

REPORT TO: Safer Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 9th February 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director
Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Emergency Planning

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To raise awareness of the role of the Emergency Planning Team and the work undertaken for the period 2019-2020.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

Risk & Emergency Planning is a team within the Enterprise, Community & Resources Directorate. The team consists of a Principal Emergency Planning Officer and two Emergency Planning Officers.

3.2 STATUTORY DUTIES:

Halton Borough Council, as a Local Authority, has a 'Statutory Duty' to comply with the following legislation:

- Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004
- Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (COMAH) 2015
- Pipeline Safety Regulations (PSR) 1996

Therefore, the Emergency Planning Team are governed by this Legislation, aiming to ensure the Borough of Halton is safe and resilient.

3.3 Civil Contingencies Act 2004

As part of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Council has a duty to ensure the resilience of the Council's response to an emergency situation. Part:1 of the Act is designed to deal with preparations by local responders for localised emergencies, such as risk of serious damage to human welfare or the environment. Part: 2 is designed for use in very serious emergencies, which affect a larger geographical area.

The Act divides local responders into 2 categories, imposing a different set of duties on each. Category:1 organisations are at the core of the response to most emergencies (e.g. Emergency Services, Local Authorities, NHS bodies).

As a Category:1 Responder, Halton Borough Council is subject to a full set of 'civil protection statutory duties' and is required to:

- Assess the 'risk of emergencies' occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
- Put in place Emergency Plans;
- Put in place Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements;
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public regarding civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to 'warn, inform and advise' the public in the event of an emergency;
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination.
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations regarding Business Continuity Management.

Category: 2 organisations (e.g. Health & Safety Executive, Transport and Utility Companies) are 'co-operating bodies' which are less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work. However, will be heavily involved in incidents that affect their sector.

3.4 Planning for Local Risks

In line with the CCA, Halton Borough Council have a number of Emergency Plans with the aim to ensure resilience is in place to protect, minimise the effects and reassure the community of Halton; limiting the consequences in the event of a Major Incident / Major Incident Standby within the Borough.

Emergency Planning have prepared a number of key plans to ensure resilience within the Borough of Halton, which are regularly updated and tested.

The CCA identifies two pieces of legislation that relate to Major Accident Hazards at *industrial establishments*, Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations (COMAH) and to *hazardous pipelines* (Major Accident Hazard Pipelines) (MAHP).

3.5 Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (COMAH) 2015

COMAH applies mainly to the chemical industry, some storage activities, explosives and nuclear sites and other industries, where a threshold quantity of dangerous substances identified in the Regulations are kept or used.

The COMAH Regulations require Halton Borough Council, as a Local Authority, to prepare adequate emergency plans to deal with the off-site consequences of possible major accidents at 'Upper Tier' sites and should review and where necessary revise them. They must also test them at specified intervals at least once every three years.

The Seveso Directives are the main EU legislation dealing specifically with the control of on-shore major accident hazards involving dangerous substances. The Seveso III Directive came into force on 1 June 2015, replacing the Seveso II Directive.

The COMAH Regulations 2015, Regulation: 9, places 'nine' industrial sites within Halton as 'Upper Tier' sites. Each of these sites requires an 'external emergency plan' to be in produced and exercised / tested at least once every three years.

The Runcorn Site COMAH Operators is the 'umbrella terminology' which is used to capture the six operators, which is based in Weston Point, Runcorn. This name has been agreed by The Competent Authority (HSE and The Environment Agency), the Operators and Halton Borough Council.

Below is a list of 'Upper Tier COMAH sites' in Halton:

'Upper Tier' - Runcorn sites

Runcorn COMAH Site Operators:

- INOVYN ChlorVinyls
- INEOS Enterprises
- Vynova Runcorn Ltd
- Runcorn Membrane Chlorine (MCP) Ltd
- Packed Chlorine Ltd
- Koura Ltd (formerly Mexichem Ltd)

'Upper Tier' - Widnes sites

- Univar Ltd, Pickerings Road, Halebank
- ICoNiChem Widnes Ltd, Moss Bank Road
- Kalama Chemical Ltd, Dans Road

3.6 COMAH Compliance

COMAH Regulations requires all 'Upper Tier' COMAH sites to produce and submit a 'Safety Report' to the Competent Authority and this is reviewed every 5 years by them.

