



Report to Cabinet

Date: 15th November 2022

Title: **Buckinghamshire Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy**

Relevant councillor(s): Cllr Steve Bowles

Contact officer: Vince Grey, Resilience Service

Ward(s) affected: None specific

Recommendations: **That the new Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Resilience Framework and Standards Policy is endorsed and it is noted that this replaces the interim Civil Contingencies Policy agreed prior to Vesting Day.**

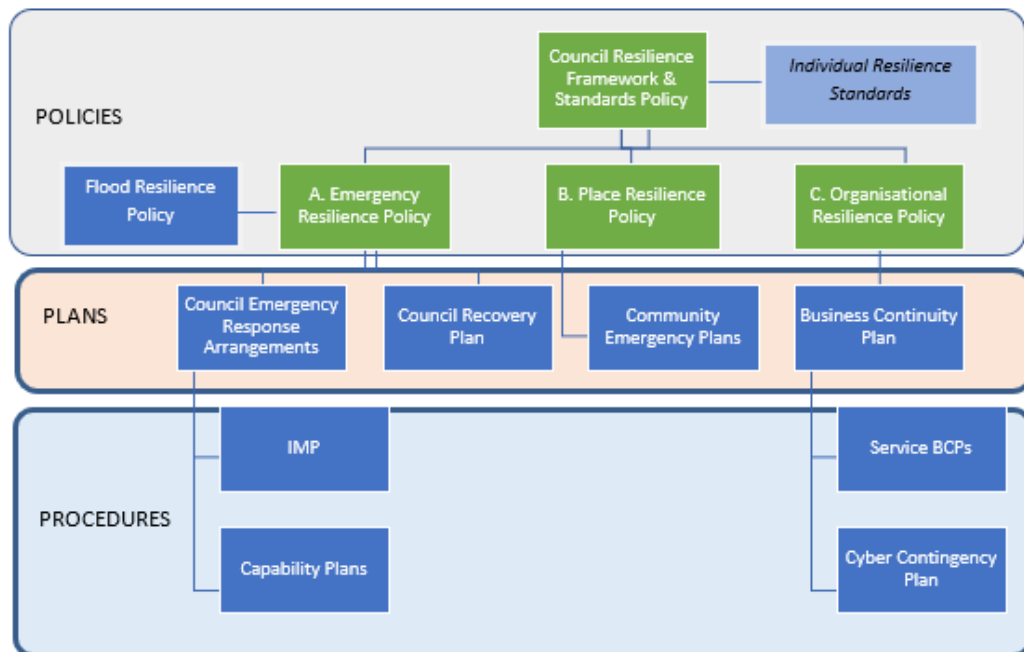
Reason for decision: The Council as part of its commitment to delivery of its statutory obligations with regards to the Civil Contingencies Act has developed a new Corporate Resilience Framework and Standards Policy which incorporates the Governments new national strategy for Resilience so that there is now a single Council wide approach.

1. Executive summary

1.1 At Vesting Day the Council put in place an interim Civil Contingencies Policy to discharge our duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA). Since then the Government has developed a national strategy for resilience and the new Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy (CRF&S) at **Annex 1** will ensure that the Council complies with these new national standards together with its duties under the CCA.

1.2 The CRF&S policy has been discussed at a range of presentations to Members, including the Select Committee for Communities and Localism in April 2022.

- 1.3 The new Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy is the overarching policy document and this includes 3 'sub' policies covering Emergency Resilience; Place Resilience and Organisational (Council) Resilience – coloured green in the diagram below. The CRF&S Policy incorporates the detail covered in the interim Civil Contingencies Policy, so allowing that Vesting Day policy to be replaced.



