

## Corporate Services Select Committee

4 October 2017



## Emergency Management, Business Continuity and Local Resilience

**Purpose of report:** Scrutiny of Policy Development and Review

### Introduction:

1. This report is submitted to the Corporate Services Select Committee to outline Surrey County Council's responsibility as described in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
2. The report outlines the current progress and issues relating to recent incidents and the requirement to learn and improve the response by Surrey County Council in coordination with our partners to support the needs of residents.

### Surrey County Councils Role as a Category One Responder

3. Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 ("the Act") establishes a consistent level of civil protection activity across the UK. Consistency is sought too in the way the function is carried out between the local Category 1 and 2 responders as partners covered by the Act.
4. The Act provides a basic framework defining what tasks should be performed and how co-operation should be conducted.
5. The Act provides Local Responders with a common framework to make their own decisions in the light of local circumstances and priorities about what planning arrangements are appropriate in their areas.
6. The Act defines an "Emergency" in Part 1 of the Act as: an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK.
7. The Act requires Surrey County Council to deliver the duties of a Category One responder. These duties are,
  - risk assessment;
  - business continuity management (BCM);
  - emergency planning; and
  - maintain public awareness and arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public.
  - co-operate with other Category One and Two responders

- share information with Category One and Two responders

A separate duty applies to local authorities alone:

- provision of business continuity advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations
8. The SCC Emergency Management Team also works to ensure compliance to other areas of emergency planning which include,
- Health and Social Care Act 2012
  - Notification of Installations Handling Hazardous Substance (NIHHS) Regulations 1982
  - The Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996
  - The Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 2015
  - The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness & Public Information) Regulations (REPPPIR) 2001
  - Reservoir Act 1975
  - The Flood and Water Management Act 2010

<b>Current Very High Risks in Surrey</b>
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9. Approximately one third of the National risks have changed or have been newly created since the 2014 National Risk Assessment (NRA). In general terms this is for the following reasons,
- Changes in likelihood have been prompted by better understanding of the risk and more accurate information being available to inform assumptions on how frequently the Reasonable Worst Case Scenario will occur.
  - New data modelling has been employed by some Government Departments, which has led to changes in expected severity of impacts, particularly for flooding-type risks.
  - Where similar risks have been consolidated together, these have tended to result in a Reasonable Worst Case Scenario at the same likelihood as the more impactful risk within the merger.
  - Expert challenge groups were used throughout the NRA development process and have prompted changes to some impact scores via greater input of scientific, evidence and expert judgement, particular regarding the psychological impact, fatalities and casualties.
10. The 2016 National Risk Register employs a revised economic impact methodology that has decreased the financial impacts of loss of tourism, but increased the momentary costs of fatalities and casualties in line with the cross - Government norms. To ensure that there is the ability to respond to local risks Surrey Local Resilience Forum partners work to deliver the National Resilience Capabilities Programme (NRCP) which aims to increase the capability of the United Kingdom to respond to and recover from civil emergencies. It does this by building capability to deal with the consequences that are common to most types of emergency, regardless of whether those emergencies are caused by accidents, natural hazards or man-made threats.
11. The Surrey Local Resilience Forum has assessed the following areas as VERY HIGH,

