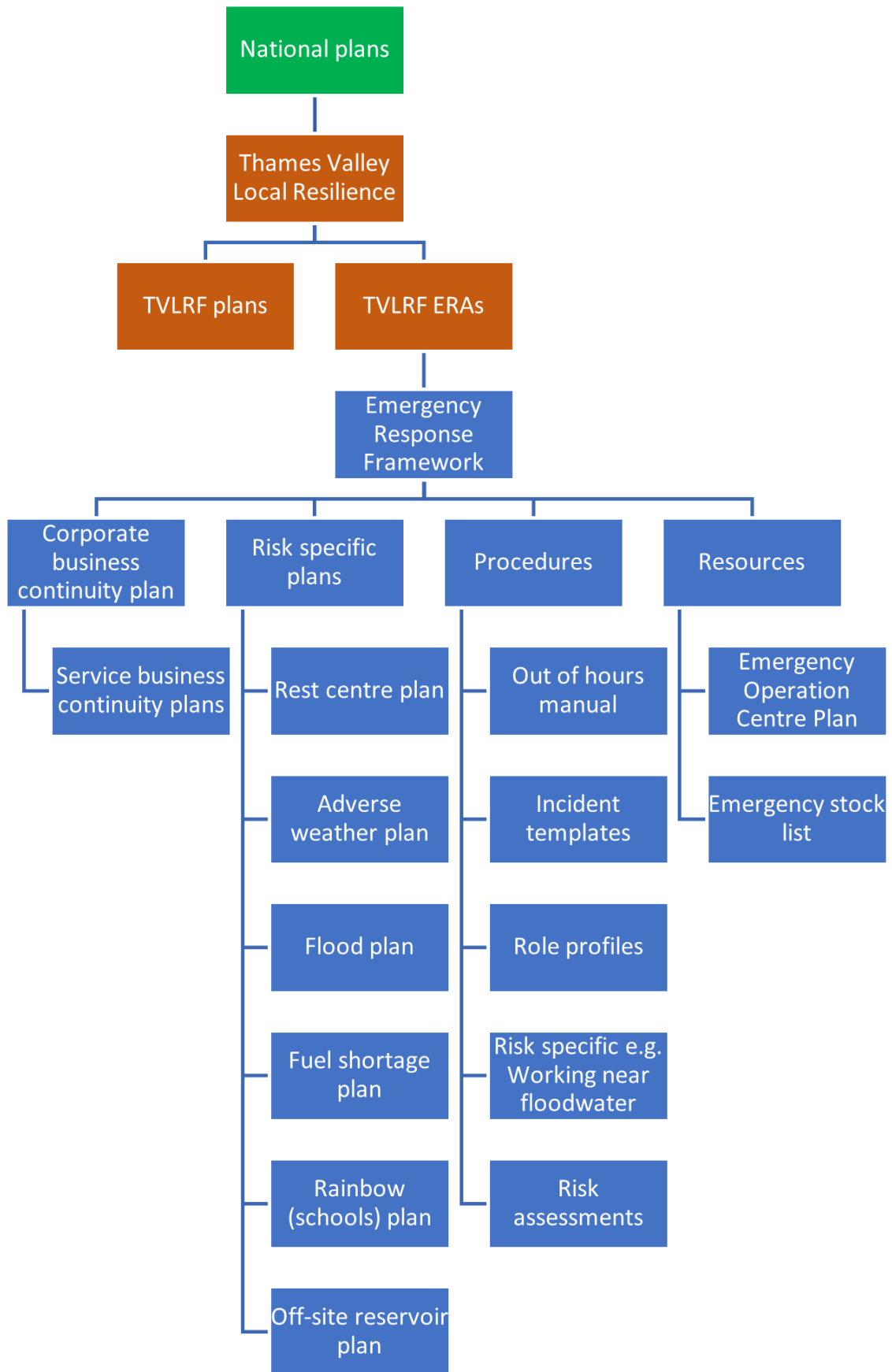


Figure 9: Emergency plans, procedures and documentation

Governance

To monitor and review compliance with legislation, and assess emerging risks, the following governance methods should be used:

- All plans have review dates and their own specific approval thresholds within them to be followed
- Risk Management Group
- Annual Emergency Planning delivery plan to CLT and Oversight and Scrutiny
- Internal and external audits

Section 12: Training and exercising

To ensure, as far as possible, that the council can respond in line with this framework and other response and recovery plans, a training and exercising programme is put in place on an annual basis.

This programme is reviewed annually and includes:

- Core training and exercising – the basic training needed to understand how the council and others respond to an emergency
- Specific site and risk/hazard training and exercising – this is training on specific sites or risks.
- Supporting plan training and exercising - this includes training for supporting roles in response and recovery, including loggist and multi-agency information cell training and exercising.

Training and exercises are provided either directly by the Emergency Planning team, by members of the TVLRF or other specialists as necessary.

Records of training and exercising provided is held on record along with those who are trained. Full details of the training requirements for specific roles are detailed in the respective role profiles.

Section 13: Data management

It is vital that all documents relating to the response should be collated and kept for a period of at least seven years. However, in some cases records may be kept indefinitely. Records should include details of all actions taken, communications with outside agencies, a summary of all key decisions made, and details of all expenditure incurred. Records are stored securely for at least seven years or longer after the end of the incident as per the council's record retention policy.

It is important to log and retain a record of all events during an incident to:

- assist post-incident debriefs and reviews of plans
- provide evidence for inquires or other investigation
- if liability, compensation or reimbursement issues arise as a result of an incident

All responders are required to log during an incident, and the Emergency Planning can provide training on this, and provide logbooks. They are provided to all duty officers when they join a rota.

Accessing vulnerable data

The Council is often requested by emergency partners, specifically utility companies, to share data of known vulnerable persons or infrastructure.

Data sharing tends to happen where emergency plans has been enacted, however the provider largely makes a dynamic assessment based on the population size, and the severity of the outage. In any supply disruption, utility companies focus any support initially on customers listed on their Priority Services Registers.

Where the Council is notified of outage, but no request for data has been required, an assessment should be made by Silver based on the information provided by the utility company on the population size, location and severity – as to whether the Council should review the data it holds regardless.

The Emergency Planning team and Emergency Planning Duty Officers will have access to weekly reports filtered to adults and children who would be considered vulnerable in an utility outage. This can be accessed in and out of working hours.

In working hours, if further support is needed, the team will go to Children and Adults services, specifically:

- Assistant Directors and.
- Adult Social Care Development Manager
- Senior Performance Analyst
- Systems Business Analyst
- Service Manager, Intelligence & Impact

Out of hours, these requests for support will go to:

- On duty Adults and Children ADs
- IT team for larger datasets

The Silver Officer will be briefed before any internal requests for vulnerable datasets are made to services – in and out of hours.

Definition of vulnerable

It is difficult to define vulnerability specifically, as it will depend on the type, severity and length of an emergency. The CCA 2004 defines vulnerable people as those who “are less able to help themselves in the circumstances of an emergency”. For example, which would include, but not limited to children, the elderly, mobility impaired, mental/cognitive function impaired and sensory impaired.

The Council can search by those reliant on domiciliary care for meals and other personal care.

However, the Council should also include any known educational establishments and care providers in this search too.

Data management

Any sensitive information required for an incident will be stored securely and password protected, and access only given to those who require it.

Data can be collected, stored and shared in an emergency in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This is further detailed in the Emergency Planning Privacy Notice on the Council's website.

Appendix 1: Roles & Responsibilities In response

This section sets out the roles and responsibilities when responding to an emergency. The whole council has a role to play when responding to an emergency or major incident, the following outlines some council functions, and that function's responsibilities.

