

Audit and Governance Committee

4 August 2025

Annual Emergency Management and Resilience Report 2024/25

For Review and Consultation

Cabinet Member:

Cllr S Bartlett, Planning and Emergency Planning

Local Councillor(s): N/A

Executive Director:

J Mair, Director of Legal & Democratic

Report author and job title: Marc Eyre, Service Manager for Assurance
Email: marc.eyre@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

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Report status: Public

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This is the second annual report on emergency management and resilience and follows a request from Audit and Governance Committee to receive a periodic update on activity and learnings from events. It provides a comprehensive overview of Dorset Council's preparedness, response, and recovery efforts in managing civil emergencies. It reflects on key incidents, evaluates performance, and outlines strategic priorities for 2025/26.
- 1.2 Appendix A to this report sets out background information on the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) legislation; Dorset Council's command and control structure; arrangements for business continuity and community resilience; and the role of councillors. This should provide some context to those members of the committee with limited knowledge of the Council's emergency management arrangements.
- 1.3 Over the reporting period, the Emergency Management and Resilience team responded to 49 incidents, ranging from severe weather events and fires to ICT disruptions and pollution threats. Notable incidents included Storm Bert, the Gainsborough Care Home evacuation, and the Gorge Café fire. These events tested the Council's command and control structures, which were refined in 2024 to streamline Gold and Silver officer roles and improve training

compliance—now at 94%.

- 1.4 The Council's Incident Management Teams (IMTs) played a pivotal role in coordinating multi-agency responses. Lessons learned from debriefs have led to improvements in communication, resource deployment, and integration of humanitarian support, particularly through the proposed Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officer (HALO) role.
- 1.5 Exercising remains a cornerstone of resilience. Dorset Council participated in statutory and multi-agency exercises, including "Operation Shortbill" and "Exercise Eleos," to test readiness for nuclear, coastal flooding, and recovery scenarios. Planning is underway for national exercises on i) communicable disease, pandemic and public health emergencies; and ii) counter-terrorism.
- 1.6 Business continuity has been a focus following a critical ICT incident and a limited assurance audit. A revised framework, updated action cards, and a training plan have been implemented, with 69% of services reviewing their continuity plans in the past year. Automation is being explored to support ongoing updates.
- 1.7 Community resilience efforts faced challenges due to the expiration of funding for the Community Resilience Liaison Officer. However, integration with the "Our Future Council" programme and continued engagement through the Dorset Prepared website aim to sustain momentum.
- 1.8 National developments, including the governments' recently published UK Resilience Action Plan and Strategic Defence Review, alongside findings from a number of national public inquiries, are shaping local strategies. The Council is aligning with these to enhance preparedness, particularly for high-risk scenarios like national power outages and cyber-attacks.
- 1.9 Priorities for 2025/26 include:
 - Strengthening business continuity and humanitarian planning.
 - Enhancing societal resilience through community engagement.
 - Delivery and participating in national and local exercises.
 - Responding to evolving risks, including climate-related events and technological threats.
- 1.10 This report provides assurance of Dorset Council's capability to manage emergencies and highlights its commitment to continuous improvement in resilience planning and response.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To note the annual report and learnings from incidents.

3. Reason for the recommendation(s)

- 3.1 To provide assurance over the Council's ability to respond to significant civil emergencies, in meeting its obligations as a Category One Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act and associated legislation.

4. Incidents During 2024/25

- 4.1 During 2024/25, the Emergency Management and Resilience team recorded 49 incidents in which they were mobilised, in addition to a range of call outs not associated with response. In the majority of cases, these incidents will be managed within the team (or by the Duty Emergency Management and Resilience Officer out of hours), but larger incidents will require input/support from across a number of Dorset Council services, escalation to Gold/Silver and, in some cases, escalation to the multi-agency LRF. By their very nature, the most significant events can require ongoing response over a number of days, weeks or even months.
- 4.2 In the event of a significant emergency or business continuity incident, the Emergency Management and Resilience team will liaise with DC Gold/Silver officers to determine the need for calling an Incident Management Team (IMT). This will bring together decision makers from across all impacted services to understand the risks and determine a co-ordinated response. The IMT will help understand and inform Gold/Silver officers of the latest situation, in advance of multi-agency meetings (e.g. Strategic Coordinating Groups and Tactical Coordination Groups).
- 4.3 Emergency Management and Resilience response per calendar months is set out below:

April 2024	Fatality at an event; Blue light response to health and safety incident
May 2024	Mutual aid support to evacuation; ICT business continuity incident; Support to Dorset Police for criminal investigation
June 2024	Body found on boat in Weymouth Marina Animal carcass on beach

July 2024	Beached vessel Swanage Out of hours alleged data breach Power outages Bridport
August 2024	Multiple right wing Protests; ICT business continuity incident
September 2024	Sunk uninsured vessel and salvage in Swanage waters Dorset Council website failure; Vehicle in river; Potential pollution incident with sunken vessel; Severe weather; Explosive items in car park
October 2024	Potential pollution incident with sunken vessel; Fire requiring evacuation; Deaths at care home
November 2024	Snow event; Lorry fire incident Fire at residential property with possible evacuation; HGV carrying fireworks Severe weather - Snow event and flooding Landslip
December 2024	Severe weather; Fire requiring evacuation; Fire requiring possible evacuation; Gas leak and evacuation
January 2025	Unknown chemical; Road traffic collision involving DC vehicle; Fire requiring possible evacuation; Fire at care home requiring evacuation Severe weather – multiple Pollution reports
February 2025	Severe weather; RTC and road closure Diesel spill on highway; Stranded cetacean Dangerous structure

March 2025	Security incident requiring evacuation; Multiple wildfires within close vicinity; Wildfire; Dangerous structure; Unexploded device; Loss of Dorset Council phone lines; Chemicals on public bus; Safeguarding issue
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2.1 Those incidents requiring Incident Management Teams and/or multi agency co-ordination are set out below. A key Emergency Management and Resilience discipline is to undertake de-briefing, so that plans and response can be enhanced for future incidents. These de-briefs identify i) what went well; ii) what didn't go so well; iii) what could be done better in future. A summary of key learnings is included, where available, below.

2.2 **ICT Business Continuity Incident**

- 2.2.1 On the 28th May 2024 an Incident Management Team was instigated to consider a risk with licencing which was thought could have resulted in the Council losing access to critical ICT products until licencing could be resolved, which presented significant business continuity implications.
- 2.2.2 This incident prompted the Service Manager for Assurance to commission a SWAP Internal Audit on business continuity, which is discussed elsewhere in this report and led to a review of the framework, business impact analysis and introduction of action card review monitoring.

2.3 **Storm Bert and Snow Event**

- 2.3.1 The county was subjected to a severe weather event through the period 21 to 24 November 2024, which started with a snow event and continued in the following days with a named Storm (Storm Bert).
- 2.3.2 Debriefing identified that some elements of the response may have operated more smoothly if a precautionary incident management team had been held (weather warnings had not met the thresholds); 4 x4 provision should be considered for stand up as a precaution; improvements to out of hours warning and informing for live traffic updates etc.

2.4 **Gainsborough Care Home**

- 2.4.1 On 23 October 2024 the Council received notification from South Western Ambulance Service that a care home operated by a provider - Gainsborough Care Home in Swanage - had reported three deceased residents overnight. The cause of the incident had not been determined, and residents

were evacuated to a rest centre. Whilst investigations were ongoing it was necessary to establish alternative provision for residents at speed. The Police have now concluded their investigation, no further action will be taken.

- 2.4.2 Learnings included improving the interface between the command and control/emergency response processes, Adults Social Care and health processes; earlier deployment of additional local authority liaison officers as resourcing was stretched; early determination of when the Council needs to take control of processes being followed under the provider business continuity arrangements; earlier and more co-ordinated communication with councillors and staff; embedding the humanitarian assistance role with associated training for designated officers.

