

Key Decision Required	No	In the Forward Plan	No
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CABINET

14 JULY 2017

REFERENCE REPORT FROM THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

A.1 CORPORATE RISK UPDATE

(Report prepared by Ian Ford)

BACKGROUND

At its meeting held on 22 June 2017 the Audit Committee the Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits Services & Section 151 Officer (Richard Barrett) presented to the Committee a report on the Risk Management Framework and the updated Corporate Risk Register.

It was reported that, within the period under review, no new risks had been added to the register, no risks had been removed, or amended and there were no items that were currently under review. Risks had been amended in respect of –

- (1) 2c Community Leadership Projects;
- (2) 1a Failure to Effectively Manage Assets;
- (3) 1b Catastrophic IT Network Failure;
- (4) 1c Ineffective Communication / Management of Information;
- (5) 6a Loss of sensitive and/or personal data through Malicious Actions, Theft and/or Hacking;
- (6) 6c Disconnection from PCN Network; and
- (7) 9a Ineffective Emergency Planning.

The Committee was informed that although no changes had been identified as being required at this time, the Risk Management Framework was included at Appendix A to the report for information purposes only.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS TO CABINET

The Audit Committee **RESOLVED** that -

- (a) the contents of the updates provided to the current Risk Register be noted;
- (b) in the light of the Grenfell Tower in Kensington, London fire disaster, the Cabinet be requested to re-assess the Council's emergency plans for the evacuation and re-housing of residents in the event of a fire, flood or other major incident and ensure that the Council's financial reserves are adequate to cope with the aftermath over a number of months; and
- (c) the Cabinet be also requested to reassess the emergency arrangements for its own office buildings.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

COMMENTS:

It will be sometime until the official lessons identified in the response to the Grenfell Town incident are published.

However already there are some clear, early, indicators generally for local authorities to consider:

1. Early public liaison from the senior team within the Council
2. Regular, positive liaison between Council senior team and those affected
3. Management of donated, domestic equipment (bedding, chairs etc.)
4. Management of disaster appeal fund
5. Management of personal memorials, laying of flowers, publication of missing persons etc.
6. Opening and management of a Family and Friends Centre
7. Opening and management of Humanitarian Assistance Centre
8. Management of VIP visits
9. Management of media, opening of a media briefing centre – giving the media somewhere to go.
10. Access to money, when an individual has lost bank cards, bank details, I.D. etc.

Official reports of the incident are expected to filter through the Essex Resilience Forum and the Local Government Association etc.

However it is important to note the robust approach this Council already takes to Emergency Planning in general, including:

Managing short to medium term impact:

- The Council has good, tested Rest Centre procedures, enabling us to provide emergency accommodation to those who find themselves without shelter following an incident.
- Whilst at the Rest Centre, our Housing Options Team work closely with those who have “lost” their homes to access the most suitable alternative accommodation as quickly as possible.
- High Rise issue: The Council’s Building Services Team have already identified those multi-dwelling Council properties across the District with 3 or more floors
- On average there are approximately 13-20 Void council homes where work is being undertaken. This work could be FAST TRACKED in response to a major incident to make that property available for short term accommodation.
- On average there are approximately 20 Void council homes waiting allocation to new tenants, which could be utilised on a short term basis.
- There are a significant number of bedsits, sheltered units, caravan parks and hotel accommodation across the District that could be utilised.

Managing Longer term impact

- Securing medium to long term accommodation either from rebuilding or re-locating.
- Provision of mental health support
- Memorials and anniversaries

In December 2013 and January 2017 the Council successfully responded to the risk of a coastal surge affecting various coastal locations around the District. Evacuation centres, rest centres, emergency response centre, passenger transport, volunteers, Council staff, Emergency Services, social care support, voluntary sector support and mutual aid from other local authorities assisted in our response arrangements. Fortunately no inundation was experienced on either occasion, however we could have been looking at over 1000 people needing assistance.

The Council's Emergency Planning Service promotes the preparation of **Emergency Grab Bags**. This encourages households to prepare a bag containing "little things that could make a BIG difference" in the event of an evacuation, such as:

- Note book – containing useful phone numbers and documentation details, list of medication
- Pen
- First aid kit
- Torch
- Spare batteries
- Toiletries
- Puzzle book, novel or pack of cards to provide some entertainment
- Bottle of water
- Snack
- Spare jumper
- Spare mobile phone charger

The Emergency Planning team also hold a Community Resilience Workshop on a quarterly basis with Parish and Town Councils across the District to promote Emergency Preparedness and an annual meeting with the **Caravan Camping and Chalet Parks**.

From within its own staff, the Council currently has **37 Rest Centre Volunteers and 24 District Emergency Response Centre Volunteers**, all receive training on the Council's response arrangements. Contracts of Employment also include the expectation that staff may be required to provide support in an emergency response, during working hours.

In addition to the above, Strategic and Tactical training is also delivered on an annual basis.

In respect of the Council's own Office buildings, this will be a key feature of the office transformation project currently in progress.

The Council's Reserves are risk assessed as part of the Financial Strategy process. Although current reserves would support the Council in responding to an emergency in the short term whilst it applied for funding from the Government's emergency relief scheme, it is important to protect as much as possible the existing level of reserves to 'underwrite' the risks associated with an emergency planning response within the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

It is **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that:-

It is recognised that this is an important issue which has been brought into sharp focus by the tragic events at Grenfell Tower. It is also recognised that the Council's standing emergency planning procedures are robust and it is proposed to include a session on the Council's Emergency Planning arrangements at a future All Member's Briefing.