



www.north-herts.gov.uk

Emergency Planning & Business Continuity NHDC Response to an Emergency

February 2010

Section A – Emergency Planning Background

1	Introduction	4
2	Responsibilities in Major Incidents	5
3	Assessing the Risk – the Community Risk Register	8
4	Emergency Planning in Hertfordshire	10
5	Emergency Plans	12

Section B – NHDC Response

6	Purpose & Principles of the NHDC Emergency Plan	16
7	Command and Control	18
8	Council Role in an Emergency	21
9	NHDC Response to an Emergency	24
10	Incident Control Centre	30
11	Reception Centres	34
12	Communications	37
13	Finance	41
14	Councillor Role	42
15	Emergency Planning Role Descriptions	43

Section C – Business Continuity

16	Business Continuity	52
17	Key Steps in Developing Business Continuity	54

Section A:

Emergency Planning Background

1. Introduction

This booklet outlines the Emergency Planning arrangements within Hertfordshire and specifically those that have been developed by the Council within its operational Emergency Plan to respond to a major incident occurring anywhere within the boundary of the authority.

Hertfordshire is a safe place to live, however, major incidents do occur and usually with little or no warning. Major incidents are characterised by causing widespread disruption, injury to people and damage to property and businesses. The aim of any incident or emergency plan is to reduce, control or mitigate the effects of a major incident on the public, community and environment.

One definition of a major incident is:

'any event or circumstance (happening with or without warning) that causes or threatens death or injury, disruption to the community, or damage to property or to the environment on such a scale that the effects cannot be dealt with by the emergency services, local authorities, and other organisations as part of their day to day activities'.

Dealing with Disaster, 3rd edn

In order to respond quickly, North Hertfordshire District Council maintains plans known as **Major Incident Plans** and **Business Continuity Plans**. These ensure we can respond to the incident and still maintain our key services during the period that staff may be deployed on other duties or be unable to gain access to the work place.

2. Responsibilities in Major Incidents

2.1 The Civil Contingencies Act

In the United Kingdom no single organisation is responsible for dealing with major accidents or natural disasters. Following the fuel crisis and severe floods in 2000, the government announced a review of emergency planning arrangements. New legislation was enacted in 2004 that updated outmoded civil defence legislation relating to the cold war threat, and put civil protection on a formal basis, with legal requirements at both the planning and emergency response level.

This new legislation, **The Civil Contingencies Act 2004**, provides a generic framework at a local level, outlining what tasks should be performed and how, thus ensuring greater consistency in civil protection across the UK.

The Act is separated into two parts:

Part 1: local arrangements for civil protection

The purpose of Part 1 of the Act is to establish a new statutory framework for civil protection at the local level. This sets out clear expectations and responsibilities for front line responders at the local level to ensure that they are prepared to deal effectively with the full range of emergencies from localised incidents through to catastrophic emergencies.

Part 2: emergency powers

Part 2 provides an update to the emergency powers legislation last updated in 1920. It sets out a new definition of what

constitutes an emergency appropriate to the times in which we live and incorporating new risks and threats which were not so relevant in 1920, including terrorist attacks, contamination of land following a biological or chemical terrorist attack and loss of communications systems on which we now depend. It allows the making of temporary special legislation aimed at dealing with a serious emergency that fits within the definition.

For the first time it is possible to use emergency powers on a regional and / or devolved administration basis. This ensures any special temporary legislation will apply only in the part of the UK affected by the emergency, leaving those elsewhere unaffected. The Act also requires the appointment of a 'Regional Nominated Coordinator'. This individual will be a highly trained crisis manager with expert knowledge of the particular type of emergency in question who, if emergency powers are used, will act as the focal point for co-ordination of response efforts at the regional or devolved administration level.

2.2 Emergency Responders

Under the Act organisations involved in civil protection are divided into two categories known as **Category 1 and Category 2 responders**.

Category 1 responders include:

- Police
- Fire Authorities
- British Transport Police
- Ambulance Authorities
- Principal local authorities (county, district & borough councils & unitary authorities)
- Primary Care Trusts
- Health Protection Agency

- NHS Acute Trusts (hospitals)
- Environment Agency
- Foundation Trusts (Hertfordshire Partnership Trust)
- Maritime & Coastguard Agency
- Port Health Authorities

Category 2 responders include:

- Utilities
- Transport
- Health & Safety Executive

2.3 The Civil Contingencies Act – Duties Under the Act

As a Local Authority and Category 1 responder, the Act places a number of duties on North Hertfordshire District Council. The main functions include:

- Risk assessment
- Emergency Planning (prepare, test and validate emergency and business continuity plans)
- Information sharing (share plans with other Category 1 responders)
- Train and equip staff to respond to an emergency by using these plans.
- Co-operation (between Category 1 & 2 responders and participate in Forum meetings)
- Warning & Informing the public
- Business Continuity promotion (including working with the business community)

3. Assessing the Risk – the Community Risk Register

As defined in Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act an 'Emergency' is:

'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'.

A countywide risk assessment exercise known as the **Hertfordshire Community Risk Register** has been produced as required by the Civil Contingencies Act to assist in preparing for major incidents; the register can be found via the **Herts Direct** website at www.hertsdirect.org.

The hazards listed in the register are grouped under the following headings:

- Animal Health, Human Health and Plant Disease
- Business Failure and Industrial Action
- Public Disorder
- Industrial Accidents, Environmental Pollution and Transport Accidents
- Severe Weather and Structural Hazards
- Technical Failure

The risk assessment process is constantly reviewed and updated.

For the North Hertfordshire area North Hertfordshire District Council has identified the following Community Risks:

- Pollution
- Transport
- Severe Weather
- Health
- Business Continuity

To enable the authority to respond quickly and adequately, **Specialist Teams** are being established, equipped and trained to provide support and guidance during these types of emergencies. Private and confidential plans exist for many of these risks.

