



# Report to Communities and Localism Select Committee

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Steve Bowles

**Contact officer:** Vince Grey, Resilience Service, Business Operations, Resources

## Council Resilience Group

Focussing on the continued development of the Council Resilience Framework and Standards Policy we have held two Executive Council Resilience Group (CRG) meetings in the last six months. The theme has been to focus on a One Council Approach to deliver across both council services and collaboration with local communities. During the last two meetings a range of subjects have been brought to the CRG for discussion and review. These range from community resilience, climate change, Corporate Business Continuity plan, Council cyber framework, Exercise Faraday and the council winter readiness and response framework.

## Winter Readiness and Response Framework

Building on the One Council Approach we have developed a council winter readiness and response framework that has been in place since November and concluded on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. This framework provided an overarching review of the council's winter preparedness utilising 15 front line services which included Service Areas dealing with vulnerability i.e. health, Social care and Housing. Service Areas dealing with front line operational activity i.e. Waste Management, TfB, Country parks and Service Areas dealing with emergency or risk i.e. Resilience Service, Business Assurance and Community Safety.

These Service Areas also formed a winter cell which met on the first Thursday of each month. Through the cell we were able to report across the whole council with regards to any arising issues or concerns through the winter months. The winter cell was designed to cover a range of winter planning assumptions from poor weather, cost of living crisis, developing situations across Europe, health concerns, fuel costs and the possibility of power outages as per the Governments power outage plans.

The above approach has proved very successful in supporting the council and provided reassurance across the board. As a result we will be setting up a Summer Framework utilising the same blueprint as the winter framework, this will run from June till September.

One aspect of developing the summer and winter frameworks is that it allows the council to understand any current issues or horizon scan, thus enabling us to plan for better outcomes across all our service areas. This in turn ensures that service provision to the public is always at its peak and responses can be managed quickly.

### Work with Parish and Town Councils

There has been a drive for the Resilience Service (RS) to deliver evening community workshops focusing on supporting communities in developing local community emergency plans. At present 4 such workshops have taken place, with one community moving forward to develop their own plan and a second one currently undertaking a review prior to moving forward. As part of the engagement process the RS are keen to develop work within communities that are part of the Opportunities Bucks levelling up programme and by linking in with Community Boards and Town/Parish Clerks we are hoping to drive this activity forward.

### Member Training

The RS have undertaken two Member training sessions with regards to emergency management and the council resilience framework and standards policy. These sessions discussed the topics in general but also provided an oversight of the role of Members in these areas of business and how Members could provide their continued support. In particular we are looking for continued Member support in the area of developing local community emergency plans to ensure communities can become more resilient and support the Governments national resilience strategy. Up to seventy Members took part in these sessions and positive feedback was received with regards to the content and support the sessions provided Members

### Training and Exercising

The RS have undertaken a range of training and exercising over the last six months. In response to the Governments plans for the possibility of power outages, the RS along with colleagues in Business Assurance, planned Exercise Faraday, a four day exercise to test the council power outage plans and business continuity planning across our front line 15 services as identified in the winter cell. Ex Faraday proved very successful and a report has been reviewed at CMT with regards to its outcomes and next steps. The RS further tested the power outage plan at a regional and national level through our engagement with the Local Resilience Forum's Ex Lemur and the Governments Ex Mighty Oak. Again through testing these process we are able to be better prepared to support the needs of the community should any of these eventualities take place.

The RS worked in tandem with Marlow Town Council in January to exercise their own Town flood plan, Ex Naboo. This was run over an afternoon and involved a range of assets from both Buckinghamshire and Marlow Council's.

We are currently working up a training offer to support the training of all the directors within the council with regards to their role in emergency management. This will also be transformed into training for our volunteer staff, particularly those performing roles at rest centres, local authority liaison officers and third sector voluntary organisations.

Through testing and training these processes we are able to be better prepared to support the needs of the community should any of these eventualities take place. In turn this leads to better service provision to the public.

### Resilience Service Webpage

The RS webpage is constantly evolving and we review its content and analytics on a regular basis with our web colleagues. Through this process we aim to provide continued support to communities and businesses across Buckinghamshire on a range of subjects. We review up and coming national days or weeks of activity and plan accordingly using the webpage to deliver important messages i.e. 30 ways for 30 days in September. We also utilised the webpage to support our attendance at the Bucks County Show and highlight the impact of understanding the need for personal resilience in the home and wider community.