

REPORT TO: Safer Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 19 January 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Emergency Planning

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Chair of Policy Performance Board (PPB) has requested a report on the work undertaken by Risk & Emergency Planning.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Risk and Emergency Planning sits under the Community & Resources Directorate and is managed by Stephen Rimmer who is the Divisional Manager with responsibility for the areas of:

- Traffic
- Risk & Emergency Planning,
- Health & Safety.

3.2 The over-arching risk factors for Health & Safety are operationally managed by a Principal Health and Safety Advisor, and a Health & Safety Adviser.

3.3 Health & Safety are a completely separate entity and generally do not cross over in real terms with Emergency Planning. There are however some areas that crossover the specialisms such as security, terrorism and public safety issues including event safety. Health & Safety is reported to the Corporate Policy & Performance Board each year.

3.4 Structure of Emergency Planning

Emergency Planning comprises:

Principal Emergency Planning Officer; and
Two Emergency Planning Officers

3.5 **Main Function of Emergency Planning:**

To implement the Civil Contingencies Act, relevant Statutory Regulations and advise the Council on all matters relating to emergency planning in order to meet the strategic objectives of the Council.

3.6 **Key Duties & Responsibilities of the Team:**

1. To assist with the preparation, review and exercising of the Council's contingency plans for the **provision of services during and following a Major Incident or Major Incident Standby** and/or emergencies, including arranging and conducting de-briefs following incidents.
2. To assist with the **preparation, review and exercising** of the Council's plans required by statutory legislation (e.g. **Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Regulations, Major Accident Hazard Pipelines (MAHP)**) and other plans as required.
3. To liaise with External Organisations (Category 1 & 2 Responders) including emergency services, Health & Safety Executive (HSE), voluntary organisations, etc.), Members, and other Council departments on functions covered by the Emergency Planning Team.
4. To assist with updating the Corporate and Directorate **Business Continuity** Plans, and where appropriate including testing and exercising.
5. To **arrange and present seminars and exercises** for the Council and other relevant organisations to improve and refine the Council's response to incidents.
6. To ensure records of **emergency planning training and exercises**, involving the Council are maintained.
7. To **provide specialist technical advice to the Council and other Council Departments**, participating in senior level multi-discipline officer working groups, both internal and external.
8. To **promote Business Continuity to local businesses**
9. To ensure the **public information strategy is established and maintained before, during and after incidents in line with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Media Plan**
10. To be part of the Council's **on-call duty rota for response to Major Incident and Major Incident standby and to act as Staff Officer** (if required) or as a member of the Council's emergency response team.
11. To support the working of the Cheshire Resilience Forum (**CRF**), attend Management Group meetings, act as Capability Leads, undertake Risk Assessment and Chair Groups when required.

3.7 **Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH)**

The above gives a very generic account of the areas of work that are covered. It does not convey or reflect the time consuming areas of work undertaken for the Control of Major Accident Hazard (**COMAH**) Regulations and the new Seveso III Directive.

COMAH applies mainly to the chemical industry, also to some storage activities, explosives and nuclear sites and other industries where threshold quantities of dangerous substances identified in the Regulations are kept or used.

The COMAH Regulations 1999, (2015) requires Local authorities to prepare adequate emergency plans to deal with the off-site consequences of possible major accidents at upper tier sites, and should review and where necessary revise them. They must also test them at specified intervals at least once every three years.

Local authorities need to prepare emergency plans for any sites in their area that become upper tier sites as a result of the changes in the Seveso III Directive. The Seveso Directives are the main EU legislation dealing specifically with the control of on-shore major accident hazards involving dangerous substances. The Seveso III Directive came into force on 1 June 2015, replacing the Seveso II Directive.

Under Article 12 of the Seveso III Directive the 'public concerned' must be given early opportunity to comment on off-site emergency plans as they are being developed or substantially modified. Consideration will need to give to the role the emergency planning authorities will have with regard to Annex 5, para 5 which requires that the 'public concerned' is given appropriate information about how to behave in the event of a major accident.

3.8 The above may impact on the work of the authority's emergency planners when the Authority is informed of any new companies that may be re-classified under the Directive. HSE are yet to confirm any new responsibilities.

3.9 The Authority has for many years worked with the local chemical companies located within the former ICI Runcorn site. Initially there were only 3 Top Tier sites.

3.10 Recent years have seen the sell-off of parts of the Ineos and Mexichem Group and joint ventures have resulted in many changes in names and processes. There are now 6 top tier companies on the Runcorn site and this may increase further in the future.

3.11 Below is a list of the Current Top Tier sites in Halton.

- INOVYN ChlorVinyls Limited,
- VYNOVA Runcorn Limited,
- Runcorn MCP Limited,
- INEOS Enterprises Limited,
- Packed Chlorine Limited and

- Mexichem Fluor Limited
(known as Runcorn Site COMAH Operators)
- Univar, Pickerings Road, Halebank, Widnes
- Shepherd Widnes Ltd, Moss Bank Road

Lower Tier sites

- Innospec (Widnes) Ltd, Dans Road, Widnes

Cross Border Sites

- Vertellus Specialities UK (formerly Pentagon Chemicals, Lower Road, Halewood)

3.12 The number of Top Tier sites within and around Halton effectively means that the team are planning, exercising or amending one of the plans throughout the year. In 2015 there have already been three COMAH Exercises. (2 Table Top exercises and 1 Multi-Agency live exercise)

3.13 The Control of Major Accident Hazards (**COMAH**) Regulations 2015 requires businesses to take all necessary measures to prevent major accidents involving dangerous substances, limit the consequences to people and the environment of any major accidents which do occur.

3.14 **COMAH** work is a time consuming process. It requires constant liaison with companies and emergency services. This is a “Statutory Duty” of the Authority to complete the work. Due to the increased number of sites, there is a need to prioritise this work is to ensure the “protection of our communities” is maintained.

3.15 Major incidents are rare events but emergency planning, preparedness and response help to ensure that the effects of any that do occur are kept to a minimum.

3.16 Local authorities will need to prepare emergency plans for any sites in their area that become upper tier sites as a result of the changes in the Seveso III Directive.

3.17 Halton Incidents in 2015

During the course of the last 12 months the team have dealt with numerous incidents including Chemical incidents, fires at Industrial properties and private dwellings, Bomb Threats, Closure of the Silver Jubilee Bridge due to incidents and closure of the M56 due to Road Traffic Collisions.

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, but reductions in resources and changes as a result of the Liverpool City Region could impact on the delivery of the service in future.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications on the Council's 'Halton's Urban Renewal'.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

No full risk assessment is required

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no direct equality and diversity issues associated with this report

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.