4. Emergency Planning

4.1 Emergency Planning in Hertfordshire

In Hertfordshire all the District Councils and the County Council maintain their own emergency plans for their own services. All of these plans contain important information which will allow for locally managed resources to be accessed quickly in time of need.

4.2 Hertfordshire Resilience

Many organisations would be involved in the response to a major incident and for this reason the development of inter-agency arrangements is widely encouraged in the County. Since 1975 the Hertfordshire Emergency Services Major Incident Committee (HESMIC) provided a forum for the emergency services and local authorities to discuss emergency planning issues.

Following the introduction of the **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** and the new requirement to have a Local Resilience Forum (LRF), the HESMIC structure was reviewed and re-launched as **Hertfordshire Resilience**. The structure serves as a framework within which standard arrangements are made across Hertfordshire to deal with emergency planning issues. The resulting guidance developed by a range of specialist groups takes on board the lessons of previous disasters and best practice. By working in this way a better understanding of the roles and requirements of the emergency services, local authorities and other organisations can be achieved when planning, exercising or responding to an emergency.

4.3 Local Resilience Forum

North Hertfordshire District Council and **Stevenage Borough Council** hold Local Emergency Planning Forum meetings together, this has improved communication and understanding of our respective responses to major incidents.

The forum enables representatives from the Local Authority, voluntary organisations and the blue light services to meet and discuss local issues, training, testing and validation of plans. The meetings ensure there is a standard approach to plans, terminology and awareness across the member groups.

North Hertfordshire also has a number of borders with other County Councils and District, Borough and Unitary Authorities outside Hertfordshire. Liaison meetings are held annually with all neighbouring Authorities to discuss cross-border issues.

The forum has a number of groups and sub-groups with responsibility to provide a standard framework for responding to major incidents across the county, these include:

- Training Group
- Local Authority Group
- Risk Assessment Working Group
- Specialist / Capability Groups

5. Emergency Plans

5.1 NHDC Emergency Plan

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to prepare, test and validate resilience (emergency) plans.

North Hertfordshire District Council has its own confidential staff operational Emergency Plan as well as this generic public Emergency Planning booklet.

The staff Emergency Plan has been developed to help the Council respond to any incident that might affect the Authority and is designed to give a clear indication of the roles and responsibilities the Authority will undertake during a major incident. It is based upon a generic Emergency Plan produced by the Local Authority Emergency Plan Working Group. The response by the Council will vary according to the type of incident. To support this plan there are a number of other plans that are specific to pre-identified hazards, including:

- NHDC Staff Emergency Plan Call-Out Arrangements
- Off-site plans for Aircraft Accident, Major Pipelines, Pop Concerts
- Support plans, e.g. Reception Centre Guidance, Media, Communication & Information Guidelines

For security reasons these plans are classed as private and confidential and are not available to the public, but they do exist and provide clear guidance to both NHDC staff and our partners such as the blue light services.

5.2 Special Site Specific Plans

Off-Site Emergency Plan (under revision)

A specific plan for the industrial sites has been produced to alleviate the effects of a possible emergency. The off-site emergency plans have been drawn up in consultation with the police, fire and ambulance services, Hertfordshire County Council and North Hertfordshire District Council.

In the event of activation the off-site plan gives actions for the Council to be involved in the response. The operational Emergency Plan of the Council should also be activated in order to establish the Council response and cross reference will need to be made with the specific details given in the off-site emergency plan.

Aircraft Accident (Off-Airport) Multi-agency Emergency Plan

A specific plan for Local Airports has been prepared to ensure an effective and co-ordinated inter-agency response to an off-site aircraft incident within Hertfordshire, involving an aircraft on approach to, or departing from the airport.

The document outlines the main operational responsibilities of each of the parties involved, but does not contain specific details of each organisations emergency response. Those details will be contained within their individual emergency plans. Should there be an incident the Council will be involved in the response and will need to activate the North Hertfordshire District Council operational Emergency Plan in parallel with the Airports Off-site Emergency Plan.

Pop Concert Emergency Plan

Over a number of years there have been numerous pop festivals in the District. The very nature and the size of these events has necessitated the preparation of a specific emergency plan, which outlines the main operational responsibilities of each of the parties involved. It also outlines potential hazards and describes the alerting procedure, should a major incident occur.

In support of the plan is a Reception Centre Plan, which is prepared by NHDC and Hertfordshire County Council, in liaison with relevant organisations.

Should an incident occur, both these plans will be activated and will work in conjunction with the NHDC Emergency Plan.

Section B:

NHDC

Response

6. Purpose & Principles of the NHDC Emergency Plan

North Hertfordshire District Council is committed to caring for the people it serves. The purpose of the NHDC operational Emergency Plan is to prevent, contain and / or relieve the effects of any major incident on both the population and the environment.

The following principles have been maintained in developing the plan:

- The emergency services will deal with the immediate effects of an incident and will implement their respective emergency plans as necessary.
- The District Council should be alerted directly by the Police Force Operations Room at the earliest possible moment of any actual or potential major incident, either within, or which could affect, their area.
- The police would normally be the lead agency in the emergency response, but in the recovery period the lead and co-ordinating agency will invariably be the local authority.
- The resources of voluntary aid societies are available to the District Council Chief Executive and can be accessed directly or via the County Council Emergency Planning Service.
- If the incident is such that the response is beyond the resources of a single District Council or is likely to have an

effect upon a wider population than the co-ordinating function may be assumed by the County Council.

- A major incident can be declared by any service that is involved in the emergency response.

The operational Emergency Plan contains several different elements. The objective is that each member of staff will have enough information available to undertake their particular role in an emergency response. It is important that arrangements given in the plan are flexible in order to be able to respond to a variety of possible emergency scenarios.

