

**Report for: Community, People & Equalities
PDG**

Date of Meeting:	25 June 2024
Subject:	RESILIENCE STRATEGY
Cabinet Member:	David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Quality (Cost) of Living, Equalities and Public Health
Responsible Officer:	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health
Exempt:	Not Applicable
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Annex A – Resilience Strategy Annex B – Resilience Strategy Equalities Impact Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

One of the key outputs of the newly appointed Resilience Officer role is the creation of a Resilience Strategy and the provision of day-to-day oversight of its delivery. Whilst it is not a mandatory requirement to develop such a Strategy, the document sets out how the Council will meet its statutory duties as a Category 1 responder under Civil Contingency legislation in a coherent and defined way. It therefore provides a key framework and assurance with respect to how the Council will plan for, assess and ultimately respond to major incidents as well as events which impact on its own business continuity through increased resilience. The Strategy also sets out how the Council will undertake its role in the recovery of communities after an incident and also support our communities to increase their own resilience to emergencies and business disruptions.

The Strategy is split into four main sections each covering an aspect of resilience which, when working in tandem will ensure that the Council has identified risks, planned accordingly and is agile in testing and updating these plans to ensure they remain fit for purpose. These four sections are:

Risk Management: This details the different ways in which Mid Devon assess and will assess risks going forward. This includes the current Corporate Risk Register

alongside the addition of two new documents, the Business Impact Assessments and the Community Risk Register. The later will function similarly to the Corporate Risk Register but has a greater emphasis on very local risks to the wider community and it is likely that district Councillors will either own or be consulted on these risks.

Core Plans: These are the two key plans to improve resilience and is a large proportion of the Resilience Officer's duties which includes the Emergency Plan for the Council as a whole and the individual service Business Continuity plans.

Supporting Plans: This is a repository which details all of the additional plans that relate to responding and recovering from potential emergencies and business disruption. This allows the Council to accurately understand what plans are in place, the ownership of those plans and the frequency of their review/updating.

Preparedness: This lists out the training, testing and reviewing of the plans mentioned within the document. This will ensure that our staff are competent and confident to fulfil their roles during and emergency or business disruption and the testing/updating will ensure that the plans are fit for purpose and up to date.

The Resilience Strategy is in essence an internal operational document however there are links to the role of District Councillors including specific media training identified for the Cabinet due to their potential role within an emergency. Furthermore, it is important for members to be sighted on the wider document so as to have assurance that the Council has a structure in place to meet its Civil Contingency duties and to build on recent member briefings regarding the specific role (and therefore boundaries) of the Council during and after an incident.

Recommendation:

1. That the Community PDG notes the new Resilience Strategy

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Mid Devon District Council is required by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as a Category 1 responder organisation to be prepared for a range of different emergencies and business disruptions. Integral to this is the validation and testing of plans to ensure business continuity solutions and response structures reflect the needs of the Council and community, and that plans are current, accurate, effective and complete.

1.2 As a Category 1 responder there is a requirement on us at the core of any response and recovery. The Act requires Category 1 responders to maintain plans for preventing emergencies; reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of emergencies in both the response and recovery phases; and taking other action in the event of emergencies. There are additional overarching requirements with regard to co-operation, information sharing and assessing the risk of emergencies.

- 1.3 Other Category 1 organisations include all emergency services, acute and ambulance NHS trusts and upper tier Local Authorities.
- 1.4 As a lower tier Local Authority, our specific role in the response phase of an incident is:
- Support Emergency Services
 - Attendance at multi-agency Strategic and Tactical Coordinating Groups
 - Contribute to development of a wider Common Operating Picture of any live incident
 - Supporting the establishment of Rest Centres for displaced people (with Devon County Council)
 - Resources – e.g. clothing, food, refreshments, sleeping bags
 - Advice on environmental health and structural safety
 - Temporary and emergency housing
 - Warning & Informing/Communications
 - Mutual aid – provision of emergency or backfill staff to support other Districts and/or the County Council and vice-versa as required
- 1.5 Once the response phase of a major incident is over, then local authorities including District Councils take the lead role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the community – either back to normal or to a new normal. This includes specific statutory responsibilities to assist economic/business recovery. As such local authorities will lead any Recovery Coordinating Group (the relevant District Council if only the district area is impacted or the County Council if multiple districts are impacted).
- 1.6 Category 2 organisations have a supporting or co-enabling role in both response and recovery in their respective specific areas and include the Environment Agency, Met Office, Telecoms, Transport and Utility Companies.
- 1.7 During an incident, the combined Category 1 and 2 responders come together on a regional (Policing area) multi-agency basis through a partnership known as the Local Resilience Forum. For our area, this is the Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly forum (DCIOS LRF). At a delivery level, all the District Councils and the County Council work as part of a Devon-wide group known as the Devon Emergency Planning Partnership (DEPP) which supports on the development of emergency plan templates and provides a focus for wider local authority cooperation, shared arrangements (e.g. rest centres) and training/development (e.g. competency frameworks and co-delivery of learning).
- 1.8 Because of this we have developed and adopted a Resilience Strategy covering key aspects of our Emergency and Business Continuity Planning. The Resilience Strategy has been created to:
1. Ensure effective consideration of risks that may impact on the Council and its communities