- Flooding
  - Flu Pandemic
  - Terrorism
  - National failure of power supplies for 3-5 days
  - Cold and Snow
12. **FLOODING** – Communities in Woking (11-05-2016) and Caterham (06-06-2016) suffered from flash flooding due to extreme rainfall. In all around 100 properties, 40 in Woking and 60 in Caterham, are known to have suffered from internal property flooding. During the early summer other periods of localised intense rainfall caused flooding to properties across the County. There have been debriefs undertaken for the Woking and Caterham incidents to capture the learning from the response to the incidents for inclusion in the Counties planning.
  13. The risk of flooding remains relatively unchanged, with around 60,000 properties in Surrey at risk of a 1:100 (1% in a year) chance of fluvial flooding. There is a current Environment Agency led project underway to provide temporary flood defence to communities in Godalming, Guildford and in the Lower Thames being led by the Environment Agency. This work is a key priority for the Local Resilience Forum and one that will, on completion bring benefits to the communities in these areas.
  14. The national scenario now concentrates on the river flooding in the South East with increased impacts relating to,
    - Economic Impact
    - Fatalities
    - Casualties
    - Psychological Impact
  15. **FLU PANDEMIC** - Influenza pandemics are a natural phenomenon that have occurred from time to time for centuries – including 3 times during the 20th century. They present a real and daunting challenge to the economic and social wellbeing of any country, as well as a serious risk to the health of its population.
  16. There are important differences between ‘ordinary’ seasonal flu and pandemic flu. These differences explain why we regard pandemic flu as such a high risk.
  17. Pandemic influenza is one of the most severe natural challenges likely to affect the UK, but sensible and proportionate preparation and collective action is being taken by the Local Resilience Forum in line with Government and Department of Health advice to mitigate its effects.
  18. The Department of Health is the lead department for planning for a human influenza pandemic. However, given the wide impacts of a pandemic all Local Resilience Forum partners are involved in planning to mitigate its impacts.
  19. **TERRORISM – UK THREAT LEVELS** - The threat to the UK (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) from international terrorism is SEVERE. This means an attack is highly likely.

20. The main efforts for the LRF are,
- Prepare for consequences of an attack on a crowded space, (i.e. public gatherings)
  - Prepare for denial of services due to a cyber-attack affecting critical services
  - Support to the work to Protect critical sites in the county
21. Following the attacks in the United Kingdom and Europe this work to prepare for such incidents will continue. Individual organisations are being asked to review security and resilience for their staff and sites and to understand the actions that would be taken should such an attack occur or the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) increases the current National Threat Level to Critical, meaning that a terrorist attack is expected imminently.
22. **WIDESPREAD POWER OUTAGE** – This is a new risk previously grouped within the major industrial accidents risk category, the risk of widespread electricity failure has been reassessed in light of an enhanced understanding of the risk’s impacts. As a result this is now assessed to be very high, and thus a priority risk. Although the UK has never before suffered a national loss of electricity, and this does not represent an increase in likelihood, the consequences of such an event would be significant.
23. A nationwide loss of electricity, for which the technical recovery process “Black Start” could take up to 5 days, would affect millions of consumers and critical services. If significant damage is caused to the transmission lines, it could be weeks before some parts of the network are fully recovered and power is restored.
24. A recent example of the impact of severe weather was between 22 and 28 December 2013 when two severe winter storms caused damage to the distribution overhead line network. Almost 1 million properties suffered disruption to electricity supplies in the UK. Though 876,000 customers were restored within 24 hours, 16,000 customers experienced disruption to supply in excess of 48 hours. Surrey residents were also impacted during this period in areas across the County with the most prolonged power outage in the Godalming area.
25. The Local Resilience Forum partners recently reviewed the impact of this new risk. The outcome highlighted eight key areas where further partnership work was deemed to be required, the eight areas are,
- Telecommunication
  - Warning and informing the public
  - Energy Supply, including the impact on gas and petroleum Supplies
  - Food and Water
  - Transport
  - Impact on Health and Social Care
  - Businesses and Business Continuity
  - Local Authority and Voluntary agencies provision to communities and residents  
Emergency services and the Military
26. **Cold and Snow** – Natural Hazard (H18) – The scenario for this risk relates to a period of 7 days of snow and mean temperatures below -3°C leading to a significant impact on communities across a large area. The risk was previously assessed as HIGH, but as a result of further analysis the economic impact and the increase in fatalities caused mean the national risk has been raised from **HIGH** to **VERY HIGH**.