Preparing for Emergencies

Function	Responsibilities Preparing for Emergencies
Chief Executive or nominated deputy:	The Chief Executive, or nominated deputy, has the overarching responsibility to ensure the council is prepared to respond and support the community because of an emergency, major incident or business continuity incident.
Directors and Assistant Directors	<p>All senior managers have responsibilities in an emergency response. It should be noted that in most cases this is doing their normal day job in an unusual situation, often at a high tempo and in a coordinated way with other services and agencies which they may not normally work with. Specific actions they should do when not in response mode include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Attend or ensure representation at: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. emergency planning meetings as requested ii. emergency planning training and exercising as requested b. Ensure sufficient staff are trained in order to have an effective response. c. Ensure specialist staff with a role to undertake in specific plans are trained in their role e.g. building control, flood specialists. d. Ensure relevant contractors understand their role in an emergency e. Ensure there are robust business continuity (BC) plans in place.
Director of Public Health	Required to ensure plans are in place to protect the health of their geographical population from threats ranging from relatively minor outbreaks to full-scale emergencies.
All services	All services have a role in responding to and recovering from an emergency. This can be varied depending on the emergency and may on occasions mean some officers undertake roles which they would not normally do. However, for most of the time the services in response mode are doing what they would do normally at high tempo, under pressure and often outside normal working hours.
Bronze and Emergency Planning Duty Officers (EPDO)	Duty officer rotas is in place available for out of office hours for the council. Their main role is to be the first point of contact in an emergency for the council outside office hours. This includes responding to queries relating to potential emergencies and

Function	Responsibilities Preparing for Emergencies
	initiation of the activation process for the council as necessary outside office hours.
Emergency Planning Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Undertake an annual risk review, b. Develop an annual delivery plan based on the risk review, plan review status and lessons identified from emergencies c. Co-ordinate the development and maintenance of the Council's Plans. d. Engage with other Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders in addition to specific risk sites owners e. Support the work of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum f. Support the work of the Berkshire Resilience Group g. Work across the Berkshire councils in relation to the agreed Berkshire LA MOU h. Develops and deliver an annual training and exercise programme i. Manage the out of hours contract and manual j. Engage across all the services k. Ensure the councils' emergency operations centres (EOC) are ready for activation l. Work with services to develop and maintain their service business continuity and respective emergency response plans m. Be prepared to respond to incidents to support as subject matter experts/TacAds

Responding to Emergencies

Function	Responsibilities Responding to Emergencies
Chief Executive or nominated deputy (Gold Commander)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Has overall responsibility for the response to and recovery from emergencies including Business continuity incidents b. Confirms the declaration of a major incident c. Confirms the establishment of and chairs internal Gold meetings d. Ensures the coordinates the council's strategic recovery is in place e. Assigns or confirms staffing for multi-agency command and control locations f. As required, authorise requests for mutual aid g. As required, authorise requests for military assistance via the SCG

Function	Responsibilities Responding to Emergencies
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> h. Provides liaison with Councillors. i. Decides the organisational requirements needed to respond to the major incident, j. Balances the ongoing day-to-day continuation of critical council services, alongside response requirements and recovery needs
Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Attend internal Gold meetings b. Coordinate their directorate responses to the emergency c. Co-ordinate the emergency and business continuity responses relating to their area of responsibility d. Provide staff to command and coordination groups – both internal and external e. Provide relevant information for situation reports f. Provide officers in their areas of specialism to support the response, such as to assist in the identification of vulnerable people g. Ensure staff welfare h. Log their and the council’s actions and decisions during the incident response and recovery <p>Post emergency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Support the recovery process j. Support a detailed debriefing process to identify areas of improvement.
Assistant Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be the service area’s nominated co-ordinator; acting as the point of contact for that service to the EOC b. Co-ordinate the resources and response of their service. c. Have an overview of all service issues. d. Co-ordinate and liaise with any contracted services e. Provide specialist care and support staff as necessary to locations f. Log their and the council’s actions and decisions during the incident response and recovery g. Provide Situational Reports as required h. Ensure staff welfare

Function	Responsibilities Responding to Emergencies
Emergency Planning Team/Emergency Planning Duty Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support or lead the coordination of the initial response to an incident b. Facilitate the establishment of command and control structure c. Provide tactical advice (TACAD) as required, this may be for multiple command or working groups. d. Answer calls from the control room/contact centre throughout the duty period. e. Activate and coordinate the council's initial response as necessary.
Bronze Duty Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be available to travel to the incident area and act as the local authority liaison officer (LALO) at the scene as necessary. b. Answer calls from the control room/contact centre throughout the duty period. c. Be available to mobilise (set off, not arrive) in response to a call out within 30 minutes of receiving the activation call.

Specific Service/Team area responsibilities in response

Service/Team	Actions
Communications, Engagement and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Produce emergency communications on behalf of the council b. Provide trained staff to work in the EOC as information and advice officers c. Provide public relations officers and support handling the media d. Communicate to staff, Councillors and town and parish e. Provide communications to the public – residents and businesses f. Engage with the media g. Staff a media centre in conjunction with the police, if stood up h. Assist to facilitate any very important person (VIP) visits to the area i. Provide website support to the EOC as required. j. Attend the multi-agency media advisory cell (MAC)
Customer Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be prepared to receive the notifying calls from emergency partners b. Provide a focal point for the public to contact the council to report issues and obtain advice c. Log all calls from the public on information management systems d. Provide up to date advice to callers e. Communicate on a regular basis with the EOC on the current information and emerging issues f. Refer calls to the EOC from professional partners g. Provide staff and resources for an information hotline, where resource allows

Service/Team	Actions
	h. Provide message takers for the EOC, where resource allows
Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide technical advice on damaged structures b. Provide advice on structural demolition and emergency repairs c. Provide advice on access to casualties who require rescue from damaged structures.
Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide trained staff to support Councillor questions and issues b. Facilitate any VIP visits to the area
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide specialist expertise relating to emergencies involving school children or council owned Schools b. Provide current school contact lists to the EOC c. Provide a focal point for communicating with all schools across the area d. Provide a service lead in the EOC as necessary e. Provide support and advice to the private sector education services as necessary f. Provide support to the EOC regarding trips etc. which may be involved in incidents away from the area.
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide financial support throughout the response and recovery phase b. Monitor and report on expenditure in relation to the incident c. Set up cost codes for any expenditures associated with the incident d. Ensure authorisation, payment and tracking of monies e. Provide petty cash for the period of the response phase f. Provide advice to the EOC and emergency management team on any financial issue g. Manage procurement cards authorised for use in an emergency h. Management of the cost recovery process via insurance and/or Bellwin scheme i. Support in sourcing relevant funding to support the recovery process j. Provide audit support as necessary k. Resolve any insurance matters arising. l. Support provision of grants or payments provided by the Government
Corporate Health and Safety	a. Provide health and safety advice.
Highways and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide advice on any highway or engineering matters. b. Provide specialist officers to visit areas to assess damage to highways network c. Co-ordinate highway contractors and operational level liaison with all utility companies

Service/Team	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Co-ordinate the clearance of roads, bridges, footpaths etc. including the use of specialist clean up material for chemical spills etc. e. Co-ordinate of repair and maintenance of streetlights and traffic lights f. Co-ordinate diversionary routes with Highways England g. Co-ordinate road closures including maintenance of the https://one.network/ website h. Assist with signage and barriers for use on the highways
Flood Risk & Drainage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assist in flood alleviation including the provision plant and materials as required, including sandbags, in accordance with the sandbag policies b. Attending flooded locations to assess impact, and risk c. Provide subject matter expertise d. Data collection
Waste services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Coordinate of refuse collection and street cleaning contractors b. Provide specialist advice on waste management and co-ordination of debris and waste clearance if required. c. Provide information in relation to specialist waste contractors a. Engage with other private waste collectors operating in the area as necessary
Grounds Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Can support the removal of fallen trees on public land and adopted highway to maintain public safety b. Clear fallen vegetation/debris c. Provide specialist advice on trees/parks/grounds management and co-ordination. d. Support the response with equipment and trained staff
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lead on any housing or homelessness issues arising from emergency b. Co-ordinate and liaise with contractors and partnership services c. Liaise with housing associations d. Provide specialist care and support staff at reception centres, friends and family reception centres and temporary mortuaries where established e. Assist in the identification of vulnerable people who may be affected by the incident
Human Resources and Payroll (HR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support in the redeployment of staff b. Manage any staff payments in accordance with the agreed payment schedule c. Provide additional short-term staff assistance / replacements as required

Service/Team	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Provide next of kin information e. Co-ordinate staff counselling post event f. Support in any matters related to council staff in abnormal/ unsociable hours arising from the incident g. Provide advice and support in relation to staff absences, extended working hours etc. due to an incident.
Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Maintain all essential ICT and communication applications b. Monitor for any cyber-attack or weakness in the system c. Provide ICT support to the EOC as required d. Provide additional communications facilities as required e. Co-ordinate with landline and mobile phone providers as necessary f. Manage the Mobile Telecommunication Privileged Access Scheme (MTPAS) for mobile phones g. Provide printing support as required throughout the response and recovery phases.
GIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide GIS Mapping and support to the EOC as required.
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Resolve legal matters concerning the council resulting from or in association with the incident b. Provide legal advice on any legal matters including the hire / rental / use of private property c. Provide information regarding residents in properties. d. Provide specialist advise in relation to Freedom of Information requests
Leisure facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provision of the use of buildings for rest centres
Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide library buildings and the mobile library to provide information and advice to the public in affected areas.
Councillors	<p>All Councillors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Adopt a supportive position within their communities b. Liaise with their communities and try to ascertain the feeling of the community in the affected areas c. Liaise with the Parish/Town Councils and community groups to provide information on vulnerable people or local specific issues d. Provide updates to the communities from the council e. Remain impartial and allow council officers to provide appropriate responses according to priority areas

