

\*\*\*\*OFFICIAL\*\*\*\*

# Overview of Westminster and pan-London Emergency Planning Arrangements

A guide for elected members

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document aims to give an overview of the emergency planning arrangements across London and locally within the City of Westminster. Emergency planning arrangements are regularly reviewed and updated following incidents and exercises and as such this is a live document.

- Overview of key aspects of Emergency Planning
- London Emergency Planning Arrangements
- Westminster Emergency Planning Arrangements
- Role of elected members

There are also appendices which include further details of levels of emergency, cordons and definitions.

### 1.1 Overview

Nationally, emergency planning arrangements are based on the statutory duties laid out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA). The CCA was introduced in 2004 as a replacement for the Civil Defence Act 1984 and is divided into two parts; Part 1 of the act outlines the definitions for an 'emergency' and the key statutory duties for category 1 responders. Part 2 of the act covers emergency powers that the government can use to create temporary emergency legislation during or to deal with a serious emergency.

Local Authorities have seven duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004:

- To operate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency
- Ensure information is shared with other local responders to enhance coordination
- Carry out risk assessments
- Have emergency plans in place
- Have business continuity management arrangements in place
- Have arrangements in place to be able to warn and inform the public in the event of an Emergency
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations regarding business continuity management

#### Category 1 & 2 responders

Category 1 responders, 'Core responders', include the usual 'blue light' responders and agencies that would be directly involved in the response to a major incident. Alongside police, fire and ambulance services, this group also includes local authorities, health trusts and the Environment Agency.

Category 2 responders, 'supporting agencies', are key cooperating responders that support category 1 responders. This group includes utilities, transport providers, telecommunications providers and the Health and Safety Executive.

### 1.2 Levels of Emergencies

The UK central government response; concept of operations, defines the various scale of emergencies. They are as follows:

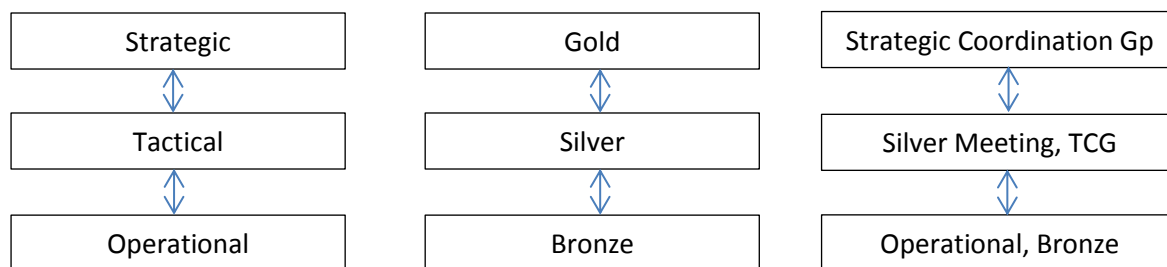
- Local incident
- Local Large Scale incident
- Significant Emergency (Level 1)
- Serious Emergency (Level 2)
- Catastrophic Emergency (Level 3).

Details of these are provided in Appendix 1.

### 1.3 Interoperability between Services

The same levels of Command, Operational (Bronze), Tactical (Silver), Strategic (Gold) are used by each of the emergency services and a number of other responding organisations, including local authorities. By using these universal tiers of command the emergency services and other responders are able to communicate appropriately with one another and understand each other's function and authority.

The below diagram shows the levels of command and the interchangeable terms used, the right hand column shows terms that may be used for meetings at the three levels of command.



The Joint emergency services interoperability program (JESIP) was initially a national two year program that ran between 2012-2014 and was primarily about improving the way police, fire and ambulance services work together when responding to major multi-agency incidents. The JESIP program produced a practical guide to help improve multi-agency response - the joint doctrine. This interoperability framework sets out a standardised approach to multi-agency working, along with training and awareness for agencies to train their staff.

## **2.0 LONDON EMERGENCY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS**

Emergency planning/ Contingency planning in London are delivered by contingency planning teams across all category 1 responders. These include the Metropolitan Police SC&O 22 (13), London Fire Brigade Emergency Planning Authority, London Ambulance service Emergency Planning resilience and response and all 33 London Boroughs.

### **2.1 Resilience Forums**

All Category 1 and 2 responders meet regularly at a number of resilience forums. In London this consists of the London Resilience forum, sub-regional resilience forums and 33 borough resilience forums. Alongside this, there are structures in place to test, assure and improve London's emergency preparedness.