These sites are also responsible for producing a Major Accident Prevention Policy (MAPP), which focuses on major accident hazards and details the Safety Management System, which will include the quantities of dangerous substances which are present or likely to be present.

All 'Upper Tier' COMAH sites are required to produce both an 'Internal' and 'External' Emergency COMAH Plan. The 'Internal' Plan is produced by the operator and the 'External' Plan is produced in partnership between Halton Borough Council and the Operator(s). All External Plans have been updated within the past 12 months to reflect changes at the site(s) and/or in line with the new Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) COMAH Template. The Competent Authority (HSE and the Environment Agency) schedules an annual compliancy meeting with Halton, the aim to review the External COMAH Planning work. All nine sites within the borough, are compliant.

3.7 Exercises / Validation

Due to the complexity and interconnectivity of the six operators at the Runcorn COMAH site, the External COMAH Plan is tested on an annual basis. This is a recommendation by the Competent Authority and has been implemented for a number of years.

Univar Solutions Ltd, Widnes, ICoNiChem, Widnes and Emerald Kalama Chemical Ltd 'External COMAH Plans' are tested / validated every three years. This is in line and in agreement with the Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF) 3-year cycle.

3.8 Lower Tier COMAH Sites

Halton Borough Council has no statutory duty for 'Lower Tier' COMAH sites. However, these sites remain governed under COMAH Regulations and are required to produce a Safety Report, an 'Internal COMAH Plan' and a Major Accident Prevention Policy. There is also an annual inspection from Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service. All dates of these inspections are circulated to the Emergency Planning Team. Halton has one 'Lower Tier' COMAH sites, Syntor Ltd, which is based on Manor Park, Runcorn.

3.9 Further Local Risks

Halton have a number of further risks within the Borough such as the Mersey Gateway, Severe Weather, Flooding and Cross Border Risks, such as Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Merseyside's COMAH site, Vertellus Specialities UK Ltd. Halton work with partner agencies to produce Emergency Plans and exercise, as appropriate.

3.10 Major Accident Hazard Pipeline (MAHP) Regulations 1996

The Major Accident Hazard Pipeline (MAHP) Regulations 1996, governs all high pressure natural gas supply transmission and distribution network within the Borough of Halton. These substances are known collectively as dangerous fluids, as defined in Schedule 2 of the Major Accident Pipeline Safety Regulations (1996).

Major Accident Hazard Pipeline Emergency means an occurrence i.e. an explosion, fire or breach of a Major Accident Hazard Pipeline. This is further defined as a Mobile Cloudburst - an incident involving a release of chemicals or toxic substances at any location (usually during transportation) i.e. highways, railways, ships and pipelines and not relating to a specific site i.e. COMAH site.

Halton Borough Council, as the Local Authority has a statutory duty to work with the pipeline operators who have MAHP infrastructure in the area and partners to produce a MAHP Multi-Agency Plan. Consultations have taken place with pipeline operators, Emergency Services, NHS England, Public Health England, HSE and with members of the public via their Elected Members.

As part of the Regulations there is no specific duty on Local Authorities to test the plan but exercises may be carried out as part of duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It has been agreed between partners and MAHP Operators across Cheshire to exercise and validate the MAHP Template in the near future.

3.11 Public Reassurance

The 'Community' / Public Information Zone (PIZ) are consulted regarding a COMAH site which is in close proximity to their home / business. This consultation process includes a 'Safety Letter' and 'Information Card' which is circulated, at least every 5 years, and includes actions to be taken in the event of a major incident. This information is also posted on the HBC Website.

As part of the community reassurance, the team have worked, with the local Parish Councils and schools, where appropriate, with the aim of raising awareness regarding a COMAH Site in their area.

