

Report to: Audit Governance and Improvement Review Committee
Date: 20th March 2008
Subject: Risk Management - Civil Contingencies Service
Report of: Director of Environmental Services
Contact officer: Tina Smith Telephone: 01942 827188

Purpose/summary: To ensure the council discharges its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and to provide an overview of work undertaken by the Civil Contingencies Service in relation to *'Enhancing Wigan's Resilience'*.

Alternative options considered and reason for selecting the one recommended: N/A

Recommendation/decision: That members:
Note the Council's arrangements for dealing with civil contingencies and the requirement for members to:

- Familiarise themselves with the duty of local authorities as directed by the Civil Contingencies Act.
- Attend associated member training and awareness raising sessions.
- Support the Council's work in raising community awareness of the need to prepare to cope with the effect of an emergency.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision.

Risks/Implications: Failure to have effective civil contingency arrangements is a breach of statutory duty and will result in:

- Ineffective response to a major incident
- Interruption of wider service delivery
- Reduced confidence in the Council as community leader
- Increased potential for litigation

Financial: Current expenditure on the Civil Contingency function is £310,000 which is largely supported by Central Government Grant

Staffing: Within current staffing levels

Policy: None

Equal Opportunities - has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted? Yes

Wards affected: All

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

If yes have the property implications been agreed with the Corporate Property officer?

N/A

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

No

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

No

Has the Director of Legal and Property Services confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Director of Finance and IT confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only:

Categorisation of the report:	x
Discussion leading to a decision	
Monitoring	
Sharing for corporate understanding	

Discussion	
Decision	
Information	

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
Audit Governance and Improvement Review Committee 20 March 2008			

Proper Officer Martin Kimber,
Director of
Environmental
Services

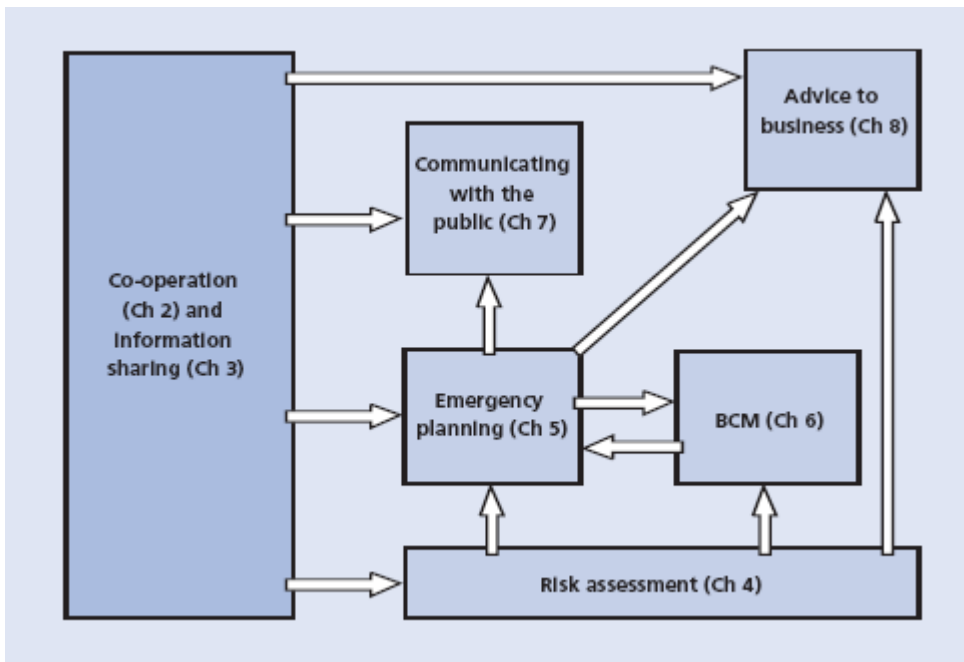
Date 20th March 2008

1. Background:

- 1.1. There have been several examples of major incidents which have recently made national headlines (eg the Buncefield fire, severe flooding in a number of areas) which have caused severe disruption (in some cases devastation) to the communities and commerce in the areas affected. As the likelihood of such incidents appears to be increasing, the government advocate, a pro-active approach should be taken to help to prevent or minimise the effect of such incidents and to deal more effectively with the incidents where prevention is not possible.
- 1.2 As there are a number of formal agencies who have a role in dealing with major incidents, a coordinated approach is required. This report sets out the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act and outlines the Council's approach in ensuring compliance and in ensuring an effective response is possible in the event of a major incident. It also emphasises the role of Elected Members as Council and community representatives and provides links to the necessary guidance to assist members in discharging that role.

2. Civil Contingencies Service

- 2.1 The work of the Council's **Civil Contingencies Service (CCS)** (formerly the Emergency Planning Team) is directed by the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 (see Appendix 1). In accordance with the Act, the objective of the CCS is to increase the preparedness and resilience of the Council to respond to an "*event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare or the environment; or to an act of war or terrorism*", which is the definition of "an emergency", according the CCA.
- 2.2 Under the CCA, local authorities have seven main work streams:
 1. Co-operation
 2. Information Sharing
 3. Local Responder Risk Assessment Duty
 4. Emergency Planning
 5. Business Continuity Management
 6. Communicating with the Public
 7. Advice and assistance to business and voluntary organisations
- 2.3 Each work stream is far more complex than its titles suggests, but fit together as shown in the diagram below. Although '*co-operation*' and '*information sharing*' occupy the same diagram box, they pose different challenges have separate work streams.