Service/Team	Actions
	f. Provide information into the EOC via the nominated elected member or via the nominated email route or via the designated local authority liaison officer(s) on the ground.
Out of hours call centre	a. Be the point of contact for the council in emergencies outside working hours b. Notify duty officers of an incident out of hours c. Use the out of hours manual for guidance.
Tree Management	a. Undertake work on trees on public land and adopted highway to maintain public safety b. Clear fallen vegetation/debris c. Provide specialist advice on trees/parks/grounds management and co-ordination. d. Support the response with equipment and trained staff
Countryside Services	a. Maintain public safety at managed parks b. Support the response with equipment and trained staff including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chainsaws - Snow plough - Tractor - Boats and kayaks - 2-6 KWH Generators - 1" to 4" water pumps - 4x4s: to support in the transportation of staff (including bronze duty officers) and vulnerable residents
Property	a. Provide access to the corporate buildings b. Provide information of other council buildings including key holders, asbestos registers etc. c. Support the EOC with respect to facilities d. Support business continuity management e. Facilitate security arrangements in relation to corporate buildings f. Provide advice on council property and suitability for use in emergencies.
Public Health	a. Provide technical advice regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Infectious diseases o Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) and public health o Contaminated food and water supplies o Public risk and evacuation requirements

Service/Team	Actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Provide a public health consultant or similar to represent the council at a Scientific and Technical Advice Centre (STAC) and/or SCG and/or RCG c. Provide specialist advice for temporary mortuaries. d. Work with other health agencies to support the response
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Act as agents for Public Health / UKHSA / HSE in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Infectious diseases o Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) and public health o Contaminated food and water supplies o Public risk and evacuation requirements o Licensing considerations (limitations and constraints) b. Provide an environmental health officer (EHO) to represent the council at a Scientific and Technical Advice Centre (STAC) and/or RCG at Gold c. Provide specialist advice for Temporary Mortuaries.
Social Care e.g. children, adults, older people, and community care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assist in the identification of vulnerable people b. Provision of specialist staff to the reception centres, rest centres and humanitarian centres as necessary, c. Provision of welfare for vulnerable people during and after the incident d. Co-ordinate and provide social and emotional psychological support to those affected by the incident a. Engage with relevant voluntary sectors to support the humanitarian response
Trading Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lead on any animal health and welfare related emergencies b. In recovery, support the community in relation to rogue traders etc
Corporate Transport Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide vehicles and qualified drivers b. Manage and coordinate all council owned transport c. Engage with other transport providers to support the response including bus and train companies.
Anti-Social Behaviour Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be prepared to deploy into the communities affected in order to be a point of contact for the council – delivering messages and identifying emerging issues in the community

Appendix 2: JESIP

JESIP models and principles have become the standard for interoperability in the UK. JESIP is the thread that should run through all plans and subsequent incidents, and recovery from these. All incident phases need to consider multi-agency working, best served by following the JESIP principles. The JESIP Joint Doctrine: the interoperability framework sets out a standard approach to multi-agency working, along with training and awareness products for responding organisations to train their staff.

Whilst the initial focus was on improving the response to major incidents, JESIP is scalable, so much so, the principles for joint working and models can be applied to any type of multi-agency incident.

More information is available on the website: [Home - JESIP Website](#)

JESIP principles

CO-LOCATE

Co-locate with other responders as soon as practicably possible at a single, safe and easily identified location.

COMMUNICATE

Communicate using language which is clear, and free from technical jargon and abbreviations.

CO-ORDINATE

Co-ordinate by agreeing the lead organisation. Identify priorities, resources, capabilities and limitations for an effective response, including the timing of further meetings.

JOINTLY UNDERSTAND RISK

Jointly understand risk by sharing information about the likelihood and potential impact of threats and hazards, to agree appropriate control measures.

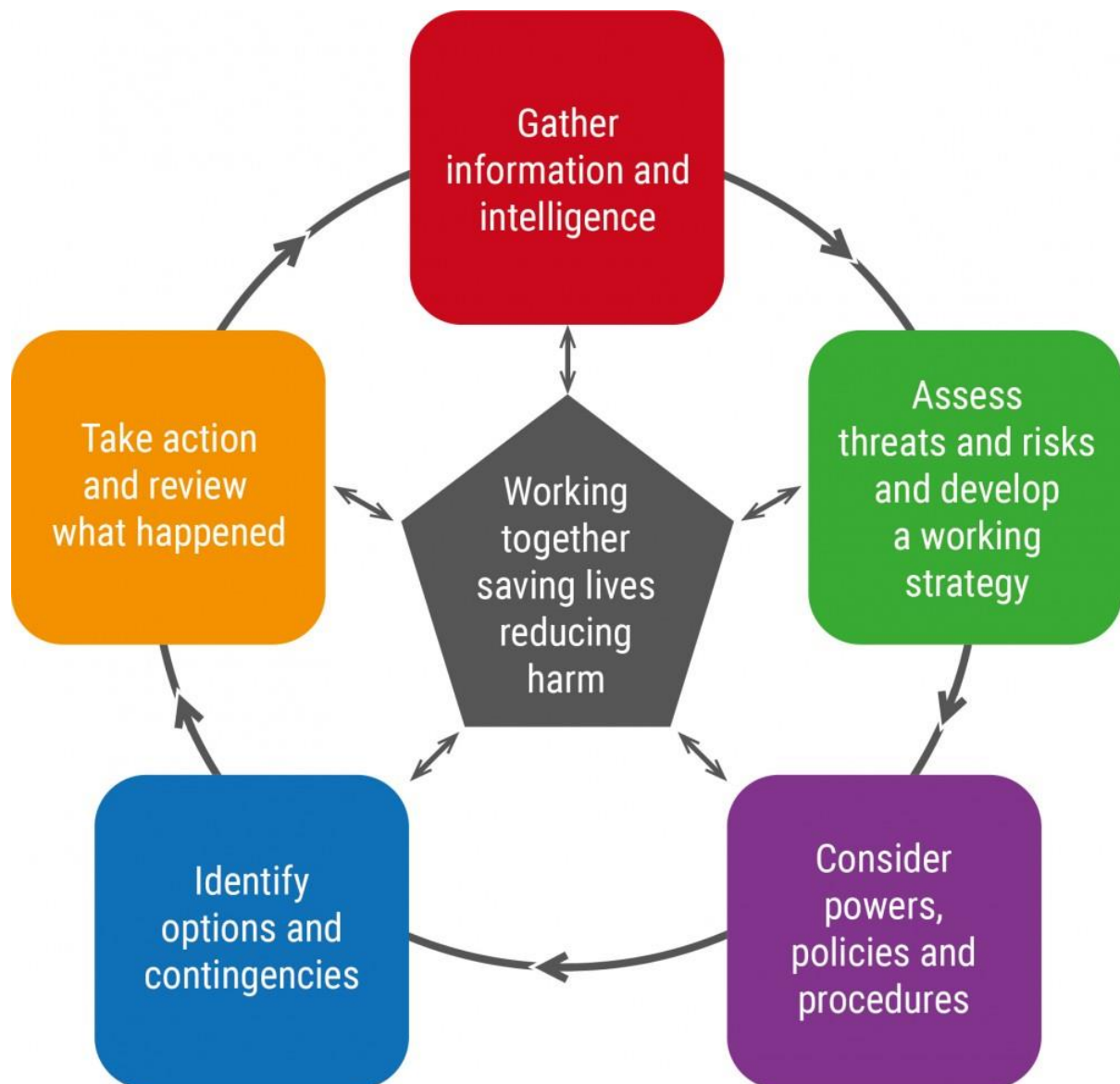
SHARED SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Establish shared situational awareness by using M/ETHANE and the Joint Decision Model.