7. Command and Control

Whilst the Police will usually assume the overall control of a major incident many other services and organisations will be involved, including local authorities.

Lessons arising from previous major incidents and experience within the emergency services has shown that effective liaison and communication between services is vital during an incident response. The emergency services have a **command and control system** that has been developed and is commonly used for incidents. This system is flexible and can involve three levels of management, which are:

GOLD (Strategic Command Level)

“What we intend to do”

The **Strategic Commander** is in overall charge of their respective service and will form the strategy and policy for the incident. They will have overall command of the resources for their organisation but tactical decisions will be delegated to the Silver Commander.

If a major incident is likely to be a protracted affair or has had very wide ranging effects, then there may be a need to establish a strategic level of command. This would be set up away from the scene and in Hertfordshire is likely to be at Police Headquarters. Organisations involved in the response

will most likely be represented by a Chief Officer and, as such, the District Council representative could be the Chief Executive or a nominated director.

SILVER (Joint Tactical Command Level)

“How we intend to do it”

The **Tactical Silver / Site Liaison Officer** will be at the scene. They will be responsible for formulating the tactics to be used by their service to implement the strategy set by Gold. Silver will direct and support operations, monitor the process and keep the strategic level informed.

The NHDC Silver / Site Liaison Officer sent to the multi-agency **Tactical (Silver) Command** post will act as a liaison between NHDC and the Police and other emergency services present at the post. The command point will have liaison officers from the emergency services, County Council and any other principal agency involved in the incident.

The SLO would:

- Maintain communication with the Council from Tactical (Silver) Command,
- Provide information to the Incident Control Centre on the incident,
- Forward any requests for support from the command point to NHDC
- Inform other services what support would be available from the Council.

- If the nature and scale of the incident is not sufficient to warrant the formation of a Tactical (Silver) Command the Silver Liaison Officer may be required to attend the scene as a Site Liaison Officer.

Other organisations will also have liaison officers present at both levels of command, if established.

BRONZE (Operational Command Level)

“Do it”

An operational command level at a specific location. The Operational Commander controls and deploys the resources of their particular service in a particular location or role to implement the tactics formulated by the Tactical Commander.

8. Council Role in an Emergency

It would be impossible to predict the exact circumstances of an emergency that would necessitate the involvement of the Council as part of the emergency response. As a result the purpose of the North Hertfordshire District Council operational Emergency Plan is to set out a framework in which the Council could operate as part of a combined response with many other agencies.

The arrangements and procedures are designed to be flexible, however, there will be certain key actions which the Council will be called upon to provide. The Council will provide some functions using staff from all parts of the authority, namely management of Reception Centres and the Incident Control Centre.

8.1 Role of the Council

The role of the Council in a major incident will include:

- Support to the Emergency Services
- Co-ordination of response by Voluntary Agencies
- Supporting the Local Community
- Promoting recovery and return to normality
- Maintaining normal services

8.2 Council Functions in an Emergency

Some of the functions that NHDC, as a Category 1 responder, has the responsibility for in the event a major incident is declared include:

- We may need to set up our own **Incident Control Centre**.
- We may be asked to set up and staff one or more **Reception Centres**.
- We may be asked to send an NHDC representative, known as a **Tactical (Silver / Site) Command Liaison Officer** to the site of the incident to help co-ordinate the Council's response with the Emergency Services.
- We may be asked to provide **expert / professional assistance** such as:

- **Environmental Health Officers**

To provide advice on the environmental and public health effects of an incident.

- **Building Control Officers**

Building Control Officers may be required to attend the incident site and assess buildings and other structures affected by the incident for their structural safety and to arrange where necessary for buildings to be made safe or demolished.

- **Housing**

To provide temporary accommodation for people made homeless by an incident and to provide information on housing issues to those affected.

- **Engineers**

- **Insurance Officers**
- **Public Liaison Officers (including Press liaison)**

- Co-ordinating with private sector organisations such as:
 - Contractors
 - Suppliers
 - Service organisation

- We may be asked to provide specialist support for:
 - Transport
 - Staff / personnel
 - Equipment (general and specialist)
 - Property
 - A dog compound (Rabies)
 - Temporary mortuaries

- We may be asked to deal with financial matters such as:
 - Donations
 - Appeal funds
 - Ordering works and equipment (expenditure)

- We may also be asked to co-ordinate the voluntary and support sectors, such as:
 - Parish & Town Councils
 - WRVS
 - RAYNET – Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network
 - St John Ambulance and The Red Cross
 - Citizens Advice Bureau
 - Religious organisations
 - Doctors surgeries
 - Veterinary surgeons

9. NHDC Response to an Emergency

The decision to activate North Hertfordshire District Council's Emergency Plan will depend on the information available at the particular time. If a major incident had already been declared by the time that support from the Council is called upon or if information available suggests that the emergency could have a large level of impact, then it would be prudent for the Emergency Plan to be activated.