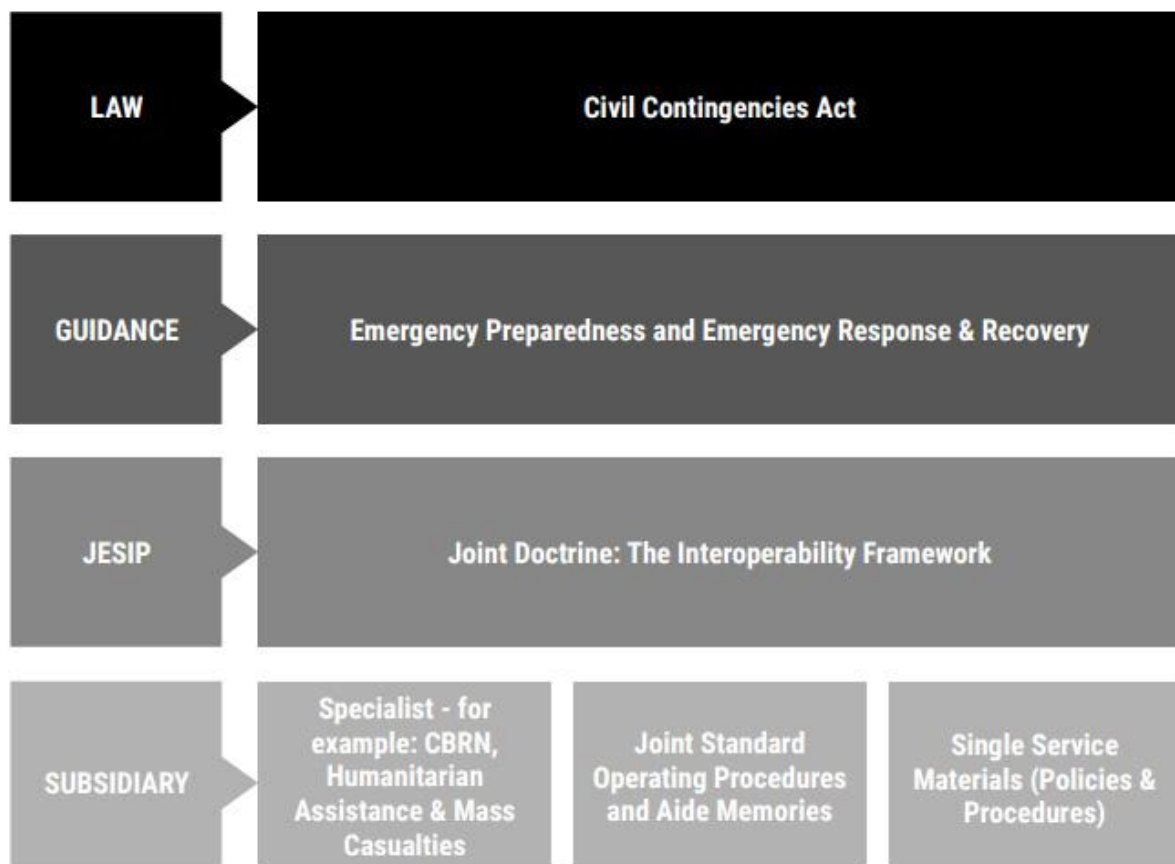
27. In line with the wider threats Surrey County Council is continually reviewing our own operations in line with changing threat and risk environment. Risks assessed either Medium or Low on the national risk register that are being progressed within Surrey County Council are:
- Risk of Cyber Crime/Terrorism
  - Protection of Surrey County Council buildings
28. **Cyber Crime/Terrorism** - There has been a significant rise in global and local Cyber based attacks on organisations in all sectors. Internationally, cyber-attacks have impacted all types of organisations from government services to large technology companies. These attacks are increasing in sophistication both in terms of technology and social based insertion methods. Surrey County Council's external technology stack is dependent on vendors ensuring that their products are up to date against the methods employed by internet based threats. Furthermore, aside from the technical risks - social engineering based insertion methods (such as legitimate looking emails which trigger viral payloads) are becoming harder to identify and filter. In a technology enabled organisation, cyber resilience cannot be assured however Surrey County Council seeks to mitigate the risk through a number of controls.
29. The IT & Digital service has invested in technology specifically to help monitor network activity and identify some security threats based on the behaviour of systems and devices on the network. In addition to this, anti-viral and protective measures are applied across all computer and smart-mobile devices, either through anti-malware software or through technical security policies applied to the device. These measures were implemented to accommodate the council's desire to implement technology to support mobile and flexible working, and relax internet restrictions. Regular system patching schedules have also been implemented to ensure security updates are made to the council business and infrastructure systems. This requires systems to be taken off-line to apply security patches. This can affect service operations but it is essential to combat the sophistication of today's malware attacks (e.g. the WannaCry attack which resulted in a widely reported impact on the NHS). Updated controls related to cyber-security have been submitted to the council's Leadership Risk Register, under Organisational Resilience and are due for consideration.
30. **Protection of Surrey County Council Buildings** – Prior to the recent move to CRITICAL, Surrey County Property and the Emergency Management Team undertook a survey of the main building with officers from the South East Counter Terrorism Unit as a means to understand the vulnerabilities and measures required to improve security.
31. Seen as a useful exercise, the outcomes of the report have been acted on with changes and improvements to the buildings that have included:
- Review of Security Policies in line with the learning from the Counter Terrorism Security Advisors
  - CCTV upgrades at County Hall to improve image quality
  - Greater control of entry and exit points at buildings
  - Renewed focus on wearing of staff ID Cards