M/ETHANE report



Joint Decision Making Model



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WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

ADVERSE WEATHER PLAN

Version: 4.2

Date: February 2024
Author: Zoran Matic

Document Control Information

Title: Adverse Weather Plan

Date: February 2024

Version: 4.2

Classification: PUBLIC

Authors: Zoran Matic

Version	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1.0	December 2012	Working draft
1.1	December 2012	Active Plan
1.2	June 2013	Updated due to Public Health transfer
1.3	January 2014	Updated
2.0	January 2015	Updated entire plan, and specific update RE strong winds
3.0	January 2016	Updated
3.1	Jan 17	Updated with multiple minor amends
3.2	Feb 2019	Review and amended intranet links
3.3	March 2022	Checked and updated hyperlinks. Review and update of terminology and business names/details.
4.0	September 2023	Reviewed entire plan, added additional section in response to a major snow event, removed sections relating to recording fallen trees.
4.1	November 2023	Minor updates following Blue Nimbus exercise and Storm Ciaron - changes to the AWM agenda and attendees.
4.2	February 2024	Minor updates to AWM attendee list following Storm Henk and flooding, and CLT consultation

Approvals

Title	Name	Signature	Date
AD Place	Stephen Brown		14/03/2022
Assistant Director for Environment and Safety	Steve Brown		

Plan review date: November 2026.

The plan will be reviewed earlier than this date in the event of any legislative, or organisational changes and any learnings from incidents or exercises. The plan will be reviewed by the Emergency Planning team and circulated to relevant services for comment.

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6. [Severe Weather Notifications](#)
7. [Plan Activation](#)
8. [Command & Control](#)
9. [Health & Safety](#)
10. [Adverse Weather Meeting](#)
11. [Roles & Responsibilities](#)
12. [Warning and Informing](#)
13. [Mutual Aid](#)
14. [Recovery](#)
15. [Annex](#)

1 Glossary of Terms

Reference should also be made to the [Cabinet Office Lexicon](#). Below is a list of the most commonly used acronyms in this plan and its Annexes.

AWM	Adverse Weather Meeting
CHEMET	Chemical Meteorology Report
CRR	Community Risk Register
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EA	Environment Agency
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ERA	Extreme Rainfall Alert
FFC	Flood Forecasting Centre
FGS	Flood Guidance Statement
FSA	Food Standards Agency
LA	Local Authority
MET	Meteorological Office
MIRS	Major Incident Reporting System
NHS	National Health Service
NSWWS	National Severe Weather Warning Service
RWG	Recovery Working Group
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Protection of Animals
SCG	Strategic Coordinating Group
SUDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems
SEMD 1998	Security and Emergency Measures Direction 1998
TCG	Tactical Coordinating Group
TVLRF	Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum
TVP	Thames Valley Police
UKHSA	United Kingdom Health Security Agency

2 Introduction

For the purposes of this plan the definition of adverse weather is:

‘a period of concentrated, sustained weather which leads to problems with the delivery of normal services, a potential increase in demand for some services and/or disruption to transportation services, or weather that has an adverse effect on vulnerable individuals’

Wokingham borough has experienced the effect of extreme weather conditions over the last 10 years including a heatwave in 2003; drought conditions in 2005/6; flooding in 2014, severe winters in 2009/10 and “The Beast from the East” in 2018.

Whilst there is an Emergency Response Framework, which covers the overall response to an incident it was deemed necessary to produce an adverse weather plan to include details and actions for all the Council services. This plan aims to include details that the community, residents and businesses alike would find beneficial in order to prepare themselves.

3 Aims & Objectives of Plan

The Plan provides a framework for the activation, allocation and deployment of Council resources in the event of adverse weather. The plan is based upon the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register and covers those areas identified in the adverse weather section.

The types of adverse weather and flooding conditions that the UK Government uses for contingency planning purposes are severe storms and gales, persistent low temperatures and heavy snow, heat waves, drought and major flooding (pluvial and fluvial at local and national scales).

The aim of this plan is to combine all weather-related hazards that may affect the Wokingham area and create just one plan that ensures all response services are aware and prepared to react to adverse weather events.

The objectives of the plan are:

- To provide guidance for responders to ensure greater understanding in order to provide an effective response to an adverse weather event.
- To identify triggers and activation at the appropriate level within the Council at the initial stages of severe weather incidents.
- To ensure co-ordinated management of any severe weather incident.
- To ensure a co-ordinated approach with partners, where required, during a severe weather incident.
- To provide services with a detailed list of actions to cover the activation and initial period following notification of severe weather.

4 Community Risk Register

The [Thames Valley Community Risk Register](#) has been developed and published by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) Category 1 Responders in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and associated regulations and guidance. Its purpose is to assure the people within Thames Valley that an assessment of potential risks has taken place and is enforcing the approach to joined up emergency planning at local, regional and national levels.

Weather features as part of this TVLRF Community Risk Register can be found in the above link.

5 Severe Weather Impact

The table below details the impact of the various severe weather types on the community:

	Met Office criteria	Possible effects
Severe gales	Repeated gusts of 70 m.p.h. or more over inland areas	High-sided vehicles at risk of being blown over Some trees uprooted Tiles, slates and chimneys dislodged from some buildings
Storms	Repeated gusts of 80 m.p.h. or more over inland areas.	Widespread removal of branches from trees; many trees uprooted Tiles, slates and chimneys dislodged from many buildings; some structural damage Where wind is forecast above 90 m.p.h. the following may occur. Widespread uprooting of trees Injury due to flying debris Widespread damage to buildings; some buildings collapse Damage to electricity pylons and mobile telephone masts

	Met Office criteria	Possible effects
Heavy snow	Snow falling at a rate of 2 cm/hour or more expected for at least two hours.	Increased journey times Minor accidents
Very heavy snow	Snow falling at a rate of 2 cm/hour or more expected for at least two hours, accumulating to 15 cm or more.	Local routes impassable Local loss of power and telecommunication lines Isolation of remote inhabitants
Blizzard	Moderate or heavy snow accompanied by winds of 30 m.p.h. or more, with visibility reduced to 200 m or less; or drifting snow giving rise to similar conditions.	Major routes impassable Local loss of power and telecommunication lines
Severe blizzard	Heavy Snow accompanied by winds of 30 m.p.h. or more, reducing visibility to near zero.	Transport infrastructure paralysed Regional loss of power and communication lines
Heavy rain	Rain expected to continue for at least two hours and to give at least 15 mm within a three hour period or, following previous heavy rain events, 25 mm/day. Warning may be triggered by thunderstorms (warnings will state this if expected).	Aquaplaning Flooding Squally winds or tornadoes may remove roof tiles or chimneys Power surges
Fog	Visibility below 50 metres (restricted to heights where major roads occur).	Difficulty identifying distances and speed of movement leading to increased journey times Road traffic accidents
Widespread icy roads, glazed frost, freezing rain	When rain falls onto surfaces with temperatures at or below zero; or condensation occurs on surfaces at or below zero; or already wet surfaces fall to or below zero. The ice is usually clear and difficult to distinguish from a wet surface. It usually forms in sheets. Warnings are issued when any depth of ice is expected over a widespread area.	Damage to power and telecommunication lines Driving difficulties Difficulty when walking

	Met Office criteria	Possible effects
Hot weather	<p>Warnings are not issued merely on the basis of forecast temperature thresholds.</p> <p>Under the National Severe Weather Warning System (NSWWS), warnings may be issued (amber or red) for “Extreme Heat” to reflect the likelihood and severity of impact causing widespread disruption.</p> <p>Under the Weather Health Alert system (issued in conjunction with UKHSA), a “Heat-Health Weather Alert” may be issued (green, yellow, amber or red) to highlight the likelihood and severity of impact on health.</p> <p>In Berkshire, a “heatwave” threshold is met when a period of at least three consecutive days with daily maximum temperatures meeting or exceeding 28°C.</p>	<p>Heat exhaustion and heat stroke; this can lead to organ failure, brain damage or death.</p> <p>Those most vulnerable to these effects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> older people, especially those over 65 years old; those suffering from underlying health conditions or serious mental health problems; the bed-bound; those on certain medications; babies and young children, especially those under 5 years old; people who work in jobs that require manual labour or extensive time outside; people experiencing homelessness; people who may be unable to care for themselves. <p>There are impacts on healthcare and social care.</p> <p>(see Supporting Evidence document of Adverse Weather and Health Plan)</p>

