Staffordshire County Council
Civil Contingencies Policy
Version 05 (Feb 2023)

1.1 Introduction

The Council aims to protect the wellbeing and safety of its community, employees, assets and key stakeholders. This policy outlines the Council's approach to ensuring it has effective arrangements in place for responding to and recovering from incidents.

Staffordshire County Council will also ensure that it is able to continue to provide its Critical Services during a disruptive event. In doing so, the Council will ensure that it meets its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and Health & Social Care Act 2012.

To meet its aims the Council will:

- Safeguard people and assets
- Maintain Critical Services
- Restore full services as soon as is practicably possible

1.2 Obligations

The Council will fulfil its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) by supporting multi-agency working for the following activities:

Risk Assessment – The Council will assist in undertaking risk assessments of hazards likely to affect Staffordshire and participate in maintaining the Staffordshire Community Risk Register. This will inform response and recovery and business continuity planning relevant to the Council. Council officers are represented on the Staffordshire Resilience Forum Risk Assessment Working Group to achieve this.

Emergency Planning and Business Continuity – The Council will put in place response and recovery arrangements, and business continuity plans to assist in responding to and recovering from an event which affects the day-to-day Council's services. The Council will ensure sufficient resources are made available to produce and maintain these arrangements / plans and deliver training and exercise programmes to provide assurance that they are adequate and effective.

Communicating with the Public – The Council will provide information to the public to inform them about civil contingencies matters and maintain arrangements to support multi-agency work to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an incident. This is predominantly done through www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk, which is hosted by the Council and managed by Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU).

Partnership Working – The Council will co-operate and share information with other responders, in order to enhance coordination and efficiency, ensure that plans are robust and effective and that they integrate with other responders' plans.

Promoting Business Continuity – The Council will promote business continuity and provide advice on producing Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) to local businesses and voluntary organisations, predominantly via www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk.

Building Community Resilience – The Council will work with local communities to encourage communities and individuals to make use of resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency and complement the response of emergency services. The Council will minimise risks, prioritise work and direct resources, in order to ensure that Staffordshire's communities are as safe as is practicably possible. Where multi-agency work streams for community resilience are in place, the Council will support such projects as part of this duty. The Staffordshire Prepared website provides a central hub for community preparedness and resilience information which can be referenced and signposted to by the Council as required.
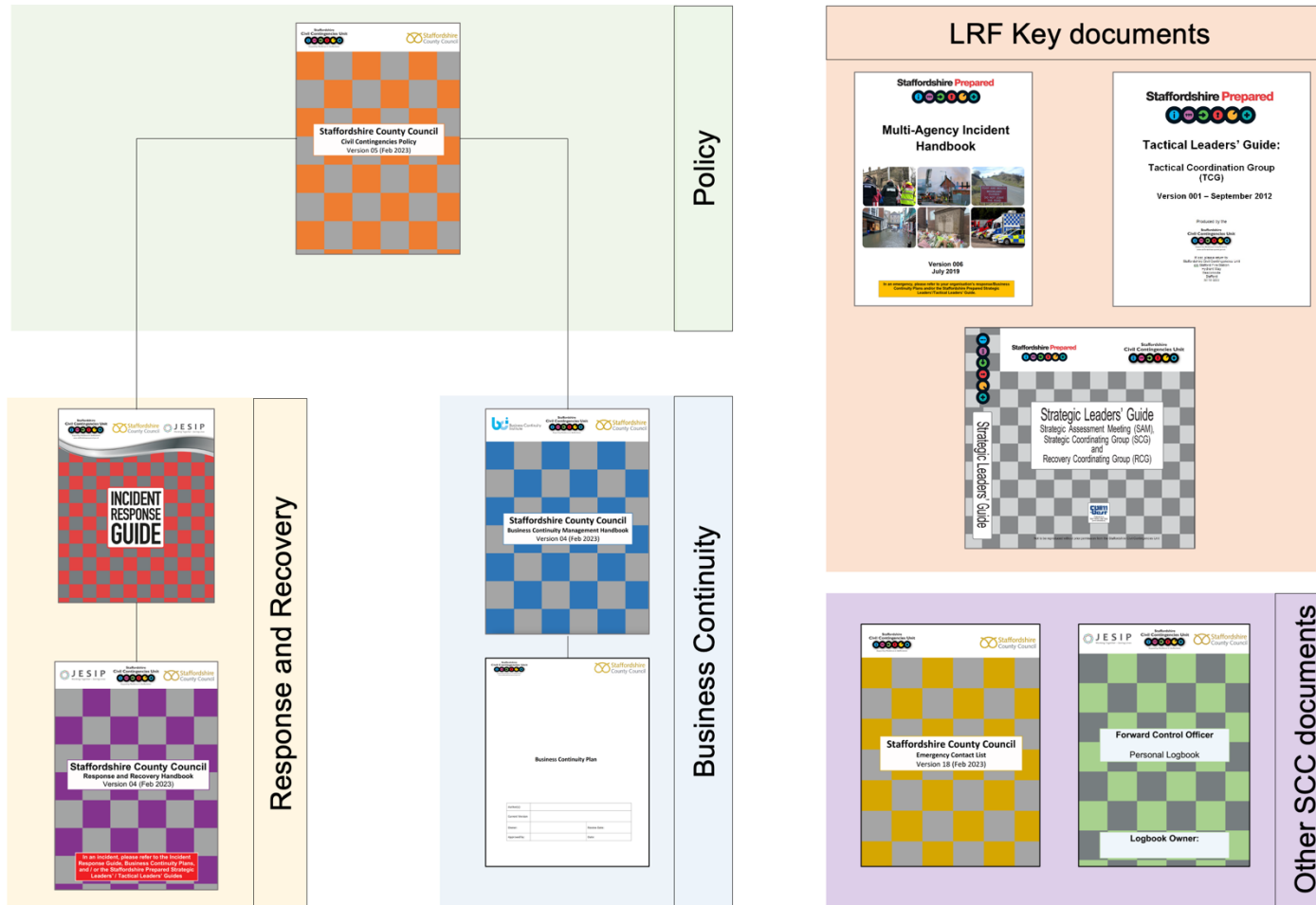
1.3 Accountability