32. Training provided to officers from the Property and Emergency Management Teams on the specific issues of terrorist threat to SCC buildings.

### **Planning for Emergencies in Surrey – Role of the Local Resilience Forum**

33. Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (“the Act”) establishes a consistent level of civil protection activity across the UK. Greater consistency is sought too in the way the function is carried out between the local Category 1 and 2 responders as partners covered by the Act and in different parts of the country.
34. The Act provides a basic framework defining what tasks should be performed and how cooperation should be conducted. The Government does not consider that it is necessary to radically change the way things were done prior to civil protection being placed on a statutory basis. It aims to consolidate and strengthen what exists.
35. In Surrey, the principal mechanism for multi-agency cooperation under the Act is the Surrey Local Resilience Forum (SLRF), based on each police area. The forum is a process whereby the organisations on which the duty fall co-operate with each other. The Surrey Local Resilience Forum does not have a separate legal personality; it does not have powers to direct its members.
36. The Surrey Local Resilience Forum (SLRF) is not a legal entity, nor does it have powers to direct its members. Nevertheless, the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and the Regulations provide that responders, through the Forum, have a collective responsibility to plan, prepare and communicate in a multi-agency environment.
37. As with all LRFs, the Surrey Local Resilience Forum mirrors the operational response arrangements for the strategic coordinating group structure, and allows those responsible for the response to emergencies to discuss arrangements and establish relationships in the preparation of the emergency arrangements. It matches, in the anticipation, prevention and planning phases, the strategic coordinating group usually established by the police during the response and recovery phases of an emergency.
38. The purpose of the LRF process is to ensure effective delivery of those duties under the Act that need to be developed in a multi-agency environment.
39. The structure for managing the local multi-agency response to emergencies is based on the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). The act is supported by two sets of guidance: Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Response and Recovery (ERR).
40. Emergency Preparedness deals with the pre-emergency (planning) phase. Emergency Response and Recovery (ERR) describes the multi-agency framework for responding to, and recovering from, emergencies in the UK and is the key document followed by the Surrey Local Resilience Forum to establish the multi-agency response arrangements.
41. Details of the operation and co-ordination of emergency response are outlined in the Cabinet Office Concept of Operations and the relevant chapters of Emergency Response and Recovery.

42. The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) was established in 2012 to address the recommendations and findings from a number of major incident reports. This work has been undertaken nationally and adopted locally by the Surrey Local Resilience Forum to improve the coordinated response to emergencies and complements Emergency Response and Recovery (ERR) by focusing on the interoperability of the emergency services and other responder agencies in the response to an incident.
43. Separate publications set out specialist ways of working that will apply in specific circumstances, such as chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRNe) incidents or marauding terrorist firearms attacks (MTFA).
44. Figure 1. Legislation and Guidance Documents for Emergency Planning



45. The Surrey Local Resilience Forum works to ensure that there are the appropriate plans and resources in place to support the National Resilience Capabilities Programme (NRCP). This Programme aims to increase the capability of the United Kingdom to respond to and recover from civil emergencies. It does this by building capability to deal with the consequences that are common to most types of emergency, regardless of whether those emergencies are caused by accidents, natural hazards or man-made threats.