	Met Office criteria	Possible effects
Cold Weather	<p>Warnings are not issued merely on the basis of forecast temperature thresholds.</p> <p>Under the National Severe Weather Warning System (NSWWS), warnings may be issued (amber or red) for “Wind”, “Snow”, “Ice”, “Fog” etc to reflect the likelihood and severity of impact causing widespread disruption.</p> <p>Under the Weather Health Alert system (issued in conjunction with UKHSA), a “Cold-Health Weather Alert” may be issued (green, yellow, amber or red) to highlight the likelihood and severity of impact on health.</p> <p>There are two different thresholds for the Cold Weather Alert service. Only one of the thresholds needs to be breached for a warning to be issued. The thresholds were formulated with advice from the Department of Health and the Health Protection Agency to pinpoint when winter weather would affect people’s health. The thresholds are: mean temperatures below 2°C for 48 hours or longer; and heavy snow and/or widespread ice.</p>	<p>There are direct and indirect health effects of cold weather.</p> <p>Vulnerable groups are similar to those for hot weather; in addition people who are at risk of recurrent falls, living in poor housing conditions and facing deprivation are also vulnerable.</p> <p>There are impacts on healthcare and social care. (see Supporting Evidence document of Adverse Weather and Health Plan)</p>

6 Severe Weather Notifications

6.1 Sources of Information

There are a number of potential triggers to the activation of this plan and its relevant sections. The information comes from a number of sources to different audiences depending on the actions required. These are set out in the table below:

Information	Issued by	Issued to
Flood Guidance Information	Flood Forecasting Centre (FFC)	Professional Partners, Media & Public
Severe Weather Warning	Met Office	Professional Partners, Media & Public
Environment Agency flood alerts & warnings	Environment Agency	Public, Professional Partners & Media
' River levels on the Internet ' (near real-time information on river levels published on the Environment Agency's website)	Environment Agency	On website for all to see
Ground Water Monitoring & Information	Environment Agency	Government Website
National Severe Weather Warning Service : rain, thunderstorms, wind, snow, lightning, ice, extreme heat, fog	Met Office	Public website
Weather Health Alerts : Heat-health alerts (1 Jun to 30 Sep) Cold health alerts (1 Nov to 30 Mar)	UKHSA and Met Office	Public website Subscribers of alert Public health partners
Reports of flooding from the public/other agencies	N/A	Council and other partners/

The background and details of each of these alerting systems is set out below: Interpretation is detailed in the specific annexes.

6.1.1 Flood Guidance Statements.

These statements are produced by a joint Met Office and Environment Agency Team which considers both the weather and ground conditions to produce a 5 day forecast of the risk of flooding. They are issued in addition to The Met Office Severe Weather Alerts & Warnings and Environment Agency Flood Alerts & Warnings (and therefore can appear to be duplication) and provide a report detailing the impacts of both over a very wide geographic area.

Flood Guidance Statements are primarily designed to provide information to Strategic emergency decision makers at a regional level.

The Flood Guidance Statements are issued when trigger levels are reached, and during periods of higher risk the statements are issued more frequently with more specific advice.

The Emergency Planning Team receive the Flood Guidance Statements and action as necessary. As we should have already received Flood or Severe Weather Warnings, the Flood Guidance Statements will not form a significant part of Wokingham's emergency response criteria, as we activate our response based upon the Flood and Severe Weather Alerts and Warnings.

6.1.2 Severe Warnings

These are issued by the Met Office when trigger levels are reached.

Weather warnings are given 3 colour codes. Below is information about these codes from the Met Office.

Yellow Warning: Yellow warnings can be issued for a range of weather situations. Many are issued when it is likely that the weather will cause some low level impacts, including some disruption to travel in a few places. Many people may be able to continue with their daily routine, but there will be some that will be directly impacted and so it is important to assess if you could be affected. Other yellow warnings are issued when the weather could bring much more severe impacts to the majority of people but the certainty of those impacts occurring is much lower. It is important to read the content of yellow warnings to determine which weather situation is being covered by the yellow warning.

Amber Warning: There is an increased likelihood of impacts from severe weather, which could potentially disrupt your plans. This means there is the possibility of travel delays, road and rail closures, power cuts and the potential risk to life and property. You should think about changing your plans and taking action to protect yourself and your property. You may want to consider the impact of the weather on your family and your community and whether there is anything you need to do ahead of the severe weather to minimise the impact.

Red Warning: Dangerous weather is expected and, if you haven't already done so, you should take action now to keep yourself and others safe from the impact of the severe

weather. It is very likely that there will be a risk to life, with substantial disruption to travel, energy supplies and possibly widespread damage to property and infrastructure. You should avoid travelling, where possible, and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

These warnings are sent to Emergency Planning and other individuals/teams who sign up to the weather warnings. Emergency Planning cascade this information as highlighted in section 7.1.

Services should sign up to the weather warnings themselves on the Met Office's website: [Guide to email alert service - Met Office](#)

6.1.3 Environment Agency Flood Warnings

The Environment Agency operates a flood warning service called Floodline in areas at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. The Floodline service is available free to all who live and work in most flood prone areas. Warnings can be sent by telephone, mobile, email SMS text message and fax.

Floodline is a 24/7 service provides flooding updates for the area that an individual is registered at. To receive these updates, you must be registered with [Floodline](#). Although you have to be registered with Floodline to automatically receive updates, anyone can call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or textphone 0345 602 6340 to receive updates. Some mobile networks will auto-enrol their customers to Floodline.

Communities can find out if they are in a flood risk area and whether a service is available to them via the [Environment Agency](#) website or by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

If flooding is forecast, alerts & warnings are issued by the Environment Agency using a set of easily recognisable codes. The codes are ONLY in relation to river flooding (there is no similar public alert system currently in place for groundwater flooding but the Environment Agency will inform Emergency Planners of potential groundwater issues).



Flood alert - A flood alert will indicate that flooding is possible and that you need to be prepared.



Flood warning - will indicate that flooding is expected and that you should take immediate action. You should take action when a flood warning is issued and not wait for a severe flood warning.



Severe flood warning - will tell people that there is severe flooding and danger to life. These will be issued only when flooding is posing **significant** risk to life or disruption to communities.

When an Environment Agency warning is received the appropriate advice and action should be taken by the communities at risk.

Each river system has a Flood Warning Code, with some rivers, due to their size, being split into a number of geographic areas with different codes. When a Flood Warning is received the recipient can get more information by using this Flood Warning Code. It should be noted that the flood warnings issued by the Environment Agency are not for sewers, road drainage, overland flow from heavy rain or blockages due to the uncertain nature of these events.

The Emergency Planning and the Flooding teams receive all flood warnings and alerts. The Emergency Planning team will distribute them to relevant duty staff and services in larger incidents, or when horizon scanning. To ensure services receive the relevant alerts and warnings they require promptly, they should sign up via the Environment Agency's website: [Sign up for flood warnings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings). Alternatively, they should contact the Emergency Planning team if they need signing up to all.

6.1.4 'River levels on the Internet'

There are public links on the Environment Agency's website showing the river levels for rivers flowing through Wokingham Borough.

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels>

These allow near real-time viewing of information on river levels, although Officer observation is also required to verify these results as calibration of the river level gauges cannot be guaranteed.

This system assists by informing the public and responders as to the current situation regarding current flooding and therefore support the actions the community and responders consider.

6.1.5 Ground Water Monitoring & Alerts

In Wokingham, due to the risk of ground water flooding, an alerting system is in place where the Environment Agency advise the Emergency Planning Team of an increased ground water level so that specific actions can be agreed. There are a number of ground water monitoring points in the Loddon area that are visited on a regular basis throughout the year and data recorded. When there has been a period of heavy rain or the levels are notably increasing this monitoring is also increased.

6.1.6 Heat-Health Alerts

The heat-health alert system operates from 1 June to 30 September and the cold health alert system operates from 1 November to 30 March.

Both systems are based on the Met Office forecasts and data. Depending on the level of alert, a response will be triggered to communicate the risk to the NHS England, government, and public health system. Advice and information will be sent to the public and health and social care professionals, particularly those working with at-risk groups, after an alert is issued or updated.

The 4 alerts are:

- green (preparedness): no alert will be issued as the conditions are likely to have minimal impact on health; business as usual and summer/winter planning and preparedness activities.
- yellow (response): these alerts cover a range of situations; yellow alerts may be issued during periods of heat/cold which would be unlikely to impact most people but could impact those who are particularly vulnerable.
- amber (enhanced response): an amber alert indicates that weather impacts are likely to be felt across the whole health service, and at this level we may begin to see some health impacts across the wider population, not just the most vulnerable; non-health sectors may also start to observe impacts and a more significant coordinated response may be required.
- red (emergency response): a red alert indicates significant risk to life for even the healthy population; severe impacts would be expected across all sectors with a coordinated response essential

These are circulated by the Council's Public Health team, but services are encouraged to sign-up to receive them directly: [Weather-Health Alerting System - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

6.1.7 Other Information Sources

6.1.7.1 Hazard Manager

Hazard Manager, provided by the Met Office, is a one stop source of information for emergency planning professionals.