3.12 Emergency Centres

In the event of an emergency, there is a number of Emergency Centres which may be activated in the response to the incident. This depends on the type, nature and severity of the incident.

3.13 Local Authority Emergency Centres

In the event of a Major Incident / Major Incident Standby, Halton has two Local Authority Emergency Centres (LAEC), one is based at Municipal Building and the other at Runcorn Town Hall. All equipment and plans are checked and updated on a monthly basis.

3.14 Emergency Survivor Reception Centres

In the event of a Major Incident / Major Incident Standby, a Survivor Reception Centre may be activated in response to the incident. Within the borough there are approximately 50 designated centres, which are made up of Church Halls, Social Clubs and Hotels. These buildings are used as a secure area where people affected by an Emergency will be taken for short-term shelter. People attending this centre will not require acute hospital treatment, however, may require first aid.

3.15 Emergency Rest Centres

In the event of a Major Incident / Major Incident Standby, a Rest Centre may be activated in response to the incident. Within the borough there are a total of 10 designed Rest Centres, which are made up of Leisure Centres and Community Centres. These buildings are used as temporary accommodation, a place of safety for displaced people. Two of the ten designated establishments are designed care homes, which would be used to move vulnerable people, who have been involved in an emergency evacuation. These establishments all have a Rest Centre box, which is checked on a quarterly basis or before a major event.

3.16 Working with Partners

Halton continues to work with partner agencies as part of exercise planning, training and validation exercises, both within Cheshire and Cross-Border. For example, Halton attend and umpire COMAH Exercises. Also, attending cross border exercises in Merseyside. Halton is also a member of the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Emergency Planning Group.

3.17 Working with Cheshire Resilience Forum (CRF)

Halton is an active member of the Cheshire Resilience Forum. The forum works with partner agencies, such as Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service, NWAS and Health Organisations. The aim and objectives of the Cheshire Resilience is to prepare for, respond to and recover from any emergency.

The forum brings together local emergency services, NHS and local authorities, plus other agencies that can help to prepare and respond to any event. Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 every part of the United Kingdom is required to establish a Local Resilience Forum, which is a multi-agency group covering a policing area that share information and resources, and respond together to an incident. Cheshire Resilience will not offer immediate information in the event of an emergency. The aim is to work together to protect the community and make Cheshire the best prepared place for any emergency.

The forum works towards the National Risk Register, where these risks are assessed at a Cheshire level and risks assessed at a local level and where appropriate work programme.

Over the last twelve months the Team has been heavily involved in working with colleagues from the partner agencies that form the LRF on the response to the Covid 19 Pandemic and supporting Senior Management who represent the Council on various LRF Groups. Regular briefings and discussions also take place with the Executive Board Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

3.18 Internal Resilience

Emergency Planning continue to develop SharePoint and the Emergency Planning Portal via the intranet, with the aim to ensure emergency planning documents, Business Continuity Plans, Training Programmes and dates are easily accessible for Emergency Responders.

3.19 Training

A number of HBC First Responders and partner agencies have been involved in the training exercises throughout the year.

3.20 Major Incidents in Halton

The team have responded to a number of incidents throughout the year.

The team have worked supporting the authority's response to Covid-19 internally and externally with partner agencies.

The team have supported the Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources regarding the preparedness and response to the potential impact of EU Exit may have for the authority.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton -

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Children and Young People in Halton' priority

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton -

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton' priority.

6.3 A Healthy Halton -

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Healthy Halton' priority.

6.4 A Safer Halton -

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'A Safer Halton' priority.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal -

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal' priority.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

No full risk assessment is required.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

9.0 KEY DECISIONS ON THE FORWARD PLAN

These proposals do not constitute a key decision and are not included in the Forward Plan.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

February 2017	Introduction to the Emergency Planning Service
February 2018	Annual Emergency Planning Service update
February 2019	Annual Emergency Planning Service update
February 2020	Annual Emergency Planning Service update
February 2020	Annual Emergency Planning Service update