The table below shows the key groups and individuals and their areas of responsibility:

Lead	Cabinet	Senior Leadership Team (SLT)	Lead Director	Emergency Planning and Resilience Group (EPRG)	Emergency Planning and Resilience Strategic Group (EPRSG)	Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU)
Responsibilities	Set Policy	Set strategy and agree resources	Oversee delivery	Lead tactical delivery	Ensure production and maintenance of Service BCPs	Deliver the CCU element of the SLA
	Direct SLT	Ownership and accountability of risk	Sponsorship of work programme	Ensure compliance with legislation	Oversee production and maintenance of an Incident Response Guide	Deliver Training and Exercises as agreed
	Lead Member for Civil Contingencies	Nominate a Lead Director	Provide leadership	Identify and maintain Critical Services	Oversee maintenance of Response & Recovery handbook	Provide Operational Support in the form of a 24/7 Duty Officer
		Liaise with Members	Maintain CCU Shared Services Service Level Agreement (SLA)	Ensure satisfactory day-to-day delivery	Oversee maintenance of Business Continuity Management handbook	Ensure documents are maintained
		Review and approve SCC critical services for business continuity purposes	Provide representation on the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) / Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)	Monitoring / updating / escalating risk	Oversee CCU delivery and provide representation at the Staffordshire Tactical Forum, Risk Assessment Working Group (RAWG) and Strategic Leaders Meeting (SLM)	Promote Business Continuity (with SCC), and provide advice on, and review of, Business Continuity Plans (BCP) at SCC
			Liaise with Members	Provide an Incident Management Team	Provide updates and assurance to Lead Director, SLT and Lead Member	Act as Subject Matter Experts to the County Council
			Attend Civil Contingencies Strategic Leads Meeting (SLM)			

1.4 Key Document Framework

The following chart shows the key internal documents that come under this Policy:

1.5 Shared Service Delivery

The Council is accountable for the delivery of its statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and the Health & Social Care Act 2012.

The CCU supports the delivery of these duties under a shared service arrangement. The Council commits to contribute to the CCU and support the provision of staff, to a level commensurate to meet, and continue to meet, its statutory requirements in full while ensuring value for money is achieved. This partnership approach promotes greater economy and efficiency across all of Staffordshire's Category 1 and 2 responders. It delivers positive outcomes by sharing existing resources, capabilities and knowledge across the Staffordshire Resilience Forum area for the benefit of Staffordshire's communities and residents.

1.6 Performance Monitoring and Recording

The CCU maintains a comprehensive work programme and updates the Council on its delivery as follows:

- The Lead Elected Member for Civil Contingencies, when requested
- The Lead Director responsible for Civil Contingencies, when requested
- The EPRSG, on a monthly basis
- The EPRG, on a quarterly basis
- Internal audit, when requested
- Scrutiny by any Member, when requested

The updated work programme is also available on the Emergency Planning section of SharePoint and is available to be viewed at any time.