2. Content of report

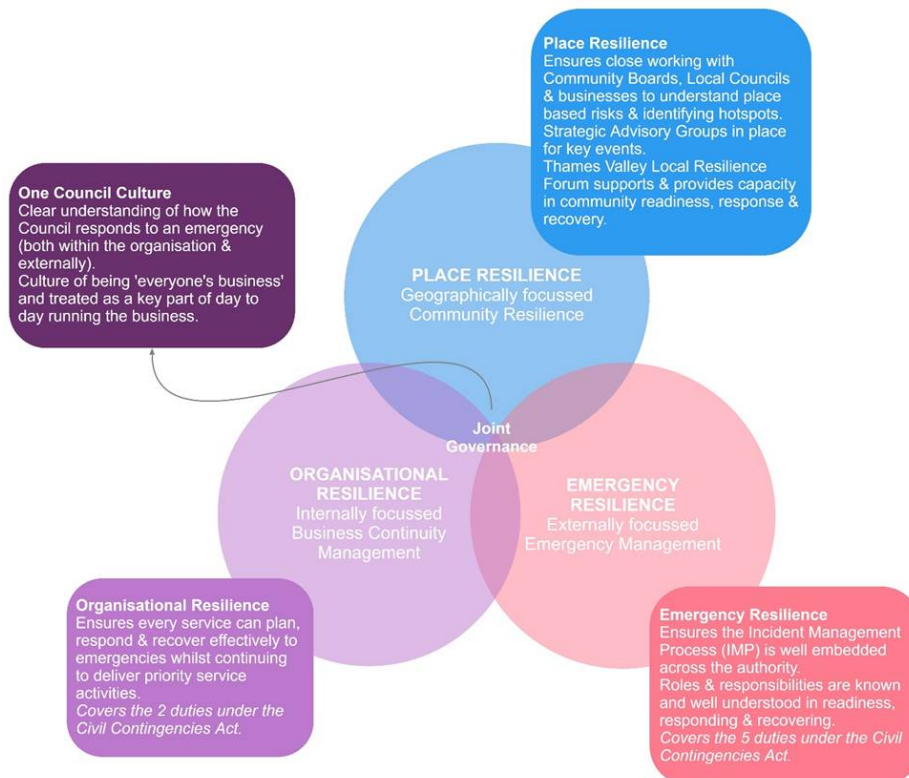
Introduction


- 2.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) sets out a framework for emergency preparedness in the UK. It defines what an emergency is, creates the conditions for effective multi-agency working at the local level and provides emergency powers which allow the government to react quickly to make temporary special legislation in the most serious of emergencies. The Government last reviewed the CCA in 2022 with no substantive changes being recommended.
- 2.2 In 2021 the Government, in recognition that resilience is a key part of preparedness, produced the National Resilience Strategy, this brought a focus as to how communities and local government and Agencies should develop working partnerships to provide more re-assurance and better resilience within local communities.

- 2.3 The Council's new CRF&S incorporates our CCA duties and builds a model of resilience across the whole Council and the County that is easy to understand and for all staff to work to. The Framework and Policy plays a key part in helping the Council to deliver its priorities under the 'Strengthening Our Communities' objective.
- 2.4 The CRF&S Policy meets the requirements of the National Government Resilience Strategy and the policy has been shared for input across the Council, with Members and Partners at the following forums during 2022:
- Communities and Localism Select Committee (April)
 - Member Briefing (April)
 - Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member for Communities briefing (April)
 - CMT (May)
 - Service Directors (June)
 - TVLRF Annual Conference (June)
 - Communications Team (July)
 - Business Operations (July)
 - Community Boards (September)

Buckinghamshire Council Resilience Framework

- 2.3 The CRF&S covers three areas of critical business for the Council and the diagram below highlights these under the banner of a One Council Approach and Culture:



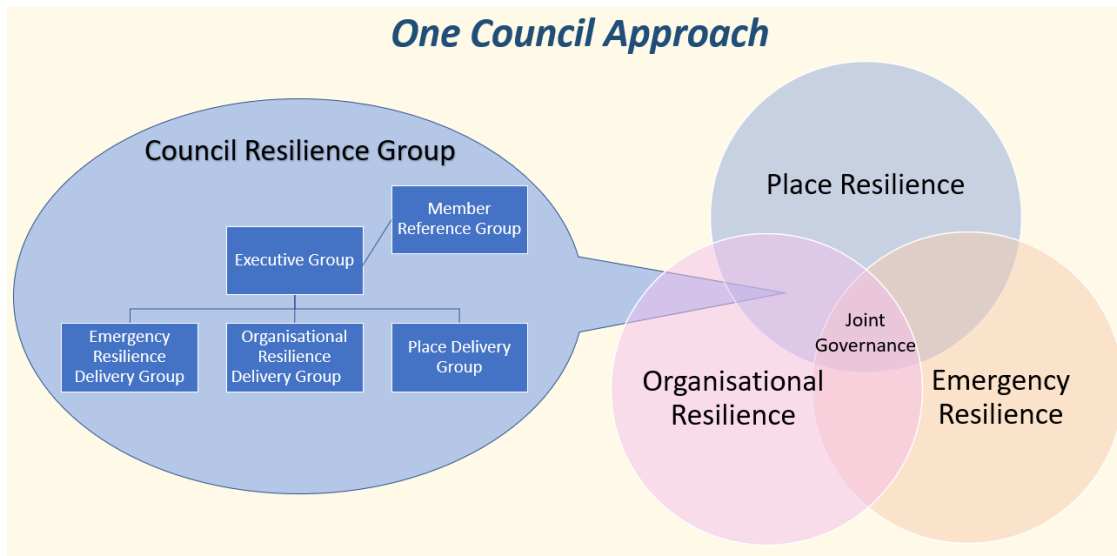
- 2.4 Place Resilience ensures close working between communities (including Community Boards), the Council and businesses to understand place-based risks, including identifying hotspots to create activity that enables individuals, businesses, community networks and voluntary organisations to behave in a resilient way and act to support the public. This includes:
- Working with local communities to ensure effective emergency response plans are in place.
 - Identify and develop an understanding of community assets to support emergency activities in response and recover.
 - Use Business Intelligence to establish vulnerability within communities and mitigate responses.
 - Plan, train and exercise with and in local communities.
- 2.5 Organisational Resilience is the ability to anticipate, adapt to and move forward from disruption. Business continuity is a key management discipline that builds and improves organisational resilience. An effective business continuity programme is essential for any organisation that seeks to develop and enhance organisational resilience and is an ongoing cycle of activities that implements the policy. These activities are carried out by following the business continuity management lifecycle. This includes:
- Develop and build a robust business continuity management process across the Council.
 - Where appropriate develop specific overarching plans for incidents such as a cyber-attack.
 - Ensure the management of risk is understood.
- 2.6 Emergency Resilience ensures that the Council effectively delivers its statutory duties in relation to the CCA 2004 and other related legislation. Emergency Resilience requires a strategic and coordinated approach to activity to ensure the Incident Management Process (IMP) is well embedded across the Council, that roles and responsibilities are known and well understood and supports the Council in readiness, responding and recovering from incidents and emergencies. This will include:
- Developing an understanding of community assets that can be used to support emergency activities in response and recovery.
 - Plan, train and exercise internally and with and in local communities.
 - Externally focussed Emergency Management.
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2.7 At the heart of the CRF&S are eleven **Resilience Standards**. These are a nationally recognised bench marking tool which the Council has adopted and developed to provide a comprehensive set of Resilience Standards, they provide the structure to ensure our approach and activities are fit for purpose and that they benchmark against national practise. The standards do not replicate or replace existing legislation, guidance or other standards. Each standard details the desired outcomes and bench marking descriptors. The diagram below outlines the Standards:



Framework Governance

2.8 The CRF&S will be supported by a governance structure as outlined below. A Council Resilience Group (CRG) will be established to provide the governance for the CFR&S. The Group will facilitate planning, learning, engagement and development with regards to the three areas of the framework. The CRG has an Officer Executive Group which is supported by a Member Reference Group, together with three Delivery Groups covering: Emergency Resilience, Organisational Resilience and Place Resilience.



2.9 Executive Group

The Executive Group comprises Officers across the Council and sets the strategy and objectives for the Council Resilience Group and is accountable for the multi-service coordination of the Council Resilience Framework, as well as taking the lead in creating and embedding the One Council Approach to resilience. The Executive Group provides a central point for accountability for implementation and continuous monitoring of activities relating to the Framework.

2.10 Member Reference Group

This group will be led by the Cabinet Member for Communities. The group will champion and elevate awareness amongst Councillors, support the fostering of links with Town and Parish Councils, voluntary, community and business groups in line with the requirements of the Resilience Standard for Political Leadership. They would also help ensure there are appropriate communication channels in place for Councillors, in particular during an incident.

2.12 Councillors who are part of the Member Reference Group will be provided with an induction to understand their role and responsibilities. This will include the role played by Members when supporting community activity, for example awareness of community workshops and any relevant Action Plans that come from this engagement and how this can be raised at the Council Resilience Group for review and/ or action.