2. Improve the resilience of Council operations, systems, and processes to operate in the event of an incident or emergency
 3. Encourage greater resilience in the Council and its communities
 4. Meet Council responsibilities as a Category 1 responder in relation to emergency planning and business continuity, including dealing with an emergency or incident
- 1.9 The Strategy also links into the Council's approach to addressing climate change, including reducing the amount of carbon issued (mitigation) and preparing for more extreme weather and climatic events (adaptation).
- 1.10 To ensure that the Council can fulfil its requirements under the Civil Contingency legislation and provide resilient services there are a number of plans that work in conjunction with each other. The Strategy sets out the framework that the Council uses to meet its statutory requirements as well as remaining resilient as an organisation. The Strategy should be read in conjunction with the plans identified within the "supporting plans" section of the document as it is the combination of these plans that increases the overall resilience of the Council and does not function in isolation. If followed, these plans provide a high level of resilience for both our statutory Category 1 responsibilities and responding to internal incidents that could impact on one of more service areas.
- 1.11 The overall strategic approach as seen in the diagram on page 4 of the document comprises of four main areas; Risk Management, Preparedness, Core Plans, and Supporting Plans. Each area provides a different purpose and each, if completed, will provide a holistic and agile suite of plans to ensure the Council is able to adequately respond to incidents and emergencies.

2 Supporting community resilience (towns and parishes)

- 2.1 As set out in the Supporting Plans section of the Strategy, the Council has a role in building resilience in the local community which it will do so through a several approaches:
- Using the Community Risk Register to identify and plan for risks specific for the local community
 - Where possible create useful resources and signposting for our local communities to become more resilient. These can then be published on the website or other forms of media, for example our recent Flood Guide
 - Work with local Towns and Parishes to identify their local risks and if possible assist in the promotion and creation of Community Emergency Plans in partnership with Devon Communities Together
 - Assist local businesses to create their own Business Continuity Plans
 - Communicate with communities during an incident/emergency as detailed within the Crisis Comms plan

- 2.2 Work on the development of Community Emergency Plans has also been put forward under the emerging new Corporate Plan for 2024-28. It is proposed that this element of the Resilience Strategy directly links to wider corporate aspirations to work more closely with Town and Parish Councils and as such a specific target has been suggested regarding the number of new (or significantly) updated such plans completed annually.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 In accordance with the above, and given the operational nature of the Strategy, the recommendation is that the PDG note the document only.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the resilience strategy is the potential costs towards training key individuals as some of the training has to be conducted externally. Where possible training will be completed in house, through the Devon Emergency Planning Partnership or the DCIOS LRF of which Mid Devon is a part of. Training costs will vary year on year due to the different lengths of time between retaking the training as set out within the DEPP competency framework. It is proposed that where possible the cost of this training will be absorbed within the existing corporate training budget.

Legal Implications

The strategy sets out to ensure MDDC meets its statutory duties as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. More information on these duties is set out within the report.

Risk Assessment

The overall risk of the strategy is very low with much of the work being to enhance and up to date pre-existing plans along with producing robust new ones and insuring they are fit for purpose. Like with many of the plans, this is not a static document and will be reviewed and updated in accordance with statutory requirements and the requirements of the Council and its communities.

Impact on Climate Change

None directly arising from the report. Climate change is highlighted within the document from the perspective of creating adaptation plans for our communities to ensure they are more resilient to more severe and frequent weather events.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The Resilience Strategy sets out a framework for the Council to meet its statutory duties for the benefit of the wider community of Mid Devon as a whole. It does not positively or negatively impact directly anyone with protected characteristics however the component emergency plans that sit below the strategy do take into account vulnerable members of the community such that their needs are prioritised in both the response and recovery phases of any emergency or major incident. Overall, the

Strategy is neutral regarding equalities as reflected in the screening assessment attached in Annex B.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The purpose of the Resilience Strategy is to provide a compliance framework regarding MDDC's statutory responsibilities as a Category 1 responder and so relates to those duties first and foremost. However, the Strategy goes beyond this and in doing so relates to multiple aspects of the Corporate Plan including but not limited to; Climate mitigation and adaptation relating to a "Sustainable Planet" and an emphasis on building whole society resilience which relates to "Sustainable and Prosperous Communities".

As noted within the report, work on the development of Community Emergency Plans has also be put forward under the emerging new Corporate Plan for 2024-28. It is proposed that this element of the Resilience Strategy directly links to wider corporate aspirations to work more closely with Town and Parish Councils.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 12 June 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 12 June 2024

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 29 April 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health or Lewis Dyson, Resilience Officer

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Background information