### **2.2 Pan-London Response**

A pan London response to an "immediate impact" incident will activate the London Local Authority Gold arrangements (LAG). The Gold Resolution was agreed in 2004 across the 33 London chief executives, the purpose of the resolution to enable a single nominated chief executive to act on behalf of all London boroughs while responding to a catastrophic incident, including the power to incur expenditure. The 'on-call' Chief Executive would provide strategic input into the wider "Gold" group, chaired by the Metropolitan Police, and will manage the collective response to the catastrophic incident. The strategic coordination or 'Gold group' includes representatives of all emergency services, the health services and utilities. Borough chief executives cover 3 to 4 weeks throughout the year as the duty local authority Gold (LAG) or deputy LAG.

### **2.3 LLACC**

The London local authority coordination centre (LLACC) is operated by the London fire and emergency planning authority on behalf of the 33 London boroughs to act as a single point of coordination during a major incident. When the LLACC is activated following a 'Local large scale emergency' or more serious emergency the LLACC manages the compiling of situation reports from the boroughs to London Local Authority Gold. The LLACC would also coordinate mutual aid requests from the affected borough/s.

### **2.4 SOR**

The Special Operations Room is primarily a metropolitan police facility. During a major incident, partner agencies may be invited to attend. The strategic coordination group (SCG) would typically meet at this location depending on the incident severity and impacted area.

### **2.5 Resilience Standards for London**

The Local Authorities Panel play a role in assuring the levels of preparedness and capability of London Local Authorities to provide a response in support of members of public to, and lead the recovery of the community from, emergencies. An externally commissioned report, (Sean Ruth Report, February 2018) identified that this should be enhanced from the previous Minimum Standards for London. Work is underway to replace them with Resilience Standards for London by the autumn of 2019. In the meantime, an interim assurance process is in place.

### **3.0 WESTMINSTER EMERGENCY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS**

Emergency planning/ Contingency planning in Westminster is coordinated by the Westminster Contingency Planning Team, which is located within the City-wide Operations within the Public Protection and Licensing directorate.

#### **3.1 Contingency Plans**

The contingency planning team produce, maintain, review and update the council's generic contingency plan for major emergencies and a number of specific emergency plans and supporting documents. Contingency plans are regularly reviewed and exercised with any post incident learning points applied to further plan updates.

#### **3.2 Risks**

The Borough Resilience Forum is responsible for maintaining and updating the Borough Risk Register. Examples of key risks identified on this include: industrial accidents; severe weather; pandemic influenza and terrorism.

#### **3.3 Westminster Response - 'On call' arrangements**

The contingency planning team maintain a constant on call response with a first call and second call contingency planning officer available throughout the year. Officers receive notification of a major incident from the emergency services via the Westminster contact centre dedicated major incident contact number.

Westminster maintains a constant on call rota of first call and second call Gold and silver officers. These officers have been trained in emergency response and are the initial tactical (silver) and strategic (gold) level representatives for the borough during a major incident.

Details of officers who are designated as 'on call' for a major incident or other serious emergency requiring an out of hours response from the council, is circulated twice weekly.

#### **3.4 Major incidents**

A major incident may be declared by one or more emergency services and in certain circumstances, such as flooding, the local authority may declare a major incident.

Each of the other emergency services will attend with an appropriate pre-determined response and notify the relevant supporting agencies, such as utilities providers or transport operators.

If the scale of the incident is such that a service area requires additional resources the appropriate Voluntary Services may be called in to assist and or the Borough Mutual Aid arrangements may be activated to use resources from another Borough.

#### **3.5 BECC (Borough Emergency Coordination Centre) Arrangements**

The BECC is activated following the declaration of a major incident to provide a central point for the council's emergency management and communications by;

- Locating the appropriately trained staff and responding service managers together;
- Providing a single point for all relevant information and directives to be received and sent;
- To maintain an overview of the total response to the incident and
- To ensure all the required protocols and procedures are maintained.

A BECC is scalable and can involve just a single officer acting as a liaison and coordination point or multiple officers over a sustained period of time. A BECC may also be activated for a local incident if the scale, duration or impact requires it.

A number of officers may be requested to work within the BECC during a major incident. Specific roles have been identified and training has taken place with these officers. Service leads would be identified during an incident and requested to work in the BECC as a single point of contact for their service area. BECC service leads may change during the incident response depending on the requirements and services involved at any point.

A communications officer would also be present in the BECC while operational to ensure a link between the incident response and the wider communications team.