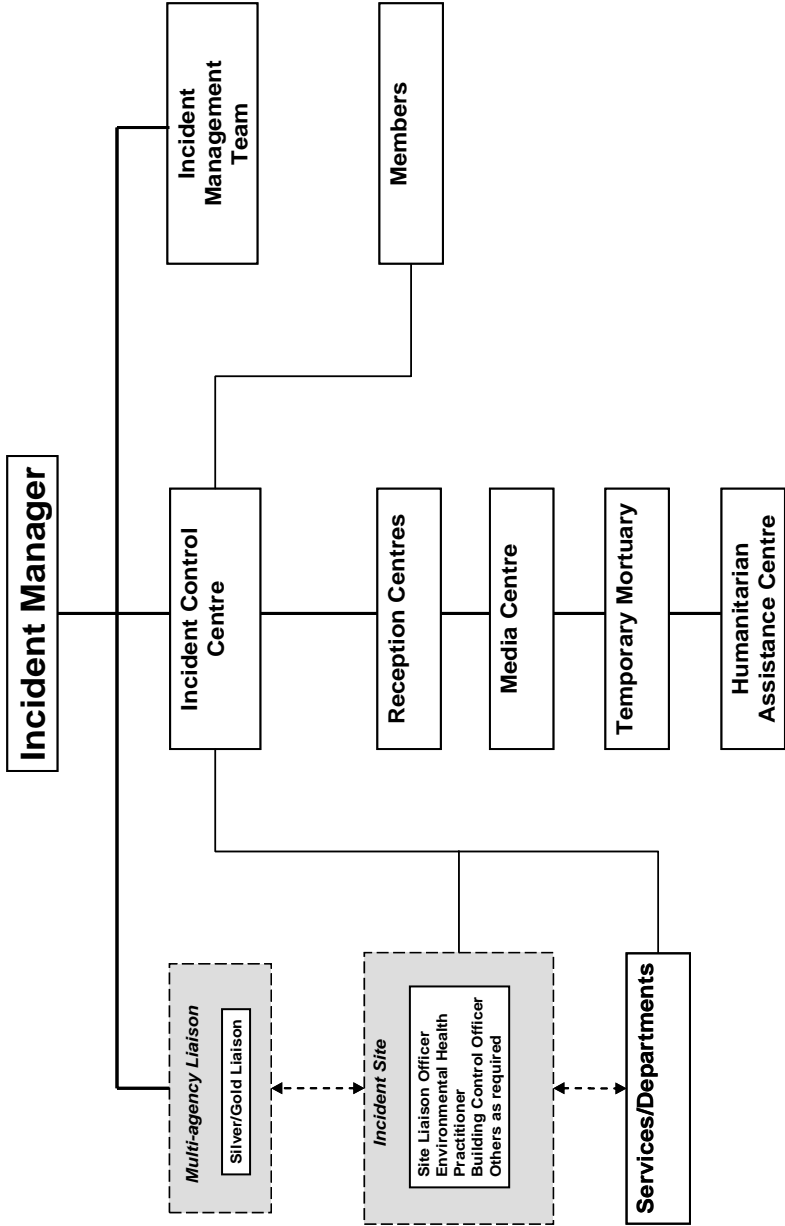
9.1 Initial Contact

Support from the Council could be called on at any time day or night and so call out arrangements are in place for both during and outside office hours. In the event of an emergency call out it is likely that a large number of Council employees will have to be mobilised in a short space of time. As a result a cascade system of call out has been developed.

An overview of the emergency response process is shown in Fig 1.

The emergency services generally prefer to have a single contact number for each organisation that they may need to contact. The police may have to contact ten or more organisations in the initial stages of a major incident and so in limiting the amount of numbers the communication process will be less susceptible to error. For this reason a dedicated phone number is given for contacting the Council out of office hours.

Fig 1. Emergency Response Overview



During Normal Office Hours

During normal office hours

(8.45am – 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.45pm Fridays)

Initial contact will be to the Chief Executive's Office.

In the event of an emergency occurring during normal office hours, the initial call will be made to the Chief Executive. At this stage the circumstances of the incident need to be understood and the level of support required from the Council. This information will determine whether the Council's Emergency Plan will be activated. If the decision to activate the plan is taken then the cascade will be started and staff with an emergency function or operational role will be contacted.

Outside Office Hours

Outside office hours

Initial contact will be to the Careline Control Centre.

Outside normal office hours the contact number used by other services likely to call on the Council will be the Careline Control Centre. The duty officer at the Control Centre will then be responsible for contacting officers on the Call-Out List for the Initial Response, they will work through the contact list until getting a response. If there is no answer they will move on to the next person on the list.

The out of office hours contact information is contained within Part II of the operational Emergency Plan.

Although there is an agreed system for alerting the Council of the need for assistance to be provided, this may not always be adhered to. This could be because of circumstances at the

time of the incident or as a result of unfamiliarity with the system. Additionally it is possible that it might not be feasible to fully implement the cascade system or involve all services. The process for the internal cascade of information within the Council will follow the same course at all times, although there is a better chance of dissemination being quicker during office hours.

9.2 Initial Response

The level of services that are called out will depend on the particular circumstances of the incident. If the decision taken by the Chief Executive, or nominated deputy, is to activate the Council's Emergency Plan, the procedure will be:

- To send a Joint Tactical Liaison Council Officer (Silver) to the site as advised by the police.
- To instruct an appropriate Corporate Director or Head of Service to implement arrangements for establishing an Incident Control Centre in Committee Room 3 of the Council Offices.
- To notify and activate staff with key roles and responsibilities who in turn activate staff call out for their specific roles.
- To notify and activate services.
- Corporate Directors will activate their own internal cascades to call out operational staff in order to meet any identified responsibilities of that directorate.

9.3 Staff Roles During a Major Incident

Where possible staff roles during a major incident are an extension of their normal working role. However, some actions will be outside of normal working arrangements. Role descriptions and action checklists have been provided for emergency functions to show what is required from each role.

Staff volunteers may be used in the following roles:

Reception Centre Manager

To manage the operational aspects of the Reception Centre. The main role for the Reception Centre Manager and staff would be to provide, as required, emergency reception facilities to deal with casualties from the incident and locally all victims of the emergency and temporary accommodation for those made homeless by the incident.

Reception Centre Staff

To carry out the operational aspects of the Council's response at the Reception Centre.

Silver / Site Liaison Officer (SLO)

The Police will normally assume overall control of a major incident, though many other services and organisations will be involved. The NHDC Silver / Site Liaison Officer sent to the multi-agency Tactical (Silver) Command post will act as a liaison between NHDC and the Police and other emergency services present at the post. The command point will have liaison officers from the emergency services, County Council and any other principal agency involved in the incident.