2.5 Gorge Café Fire, Dorchester

- 2.5.1 On 8 December, whilst officers were in response to a concurrent storm event, a fire broke out at the Gorge Café in Dorchester resulting in a partial collapse of the building. This required temporary closure of South Street, an impact of local businesses and an immediate need to rehouse some residents.
- 2.5.2 The local debrief has not yet been signed off, but there was a feeling expressed from services that we could improve inter-departmental communications for a prolonged incident involving multiple service areas. Future Incident Management Team close downs will include a consideration of whether a recovery group (whether full or light touch) would be of assistance to provide more joined up work.

3. Changes to the Command and Control Structure

- 3.1 In 2024 the decision was reached to reduce the number of Gold and Silver officers to ensure that those fulfilling the roles build up a greater level of experience and makes it easier to maintain training levels. Therefore, Gold is now performed by six members of the Senior Leadership Team (supplemented by Corporate Directors if necessary). Silver is performed by volunteer officers across a range of Corporate Directors, Heads of Service and Service Managers.
- 3.2 The Emergency Response Plan sets out that all Gold and Silver officers should receive training both before commencing first duties and refresher training every three years. All Gold and Silver officers are provided with an overview of their role by the appropriate Emergency Management and Resilience business partner ahead of the first duty. In addition to this, multi-agency training should be undertaken, together with decision making and inquest/public enquiry training. At present 94% of current Gold and Silver officers have received or booked on multi agency training (refreshed every within the last three years). This is an improvement from 67% and 65% respectively last financial year.

- 3.3 Gold and Silver officers are also encouraged (and often required) to participate in exercises, to help boost experience. The Emergency Management and Resilience team periodically host short workshops to help share knowledge.

4. Exercising

- 4.1 The REPPIR (Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations) and COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) regulations set out the requirement for statutory exercises for demonstrating offsite plans. In particular, significant planning and exercising is statutorily required for the Portland Port MoD submarine operational berth at least every three years to satisfy the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), and Defence Safety Nuclear Regulator (DNSR). This also allows the MoD to maintain Portland Port as an asset for the Royal Navy's nuclear-powered warships. Operation Shortbill is the largest multi-agency exercise held by the LRF and was successfully completed under regulator observation in February 2025. Whilst not as onerous, COMAH sites are also subject to regular exercising/testing, to satisfy regulators (Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency) and maintain the operators' licenses.
- 4.2 The Council planned and participated in a two day multi agency exercise in October 2024 called "Exercise Eleos". Day one was a response to a widespread coastal flooding and high wind incident. Day two looked at the recovery from that incident and there were a number of in person workshops looking at the humanitarian response, communities, health and infrastructure. Dorset Council played fully throughout both days.
- 4.3 The Covid-19 module one findings highlighted a need for stronger national led exercises. Planning has commenced across the Local Resilience Forum for two significant exercises, relating to i) communicable disease, pandemic and public health emergencies; and ii) counter terrorism. The Council will participate in both the planning and delivery, in terms of national requirements and reporting; Local Resilience Forum level exercising, but also as an opportunity to test internal planning arrangements.
- 4.4 Exercises involve a whole range of Dorset Council services, depending on the scenario, in addition to providing hands on experience to Gold and Silver officers.

5. Community Resilience

- 5.1 In 2023 the LRF agreed to fund a pan-Dorset Community Resilience Liaison Officer (CRLO) on a fixed term contract, however this contract expired and future funding is currently unclear. This limits the amount of proactive engagement that the team are able to have with Parish and Town Councils and community groups. A bid for future funding from the LRF has been

agreed in principle, subject to LRF Executive sign off. However, spend has to be achieved within the financial year, which limits the recruitment capabilities. A range of options for delivery are being explored, including additional hours within the team and potential zero hour contract work.

- 5.2 An approach has been made to the Our Future Council programme to seek embedding of community resilience principles within the community partnership project.