1.7 Multi-Agency Meetings

The Council commits to support wider multi-agency working in order to promote a joined-up, partnership approach to resilience in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. It therefore supports the following meetings:

- Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF): Chief Executive or Lead Director (Director of Corporate Services), or their representative deputy
- SRF Tactical Meeting: Incident Management Team Chair, or other TCG chair
- Risk Assessment Working Group (RAWG): Health & Safety Manager and Flood Risk Manager
- Staffordshire Prepared Conference: Open invitation to all staff
- Task & Finish Projects: Specialist staff to support on request of CCU and / or EPRG
- Strategic Assessment Meeting (SAM) / Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)
- Tactical Assessment Meeting (TAM) / Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG)
- Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) and Sub-Groups dependant on the nature and scope of an incident.
- Civil Contingencies Strategic Leads Meeting (SLM)

1.8 Incident Management Team (IMT)

Where required, the Council will provide an Incident Management Team to coordinate and direct the tactical response to an incident. This is to ensure that the actions taken by Operational Teams on the ground are coordinated, coherent and integrated, in order to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. These duties are detailed in the Response and Recovery Handbook. Dependent upon the nature, scale, and type of incident, the team will co-opt representatives from the following areas as appropriate:

- IMT Chair
- Children's Services
- Health and Care
- Schools and SEND
- Environment, Infrastructure and Skills (EIS)
- Support Services
- Tactical Coordinating Group Representatives

The IMT will be able to call on specialist support from IMT specialists. These are available from the following areas:

- Property
- Communications (Media)
- Health and Safety
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Flood Risk Management
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)
- Adult Services
- Public Health
- Trading Standards (including Animal Health)
- Support Officers
- Mass Fatality
- Mass Displacement (evacuation and sheltering)
- Loggists, support and runners
- Representatives from external delivery partners where required and appropriate

1.9 Business Continuity Management

1.9.1 Critical Services

The Council will identify and maintain a schedule of Critical Services and ensure that each one is covered by an effective BCP. The Council's definition of a Critical Service is one which:

1. Provides a vital life-saving and / or health function; and / or:

2. Is provided as a legal / regulatory requirement, and / or is vital in maintaining the financial stability of the County Council, and / or is vital in maintaining the County Council's reputation (public perception), and / or is vital to maintaining the delivery of core services.

In addition, only these services which would need to be substantially restored within 1 month are deemed to be critical.

Critical Services are also deemed to include those corporate support services, which are essential to the maintenance of other Critical Services. This includes, but is not limited to, property, staffing, ICT and supplies. These will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the EPRSG.

Once all Critical Services have a BCP in place, other services within the Council will be encouraged and supported to produce a BCP with the goal of embedding the principles and culture of Business Continuity Management across the organisation.

The critical services list is reviewed annually.

1.9.2 Business Continuity Planning

Under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004, the Council, as a Category 1 responder, commits to undertake Business Continuity Management (BCM) to ensure continued operation of services during an emergency. BCM is a process by which the organisation or service area can prepare for a disruptive incident which is likely to create a gap in normal business provision.

Ongoing support is required from all critical service leads to ensure business continuity arrangements are put into place as defined in section 1.9.1, with support from CCU. Business continuity plans are reviewed on an annual basis, with a detailed rewrite scheduled on a triennial basis, or more frequently as appropriate. Plans will be reviewed more frequently where staffing changes or restructures deem appropriate.

As part of the planning process, critical services will consider their critical functions or processes as per section 1.9.1. Strategies and / or contingency arrangements will be established to ensure each process to continue to function at a defined level during the maximum tolerable period of disruption. Services will consider the loss of process, property, personnel, supplier and commissioned services (as appropriate) throughout.

To ensure plans are maintained, reviewed and tested, the business recovery team defined in each of the business continuity plans will undertake a self-service and / or table-top exercise on an annual basis to ensure knowledge is embedded, members are staff are trained in the appropriate response, and to provide confidence that each plan is fit for purpose.

1.10 A Commissioning Authority

As a commissioning authority, some of the Council's services are delivered by external partners. Staffordshire County Council commits to ensuring that the obligations in 1.2 continue to be met where relevant services are commissioned to, and operated by, external partners.

This is to include incident response, business continuity and input to planning and risk assessments, where appropriate to the commissioned service. Where Critical Services are commissioned externally, (as defined in 1.9) validated and exercised BCPs will be required to ensure these services remain operational during an emergency or disruptive event.

Commissioners responsible for the commissioning of these services retain responsibility for the Council's delivery of these services and must ensure these obligations are reviewed during procurement and made clear in contracts. Support in reviewing and monitoring business continuity / incident response arrangements is available from the Civil Contingencies Unit.

1.11 Role of Members

Elected Members have an important role to play both in preparing for and during emergencies. The document "Incident Guidance for Members" is available to provide members with an overview of how Incidents are managed and to highlight the potential role of members. Briefings are also available on request.

1.12 Publication of this Policy

This Civil Contingencies Policy will be placed on the intranet as a key corporate policy document.

1.13 Review and Revision of this Policy

The EPRSG will review this Civil Contingencies Policy on an annual basis, making amendments, as appropriate. Any fundamental policy changes will be submitted to the Cabinet for approval.