46. Capability to respond to emergencies encompasses a number of interdependent and interrelated factors including appropriate numbers and types of personnel, the right types of equipment and supplies, relevant and sufficient training and exercising, clear plans etc.
47. The purpose of the programme is to identify, challenge and monitor the current levels of capability in each of the areas covered by the workstreams. The information gathered on how much capability each workstream has delivered is then used to provide assurance to ministers on how ready the UK is to respond to civil emergencies.
48. The Surrey Local Resilience Forum runs a programme of training and exercising events to support their programme. The main partnership exercises that are planned where Members may wish to attend are:
- 2 October 2017 – Briefing to Surrey Local Resilience Forum Strategic Officers and Tactical Advisors
  - 8 December 2017 - Partnership exercise for a national 'Move to Critical'
  - 4 and 5 May 2018 – Exercise Comet, Tactical Command Level Exercise
49. The development of the capabilities at a local level require the support for all partners within the partnership. To ensure that each capability is monitored a lead partner has been identified for each of the capabilities. These are:
- Evacuation and Shelter – Surrey County Council
  - Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear – Surrey Fire and Rescue
  - Infectious Disease (Human) – Public Health England
  - Infectious Disease (Animal) – Surrey County Council
  - Mass Fatalities – Surrey County Council
  - Mass Casualties – NHS England
  - Flooding – Surrey County Council
  - Site Clearance – Surrey County Council
  - Surrey Major Incident Protocol – Surrey County Council
  - Transport – Surrey Police
  - Warning & Informing – Surrey Police
  - Resilient Telecommunications – Surrey Police
  - Humanitarian Assistance – Surrey County Council
  - Community & Corporate Resilience – Surrey County Council

<p><b>Responding to Emergencies in Surrey</b></p>
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50. As with all areas of the United Kingdom, Emergency responders in Surrey adopt three levels of command and control when responding to incidents. The level does not convey seniority or rank but the level of command an individual has at the incident. The figure below shows the generic tiers of command and basic responsibilities for the different levels of command.





### Strategic Command

51. In Surrey the Strategic Command Group will be based at Police Headquarters and is made up by the strategic commanders from each agency with overall authority on behalf of their agency for the given incident. They are responsible for the resources of their own agency and for formulating their single agency strategy for the incident.
52. Surrey County Council has a 24 hour on-call duty director who will provide the role on declaration of a major incident. Following a review of this arrangement, a second support Director from the Extended Leadership Team will be on call to provide support for protracted incidents.
53. At the earliest opportunity, the strategic co-ordinating group (SCG) will determine or confirm a specific response strategy and record a strategy statement.
54. To minimise the consequences of the developing incident as far as is reasonably practicable, the command structures are activated and put into place as quickly as possible, but it is acknowledged this is likely to take some time. Therefore the first responders and commanders at a scene will identify and implement the initial tactics, whilst also communicating the need for support.

### Tactical Command

55. In the initial stages of an incident, first responders are responsible for tactics. Once the scale and nature of the incident is known, emergency services will appoint officers to act as tactical commanders for their organisation. Other responder agencies will also appoint individuals to act as tactical commanders or co-ordinators on behalf of their organisations where relevant.
56. Communication and co-ordination between commanders is critical. Tactical commanders will be located at a mutually agreed location where they can maintain effective joint command of the operation. This includes effective joint working with other

services, and other factors such as access to communications systems. To support this a number of Fire Stations have been identified to provide this facility.

57. Where circumstances hinder co-location of commanders (of any level) then communications arrangements will be implemented, through the use of other means (i.e. Teleconferencing).
58. The Tactical Coordination Group is likely to be in place before the strategic level and is also likely to be the first senior officer taking command of the incident. In the early stages of an incident, the tactical commander is likely to set priorities before the strategic commander has set a strategy.
59. Frontline Surrey Council Service have 24 hour rotas in place to ensure that there is the correct managerial level of officer available to support the Tactical Command level with expertise and resource based on the needs of the response.