The SLO would:

Maintain communication with the Council from Tactical (Silver) Command.

Provide information to the Incident Control Centre on the incident.

Forward any requests for support from the command point to NHDC.

Inform other services what support would be available from the Council.

If the nature and scale of the incident is not sufficient to warrant the formation of a Tactical (Silver) Command the Silver Liaison Officer may be required to attend the scene as a Site Liaison Officer.

To represent the Council at the multi-agency Tactical (Silver) Command post or at the scene.

Gold Liaison Officer

To represent the Council at multi-agency Strategic (Gold) Command meetings.

Emergency Support Staff

To provide general administrative support within the Incident Control Centre and to officers including the Gold Liaison Officer and Silver Liaison Officer.

**Emergency Planning role descriptions are given in
Section 15**

10. Incident Control Centre

Should the need arise to establish an **Incident Control Centre** to co-ordinate the Council's response, a designated centre with dedicated communications will be established. The Council's first choice will be **Committee Room 3** in the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth.

The main purpose of the Incident Control Centre is to:

- maintain an overview of the incident,
- to record all requests for information,
- to maintain an accurate log of events throughout the Council's response, including the deployment of resources.

The response will be led by a **Strategic Director** or **nominated representative** on behalf of the Chief Executive. Support within the Incident Control Centre is provided by communication links to our liaison officer at the scene, known as the **Silver or Site Liaison Officer** and our liaison officer at Strategic (Gold) Command, known as the **Gold Officer**. The Strategic Command is normally situated at Police Headquarters.

The circumstances of the emergency will dictate the level of response from the Council, for small scale events the operations could be directed by officers from their normal places of work. However, there could be a risk of poor co-ordination of the Council's response if information is not circulated about the incident. For this reason an open plan Incident Control Centre may be better to work from in an incident to enable a central location to work from and for information to be shared as it became known.

10.1 Functions of the Incident Control Centre

The functions that would be undertaken at this centre are:

- To provide an initial location for the Incident Management Team to work from.
- To co-ordinate the Council's response.
- To receive, collate, analyse, display and distribute information.
- To advise on the initial strategy for the Council's emergency response during the operations phase and that for the long term recovery.
- To determine the priorities of the Council's response.
- To support other local authorities.
- To liaise with other services, organisations and agencies involved.
- To provide situation reports to the County Council and/or the lead central government department.
- To maintain a full records of events.

Management of the Council's response will be from the NHDC Incident Control Centre NOT the incident site.

10.2 Roles within the Incident Control Centre

In the event of a major incident the Incident Control Centre Manager will call out staff as necessary from the Emergency Plan Call-Out list after the initial level of response has been decided upon. Support staff may be called upon from a number of services to help with message taking, information distribution and general duties. Staff with more defined roles may be called in as required.

Roles within the Incident Control Centre include:

Incident Manager

To take overall command of the Council's response to the incident by determining the appropriate level of response

Public Relations Officer

To co-ordinate the release of information to the media, public, Council staff and Members.

Information Officer

To collate information coming into the Incident Control Centre and prepare situation reports on the Council's response to the Incident for the Incident Manager.

Resources Officer

To co-ordinate the provision of resources requested from the Council during the Emergency response.

Member Liaison Contact

To provide Members with up-to-date information on the incident and the Council's response.

Detailed role descriptions and action checklists are included for staff in the operational Emergency Plan.

Special advisors

Special Advisors will be chosen to suit the type of incident and could include Specialist Teams.

Five Specialist Teams have been established to strengthen the Council's response to a major incident, they will provide support and advice to the Incident Control Centre Manager. The groups are:

- Pollution Team
- Severe Weather Team
- Transport Team
- Health Team
- Recovery Team

The appropriate directorates from which the main operational support will be provided will be activated. This would be done by using the cascade information and services fulfilling their pre-identified roles and responsibilities.

The Customer Services Officer will ensure that all communication networks in the centre are tested on opening the centre. Operating instructions for all systems are located with each piece of equipment and key staff will be trained in its use.

**Emergency Planning role descriptions are given in
Section 15**

11. Reception Centres

11.1 Provision of Reception Centres

One of the Council's key roles in an emergency is to provide shelter, food, information and support to people displaced by the emergency via a Reception Centre. Other types of Centres may need to be established depending on the incident, these include:

Family and Friends Reception Centre

A centre set aside to register, interview and provide shelter for the family and friends of missing persons thought to be involved in the incident and to reunite family and friends with survivors.

Survivor Reception Centre

A temporary secure area set up to provide shelter and first aid for survivors of an incident who do not require emergency medical treatment.

Humanitarian Assistance Centre

A focal point for information and support for those affected by a major incident, likely to be set up following the initial reception centre response. The HAC would provide links to practical support and advice following an incident e.g. London Bombings 2005.

Media Centre

A central location for media enquiries, providing communication, conference, monitoring, interview and briefing facilities and access to responding organisation personnel. Staffed by spokespersons from all the principal services / organisations responding.

North Hertfordshire District Council will establish the centres supported if necessary by Hertfordshire County Council and voluntary organisations such as the WRVS, First Aid groups, Citizens Advice, religious organisations and RAYNET (if back up communications are required).

11.2 Evacuation

Should an emergency arise that involves leaving your home, it is likely that the police will oversee your evacuation. You will be directed to a **North Hertfordshire District Council Reception Centre** managed and run by NHDC staff volunteers. If you are asked to leave your home, you may not have time to prepare for the evacuation. In the first instance you may need to leave pets, valuables and medication behind.



