

Audit Scotland Report – Improving Civil Contingencies Planning

1. SUMMARY

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 established a new legislative framework for civil protection across the UK. The Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005 describe how the provisions of the UK Act are to be implemented in Scotland. Part 1 of the Act imposes new duties on public sector and other relevant organisations to ensure that effective arrangements are in place for planning for, responding to and recovering from emergencies, and for the continued delivery of services in the event of disruption.

The Report summary states that - The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 has reinforced multi-agency working and organisations are making progress in meeting their duties, although there are a number of areas that could be improved.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Audit Committee:

- consider the draft response and make amendments as necessary
- approve the response for submission to the Accounts Commission

3. BACKGROUND AND KEY POINTS

The emphasis of the Study was on the requirement under the Act for organisations to work together. It examined co-operation between key stakeholders generally, as well as specifically in relation to risk assessment, emergency and business continuity planning, training and exercising, and learning lessons. It also looked at the resources and financial management processes that support these activities.

The report included a self-assessment checklist for Category 1 responders to support improvement and the implementation of the recommendations. There are 16 recommendations in all.

A table showing the recommendations and comments/actions is shown in 4 below. Actions highlighted in italics apply to the Council directly and will therefore be addressed by the Emergency Planning Officer and Business Continuity Manager. A

self assessment for the current status for the Council has been included on these actions – none indicate any serious issues. :-

4. EARLY ACTIONS

		No progress to date	In development	In place but needs improvement	In place and working well	N/A	Comments
1	We, our SCG partners & Scottish Govt have agreed a standard approach to sharing information relevant to planning/responding to emergencies.						This issue is primarily aimed at Scottish Government and the Strathclyde SCG
2	With our SCG partners, we have reviewed the SCG membership to ensure all organisations key to civil contingencies are properly represented, and taken action as appropriate						Strathclyde SCG reviewing the current membership, to ensure all organisations are properly represented.
3	<i>Our organisation has developed materials to raise elected members awareness of their role in an emergency and of civil contingencies planning generally, and have evaluated the impact of this work</i>			X			<i>SCG putting together training package for Elected Members.</i> <i>Work done with this in the past, but needs to be repeated. EPO has asked for slot for presentation on All Business Day in January</i>
4	With our SCG partners, we are working with the Scottish Government to ensure that our Community Risk Register can be used to its full potential.						Community Risk Register being revisited by SFR (lead organisation) by the end of the year. We will support SFR with whatever is required to achieve this.
5	We, our SCG partners & organisations we share a boundary with, are reviewing how our civil contingencies planning arrangements will work across geographic/ administrative boundaries						Working group to be set up by Scottish Government to look at cross boundary arrangements.
6	<i>We have up-to-date emergency and business continuity plans in place, which have been formally agreed.</i>			X			<i>We will revisit all plans and bring up to date. Have been formally agreed when originally completed by SMT</i>
7	<i>Emergency and business continuity planning are embedded across our organisation. All our staff are aware of their roles/responsibilities in relation to civil contingencies planning, are trained appropriately, and are aware of procedures.</i>				X		<i>EP arrangements have been embedded for some years, BC responsibilities have been progressed considerably since the questionnaire was completed earlier in the year. Both are ongoing with the relevant staff (not all staff)</i>

8	<i>Our council provides local businesses and voluntary agencies with BCM advice and assistance and we have evaluated the effectiveness of our approach.</i>			X			<i>We have made available via website advice to businesses on BCM. However, in addition we will be printing and delivering by mail shot to all businesses. Voluntary agencies are represented in many EP groups and are kept informed.</i> <i>Effectiveness not evaluated.</i>
9	Our organisation, together with SCG, has considered/taken action to help relevant councils deliver BCM advice to businesses/voluntary organisations						SCG were responsible for leaflet distributed to Councils in the Strathclyde area.
10	<i>We have a structured approach and appropriate arrangements in place to improve public awareness of the risks we face and developments during and after an incident.</i>				X		<i>Public within Hazardous zones of our emergency sites are issued with information on a three yearly basis.</i> <i>It is expected that the Community Risk Register will be made available to the public in the near future.</i>
11	With SCG partners, we have considered how best to target and co-ordinate training/exercising activity in our area with national events, and how to increase efficiency and share good practice by working with organisations in neighbouring areas.						Being addressed by Scot Govt and SCG.
12	<i>All our emergency and business continuity plans are subject to regular and routine tests and exercises.</i>				X		<i>Emergency Teams take part in regular exercises and training both internally and with the sites operators in our area</i>
13	<i>With our SCG partners, and taking into account any national developments we have ensured that we have a systematic process to share/implement improvements from lessons identified during training/exercising activities and incidents. We have robust monitoring arrangements to demonstrate effectively lessons learned</i>				X		<i>We are expected to apply to the SCG to put exercises on a central timetable as far in advance as possible. Post exercise we forward exercise report to SCG this contains lessons learned.</i> <i>Internally we will now report lessons learned to our Emergency Management and Support Team (Tactical level group), and take forward with relevant services.</i>
14	With our SCG partners and the Scottish Government, we have developed a consistent framework for managing and reporting expenditure to demonstrate value for money and seek to deliver increased efficiencies and improved resilience through further partnership working.						Being addressed by the working sub group initiated by Scottish Government.
15	We have developed formal mutual aid agreements within our sector and SCG, taking account of cross-border arrangements, and the voluntary and private sectors.						Being addressed by Scottish Govt and SCG. Working group looking at mutual aid.

16	With our SCG partners, we have multi-agency arrangements in place for managing/monitoring & reporting our collective performance against the duties of the Civil Contingencies Act and the requirements of the Regulations and guidance.						Managing, Monitoring & reporting is monitored through the SCG.
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5. CONCLUSIONS

The Audit Scotland review highlighted 16 recommendations for action. There are no serious issues for Argyll and Bute Council to address. Seven recommendations require some action by the Council and arrangements have been put in place to address these.

6. IMPLICATIONS

Policy:	None
Financial:	No substantial financial implications.
Personnel:	None
Equality Impact Assessment:	Not required

SALLY LOUDON

Chief Executive

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