2.13 A range of training exercises are planned that Members will be made aware of and encouraged to participate in as it is relevant to their ward area or portfolio. This will

allow elected Members to identify and feedback problems and vulnerabilities in their community that may require priority attention to the relevant service or group. It is also planned that Members will receive a briefing on their role in an incident or emergency.

Partnership working

- 2.14 The Council Resilience Framework & Standards Policy sets out how the Resilience Service will work on behalf of and represent the Council within the wider partnership arena. Resilience related activities are linked into work undertaken by the multi-agency grouping of emergency responders. All partners will continue to be involved and updated as this new Framework and Policy is deployed.

Council Resilience Framework & Standards Policy – document summary

- 2.15 The full document is at Annex A and it has been reviewed by a range of Members, Committees, the Thames Valley LRF and CMT (para 2.2) and its sets out the following subjects:

- Hierarchy of Plans to support the CRF&S policy (page 5)
- The Resilience Delivery Model (page 9)
- Audit and Evaluation Governance (page 10)
- CRF&S reporting procedures (page 11)
- Emergency Resilience Delivery Policy including CCA duties (page 12)
- Place Resilience Delivery Policy (page 19)
- Organisational Resilience Delivery Policy (page 26)

Duty rotas and Training and Exercising

- 2.16 To support the operational response to emergencies and incidents the Council has a 365/24/7 duty rota which includes a Corporate Duty Director and a Service Duty Director supported by a Member of the Resilience team plus a range of Duty Officers across Services.
- 2.17 Corporate and Service Director Duty Officers are given training on emergency and incident response including the leadership of an incident Management Team; action cards relevant to the incident or emergency and decision recording for future lessons learned/ statutory reviews.

- 2.18 As part of the Resilience Standard for Political Leadership, Councillors will be provided with training about their role in an emergency and incident response situation.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 The interim Civil Contingencies Policy now requires updating and the new Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy reflects the experiences and requirements of the new Council and are in line with the Government's national Resilience Framework. To not update or replace would have meant that the interim Policy was increasingly unfit for purpose.
- 3.2 The new CRF&S Policy will replace the interim Civil Contingencies Policy that was written to support the move to become a Unitary Council.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The principle legislation governing civil contingencies work is the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) and associated statutory guidance. Under section 2 of the CCA, Councils have a duty to assess, plan and advise on the risk of an emergency occurring, the effect on their functions, how to prevent, reduce and mitigate the effects of emergencies and to publish all or appropriate parts of those emergency and business continuity plans.
- 4.2 The Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy will support the delivery of the Council's statutory responsibilities under the CCA.

5. Corporate implications

- Property - none
- HR – none
- Climate change - none
- Sustainability - none
- Equality – no EQIA required
- Data – no DPIA required
- Value for money – none

6. Local councillors & community boards consultation & views

- 6.1 The Resilience Framework and Standards Policy has already been presented to the Select Committee for communities and Localism.
- 6.2 The same policy has also been presented to a range of other Elected Members, Service Directors, Town and Parish Clerks and Community Boards.
- 6.3 Feedback from the consultation process was extremely positive with a view from Members that this was a positive step forward in terms of community engagement and that the Framework also brought about a structure to manage a range of resilience issues within the Council.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 Links have been made with Council communication teams in preparation for internal and external messaging.
- 7.2 The Resilience Service has engaged with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum throughout the development of these documents.
- 7.3 The revised Resilience Service Website has been updated to provide information and guidance on a range of resilience issues to support emergency and contingency planning for local communities and households.
- 7.4 The Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy will be reviewed annually.
- 7.5 A training offer will be provided to Staff and Members with regards to their role within the Resilience Framework and with regards to emergency/incident management.
- 7.6 Community engagement is already underway with Town and Parish Councils. The Resilience Service has undertaken a number of evening workshops with local councillors to raise the issues around community resilience and to support the development of locally driven community emergency plans.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 The Resilience Framework and Standards Policy is the foundation for Council's response to the national Government resilience strategy moving forward.
- 8.2 This policy will be placed on the Resilience Service website.

9. Background papers

9.1 None

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by telephone [01296 382343] or email [democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk]