### **3.6 Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALO)**

Trained officers located at the scene of the incident to act as the Council's front line point of contact for the emergency services. If the incident is large scale and depending on availability, a Duty Contingency Planning Manager will go to the scene and attend any Silver meetings. The Borough Liaison Officer reports back to the Duty Contingency Planning Manager until such time as the BECC is operational.

### **3.7 Welfare Services**

The majority of major incidents either directly or indirectly involve people, including those who need to be removed to a place of safety until safe to return to their homes and those affected by the trauma of what they have witnessed or been involved in.

The immediate need following the impact of an incident is to establish a place of safety for survivors, this is the responsibility of the police who will use the nearest available premises and operate a Survivor Reception Centre.

Local Authorities are required to co-ordinate the provision of welfare support to the community and lead the establishment of key humanitarian assistance facilities. The Council retains two emergency stores for essential basic equipment for use in the event of an emergency. Equipment retained includes items for sleeping evacuated people overnight, signage, low volume pumps, lighting and other generic rest and reception centre equipment.

#### Survivor Reception Centres (SRC)

SRC's are established and managed by the police immediately following an incident. A Westminster welfare services officer will attend the centre and in liaison with the police, assess the situation regarding the care of the survivors over the next 4 / 6 hours.

Resident details would normally be recorded to enable any follow up assistance that may be required.

If it is necessary to relocate evacuees, Westminster Contingency Planning Team will identify a suitable premises that is available and coordinate transport arrangements.

#### Reception Centres

Reception centres are places of safety for those who have been evacuated from their homes, work or other place but who are uninjured. Access to premises such as schools, leisure centres and other

public halls has been pre-arranged for use as a reception centre by the Westminster Contingency Planning Team.

Reception centres are activated through the Contingency Planning Team and managed by Westminster welfare services staff and / or if requested, the voluntary services.

The purpose of a reception centre is to provide a place of safety where both the immediate and longer term requirements of evacuees can be assessed.

### Rest Centres

Rest centres are activated and managed the same way as Reception Centres but are used to provide emergency sleeping accommodation for evacuees who are unable to return to their homes and have nowhere else to go and stay and where temporary accommodation cannot be found.

### **3.8 Humanitarian Assistance Centres**

Humanitarian Assistance Centres (HAC) are set up jointly between the Police and the Council when a large scale incident has occurred involving many people and where there have been a large number of fatalities or persons reported missing. Welfare services and voluntary agencies may also be located at the centre to provide further support and guidance for those requesting it.

### **3.9 Local Disaster Mortuary Plan**

The Westminster City Council Public Mortuary, located at rear of 65 Horseferry Road, has been designated by the Home Office as a Designated Disaster Mortuary for mass fatalities in any of the boroughs within the jurisdiction of HM Coroner for Inner West London (Westminster, Kensington & Chelsea, Wandsworth and Merton).

There is also a memorandum of understanding in place between Westminster City Council and the City of London to allow them to use the Mortuary as the City of London Designated Disaster Mortuary. Plans to support National Emergency Mortuary Arrangements are also in place.

### **3.10 Recovery Phase**

After the emergency services have left the scene of a major incident the local authority will take on the lead role in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the community. A Major Incident Recovery Plan is in place for Westminster.

### **3.11 Financial Support – Bellwin Scheme**

The Bellwin scheme provides emergency financial assistance to local authorities under Section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides the Government with the ability to provide financial assistance to Local Authorities where an emergency or disaster has occurred.

The scheme is intended to reimburse the cost of local authority actions taken in the immediate phase of an emergency, not those taken as part of the recovery phase. It is not intended to fund longer term repairs or cost and this is reflected in the eligible spending period of one month from the date when a qualifying incident comes to an end. There is no automatic entitlement to financial assistance; Ministers are empowered by the Act to decide whether or not to activate a scheme after considering the circumstances of each individual case.

There is a threshold for claiming costs. Before being eligible for the grant, an individual authority is required to have spent 0.2 per cent of its calculated annual budget on works that have been

reported to the Department as eligible for the grant. For Westminster threshold has been calculated as £353,519 in 2017/18.

## 4.0 ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS

While it is not the role of a member/ward councillor to get directly involved in the delivery of the strategic, tactical or operational coordination elements of the response or recovery, elected members have an important role to play in emergency planning. This is not just being involved in response and recovery but also through engaging with planning and preparation to ensure resilience and readiness. This involves being aware of the responsibilities of the council, being aware that appropriate plans are in place and in fulfilling their role as civic leaders through providing reassurance to the community.