- 2.4 Under the CCA, local authorities, the emergency services, health services, and a small number of other agencies are deemed category 1 responders (Cat 1's). The Cat 1 responders in the region work together to agree and maintain the **Greater Manchester Community Risk Register** which is further refined into the **Wigan Borough Risk Register** by the local agencies who form the **Wigan Resilience Forum**. (<http://www.wigan.gov.uk> search under "emergency planning")
- 2.5 Fortunately, emergencies are rare, but when they do happen, they are usually unexpected, non discriminatory, and can have a devastating affect on people's lives. Communities can be torn apart, and the local economy left in tatters. The CCS, on behalf of the Council, work in partnership with other Cat 1's to ensure the most effective response possible can be provided in such circumstances (see Appendix 2 for multi agency annual report), and that the return to normality is achieved as swiftly as possible. Trained staff have been identified from a number of service areas who are now able to support a response (regardless of the cause) and help take care of people affected. This usually means taking over a school hall or Leisure centre to provide temporary shelter, a cup of tea and a sandwich for people who can't get in to their homes. If overnight accommodation is needed, we have a supply of blow-up beds, and can provide a change of clothes and toiletries if necessary. After the immediate impact is dealt with, services will be assigned to support longer term needs and carry out any restoration work that is required. A copy of the Emergency Plan for Major Incidents can be found on the Council's intranet. The web link to download the plan can be found at <http://www.wigan.gov.uk> (search under E in the A – Z of services for "Emergency Plan")

3. Business Continuity Planning

- 3.1 The Civil Contingency Service team have also worked with other Council Departments and helped them to develop business continuity plans. The Business Continuity Management (BCM) Programme is a constant work in progress and has been embedded in the Council's Service Planning process. The purpose of BCM is to ensure, as far as is practicable, that the Council can continue to provide its most critical services in the event that its normal working practices are disrupted. The Council's major partners have also been engaged in our BCM planning, and we provide advice and guidance on the subject to local businesses and voluntary organisations, as directed by the CCA.

4. Communicating with the public

- 4.1 Issues which have the potential to cause disruption to Wigan have also been identified and we have worked with our partners, at a Greater Manchester and borough level, to produce a community risk register (see appendix 3) which is published via the Council's website. (<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/> search under "risk register")
- Knowing what risks we might face locally allows us to plan our response in advance. While there is nothing we can do about the volume of rainfall for example, we do know which areas are likely to be most affected by flooding, and can therefore plan to respond to that eventuality. Similarly, we are constantly being warned that we need to prepare for the influenza pandemic, and that the question is 'when' – not 'if', it will happen. Because of this, we have been helping all Council Departments, its major partners e.g. Wigan & Leigh Housing, Norfolk Property Services, The Leisure Trust, and contractors e.g. for domiciliary care, to understand what is likely to happen when it arrives, and how to plan to support the delivery of critical services when a large proportion of staff are sick or off work due to care responsibilities (schools and day centres may be closed in an attempt to slow down transmission while a vaccine is developed) or to care for sick dependants.
- 4.2 To ensure the Council is adequately equipped to respond to emergencies and business interruptions (which could emerge as a result), we have designed and delivered specific training and awareness raising sessions. In conjunction with the Cabinet Office's Emergency Planning College, we also provide training for elected members in relation to their role in supporting their local communities in such circumstances (next session 17th March).
- 4.3 The current year sees the introduction of a new Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for this subject matter. The indicator will be measured as a question via The Place Survey. The question asks *"How well informed do you feel by your local agencies, about what you should do in the event of a large-scale emergency such as (authorities to insert appropriate example)*. To help us with this, we have adopted National Business Continuity Week (31st March – 4th April this year) as **'Wigan Resilience Week'** where, with the support of partners, we have organised a week of awareness raising activities (see appendix 4). Members are encouraged to attend the *'Multi Agency Awareness Raising'* session on Thursday 3rd April. This is a high profile, half day event, which is also open to the public and press.

- 4.4 Following the training and in support of the awareness campaign, Members are asked to help bring our work to the attention of their constituents. This will help to raise public awareness in terms of what the public can do to help themselves as well as the support that will be provided by the Council and other agencies.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This report provides a brief overview of the work of the Civil Contingencies Service and sets out a number of developing areas. It also emphasises the need for joint working with other key local partners both within the borough and on a sub-regional basis.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Members are requested to:

1. Note the Council's arrangements for dealing with civil contingencies as outlined in this report
2. Agree and endorse the requirement for all members to:
 - Familiarise themselves with the duty of local authorities as directed by the Civil Contingencies Act.
 - Attend associated member training and awareness raising sessions.
 - Support the Council's work in raising community awareness of the need to prepare to cope with the effect of an emergency.

Diversity Impact Assessment form

Section: Civil Contingencies Service

Policy/Service Area: Civil Contingency

Person Completing Form:

Date:

Do any of the below groups suffer specific disadvantage (please indicate)

	Yes	No		Yes	No
Race	Yes		Disability	Yes	
Ethnicity	Yes		Gender		No
Age	Yes		Religion		No
Class	Yes		Sexual Orientation		No

Is there evidence of disadvantage or associated problems?

It is clear that in any emergency situation the most vulnerable in society are at greater risk than the majority of the population.

The aim of the Civil Contingency Section through the Emergency Plan and Business Continuity Planning is to seek to minimise this effect.

How was the information collected and/or who have you consulted with?

Based on widespread discussions within the Council and with key partners. Feedback from incidents and exercises are also taken account of.

Action Plan – *What specific actions are planned to tackle any disadvantage identified?*

Contained within the various plans including the Emergency Plan / Wigan Risk Register / Business Continuity Planning.

Is the policy in line with current equality legislation and relevant codes of practice?

Yes

Timescale	Ongoing
Responsibility	Peter Layland
Comments	

Are the actions specified included in any other documents/plans?

Departmental Service Plan	
Section/Team Plan	Yes
Other (Specify)	

Date for further review

On going under continuous review.