At first the Reception Centre you are asked to go to may not be fully established and therefore you may need to be patient. You will be asked to provide some details such as your name and address and next of kin details so that they can be passed to a central database. The details are needed as your friends and relations may phone the 'help-line', normally given out on

the television, to find out if you are safe. The help-line then matches your details with the enquiries received about you.

Depending on how long you will be required to stay at the centre, North Hertfordshire District Council will provide improved facilities, which could include, sleeping facilities, appropriate hot food etc. At the Reception Centre basic catering facilities will be available at first and, depending on how long you will need to stay, these may need to be upgraded. The facilities could include hot food, bedding, rooms for pets, welfare facilities, televisions, and most importantly the provision of information about your situation. North Hertfordshire District Council will provide these facilities for as long as required to ensure your safety.



At first it will be a very stressful environment, therefore, you will be asked to ensure you are courteous to our staff volunteers and other evacuees. Those who display anti-social behaviour may be asked to leave the centre by the Police.

We will endeavour to provide as much information as we can in appropriate forms, however, it is very likely that information at first will be very sketchy and unconfirmed. We will therefore only provide accurate information when we receive it. This we recognise may be a source of frustration but we feel is better than speculation.

12. Communications

Experience following major incidents elsewhere has shown that one of the biggest difficulties in the early stages of the response is establishing and maintaining communications between various locations. It can be safely assumed that any incident occurring in the locality of North Hertfordshire will initially be beset with the same type of problems.

At the outset of the response by the Council it may be necessary to send a liaison officer to a joint emergency services control point. This will provide a constant point of contact between the operations at the scene and the Council **Incident Control Centre**.

12.1 Incident Logs

Actions taken by all agencies, including Local Authorities, in a major incident are liable for close scrutiny following an incident when the causes and responses are investigated. For this reason a comprehensive log of events will be kept in the Incident Control Centre and individuals asked to maintain their own logs. At the conclusion of the incident all logs will be collated centrally to give an overview of the Council's response.

12.2 Information Policy

In any major incident, particularly one involving serious injury or loss of life, the release of information needs to be well co-ordinated to ensure that:

- a public alarm is not engendered or increased.
- undue stress is not caused to casualties, their relatives or friends.
- the public are discouraged from sight-seeing at the scene.
- reliable and accurate information is released.
- the needs of the media are met and that their skills and resources are positively utilised.

Hertfordshire Resilience Media Communication & Information Guidelines have been produced that set out the arrangements for dealing with the information demands of the media and general public in a co-ordinated, inter-agency process. A copy of the plan is held by the Council's Public Relations Officer.

12.3 Casualty Information

Casualty information will be handled by the Police Casualty Bureau and by the hospital(s) information services following established and agreed procedures.

However well intended, North Hertfordshire District Council will on no account provide information on the number of casualties or details of casualties themselves to the media except via the Police.

12.4 Public Information

The police have a full time and highly skilled press team who would provide the first point of contact for the press. To ensure a consistent approach to the release of information

during the incident and as part of the requested support from the Council, a Public Relations Officer would liaise directly with this team. This will allow for information about the Council's response to be disseminated and will be able to assist with the Council's own information requirements.

These arrangements have been set down in the Hertfordshire Resilience Media Communication & Information Guidelines. If a major incident is declared, this plan will be activated by the Council's Public Relations Officer.



12.5 Media Monitoring

It is always useful to know how the media are reacting to and reporting a major incident and this is best done by monitoring the media output via television, radio and newspapers.

Monitoring also has the advantage that the accuracy of the information being broadcast can be checked and mis-information can be identified and dealt with quickly. Monitoring of reports may also identify areas or subjects where the Council may wish to direct their information releases.

Media monitoring and recording will form part of the task of the Public Relations Officers team and will also provide another source of archive material that would be of benefit after the incident.

12.6 Member and Officer Information

It is important that Elected Members are kept informed about the incident. This area of responsibility will fall to the Incident Control Centre Manager (in liaison with the Council's Public Relations Officer), who would need to maintain contact with the Leader of the Council, other party leaders and ward members.

In view of the other pressures likely to be on key officers during the early stages of the incident Members will be asked not to contact the Incident Control Centre simply to seek information. Relevant information will be made available as soon as possible, but it should be borne in mind that in a major incident it can take some time to ascertain all of the facts.

It is quite likely that party leaders and local ward members will be able to assist officers by making themselves available to the media and acting as a channel of information from the public to the officers. Part of the role of the Incident Control Centre Manager, in association with the Public Relations Officer and Information Team, will be to produce regular briefings for relevant Members.

It is possible that reporters will try to contact Members directly. Since one of the biggest information problems in the response to a major incident is speculation and/or unconfirmed reports it is vital that the potential for passing inaccurate information is reduced. Members are asked not to comment to the press until and unless they have been fully briefed on the situation.

13. Finance

Financial Arrangements

The District Council is responsible for payments for all resources which are utilised by them at their own request. The County Council will pay for resources ordered by the County Council.

The Government may implement the “**Bellwin**” scheme to reimburse the Council for expenditure arising from an emergency or major incident.

The Bellwin Scheme is a discretionary scheme for providing Central Government financial assistance in exceptional circumstances to affected local authorities in the event of an emergency. (*HM Government: Emergency Response and Recovery 2009*).

14. Councillor Role

Some Councillors will play a leading role during a major incident particularly if they are a Cabinet member, other Party Leader or Ward Councillor. It is important that elected Councillors are kept informed about the incident. This area of responsibility will fall to the Incident Control Centre Manager in liaison with the Council's Public Relations Manager, who will need to maintain contact with appropriate Councillors.

Relevant information will be made available to Councillors, but during a major incident it may take some time to ascertain all the facts. Councillors and staff will be asked not to speculate to the media about the incident, as the Hertfordshire Constabulary will provide all information.