It is the responsibility of local authority Gold to notify elected members of an incident or emergency and to provide any appropriate updates. This may be done directly or through the council's communications team. Enquiries or information in relation to the incident should be communicated back in to the council through the communications team.

Members should also assist by providing relevant local knowledge and helping to identify the needs of individuals and the wider community. This may include communicating information to the public and media as required by the local authority Gold.

*Examples of some activities that elected members may engage in response to or in recovery from an emergency are below:*

Senior political leaders:

- Key policy decisions or strategic choices
- Liaising with other elected representatives
- Making representation to Government for additional resources and financial assistance
- Public spokesperson

All elected members

- Promote and communicate the council's role and response to an emergency
- Providing community leadership in their wards, including managing expectations.
- Acting as a conduit of information - feeding community sentiment to the council to inform decision making and messages to the community.
- Providing support and encouragement to officers and the affected community.
- Restoring, rehabilitating and reassuring affected communities

*Examples of some activities that elected members may engage in either in advance of an emergency are below:*

Portfolio holders

- Providing oversight and challenge to ensure that service areas are ready to respond to an emergency.
- Similarly, seeking reassurance that the service area has adequate and tested business continuity plans.

All elected members

- Identifying local community groups and partners who may be able to play a role in response to an emergency or recovery
- Promoting self-resilience within the community and with small businesses.
- Acting as a conduit of information - feeding community sentiment to the council to inform decision making and messages to the community.

#### Scrutiny

- Ensuring effective emergency planning and preparedness is in place
- That staff are trained and arrangements tested.
- Ensuring that 'lessons learned' following incidents result in service change and improvements

## **APPENDIX 1: Levels of Emergency**

### Local incident,

The majority of incidents that occur are resolved at a local level, these may include; fires, burst water mains, gas leaks, power failures and chemical incidents. These incidents are confined to a relatively small area and generally have a time scale of 4 to 6 hours, therefore the level of response required from the Council, whilst it may create some pressure on the service areas responding to the incident, is such that the Council can continue to operate business as usual.

The local response is co-ordinated by the Duty Contingency Planning Officer (DCPO), in consultation with council officers. Depending on the incident, the press office can be involved who will support any necessary briefings to members. The Borough Emergency Coordination Centre (BECC) is not usually made operational unless additional support is required.

### Local Large Scale Incident,

Similar to a Local level incident, which may be resolved at a local level, but on a larger scale, e.g a number of buildings involved in a fire or multiple/ large premises evacuated.

The larger incidents may have a time scale up to 24 - 48 hours and may, for example, require the activation of occupants to a rest centre and overnight accommodation. Due to the extended response period, it may be necessary to either use additional staff or activate the voluntary services to assist.

The response will be coordinated by the Duty Contingency Planning Officer, in consultation with the 'on call' Silver or Gold officer. It may be decided that the BECC is required, if there are a large number of service areas or contractors involved in the response, or where Mutual Aid arrangements are activated with neighbouring Boroughs.

### Significant emergency (Level 1),

This has a wider focus and requires central government involvement or support, primarily from a lead government department (LGD), alongside the work of the emergency services, local authorities and other organisations. Examples of emergencies on this scale include most severe weather-related problems.

### Serious emergency (Level 2),

This incident 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. 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, or a serious outbreak of animal disease. Examples of emergencies on this scale include the H1N1 Swine Flu pandemic, the 2007 summer floods, and the response to the 7th July bombings in London.

### Catastrophic emergency (Level 3),

This 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.

## APPENDIX 2: Cordons

To enable the emergency services to operate and to prevent the risk of injury to members of the public the area around the incident will be closed off by use of cordons which are managed by the police. A series of cordons are used and these are:

### Inner cordon:

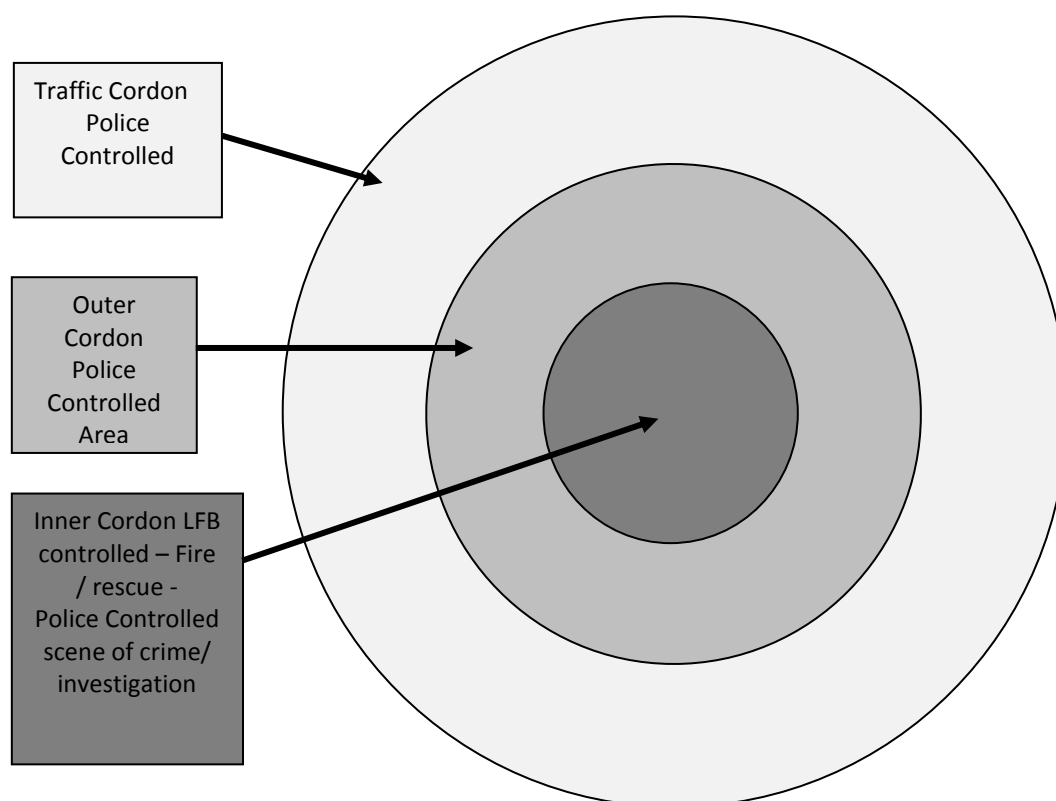
This cordon is established around the actual scene of the incident. This area is generally evacuated to enable search and rescue, fire fighting etc to be carried out. Management of this internal cordon will depend on the nature of the incident.

### Outer Cordon:

This cordon extends out beyond the inner cordon. The outer cordon area is managed by the police with access control points. The area is more extensive than the inner cordon and is routinely provided to facilitate emergency services vehicles and equipment. It is also where the incident control point will be set up. The area is not generally evacuated, however people may be advised to remain inside the area and the general public will not be permitted entry into the cordon area.

### Traffic Cordon:

This may be set up a considerable distance from the incident with the intention of diverting traffic away from the area to reduce congestion nearer to the scene.



### APPENDIX 3: Definitions

<b>Emergency –</b>	“an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom” and/ or “An event which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom” and/ or “War or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.” (Civil Contingencies Act 2004)
<b>Local -</b>	A major incident within Westminster, which is of such a scale the Council’s resources (with or without the aid of voluntary services and mutual aid arrangements) are sufficient to manage the local authority response.
<b>Major incident –</b>	<p>An event or situation requiring the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services. Typically, a major incident involves one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Involvement, either directly or indirectly, of large numbers of people.</li><li>• The rescue and transportation of a potentially large number of casualties</li><li>• The large scale combined resources of police, London fire brigade and London ambulance service.</li><li>• The mobilisation and organisation of the emergency services and support services, for example: local authority, to cater for the threat of death, serious injury or homelessness to a large number of people: and transport operators actively managing the road and rail networks to support emergency response</li><li>• The handling of large numbers of enquiries likely to be generated both from the public and the news media – usually made to the police.</li><li>• Acts of terrorism, including suspected involvement of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear devices, are subject to a specific multi-agency response supported by HM Government.</li></ul> <p>(London emergency services Liaison Panel (LESP) Major Incident Manual)</p>
<b>Pan London –</b>	all London Boroughs
<b>Rising tide –</b>	The type of event that may have a lead in time of days, weeks or months and includes such events as health pandemics and industrial action where the onset can be gradual and the final impact may not always be apparent early on.
<b>Significant Incident –</b>	“is an incident where following the advice of the emergency services an appropriate government minister is of the opinion that it is of such magnitude that it will require a specific or exceptional response, from members of the London Local Resilience Forum. Their strategic priorities will be to assist with both the immediate issues and achieving a return to normality. In so doing it is recognised that full Government involvement will be required”. (London Region Resilience Forum, LRRF).
<b>Sudden Impact -</b>	An event which happens with little or no warning and where the effects are immediate and include accidents and utilities failures etc.