## **OPERATIONAL**

60. Operational commanders will be working with colleagues from other responder agencies. This will most likely be at, or close to, the scene of the incident.
61. They will control and deploy the resources of their respective service within a functional or geographical area, and will implement the tactical plan as directed by the tactical commander.

## **Recent Incidents in 2017**

62. The summer of 2017 has seen a number of incidents both in the United Kingdom and Europe. These have included,
  - Barcelona terror attack: 17 August 2017
  - Finsbury Park terror attack: June 19 2017
  - Grenfell Tower Fire: June 14 2017
  - London Bridge terror attack: June 3 2017
  - UK government has raised the threat level to CRITICAL: May 23 2017
  - Manchester terror attack: May 22 2017
  - Paris shooting: April 20 2017
  - Stockholm Truck attack: April 7 2017
  - Westminster car and knife attack: March 22 2017
  - Louvre knife attack: February 3 2017
63. During this period there have also been a number of incidents of bomb threats made to schools across the UK including schools in Surrey. This has been a particular concern given the intent of terrorists to cause harm to children and young people in their recent attacks and the move to less sophisticated attack methods that are more readily available.
64. In dealing with these incidents colleagues in London have been under prolonged and sustained demand on their resources. The SCC Emergency Management Team along with officers from Sussex and Kent emergency planning teams have provided support to the command centre overseeing the response to the Grenfell incident as part of pre-existing mutual aid arrangements.

## Conclusions:

65. The medium to long term impact of the recent incidents is still being assessed nationally, with the expectation that there will be some significant changes to the current local response and recovery requirements. It is expected that there will need to be changes to local response plans to support these changes in an environment of increasing threat and risk at a time where there are less resources amongst partner organisations.

## Recommendations:

66. The Corporate Services Select Committee is asked to note and discuss the contents of the report and consider the appropriate timescale for future reporting.

## Current Work and Immediate Next steps:

67. The UK incidents noted above are still under review and investigation, and as such, official reports into the incidents have not yet been completed. The initial feedback has been that the following areas should be reviewed by Category One Responders through the Local Resilience Forums,
- Organizations Business Continuity Plans
    - Specific Plans Capability Plans
    - Mass Casualty Plans
    - Mass Fatality Plans
  - Welfare Support to Victims
  - Mutual Aid Arrangements with other agencies
68. In addition to this the Surrey Local Resilience Forum has requested that there is an assurance process in place across partners to ensure that arrangements are in place to support a protracted incident on the scale experienced in London during the summer.
69. The Emergency Management Team has worked with Surrey County Council Property and HR services to implement the arrangements required within the Council for a move to Critical. These arrangements were used for the first time on the 23 May 2017 with the national move in the threat state to Critical due to a suspected imminent attack somewhere in the UK. The Local Resilience Forum will be reviewing and testing these plans with an exercise before the end of 2017.
70. The SE7 Group has requested a review of the mutual aid arrangements across the SE7 Group to understand the current situation, this work will commence on the 8 September 2017.
71. The Emergency Management Team has been working with the South East Counter Terrorism Unit to establish a means for schools to protect themselves against terrorist threats. Advice has been given to head teachers on their responsibilities upon receiving a threat, to prevent unnecessary evacuations from school sites. Emergency Management Team officers have now had the required training to undertake site assessments for the Dynamic Lock Down of school sites and other locations with the aim of establishing a programme to deliver this advice to Surrey schools in response to requests from Head Teachers.