The services currently available on Hazard Manager are:

- Flood Forecasting Centre with Extreme Rainfall Alert updates (England and Wales only)
- Interactive Map Viewer with weather information
- National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS)
- Emergency Support
- FireMet and CHEMET services (for approved subscribers)

Hazard Manager is designed to supplement the role of the Public Weather Service Advisors in providing consistent weather-related information and interpretation for the UK emergency response community.

Wokingham Borough Councils Emergency Planning Officers have set up accounts on hazard manager. Other staff can register on the system if required.

6.1.7.2 RoadCast (Meteo Group members only website)

[RoadCast](#) is a complete weather forecasting service, specially tailored to provide highway maintenance engineers with all the weather information needed to ensure the safety of the road network. This web-based information and alerting system is used by the Highways Alliance Team.

7 Plan Activation

Activation would normally be as a result of 2 situations:

Advance Information of Impending Severe Weather.

Due to developments in technology this is the most likely way that a decision would be made to activate this plan. It should be noted however that there would be a variation in the process depending on whether the information was received inside or outside of office hours.

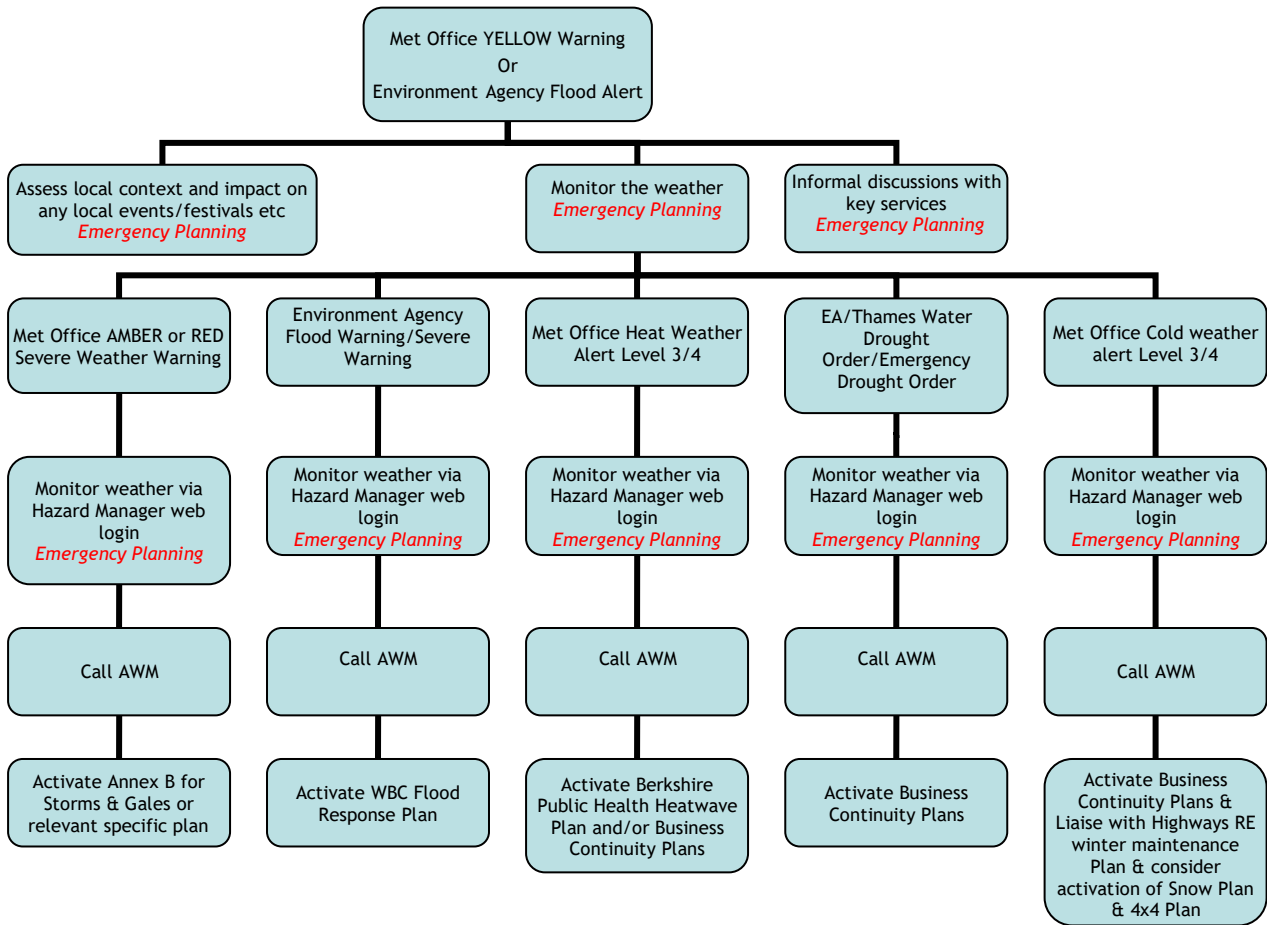
Immediate, no warning of severe weather

This would relate to severe, extreme conditions where little or no warning is received e.g. thunder storms etc.

7.1 Triggers

Source of Warning	Warning Level	Actions	Lead
MET Office Environment Agency Environment Agency / Thames Water / South East Water UKHSA Heat-Health alert	YELLOW Severe Weather Warning Flood Alert Drought/Emerg ency Drought Order Yellow and amber heat- health alerts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the local context/assess impact to any locally specific events/festivals/projects. 2. Monitor the weather 3. Informal discussions with key services 4. Inform duty officers 	Emergency Planning Team

Source of Warning	Warning Level	Actions	Lead
Met Office AMBER OR RED Severe Weather Warning		<p>Preliminary Actions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the local context/assess impact to any locally specific events/festivals/projects 2. Monitor the weather via Hazard Manager and agency partner updates 3. Call an Adverse Weather Meeting 4. Silver to brief CLT and Exec on the Council's preparedness 5. Refer to relevant section of the Severe Weather Annex at rear of this plan (checklists) 	Emergency Planning Team-
Environment Agency Floodline Flood Warning or Severe Flood Warning Red UKHSA Heat Health Alerts (consider for amber)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Update social media and other local stakeholders, such as relevant Councillors and Town & Parish councils 7. Open EOC, if coordination needed. 	



7.2 Activation

Activation of this overarching plan will vary depending on the different weather conditions and the time that the alert/warning was issued. For example, a heatwave will build gradually but there would be little advance notification of thunder storms with heavy rain. Out of hours it may be necessary to initiate a telephone conference with available managers to plan or respond to an event.

8 Command & Control

The command and control of Strategic (GOLD), Tactical (SILVER) and Operational (BRONZE), is no different from any other incident. Depending on the type of weather incident, a Teams call might be made instead of an in person meeting if it is determined that it would be unsafe for staff to travel.

The lead role for coordination of an incident would come from the Emergency Planning Team who will establish the Emergency Operations Centre if required.

The lead role in responding to the incident will come from the department most impacted by the severe weather.

As per any other incident, the Councils Directors will form the Councils GOLD Team, the Councils Assistant Directors and Service Managers working together within the EOC will be the SILVER Officers, and Operational staff working to restore normality will be the Councils BRONZE Officers.

8.1 Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum

Due to the widespread nature of an adverse weather event it is likely that the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) will, on request from an agency or the secretariat, initiate teleconferences or meetings in order to determine the status across the Thames Valley Wokingham would send staff to attend, as is laid out in our Emergency Response Framework and the TVLRF's Emergency Response Arrangements.

8.2 Government Involvement

When the impact of a severe weather event in the area dictates, or due to a wide scale severe weather event, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) or Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) may convene to coordinate and support through the various affected departments. The Strategic Coordinating Group chair of the Thames valley Local Resilience Forum or their deputy will form the link between Thames Valley and Government.

9 Health & Safety

As with any major incident, everyone involved in the response should ensure, as far as is possible, that they do not put staff or the community at additional risk when responding. For weather events, only staff with correct training and adequate PPE could:

- Working near flood water
- Operating equipment or working in the open during a level 3 or 4 Heat Health Watch
- Working in icy conditions

9.1 Staff Travelling

This could involve advising staff who are able, to work from home. Consideration should be given to the impact of this action which includes:

- Ensuring all essential services can operate.
- Sending staff home at rush-hour.
- Early morning updates via the central mailbox email, MS Teams to ensure staff have information to assist in their travel arrangements prior to setting off.
- Services must manage any decision to allow staff to leave early and have a system in place to check that all staff are safe.
- Encouraging home working for staff would be strongly encouraged for all staff that could work from home.