In the event of Reception Centres being established within a particular Member's ward, the Member(s) concerned may wish to visit the centre. This could provide a valuable link between the public and Council. If Members wish to visit they would be requested to make contact with the Reception Centre Manager.

15. Emergency Planning Role Descriptions

Incident Manager

The Incident Manager would take overall command of the Council's response to the incident and will determine the appropriate level of response. The Incident Manager and the Major Incident (Silver / Site) Command Liaison Officer would form the initial response to the incident, including:

- Initiating the incident management structure.
- Ensuring that appropriate senior officers are alerted and allocated tasks.
- Determining the Council's strategy in liaison with the Incident Management Team.
- Assessing the impact of the incident on Council resources and arranging for the normal business of the Authority to continue.
- For out-of-hours smaller incidents, the Incident Manager may decide initially to lead the response from an alternative location and send a Site Liaison Officer to the scene to gather intelligence.

Incident Management Team

Made up of senior managers representing the Council's services / departments, the Incident Management Team is formed and Chaired by the Incident Manager and provides the

link between the Council's strategic decision making and the operational response to the incident.

For smaller incidents, the Incident Manager may decide not to form the Incident Management Team but, initially, to lead the response away from the office and send a Site Liaison Officer to the scene to gather further intelligence.

Silver / Site Liaison Officer

The nature and scale of the incident may not be sufficient to warrant the immediate formation of a Tactical (Silver) Command and so a Site Liaison Officer may be required to attend the scene. However, following further multi-agency assessment of the incident, it may be decided to establish a Tactical (Silver) Command, in which case the Site Liaison Officer role will move to that of the Silver Liaison Officer.

The Silver / Site Liaison Officer would:

- Represent the Council at an incident site to assess and make decisions on the tactical elements of the incident response.
- Represent the Council at the designated, multi-agency Tactical (Silver) Command post, usually set up at a mainline police station, to assess and make decisions on the tactical elements of incident response.
- In liaison with the multi-agency response at the scene, help analyse and determine whether the incident response should be escalated requiring the activation of appropriate command structures.

- Act as the 'eyes and ears' of the Council and to offer support to the other emergency responders in relation to the Council response to the incident.

Gold Liaison Officer

The Gold Liaison Officer would represent the Council at multi-agency, Strategic (Gold) Command meetings, usually held at Herts Police HQ, Welwyn Garden City, to establish the framework in which operational and tactical managers work in responding to and recovering from emergencies.

Reception Centre Manager

The role is based at a Reception Centre and is responsible for the management of all operational aspects of the Reception Centre.

More than one Reception Centre Manager may be needed depending on the size and nature of the incident.

Reception Centre Staff

Reception Centre Staff would carry out all operational aspects of the Council's response at a Reception Centre under the guidance and direction of the Reception Centre Manager.

Reception Centre Controller

Usually based within the Incident Control Centre, the Reception Centre Controller role is to identify, establish and run the Council's reception centres, in accordance with Hertfordshire Resilience Reception Centre Guidance.

The role also acts as the main point of contact for the Council's reception centre managers.

For smaller out-of-hours incidents, the Reception Centre Controller may operate away from the office.

Forward Loading Marshal

The Forward Loading Marshall would attend the scene of a controlled evacuation arising from an incident, gather accurate information on the nature of those to be evacuated and their transport arrangements and relay this to the Incident Control Centre.

Emergency Support Staff

The Emergency Support Staff would:

- Provide general administrative support to key officers including, but not limited to, the Incident Manager, Gold Liaison Officer, Silver Liaison Officer.
- Support the communications of the Incident Control Centre.
- Carry out other duties including making and receiving phone calls, completing Log Book entries, filing, note taking and any other general administration.

Public Relations Officer

The Public Relations Officer would take responsibility for the co-ordinated release of information to the media, the public, Council employees and Members in accordance with the

instructions of the Incident Management Team, the Hertfordshire Resilience Media and Information Guidelines and the Hertfordshire Resilience Warning and Informing Strategy. The Public Relations Officer is also responsible for the monitoring of media coverage.

This role will contribute to the multi-agency media response to the incident, in the case of a major incident this is normally led by the police. In more minor incidents the Council's communication department may take the lead in the media response.

A Public Relations Officer will be called upon to be part of the Incident Management Team and attend meetings of this group.

Resources Officer

The Resources Officer would:

- Co-ordinate the provision of all resources including labour, transport, materials and equipment via the Council's departments, services and depots or external agencies and companies.
- Provide one central contact point for all issues regarding resourcing.

Member Liaison Officer

This role would ensure that Members receive timely, accurate and up-to-date general information on the incident and specifically the Council's own response to the incident.

The information would be produced and agreed in liaison with the Incident Manager and Public Relations Officer and communicated by the Member Liaison Officer to Members. This role also receives and handles Member ad hoc requests for information and ensures they are dealt with effectively.

On behalf of the Incident Manager, the Member Liaison Officer will communicate with all tiers of local government including Town and Parish Councillors and Members of Parliament.

Information Officer

The Information Officer's role, based within the Incident Control Centre, is to collate and analyse information coming into the Centre and thus prepare situation reports on the Council's response to the incident on behalf of the Incident Manager.

Recovery Team Manager

Recovery relates to the restoration of the community following a major incident. The recovery effort is a longer-term undertaking, and will continue well beyond the conclusion of the emergency response phase.

This role would take overall responsibility for the Council's recovery effort following a major incident at the earliest opportunity so that normality can be restored, this may be while the initial response to the incident is still ongoing.

Some key recovery priorities and areas to be addressed by the Recovery Team Manager include:

- Consequence management – preventing the escalation of the impacts (e.g. restoring essential services).