## Medium Term Next Steps

72. Work to support and establish Community Resilience Groups in the context of personal and business resilience has been underway for some time and will continue. Resilience to emergencies and disasters is about individuals and communities being aware of risks and planning and preparing for them to minimize the impact and disruption.
73. The aim of promoting Community resilience is to empowering individuals, businesses and community groups to:
  - take collective action to both increase their own resilience and that of others
  - come together to identify and support vulnerable individuals
  - take responsibility for the promotion of individual and business resilience
74. The Emergency Management Team will also be progressing other work relating to,
  - Working with Clinical Commission Groups to progress emergency planning and business continuity arrangements
  - Maintaining the Business Continuity Arrangements for Surrey County and Surrey Fire and Rescue
  - Major Sporting events on the Highway and Public Events
  - Support to national planning for the Royal Household
  - Public Protest for Oil Exploration and other Environmental concerns
75. Continue to the work to ensure greater collaboration with Sussex Local Resilience Forum to support the lead force model in place between Surrey and Sussex Police.

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### Sources/background papers:

Local authorities' preparedness for civil emergencies - A good practice guide - October 2014, SOLACE and Department for Communities and Local Government

A councillor's guide to civil emergencies – May 2016, Local Government Association

## **Annex One - Surrey Local Resilience Forum Membership**

### **Category One Responders**

Category 1 responders are known as core responders - they include the usual "blue-light" emergency services as well as others:

- Surrey Police, (including the British Transport Police)
- Surrey Fire and Rescue Service
- South East Coast Ambulance Service
- Surrey County Council
- Borough and Districts
- Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts, Foundation Trusts, Health Protection Agency
- Environment Agency

### **Category 2 responders**

Category 2 responders are key co-operating responders that act in support of the Category 1 responders. Category 2 responders are mostly utility companies and transport organizations:

- Electricity distributors and transmitters
- Gas distributors
- Water and sewerage undertakers
- Telephone service providers (fixed and mobile)
- Network Rail
- Train Operating Companies (passenger and freight)
- Highways England
- Airport operators
- Health and Safety Executive
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (Included as CAT 2 in 2012)

### **Other responders**

- Voluntary Sector, (Red Cross, St John, Salvation Army, WRVS, RSPCA, Raynet).
- Army
- Royal Air Force

## **Annex 2 - RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES THE UK CENTRAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS**

The local responders are the basic building block of the response to any emergency in the UK. Emergencies (or major incidents) are routinely handled by the emergency services and other local responders without the need for any significant central government involvement. Such emergencies may include major road crashes, localised flooding and many industrial accidents. The police will normally take the lead in co-ordinating the local response where a crime has been committed, or if there is a threat to public safety. The local multi-agency response is co-ordinated through a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) located in the Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC). The chair of the group, whether a police lead or led by the Local Authority Chief Executive, is known as the Strategic Coordinating Group Chair (This may colloquially be referred to by some responders as a 'Gold Commander'. Whereas this applies in a single agency response, in a multi-agency response it might be that the Police Gold Commander is also the SCG Chair, but in the role of SCG chair s/he is exercising a co-ordination function, not a command function).

