

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 February 2024

Adoption of Revised Civil Contingency Policy and new Business Continuity Management Policy for Staffordshire County Council



Councillor Alan White, Leader of the Council said,

“It is vital that as a county council we are prepared to deal with civil emergencies whenever they arise, helping to protect our communities and delivering the essential services that we’re responsible for throughout critical periods. This means having the most up-to-date and relevant information in our plans and policies, working collaboratively with key partners across Staffordshire.”

Report Summary:

We work closely with the Fire, Police, District Council’s and Health to make sure that we have emergency plans in place. Those plans are constantly being tested, reviewed and updated to make sure they remain fit for purpose.

This report asks Cabinet to agree our Policy approach for dealing with emergencies and sets out the three key outcomes that we will seek to achieve if an emergency should happen:

- a. To safeguard people and assets;
- b. To maintain business critical services; and
- c. To restore full services as soon as is practicably possible.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Cabinet approves the Civil Contingencies Policy V6 attached.
- b. Cabinet approves the Business Continuity Management Policy V1 attached.

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Recommendations of the Leader of the Council

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Cabinet approves the Civil Contingencies Policy V6 attached.
- b. Cabinet approves the Business Continuity Management Policy V1 attached.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. To ensure that the Council has an up-to-date Civil Contingencies Policy to inform its emergency planning arrangements and robust Business Continuity Management in place.
2. The Council has always taken its responsibility for planning for civil contingencies very seriously. It has established, with partners, a highly skilled and experienced team to help it manage its planning and response to emergencies. The Council has been advised by that team, the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), that its Civil Contingencies Policy needs to be updated and best practice suggests a dedicated Business Continuity Management Policy is developed with both being approved at the highest level. The two policies proposed are attached to the report.
3. The refreshed Civil Contingencies Policy has been updated, along with a supporting new Business Continuity Management to reflect current guidance, learning and ways of working and is once again based on ensuring that the Council's civil contingencies arrangements continue to deliver three key outcomes in the event of an emergency:
 - a. To safeguard people and assets;
 - b. To maintain business critical services; and
 - c. To restore full services as soon as is practicably possible.

Legal Implications

4. There are no specific legal implications arising out of the report. However, the Council's ability to perform its civil protection duties as a CAT1 responder within the Act is subject to external scrutiny and failure to comply with legislation or legal requirements (eg Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Flood Water Management Act 2010) can result in external censure, financial loss (including fines and compensation) and reputational damage.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

5. There are no specific financial implications resulting from the policies within this report, although it is worth noting that the cost of any incident cannot always be planned for, both in relation to resources required to plan and respond and financial cost of rectification.
6. In the event that the Council are not able to discharge its legal obligations there is a consequent unquantifiable risk or damages resulting from any liability, together with legal costs arising in the resolution of any matter.
7. We form part of the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies partnership model which gives us the benefits of economies of scale, with a supplementary contract for the provision of additional support. We therefore don't have dedicated emergency planning officers within the Council.

Climate Change Implications

8. Cabinet approved the Staffordshire Climate Change Adaptation strategy in September 2023, which aligned all the Councils within the County to work together, to ensure that the services that we deliver to our communities are resilient to the effects of climate change.
9. Considering that a changing climate has seen the increased incidence of extreme heat, flooding, storms and wildfires it is confirmed that within the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and adverse weather guidance we consider the effects of climate change and where necessary implement controls and actions within relevant Business Continuity Plans and risk registers to mitigate and potential negative impacts".

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Staffordshire County Council Civil Contingency Policy V6
- Appendix 2 – Staffordshire County Council Business Continuity Management Policy V1

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