

**REPORT TO:** Safer Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 12<sup>th</sup> September 2023  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Executive Director, Environment & Regeneration  
**PORTFOLIO:** Community Safety  
**SUBJECT:** Emergency Planning Annual report  
**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update the board on the role of the Emergency Planning Team and the work undertaken for the period 2022/23.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report and action plan 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 an Emergency Planning & CCTV Manager 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 one 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 two is designed for use in very serious emergencies, which affect a larger geographical area.

The Act divides local responders into two categories, imposing a different set of duties on each. Category one organisations are at the core of the response to the majority of emergencies i.e Emergency Services (Police, Fire & Ambulance), Local Authorities and NHS England. As a category one responder, the 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 two organisations such as 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 team work programme.

The Civil Contingencies Act identifies two further pieces of legislation which relates to the major accident hazards at industrial establishments, Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH) 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 require 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 team 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 require 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's Emergency Planning Team works with partner agencies to produce emergency plans and participate in 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 two 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 (MAHP). 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 Health & Safety Executive.

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 on the Council's website.

As part of 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.

### **3.10 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 other at Runcorn Town Hall. All equipment and plans are checked and updated on a monthly basis. .

### **3.11 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.

### **3.12 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 10 designated 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 have an Emergency Rest Centre box, which provides kit to support those leading the rest centre, these are checked on a quarterly basis.

In responding to any major standby or incident the Council has the capacity to support vulnerable residents, a current list is maintained and refreshed every seven days to ensure reach should this be required. There is national guidance on supporting vulnerable people which informs this area of work.

### **3.13 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 supports work in facilitating and participating at neighbouring COMAH Exercises. Also, attending cross border exercises in Merseyside. Halton is also a member of the Liverpool John Lennon Airport Emergency Planning Group.

### **3.14 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, North West Ambulance Service and Health/NHS 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.

### **3.15 Internal Resilience**

Internal arrangements for strategic and first responder arrangements have been reviewed and strengthened to increase resilience. The training offer is also being further developed to build capacity across the responder resource.

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.

### **3.16 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 works 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.

### **3.17 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. The team dealt with a number of incidents as outlined below.

#### **2022-2023**

Storm Eunice

Storm Franklin

Avian Flu (Hale)

Heatwave July  
Heatwave August  
Suspect device Johnson's Lane  
London Bridge (Death of HM the Queen)  
Percival Lane Fires x2  
Hostage situation / Siege

### **3.18 National Exercise – Operation Mighty Oak**

Halton Emergency Planning are worked alongside Cheshire Resilience Forum partners to deliver strategic and tactical level table top exercise with respect to a regional or national power Outage (NPO) as part of a Blackstart scenario. The aim of the exercise was to build a shared understanding of the implications for local multi-agency partner organisations in responding to a failure of the national electricity transmission system, leading to a national power outage. The exercise was carried out on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and lasted for 3 days.

### **3.19 Protect Duty (Martyn's Law)**

Emergency Planning is working with the building managers of the Council's larger public buildings, and the Health & Safety Team in producing an exercise to validate the local lockdown plans for The Brindley, DCBL Stadium, Rutland House and Widnes Market in line with the recommendations for the Protect Duty, which is expected to be enacted in to law later this calendar year. The exercise will be a command and control table top exercise with multi-agency partners using a credible scenario required to invoke the lock down protocols for the building. The exercise is scheduled to take place in January 2024. Focus continues on the emerging legislation to fully understand implications for us at place and any arrangements needed to ensure full compliance.

### **3.20 Business Continuity Planning**

As part of the authority's statutory duties, all Business Continuity Plans are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. All individual service plans have been reviewed and updated. These plans are held in a central area within the Emergency Planning SharePoint portal. All Plan Holders and Deputy Plan Holders have access to all plans. This is aimed to have shared resilience across the services, the directorates and the Council.

All individual service area business continuity plans share details and information regarding their priority 1, 2 and 3 services. Following the updates of these plans, all priority 1 and 2 services are extracted from these plans and captured within the overarching Directorate Plans. Following the sign off by the Executive Directors of both overarching Directorate Plans, the Corporate Plan is updated which reflects the Priority 1 and 2 services. This is an extremely in-depth detailed process however, this vital piece of work aims to ensure the authority is prepared for any unexpected internal 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 however, should a major incident occur related to a school Children Services would have a significant role in supporting and co-ordinating the Local Authority response.

##### **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**

The Emergency Planning service exists to ensure high levels of preparedness and the ability to respond to major incidents that supports residents wellbeing.

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

The service plans and multi-agency working prepares Halton's stakeholders to support responses when needed to keep residents safe and mitigate harm from major incidents.

##### **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 identified.

#### **9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

None identified



**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