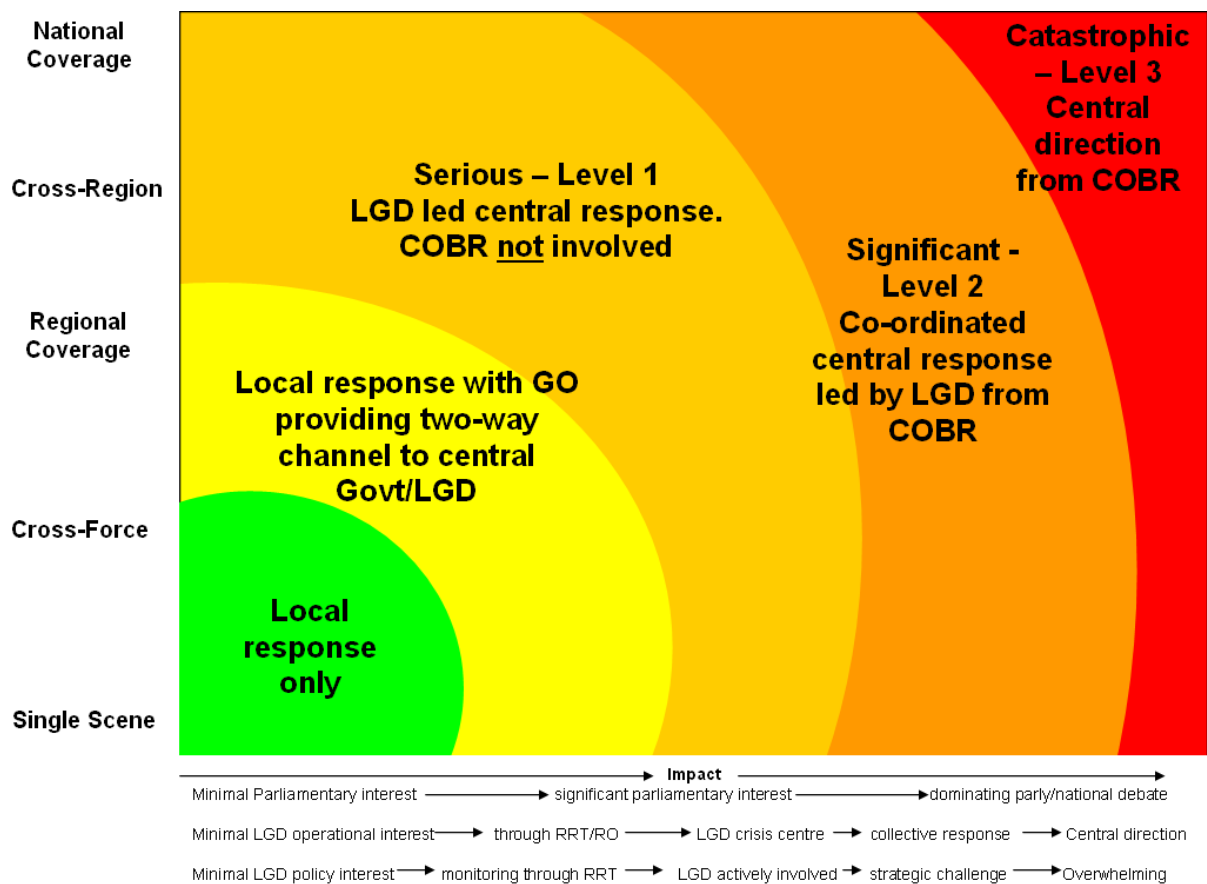
The principle of subsidiarity emphasises the importance of local decision making supported, where necessary, by co-ordination at a higher level. In order to aid planning, further understanding, and provide guidance to responders and central government planners on when they might expect central government involvement in responding to an incident, three broad types (or levels) of emergency have been identified which are likely to require direct central government engagement in addition to those emergencies described in paragraph 1.7 above which are solely managed locally. These are:

**Significant emergency (Level 1)** has a wider focus and requires central government involvement or support, primarily from a lead government department or a devolved administration, alongside the work of the emergency services, local authorities and other organisations. There is however no actual or potential requirement for fast, inter-departmental/agency, decision making which might necessitate the activation of the collective central government response, although in a few cases there may be value in using the COBR complex to facilitate the briefing of senior officials and ministers on the emergency and its management. Examples of emergencies on this scale include most severe weather-related problems. In addition, most consular emergencies overseas fall into this category with the FCO providing advice and support to those affected alongside the authorities in the country affected.

**Serious emergency (Level 2)** is one which has, or threatens, a wide and/or prolonged impact requiring sustained central government co-ordination and support from a number of departments and agencies, usually including the regional tier in England and where appropriate, the devolved administrations. The central government response to such an emergency would be co-ordinated from the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR), under the leadership of the lead government department. Examples of an emergency at this level could be a terrorist attack, widespread urban flooding, widespread and prolonged loss of essential services, a

serious outbreak of animal disease, or a major emergency overseas with a significant effect on UK nationals or interests.

**Catastrophic emergency (Level 3)** is one which has an exceptionally high and potentially widespread impact and requires immediate central government direction and support, such as a major natural disaster, or a Chernobyl-scale industrial accident. Characteristics might include a top-down response in circumstances where the local response had been overwhelmed, or the use of emergency powers were required to direct the response or requisition assets and resources. The Prime Minister would lead the national response.



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