9.2 Responders Safety

This could relate to:

- Stopping staff responding during blizzards, heavy rain or high winds because of additional risks to themselves.
- Ensuring staff have the correct equipment to undertake the tasks they are being asked to do.

10 Adverse Weather Meeting (AWM)

An AWM is activated when the anticipated impact requires more detailed information and discussion to help services better prepare.

AWM would normally be initiated by the Emergency Planning Team sending an email and/or phone call. Details of when and how to access the meeting will be provided at that time.

From a multiagency perspective, any service or any Category 1 or 2 responder that has identified a particular risk or has received reports of actual impact, can request that a multi-agency AWM is established. Initially, this will most likely take the form of a Partnership Activated Teleconference (PAT), but a Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) or Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) may be initiated.

10.1 AWM draft Agenda

A draft agenda for a teleconference meeting is set out below:

Item No	Description	Lead Person/Agency
1	Introduction of Attendees, Roles & Responsibilities.	Chair
2	Declaration of Items for Urgent Attention (eg vulnerable people/blocked strategic networks)	Chair
3	Discussion & Decision on Items for Urgent Action	Chair
Break out time to action urgent items as agreed above.		
4	Review of outstanding actions	Chair
5	Weather update and Latest Forecast -short, medium and long term	Emergency Planning Team
6	Update on general picture across the wider area and in West Berks area. (National/Regional/Thames Valley/Berkshire/Wokingham)	Emergency Planning Team
7	Update on current service issues– overview, response, BCM and PR issues.	Service Leads
8	Discuss and Agree on Decisions Confirmation and Allocation of Actions	All
9	Agree Communication Messages – Internal, public, Councillors, partners and parish & town councils	Comms Team
10	Agree on requirement for future meetings and any escalation of structure	Chair
11	Date & Time of next meeting (normally 1hr gap initially)	Chair

Attendance at the coordinating meetings should include the normal representatives i.e.:

Service/Team	Weather Condition				
	Snow/Ice	High Winds	Heatwave	Drought	Flood
Building Control	C	X	C	C	C
Children's Services	X	X	X	X	X
Emergency Planning	X	X	X	X	X
Countryside Services	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Services	X	X	X	X	X
Environmental Health	C	C	X	X	X
Facilities	X	X	X	X	X
Public Health	X	X	X	X	X
Housing	X	X	X	X	X

Service/Team	Weather Condition				
	Snow/Ice	High Winds	Heatwave	Drought	Flood
Housing Needs	X	X	X	X	X
Highways	X	X	X	X	X
HR	C	C	C	C	C
Adult Social Care	X	X	X	X	X
Trading Standards	X	C	X	X	C
Waste	X	X	X	X	X
Customer Services	X	X	X	X	X
Communications	X	X	X	X	X
Flooding & Drainage Team	X	X	C	C	X
Finance	X or C	X or C	X or C	X or C	X or C
Insurance	X or C	X or C	X or C	X or C	X or C
Duty Officers on call	X or C	X or C	X or C	X or C	X or C

X – at meeting/teleconference

C – copied into the minutes

Other critical contractors may also be invited as necessary

11 Roles & Responsibilities in Relation to Severe Weather

11.1 Met Office

The Met Office provides a range of information under the Public Weather Service (PWS), which is funded by the UK Government. This includes generating everything from day-to-day site-specific forecasts to long range forecasts. They are also responsible for the [National Severe Weather Warning Service](#), which aims to give advance warning of extreme weather to the public, businesses, emergency services and Government.

The aims of the PWS are to:

- Produce weather forecasts which help the UK public make informed decisions about day-to-day activities.
- Warn people of extreme weather to mitigate its impacts — contributing to the protection of life, property and infrastructure.

11.2 Environment Agency

The Environment Agency has an important role with respect to both flooding and drought. This comes in the form of monitoring the main river water levels and working with the Met Office to provide information via the Flood Forecasting Centre.

11.3 UKHSA

The UKHSA, working together with the Met Office, are responsible for preparing the National Heatwave Plan and the Cold Weather Plan.

11.4 Councillors

Councillors are an invaluable source of information for all types of incident, not just adverse weather. They should liaise with their communities to ascertain the impacts in the affected areas. For example, they can work with the Parish & Town Councils and community groups to assess the specific local needs, including those most vulnerable. They should report any concerns from communities into the Council, but also share Council and partner agency communications back to communities.

11.5 Town & Parish Councils

Town and parish councils within the Wokingham area are a vital communication route for all adverse weather issues. They are key in knowing their community in great detail and therefore providing information in relation to issues affecting their community whether this is flooding, vulnerable people needing support or details of snow depths in their area.

11.6 Businesses

Businesses in the area have a responsibility to ensure they are prepared via business continuity planning to continue their work in times of adverse weather.

The Emergency Planning Team at the Council is the custodian of business continuity.

Communication to businesses during adverse weather is important to ensure the businesses are aware and can invoke their plans as necessary. Over the years businesses have been encouraged to sign up to weather alerts to increase preparedness. In the event of severe weather warnings, the Emergency Planning team will cascade the warnings internally and request that the warning is sent out to external businesses as well as community groups that may be affected.

11.7 Residents

Along with the agencies, Councils, communities and businesses, local residents also have a role to play in periods of adverse weather, particularly when the conditions are widespread across the whole of Wokingham borough.

Residents should ensure their properties, including buildings and trees, are sufficiently well inspected and maintained to ensure they are not the cause of any reasonably foreseeable harm to residents, occupiers or visitors to sites.

The Council would look for community spirit, with neighbours supporting each other in times of need.

Concerns have been raised in the past about claims being made against members of the community who, in trying to help have inadvertently caused an injury. Information for

the general public is available via the following link <https://www.gov.uk/clear-snow-road-path-cycleway>.

12 Warning & Informing

Specifically in relation to adverse weather, the actions undertaken to warn & inform the community, staff and the professional partners include:

12.1 Use of other Warning & Informing methods

Other methods can be used in relation to severe weather advice. In particular, the following could be used to let communities know what is going on and what they can do to support themselves:

- Internally: emails and MS Teams messages
- Social Networking including – X (Formally Twitter) Facebook
- Media – radio, TV and newspapers – where regular timely updates are essential.
- Website

13 Mutual Aid

13.1 Mutual Aid

Over a long period of time resources may be stretched whether in terms of staffing or material. At such times a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can be put into place and 'brokering' may be undertaken at various levels according to priority and need. Examples of this include the 'National Salt Cell' activated in relation to salt shortages in 2009/10.

Across Berkshire all LA's have signed up to support each other with mutual aid when possible. A similar agreement has been approved across the Thames Valley. The Emergency Planning Team can request this mutual aid if required though mutual aid requests requires sign off from CLT.

Should no mutual aid be available the Government Team for the area can support in brokering a mutual aid request across a wider area.

13.2 Mutual Aid & Support to other Responders

Throughout severe weather events the Council may be requested to support other responders, in particular the emergency services. These requests, e.g. support in clearing roads of snow, would normally come in via Customer Services or the Emergency Planning Team.

Where requests are received from other agencies, decisions will be made after considering the impact on the greater community e.g. supporting the distribution of heating oil, ensuring supplies are provided to supermarkets, GP's etc.

14 Recovery

Recovery from a major incident is led by the local authority. A severe weather incident is no different. To facilitate the recovery the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum Recovery Plan should be used. More information is available in the Council's Emergency Response Framework.

A detailed recovery action plan should be prepared and progressed.

Subgroups may be necessary to progress the actions.

Following incidents involving cross border working it may be necessary to set up either formal or informal arrangements with our neighbours to ensure best practice is followed with regard to recovery.

ANNEX A – Flooding

As flooding is such a large scale and high risk event, the borough has developed a specific flood plan.

