

Decision Report - Non-Key Decision

Forward Plan Reference: FP/23/01/05

Decision Date - 15/03/23



LGR Emergency Incident Response

Executive Member(s): Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts - Lead Member for Communities

Local Member(s) and Division: N/A

Lead Officers: Nicola Dawson and Claire Malcolmson

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1. Summary / Background

1.1 Somerset Council will have a statutory duty to maintain readiness to respond to emergencies. The five local authorities have been planning, preparing, training, exercising, responding and recovering together for emergencies since 2005 in the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Partnership.

1.1. To enable the new Somerset Council to meet its statutory duties, emergency response plans have been aligned for the new Council and supporting capabilities including contact lists and duty officer rotas have been checked, updated and prepared ready for 1st April.

2. Recommendations

2.1. The Executive to note this report as assurance that the emergency plans and response arrangements are in place for Vesting Day and beyond. This is a tranche one deliverable for LGR.

3. Reasons for recommendations

3.1 Emergency preparedness is a statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

4. Other options considered

4.1. This is a statutory duty and a required tranche one deliverable for LGR.

5. Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

5.1. Emergency preparedness is a statutory duty.

5.2. This supports the priority of being a Healthy and Caring Somerset as the purpose of emergency preparedness is to enable effective and timely actions by local authorities to provide support and assistance to affected residents and communities and mitigate harm and distress.

6. Consultations and co-production

- 6.1.** Alignment and updating of plans and emergency response arrangements have been coordinated by the civil contingencies and emergency planning sub-workstream within the LGR Service Alignment and Improvement workstream. The sub-workstream included officers with civil contingencies responsibilities and expertise across the four District council plus the Civil Contingencies Unit staff.
- 6.2.** Progress with the plan alignment and response arrangements has been monitored by the LGR Service Alignment and Improvement Board with regular input from other sub-workstreams. The LGR Programme Board noted and signed off the aligned arrangements on 28th February 2023.

7. Financial and Risk Implications

- 7.1.** No financial implications. Emergency preparedness in the new unitary council will be a continuation of existing service delivery within current budgets. Any future transformational activities will be the subject of separate decisions.
- 7.2.** The main risk to the new Council will be failure to respond effectively to a major incident or other civil contingencies emergency. Particularly over the Vesting Day and immediate period beyond. The plans and arrangements for the new Council have been adapted from the existing tried and tested arrangements. Officers with incident response responsibilities are accustomed to working together in emergencies.

8. Legal and HR Implications

- 8.1.** No legal implications.
- 8.2.** No HR implications for the arrangements for Vesting Day. Any future transformational activities will be the subject of separate decisions.

9. Other Implications

9.1. Equalities Implications

There are no new equalities implications. This is an alignment of existing plans and arrangements which have been subject to previous equalities impact assessments.

9.2. Community Safety Implications

No community safety implications from the aligned plans.

9.3. Sustainability Implications

No sustainability implications from the aligned plans.

9.4. Health and Safety Implications

No new health and safety implications. This is an alignment of existing plans and arrangements which include health and safety provisions.

9.5. Health and Wellbeing Implications

No new health and wellbeing implications. This is an alignment of existing plans and arrangements which include considerations for people with vulnerabilities in emergency situations.

9.6. Social Value

Not applicable.

10. Scrutiny comments / recommendations:

10.1 Arrangements have not been considered by a Scrutiny Committee.

11. Background

11.1. Somerset Council will have a statutory duty to maintain readiness to respond to emergencies. This is a long established and well understood duty. The five local authorities have been planning, preparing, training, exercising, responding and recovering together in the Somerset Local Authorities Civil Contingencies Partnership since 2005. Since 2016, the five local authorities have had a shared generic emergency response and recovery plan. The majority of the other plans and guidance are common documents to the five councils. Existing plans and arrangements are well tested and are continually improved with learning from incidents. The local authorities have responded to a variety of major incidents in that time including the Somerset Levels and Moors flooding of 2012, 2014 and 2023 and the Covid pandemic.

11.2. To ensure readiness for Vesting Day, the following activities have been undertaken: existing shared emergency response plans have been aligned and re-badged for the new Council. Supporting capabilities including phone lists and emergency equipment have been checked. Interim call-out arrangements have been finalised for the initial months to maintain resilience and to allow time to transition and align to the new directorate and staffing structures. Two emergency exercises were held for Strategic and Tactical officers in late 2022.

12. Background Papers

12.1 List of Somerset Council emergency policies, strategies, plans and guidance.

Report Sign-Off

		Date completed
Legal Implications	Honor Clarke	06/03/23
Governance	Scott Wooldridge	06/03/23
Corporate Finance	Jason Vaughan	06/03/23
Customers, Digital and Workforce	Chris Squire	N/A
Property	Paula Hewitt / Oliver Woodhams	N/A
Procurement	Claire Griffiths	N/A
Senior Manager	Claire Malcolmson	02/03/23
Commissioning Development	Sunita Mills / Ryszard Rusinek	N/A
Executive Member	Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts - Lead Member for Communities	06/03/23
<u>Consulted on Non-Key Decision</u>		
Local Member	N/A	N/A
Opposition Spokesperson	Opposition Spokesperson - Communities - Cllr Faye Purbrick	07/03/23 Informed Executive Agenda
Scrutiny Chairs	All Scrutiny Chairs	07/03/23 Informed Executive Agenda