6. **National Learnings**

- 6.1 Alongside learnings from Dorset specific incidents, the Council will also review findings from significant national incidents, particularly where subject to a public inquiry. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster committed to undertaking a review of UK national resilience in his statement to the House of Commons on 19 July, in response to the Covid-19 Inquiry's Module 1 report, and reflecting on other significant civil emergencies such as Grenfell and the Manchester Arena bombings. The [UK Government Resilience Action Plan](#) was released in July 2025. Whilst at this stage a number of the points within the action plan are aspirations, the likely implications for local authorities and other category one responders includes:

- Local authorities are expected to take a more proactive role in resilience, recognising that government alone cannot manage all risks. Resilience is now framed as a whole-of-society responsibility;
- Local responders must align their risk assessments with the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) and National Resilience Planning Assumptions, applying them to local contexts;
- Local authorities are expected to participate in more frequent and realistic training and exercising, including multi-agency simulations, to improve preparedness and response capabilities;
- Local responders must work with infrastructure operators to ensure local critical services (e.g. utilities, transport, health) are resilient to disruptions, including cyber threats and power outages;
- Local authorities are encouraged to strengthen ties with voluntary, community, and faith groups to enhance community-level preparedness and response. This may become a legislative requirement (subject currently to consultation);
- Councils are expected to improve public awareness and preparedness through better communication strategies, including encouraging households to take basic preparedness actions;

- There is an emphasis on improving data sharing between national and local levels to support better situational awareness and decision-making during emergencies;
- Local authorities are urged to embed resilience considerations into spatial planning, housing, and infrastructure development to reduce long-term vulnerabilities;
- Local responders will be subject to more structured assurance processes to evaluate their resilience capabilities and identify areas for improvement.

6.2 The Government also recently issued its [Strategic Defence Review for 2025](#), which includes within section 6 of the paper a focus on the whole of society approach to home defence and resilience. Whilst the primary focus is on the military, there are aspirations for wider resilience which is likely to impact on the local authority and other Local Resilience Forum partners.

6.3 The previous government initiated a public inquiry into the handling of the Covid pandemic. The inquiry is ongoing, but the findings from Module One, which covered resilience structures and preparedness across at both a national and local level have been released. The Cabinet Office released a response to the findings, which can be viewed [here](#). Although largely targeted at a national level, there were some learnings that have been localised, such as improved data provision (through business intelligence attendance at Incident Management Teams) and a review of the command and control structure to ensure that training and experience can be more easily achieved. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, there is also an increased expectation in relation to exercising.

6.4 The Grenfell Inquiry highlighted the need for local authorities to have effective plans in place for providing humanitarian assistance, with those plans to be supported by a humanitarian assistance lead officer (HALO). The Dorset LRF Humanitarian Assistance Capability Group has proposed that the HALO role is taken forward by both local authorities. Senior officers in Adults and Housing, Children's and Public Health would be best placed to fulfil that role. The HALO is responsible for ensuring the delivery of effective, person-centered humanitarian care to meet the needs of people affected by major incidents or emergencies. Although not formalised, dedicated officers did perform the key aspects of this HALO role during the Gainsborough and Gorge Café incidents. The Emergency Management and Resilience Team will be working with three Directorates to formalise arrangements.

7. **Business Continuity**

7.1 Following some concerns around embeddedness of business continuity plans following an incident in 2025, the Service Manager for Assurance commissioned SWAP Internal Audit Partnership to carry out a review. This

identified a number of weaknesses and presented a limited assurance opinion. The majority of actions in response to the findings have now been completed, including signoff of the revised Business Continuity framework; a review of the business impact analysis by Directorate Management Teams with sign-off by Senior Leadership Team in June 2025; and a training and exercising plan.

- 7.2 All services operate an action card identifying how they respond to a business continuity incident. As at May 2025, 69% of action cards had been reviewed and updated by owners (generally Service Managers or Heads of Service) in the last year. Since this annual key performance indicator has been calculated, an ICT related business continuity incident related to an attempted cyber attack has prompted a further influx of requests to access and review action cards.
- 7.3 A proposal is in development to look at whether elements of the business continuity requirements on action card owners can be supported by automation, but this will be subject to review vs conflicting automation priorities.
- 7.4 The work of the Emergency Management and Resilience team in developing a range of simple “self service” exercises that can be adopted by services to test their resilience against a range of risks was shortlisted for the national ALARM (Public Sector Risk Management) awards, held in June 2025. Although not winning the category, the national recognition of this initiative was positive.