ANNEX B – Storms and Gales

Once the actions within sections 7.1 completed and attendees within section 8.8 have been contacted, use the information below as a specific guide/checklist for Storms and Gales

Action	Owner	Update
Contact Forest Care to reconfirm capacity to manage excess calls		
Liaise with Property RE: opening the EOC		
EOC Attendees to meet		
Agree who else needs to be on standby		
Write notification to staff re: general update from Chief Exec		
Sharepoint article to be written		
Draft message to Cllrs /Local Town and Parishes		
Remind Fire and Police about using Forestcare to report issues out of hours		
116 Activate Front Office process which email outputs to Emergency Planning		
Circulate conference call details		
All to circulate contact details to Emergency Planning		
Ensure additional CSAs are on @ 08.00		
Ensure that Social media is monitored and reports of incidents added to CRM		
Speak to comms RE social media monitoring		
Contact contractors re: photographic and video evidence		
Request additional contractors on standby		
Ensure CRM is updated with Social Media updates if info not on DB		
Advise CSAs that EOC will be prioritising “urgent” calls		
Advise CSAs that only the EOC will be liaising with contractors		

ANNEX C – Snow Response Actions

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Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Action Tracker 2023/24

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 May 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Flood Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers aim to send follow-up emails to Members once flood risk management works had been completed in their Wards; • Written answer re manhole covers; • Lower Earley peripheral road issue – officers to liaise with relevant Ward Member; • Members to encourage residents to ‘bulk’ report issues to Thames Water. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • Completed • Completed/Noted
Combatting Drugs Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Datasets re relapses, 6 & 12-month programme successes for the Borough be circulated; • Officers to ascertain if the police operation over Christmas was random or intelligence based; • Schedule agenda item re oversight of the delivery group – end of 23/24 municipal year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • Referred to HOSC
Active Travel Task and Finish Group Appointments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information be provided to the Group re funding allocation and any Government preferences to suggested WBC schemes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Work Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair, Vice-Chair and S151 officer to meet re earmarked reserves item; • Arts and Culture strategy to be scheduled; • Officers liaise with Highways colleagues re scheduling items for September 2023 meeting; • Schedule item on the Local Plan Update; • Arrange item on planning/strategic planning/enforcement services via the Chair; • Arrange work programme by ‘topic’; • Consider inviting representatives from housing management companies to the Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • Completed • 2024 • June 2024 • Completed • Completed

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 3 July 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Minutes of Previous Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Draft Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments and feedback from the Committee be fed into the development of the strategy; • Further update to be scheduled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed
Directorate Priorities – Resources and Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Working Group to be established to develop a model business case template, supported by Graham Ebers and Sally Watkins, comprising of Councillors David Cornish, Peter Dennis, Norman Jorgensen, and Pauline Jorgensen; • Note the priorities, opportunities and challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report in June 2024 • Completed
Directorate Priorities – Place and Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the priorities, opportunities and challenges. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Community Safety Partnership Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member Comments be fed back to the CSP; • Further information be provided on specific issues raised at the meeting; • The Council's ASB team be congratulated on their achievements over the past year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • Completed
Wokingham Anti-Abuse Charter Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress relating to the Anti-Abuse Charter be reported to Members in conjunction with the annual Community Safety Partnership update report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Work Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work programme be amended to reflect the point raised by Members; • The Chair and Vice-Chair discuss the possibility of additional meetings in order to ensure the effective scrutiny of items on the work programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4 September 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Member Question Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide written supplementary answer to Cllr Cowan and publish in the Minutes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed

Arts and Culture Strategy Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers consider amending any future versions of the Committee report to show which bids were in progress, finished, delayed or cancelled • Officers consider placing additional efforts into advertising the ongoing and future work of engagement with young adults; • Chair to liaise with officers and the Executive Member to establish an appropriate meeting to provide an update on tangible outputs that the public could recognise as successes of the strategy; • Arts and Culture Service Plan (internal document) be shared with the Committee at the appropriate time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted • Noted • 2024/25 • 2024/25
Highways and Transport – Customer Service, Potholes and Small Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers seek to amend the wording of the report function to specify reports to pedestrian footpaths; • Members and residents be invited to report any such instances of HGVs damaging road surfaces as a result of turning manoeuvres; • Members and residents be invited to report instances of rough patches of roads and cycleways as a result of respraying; • Members contact the Highways team directly should they not be receiving details of TROs within their Ward; • The Committee consider a follow-up session to highlight any improvements made with regards to communications and resident satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Noted • Noted • Noted • March 2024
Local Transport Plan 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers consider adding the hierarchy of road users into the LTP4; • Officers consider amending the wording of the section on scooting to specify push-scooting; • Officers consider adding in information relating to demographic data from the consultation into the draft LTP4; • Executive Members and officers be requested to assess the data received from the consultation and place a special focus on any groups which had been underrepresented in future consultations on the LTP4; • Officers consider providing an Executive Summary at the beginning of the LTP4, outlining the conclusions and recommendations of the report to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Noted • Noted • Noted • Noted

	<p>residents to easily engage with the plan and proposals;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers consider exploration of more standard market research techniques, in order to reach a wider range of people and to help qualify the data; • The Committee consider if a further session be required to offer additional overview and scrutiny of the LTP4 prior to its consideration at the Executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted • Noted
Action Tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing Note on Freedom of Information Requests be produced and circulated to the Committee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024/25
Work Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LPU item to move to November; • VAWG strategy updated to be scheduled for January. Chair to meet with Exec Member and appropriate officers to discuss tangible delivery dates and achievements; • Chair to speak with officers with regards to scheduling currently unscheduled topics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • Completed

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 2 October 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
MTFP Strategic Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic background and challenges facing the Borough noted; • Challenges and ideas to address current budget shortfall to be developed through the Budget Scrutiny process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted • Completed
Proposed approach - Street Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance Service Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Recommendations to the Executive; • Establish a T&FG later in 2023/24 to scrutinise provision and emptying of litter bins with recommendations to the Executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed
MTFP Reserves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reserves position noted – use to inform the Budget Scrutiny process; • Annual update including details of variations from year to year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed
Action Tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highways and Transport Customer Service – follow up session in March 2024. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 2024

Work Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add item on use of WBC buildings – location, uses, costs and income generation potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
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Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 9 October 2023

Agenda Item	Action	Update
Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member comments and suggestions fed into development of LTP4 prior to submission to Executive; • Chair to attend Executive on 30 November 2023 to present Committee's views. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 30 October 2023

Agenda Item	Action	Update
MTFP 2024/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic background and challenges facing the Borough noted; • Comments and challenges relating to Resources & Assets and CEX's directorates be fed in development of MTFP 2024/27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed
Work Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bins Task & Finish Group – Terms of Reference to 28 November meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
Action Tracker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on Combatting Drugs Partnership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 14 November 2023

Agenda Item	Action	Update
St Crispin's Leisure Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further report to meeting on 28 November, to include further information/evidence on protection of the Council's assets, school places; operating arrangements, ongoing maintenance and community use; • Options 3,4 and 5 not supported; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on strategic plan for school places to be considered by Children's Services O&S 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed
MTFP 2024/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic background and challenges facing the Borough noted; • Comments and challenges on Place & Growth budget proposals fed back into the development of the MTFP 2024/27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noted • Completed

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 28 November 2023

Agenda Item	Action	Update
St Crispin's Leisure Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations in Executive report supported; • Request progress on financial analysis for Montague Park Community Centre • Report back within 12 months on St Crispin's and other school/leisure arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • 2024/25
Litter Bins T&FG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Terms of Reference submit to meeting on 19 December 2023 • Membership to be confirmed at meeting on 19 December 2023 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed – one vacancy

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 December 2023

Agenda Item	Action	Update
MTFP 2024/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic background and challenges facing the Borough noted; • Comments and challenges relating to Children's Services and Adult Social Care directorates be fed in development of MTFP 2024/27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed
Litter Bins Task & Finish Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference approved • Membership approved – one Conservative vacancy • First meeting in early 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • TBC

Work Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional meeting on 28 February 2024 to consider Strategic Assets Review and Co-ordination of new development in Barkham 	• Ongoing
Action Tracker	• Updated	• Completed

Community & Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 22 January 2024		
Agenda Item	Action	Update
Review of the Council's Housing Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further updates on the WBC Housing Companies in due course • Further report on development of a Shareholder Committee • Officers commended on work of the Housing Companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • Completed
VAWG Strategy Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further update (including SMART targets and outcomes) to July 2024 meeting • Details of Action Plans/KPIs underpinning the VAWG Action Plan to be circulated • Report to July meeting to include update on the Anti-Abuse Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing • Ongoing • Ongoing
MTFP 2024/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member comments to be fed into MTFP • Members to agree O&S Budget Scrutiny report before circulation to Exec/Council • Committee to monitor Children's Services spend in 2024/25 in conjunction with the Children's Services O&S Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • 2024/25
Work Programme	• Confirmed	• Completed
Action Tracker	• Noted	• Completed

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