

REPORT TO: Safer Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 19 July 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director, Policy, Planning & Transport

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Emergency Planning

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

2.0 To raise awareness of the role of the Emergency Planning Team and the work undertaken for the period 2021-2022.

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

3.2.1 Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004

As part of the duties of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the authority 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 the majority of emergencies (e.g. Emergency Services, Local Authorities, NHS England).

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.

3.3 Planning for Local Risks

As part of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the authority has produced a number of Emergency Plans, with the aim to minimise the impact of Major Incidents within the Borough. These plans are produced to reassure the community and limit the consequences. These plans are updated and validated, as part of the Emergency Planning Work Programme.

The CCA identifies two further pieces of Legislation which relates to the Major Accident Hazards at industrial establishments, (Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 and to hazardous pipelines (Pipeline Safety Regulations 1996).

3.4 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 requires the authority to prepare adequate Emergency plans to deal with the off-site consequences of possible major accidents at 'Upper Tier' sites.

The COMAH Regulations 2015, Regulation: 9, places 'nine' industrial sites within Halton as 'Upper Tier' sites. These plans are reviewed and validated as part of the Emergency Planning Work Programme.

'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 was agreed by the Site, the Competent Authority and Halton Borough Council.

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

'Upper Tier' - Runcorn sites

Runcorn COMAH Operators include:

- INOVYN ChlorVinyls Ltd
- INEOS Enterprises Ltd
- VYNOVA Runcorn Ltd
- Runcorn Membrane Chlorine Plant (MCP) Ltd
- Packed Chlorine Limited and
- Koura Ltd (Previously Mexichem Fluor Ltd)

'Upper Tier' - Widnes sites

- Univar Ltd, Pickerings Road, Hale bank, Widnes
- ICoNiChem Ltd, Moss Bank Road, Widnes
- Lanxess Ltd, Dans Road, Widnes (Previously Emerald Kalama Chemicals Ltd)

3.5 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.

3.6 Exercises / Validation

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

Univar Ltd, Widnes, ICoNiChem, Widnes and Lanxess 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.

3.7 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 validation exercises.

3.8 Pipeline Safety Regulations (PSR) 1996

The Pipeline 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. As part of the update and review of the plan, consultation takes place between the pipeline operators, Emergency Services, NHS England, Public Health England and the HSE.

As part of the Regulations there is no specific duty placed upon Local Authorities to test the plan. However, multi-agency table top exercises are conducted to validate the MAHP template, which is used to produce the Major Accident Hazard Pipeline Plan for each Local Authority.

3.9 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 via 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.

3.11 Local Authority Emergency Centres

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

3.12 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.

3.13 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 who have been affected by the incident. Two of the 10 designated establishments are care homes, aimed to be used to move vulnerable people, who have been involved in an emergency evacuation. All designated establishments has an Emergency Rest Centre box, which is checked on a quarterly basis.

3.14 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.

3.15 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.

3.16 Internal Resilience

Emergency Planning continues to develop 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.

3.17 Training

Emergency Planning Team scheduled training and exercises internally, for example, First Responder Training, Rest Centre Training, Business Continuity Exercises and Elected Members Training.

Halton work in partnership with Cheshire Resilience Forum, leading on training which involves external partners, for example, Introduction to Emergency Planning, Recovery, Briefing and Awareness Days and Strategic Exercises.

3.18 Major Incidents in Halton Borough Council

The team have responded to a number of 'Major Incidents / Major Incident Standbys' over the last 12 months. To ensure there is resilience when planning, responding and recovering from incidents, Cheshire use Resilience Direct as an 'emergency planning platform.' To ensure learning is captured following all incidents, a structured debrief will take place, where areas of good practice, areas of development and actions generated from the incident are recorded. A report is produced which incorporates this information, with the aim to improve future responses to incidents.

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' policy.

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 2021	Annual Emergency Planning Service update
June 2022	Annual Emergency Planning Service update