8. Priorities for 2025/26

- 8.1 The Local Resilience Forum workplan is very challenging, with a wide range of plans subject to review, and an increase in national led exercises requiring local level planning. Plans relating to a number of workstreams are currently actively being reviewed and updated, notably: coastal pollution; mass fatalities; rock falls and landslides; animal disease; fuel; loss of utilities (water / gas); wildfires; dam and reservoir inundation; vulnerable people data sharing; recovery, telecoms, community resilience, humanitarian assistance, National Power Outage, communicable disease, pandemic and public health emergencies, major accident hazard pipelines (MAHP) and Radiation Monitoring Units.
- 8.2 The key priority is to respond to incidents effectively and efficiently, and ensure that any subsequent learnings are incorporated into future planning and response. As noted elsewhere in the report, we are experiencing an increase in incidents, for instance through the changing weather patterns and technology risks.

- 8.3 The risk of a significant loss of power (including a national power outage) remains high on the risk register, due to its significant impacts as well as challenges of responding, at a time when all organisations are so reliant on technology. There remains focus on planning to respond to a national power outage, including resilient communications and establishing community hubs.
- 8.4 Embeddedness of business continuity action cards remains a priority, to ensure that all critical services have reviewed and tested their plans. The action cards will need to be updated to reflect any structural changes following the move to a new operating model as part of the Our Future Council programme. We are looking at whether automation can be used to ease some of the pressure on managers in updating both the action cards and business impact assessment.
- 8.5 Dorset LRF has highlighted several large gaps around the planning for humanitarian assistance. This work has progressed over the last year, with some smaller plans being developed that sit under the umbrella of human aspects planning. Within Dorset Council, Emergency Management and Resilience have already developed excellent working relationships with Adults and Housing, especially in an incident and from the learnings of the Gainsborough Care Home Evacuation. Developing the adults on call manager role in an incident was a key feature. Once agreed, implementation of the HALO role and the processes will be worked on and will become embedded into the Local Resilience Forum.
- 8.6 A number of national led exercises will commence this year, including communicable disease, pandemic and public health emergencies and counter terrorism. The Council will participate in the planning and delivery, in terms of national requirements and reporting; Local Resilience Forum level exercising, but also as an opportunity to test internal planning arrangements.
- 8.7 There will remain a concerted effort to engage with communities and improve societal resilience. The Council is exploring funding opportunities to support this work, alongside any work integrated into the Community Partnerships Programme within Our Future Council.
- 8.8 The Council will review and respond to recommendations within the UK Government Resilience Action Plan and the Strategic Defence Review.
9. **Alternative options considered**
- 9.1 None
10. **Legal considerations**
- 10.1 The Council meets its obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as a Category One Responder, alongside associated legislation.

11. Financial implications

- 11.1 The financial impacts on an organisation of a significant emergency response can be extreme, and an unplanned / unbudgeted expenditure. Some protection is provided via the Bellwin scheme, which is a government emergency financial assistance programme designed to help local authorities recover from the immediate costs of responding to major emergencies. When a local authority incurs significant unbudgeted expenditure while protecting life or property during a disaster—such as flooding, severe weather, or major fires—it may be eligible for reimbursement under this scheme. The scheme typically covers up to 85% of eligible costs above a set threshold, which is calculated based on the authority's annual budget. The scheme only applies to immediate response costs and does not cover longer-term recovery or infrastructure repair.

12. Natural environment, climate & ecology implications

- 12.1 The changing climate informs weather events, and as an example 2024/25 presented a significant number of storm challenges. Emergency response plans need to keep pace with the changing environment.

13. Well-being and health implications

- 13.1 Protecting life is a key objective for LRFs, containing and mitigating the impacts of an emergency and creating the conditions for a return to normality.

14. Other implications

- 14.1 None

15. Risk implications

- 15.1 HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

- 15.2 As this is a report setting out activity, the risk has been ranked as low. However, it should be noted that a number of high risks are defined within both the Dorset Community Risk Register and Dorset Council's Risk Register. In particular for Dorset Council, the threat of cyber-attack is identified as a very high risk, and the impacts of a national power outage identified as high risk. In both instances, this recognises that there are significant controls in place, but that both provide high level impacts should they arise.