- Restoration of the wellbeing of individuals, communities and the infrastructure which supports them.
- Exploiting opportunities afforded by emergencies: establishing what went wrong, identifying improvements and applying lessons learned. Adapting systems, services and infrastructure affected by emergencies to meet future needs.

The Recovery Team Manager will form part of the Incident Management Team and attend meetings of this group. Additionally, this role will be highly involved in the multi-agency Recovery Working Group, which will normally be led by the local authority.

Recovery Team

Depending on the scale and nature of the incident, a Recovery Team may be appointed to support the Recovery Team Manager.

The Recovery Team would be made up of officers representing the Council's services / departments. The Recovery Team is formed and chaired by the Recovery Team Manager and provides the focal point for all recovery-related work within the Council.

Building Control

Building Control Officers may be required to attend the incident site to assess the condition of damaged buildings or structures and arrange for buildings to be made safe or where necessary to arrange for their demolition.

The Head of Building Control (or a designated officer) would attend Incident Management Team meetings and is responsible for ensuring that Building Control Officers attend the incident and that there are replacement Building Control Officers available.

Environmental Health

Environmental Health Practitioners may be required to:

- Attend the incident site, depending on the nature and scale of the incident.
- Provide advice on the environmental and public health effects of an incident.
- Respond to requests for advice and information.

The Head of Environmental Health or a designated officer may be called upon to attend the Council's Incident Management Team meetings and a multi-agency health advisory group, if established.

Housing

Housing would be responsible for providing temporary accommodation for people made homeless in the event of an emergency and to provide information and advice on housing issues to those affected.

Section C:

Business Continuity

16. Business Continuity

Nearly one in five businesses suffers a major disruption every year. How quickly – and painlessly – you manage to get back to **'business as usual'** in the event of a terrorist attack, fire, flood or other natural disaster, or any other major disruption, such as a flu pandemic, depends on how effectively you can devise, and put into action, your own business continuity management.

It has been assessed that businesses affected by a disaster that do not have business continuity arrangements in place only have a **50%** chance of surviving the **next 12 months**.

A recent example of such a major disruption is the fire at the **Buncefield Oil Storage Depot** in Hemel Hempstead. The Mayland Industrial / Business Area adjacent to the site is the largest business / industrial area in the East of England.

- 370 businesses out of a total of approximately 630 were evacuated during the incident. At least 6 of these buildings have been designated for demolition and 30 more require major repairs before they can be reoccupied.
- 290 other businesses were disrupted for up to 3 days due to the emergency response and minor damage.
- 88 companies with 4,000 employees were still without their premises five weeks after the event.

- The short-term business recovery costs have been estimated as £2.2 million and the longer-term costs as £100 million over 10 years.

What is Business Continuity?

Business Continuity Management, or **BCM** as it is more commonly known, is a generic management framework that is valid across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

It is an ongoing process that helps organisations anticipate, prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from disruptions, whatever their source and whatever aspect of the business they affect. Effective BCM helps build resilience and safeguards the interests of key stakeholders, reputation, brand, profit-creating activities and service delivery.

17. Key Steps in Developing Business Continuity Management

Following the key steps outlined below will help you in developing BCM within your business.



1. Analyse your business

It is important to have the fullest possible picture of your business; the complex interactions inside your organisation and between you, your customers and suppliers and where your business is vulnerable.

It is also essential at this stage that the senior management fully supports BCM and recognises why it is important to the business. To help achieve this there needs to be a BCM champion to help drive the process.

2. Assess the risks

This involves looking at the risks facing your business, how likely they are to happen and what the impact will be on your business.

For instance,

- what would happen if the electricity supply failed?
- what if the IT networks went down?
- what if our key documents were destroyed in a fire?
- what if something happened to the premises and staff could not gain access to the building for days, weeks or even months?

You also need to look at:

- what functions and people are essential and when
- what are the critical services and who can carry these out?
- When do these services need to be available: within a day, a couple of days or a week?

3. Develop your strategy

Having assessed the risks, you need to develop your strategy for coping with them, depending on how willing your business is to accept risks (risk appetite), using one of the following proven strategies:

- Accept the risks – change nothing;
- Accept the risks, but make a mutual arrangement with other businesses to ensure that you have help after an incident;
- Attempt to reduce the risks;
- Attempt to reduce the risks and make arrangements for help after an incident;
- Reduce all risks to the point where you should not need outside help.

4. Develop your plan

Your business continuity plan provides the basis for managing the continuity of critical functions and recovery of the business from disruption, whatever the cause. The plan may well have both generic and specific information. Generic elements include invocation procedures,

command and control, roles and responsibilities and access to financial resources. Specific plans may be required in relation to specific sites, services or risks. These provide a detailed set of arrangements designed to go beyond the generic arrangements when these are unlikely to prove sufficient. Whatever the approach, plans need to be clear and user friendly, providing checklists that can be easily followed.

Once developed the plan should continue to be a 'living document' and an agreed schedule of review should be put in place to ensure that it continues to reflect the organisation's structure, personnel and risks faced.

5. Rehearse your plan

Rehearsing your plan is a good way to test that it works as well as discovering any weaknesses it may have. It is also a good opportunity for familiarising staff with it. They may well also require additional training to assist them in fulfilling their specific roles. It is important to have an agreed programme of both staff training and testing and exercising of the plan.

There are numerous different ways in which to rehearse your plan or even specific elements of the plan:

- **Telephone tests:** these can be done with or without warning and test the cascade arrangements and communications structure laid out in the plan. Do you experience difficulties in contacting people? Are the telephone numbers correct? Do the people listed still work for the company?
- **Paper-based exercise:** test your plan using a 'what if' written scenario. New pieces of information are added as the scenario unfolds, much as they would do in a real incident.

- **Full rehearsal:** a full rehearsal of the plan will highlight the interrelations of the different elements of the plan and how well these work together as a whole.