16. Equalities

- 16.1 None

17. **Appendices**

17.1 Appendix A – Background Information

18. **Background papers**

18.1 None

19. **Report sign-off**

19.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer) and the appropriate Portfolio Holder(s)

Emergency Management and Resilience – Dorset Council

Civil Contingencies Act

The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 establishes a clear set of roles and responsibilities for organisations involved in emergency preparation and response. The Act divides local responders into two categories, imposing a different set of duties on each.

Category 1 Responders are those organisations at the core of the response to most emergencies, which includes local authorities, alongside police, fire, ambulance service, health, coastguard, and the environment agency. Category 1 responders are required to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
- put in place emergency plans;
- put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements;
- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency;
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authority responsibility).

Meanwhile Category 2 Responders consist of the Health and Safety Executive, transport, utility companies and the voluntary sector organisations. These organisations are generally less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work but will be heavily involved in incidents that affect their sector.

The CCA requires the establishment of Local Resilience Forums (LRF), usually based on each police area, as a mechanism to discharge the above duties. The Dorset LRF therefore covers both Dorset Council and Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council areas and includes representatives from each of the Category 1 responders. The LRF provides a co-ordinated cross-partner approach to planning, training/exercising, response, recovery and debriefing. The workplan of the LRF is informed by the [National Risk Register](#), and the localised [Dorset Risk Register](#). The administration and co-ordination of the LRF is facilitated by the Dorset Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), which is funded by category 1 responders and hosted by Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (DWFRS).

In the event of a significant emergency requiring multi partner response, the LRF will initiate a Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG), determining the overall strategy for

response), and a Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) that determines how to deliver the strategy. For certain emergencies, and generally once the response to an incident is concluded, a Recovery Co-ordinating Group will be initiated. Recovery is the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency. This would most often be led by a local authority.

A range of other legislation also apply. Both REPIR and COMAH are referenced in the main report. The Council also has duties under the PSR (Pipeline Safety Regulations) which are being discharged via Major Accident Hazard Pipelines (MAHP) planning. Dorset Council is the lead duty holder authority for both REPIR, COMAH and MAHP offsite plans.

Emergency Management at Dorset Council

Emergency Management and Resilience at Dorset Council has an identified 'Command and Control' structure set out within the councils' [Emergency Response Plan](#) (internal link), which is reviewed and updated annually. 'Command and Control' is essentially the term used to describe how designated Gold and Silver commanders can effect their authority and direction in an emergency situation, outside of the usual management structures of the organisation. There are 24/7 tours of duty for both Gold (Strategic) and Silver (Tactical) officers (Heads of Service level).

The Emergency Management and Resilience team are part of the Assurance Service, the Legal and Democratic Directorate, and deliver planning, exercising, response and debriefing post incident, as well as facilitating the Council's business continuity arrangements. The team consists of 4.5 fte Emergency Management and Resilience Officers who, together with the Service Manager for Assurance, provide a 24/7 Duty Emergency Management and Resilience Officer function for the Council.

Dorset Council Emergency Plans / Workstreams

Each of the Emergency Management and Resilience Officers lead on a range of workstreams, linked back to the Dorset Risk Register. This incorporates both the Council's response and statutory duties, and in some cases multi-agency plans led by Dorset Council. The key workstreams are set out below:

Humanitarian and Communities	Humanitarian response; Vulnerable people data; Communicable disease, pandemic and public health emergencies National power outage; Large scale evacuations; Community hubs and rest centres; Training and exercising; Summer operations; Health resilience;
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	Voluntary organisations; Utility (water) planning; Low pressure gas; Community resilience; Football safety advisory groups
Weather and Environmental	Severe weather; Dam and reservoir offsite plans; Stranded motorists; Space weather; Wildfires; Climate change; Rockfalls and landslides; Coastal pollution
External Threats	Cyber attack; Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN); Counter terrorism
Statutory Workstreams	Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations offsite plans; Radiation monitoring units; Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) offsite plans; Major Accident Hazard pipelines
Miscellaneous (incl internal plans)	Business continuity; Operation Bridges (death of a senior royal); Excess deaths; Mass fatalities; Recovery; Fuel disruption planning; Telecoms; Site clearance; Animal health; Technology; Website and external communications Events Safety Advisory Group (SAG)

Allocation of workstreams is reviewed regularly, and adjusted to ensure a fair caseload across the team. There are also a series of action cards to support responding officers.

In cases of national security, lead on planning and response is provided by central government.

Exercising is a key part of ensuring that the Council (and other LRF partners) are able to effectively respond to incidents. Some exercises are required by law, and hence statutory (for instance, offsite plans for REPPiR and COMAH sites, which are regulated). Other plans are exercised following periodic reviews, or on a risk based schedule.

The Role of Councillors

The Local Government Association has provided a useful councillors guide setting out [their role in a civil emergency](#). In an emergency councillors are not involved in the operational response which is led by council officers. However, it defines the following areas where councillors can provide good leadership:

- *Political leadership* – Ensuring that the Council is meeting its obligations under the CCA, in terms of preparing for and responding to emergencies. By way of this annual report, Audit and Governance Committee has an opportunity to receive this assurance. Similarly, Emergency Management and Resilience sits within the “Planning and Emergency Management and Resilience” portfolio;
- *Civic leadership* – Providing a focal point for the local area during an emergency. This was seen to great effect during the Covid pandemic, and also in response to recent storm events;
- *Community leadership* – Helping to increase community resilience, and supporting communities’ emergency responses and through the period of recovery. This is covered in more detail in section 5 of this report.

In the event of incident notification, the Duty Emergency Management and Resilience Officer will endeavour to inform the portfolio holder, Leader and relevant ward members. However, the level of contact will vary, as the primary focus of the officer is to respond to the incident.

Business Continuity

Whilst Emergency Response focuses on the safety and protection of life, assets, and the environment, business continuity is focused on the continuity of Dorset Council’s own critical business operations. All services are ranked for criticality, and this ‘business impact assessment’ is used to focus critical service maintenance, prioritisation and recovery in an emergency.

All services are required to maintain a business continuity action card, which sets out how it responds to a range of consequences, such as loss of staff, premises, systems or data, and critical third-party supplier failure. The Emergency Management and Resilience team seek to drive engagement to educate and embed BC across Dorset Council. A number of mini exercises have been released, allowing teams to test the adequacy of business continuity plans against a range of scenarios. This has included the response to a significant power outage, a cyber-

attack and resultant loss of data. It is intended to hold a whole authority business continuity exercise later in the financial year.

The '[Dorset Prepared](#)' website provides tools and guidance to support businesses and voluntary organisations.

Societal resilience

There is a growing recognition nationally of the importance of establishing greater resilience within communities, so that they are able to respond to incidents affecting them locally. Societal resilience is about empowering the whole of society, including individuals, families, businesses, sporting and social clubs, cultural groups, educational establishments, institutions and religious groups to become involved in developing how they can become more resilient.

The Dorset LRF's strategy includes:

- Co-ordinating community resilience across Dorset;
- Providing the knowledge, expertise and tools to support communities;
- Engaging with communities, groups and networks across Dorset, including parish and town councils, faith groups, voluntary groups and community interest groups;
- Encouraging effective dialogue between communities and LRF partners;
- Meet the mandatory requirements and work towards good practice as contained in the National Resilience Standard for Community Resilience

The LRF Community Resilience Group is co-chaired by Dorset and BCP Council officers, and co-ordinates delivery of the strategy. In 2023 the LRF agreed to fund a pan-Dorset Community Resilience Liaison Officer (CRLO) on a fixed term contract, however this contract expired and future funding is currently unclear. Prior to the contract, the CRLO was engaged in the development of several Community Emergency Response Plans. Community resilience remains a team priority, but is being delivered on a "best endeavours" basis by team members at present, as the work is primarily outside of normal working hours.

The '[Dorset Prepared](#)' website has been redeveloped and provides tools and guidance for communities.