

Addendum

Guidance for officers on supporting councillors to fulfil their civil resilience roles

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1. PURPOSE OF OFFICER GUIDANCE

The purpose of this document is to provide generic guidance to London local authority officers on supporting councillors to fulfil their agreed roles in civil resilience effectively.

The guidance has been intentionally written in high-level, generic terms to allow necessary flexibility in its practical application, so that particular circumstances within individual local authorities can be taken into consideration. In tailoring the guidance to local circumstances, it is important for officers to keep the overall objective in mind on which the guidance is focused, i.e. ensuring that all councillors in London local authorities have the support they need to exercise their roles effectively in preparing for, responding to and recovering major emergencies and other significant crises.

2. INTRODUCTION

Whilst all operational responsibilities associated with civil resilience will be assigned to officers, councillors in London local authorities have a key political role to play in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from major emergencies, as well as confirming that appropriate business continuity arrangements are in place. Their contribution in this regard must not overlap with, but should be complementary to, the operational role of their officer colleagues.

The important role that councillors have in civil resilience is reflected in the Resilience Standards for London. The Standards set a clear expectation that political leaders and Ward councillors will have clearly defined roles and responsibilities in relation to civil resilience. They also state that support arrangements should be put in place to enable councillors to fulfil their defined roles effectively.

Councillors' ability to follow the guidance will be substantially dependent on necessary support arrangements being put in place by officers. Hence, this guidance has been introduced to assist officers in the process of making certain that their councillor colleagues are getting the information, training and development they require to understand, and acquire the skills necessary for, their roles in civil resilience. It also focuses on the day-to-day support that councillors will need from officers when actually undertaking their roles in preparedness, response and recovery.

3. STRUCTURE AND APPLICATION OF GUIDANCE

3.1. Structure

The guidance contained in this document is divided into two main parts - Part A is focused on the provision of support to Leaders/Directly-elected Mayors and other Cabinet Members (**collectively referred to as 'Leading Members'**), with Part B addressing the support

requirements of local Ward councillors. Both Parts are subdivided into sections dealing with preparedness, response and recovery.

Within Parts A and B, the document is structured to mirror that of guidance prepared for Leading Members and Ward councillors on their respective roles in civil resilience. The rationale for taking this approach is to clearly align guidance for councillors on exercising their roles, with guidance for officers on supporting and enabling them to do so.

3.2. Application

In applying the guidance, Chief Executives should assign lead responsibility for its implementation to a designated member of their senior leadership team. Doing so will demonstrate a clear corporate commitment to ensuring that councillors get the support they need in their roles associated with civil resilience.

The guidance itself has been written in high-level, generic terms to allow necessary flexibility in its application across the 33 London local authorities. Rather than being prescriptive, it is intended to signpost officers to key issues that need to be addressed, in order that councillors are enabled to fulfil their roles effectively. The detailed solutions arrived at through this process need to fit with organisational context, whilst, at the same time, supporting councillors to operate in accordance with agreed good practice for elected members in London local authorities. With that in mind, the starting point for applying this guidance should involve officers reviewing the guidance that has been prepared for councillors.

4. **PART A – SUPPORTING LEADING MEMBERS**

The guidance contained this section of the document should be applied such that Leading Members are able to follow the good practice set out in the Part 1 of this Handbook.

4.1. Officer support in ensuring necessary preparedness

Supporting Personal Preparedness of Leading Members

In order to support Leading Members to be personally prepared to fulfil their agreed roles during the response to, and recovery from, major emergencies, officers should:

- i. Make guidance associated with the role of councillors in civil resilience readily available to elected members
- ii. Make copies of the local authority's key emergency and business continuity plans readily available to elected members
- iii. Make initial and refresher training courses available, to assist Leading Members to understand their respective roles, and how to exercise them in practice
- iv. Run exercises that enable Leading Members to perform their respective roles in a simulated environment.

Supporting the political leadership role of Leading Members within the council

In order to support Leading Members to exercise their internal and external political leadership roles in connection with preparedness effectively, officers should:

- i. Assign lead managerial responsibility for civil resilience to a single senior officer
- ii. Put in place arrangements to ensure that Leading Members will be able to contact the Chief Executive/Gold on-call senior officer immediately, in the event of an emergency
- iii. Work with councillor colleagues to put arrangements in place to enable urgent decisions to be taken during an emergency response
- iv. Put in place arrangements for reporting on the performance of the local authority in relation to preparedness – with a particular focus on performance against the Resilience Standards for London.
- v. Support the Leader to engage effectively as a member of the London Leaders' Committee, on issues associated with the individual and collective resilience of London local authorities
- vi. Where requested, support Leaders to put arrangements in place associated with the political role of MPs during response and recovery operations
- vii. Where requested, support Leaders to consider issues associated with the Mayor of London's role during response and recovery operations.

4.2. Officer support in the response phase

In order to support Leading Members to exercise their internal and external political leadership roles effectively during the response to a major emergency, officers should:

- i. Ensure that effective and resilient arrangements are put in place for regularly briefing Leading Members throughout the response phase
- ii. Ensure that effective and resilient arrangements are put in place to support the Leader/Directly-elected Mayor in their civic leadership role as the 'public face of the council'
- iii. Ensure that effective and resilient arrangements are in place to enable the two-way flow of information between the Cabinet member with lead responsibility for Ward councillor engagement and Ward councillors themselves
- iv. Support Leading Members in expressing their gratitude to council staff involved in the response operation
- v. Support Leading Members to represent the council during visits by VIPs
- vi. Where necessary, provide support to Leading Members in making representations to the Government for financial assistance
- vii. Assign responsibility for initial work associated with recovery to a designated lead officer, who will engage with the Cabinet member appointed by the Leader/Directly-elected Mayor to provide necessary political support.

4.3. Officer support in the recovery phase

In order to support Leading Members to exercise their internal and external political leadership roles effectively during the recovery from a major emergency, officers should:

- i. Ensure that effective and resilient arrangements remain in place to support the Leader/Directly-elected Mayor in their ongoing civic leadership role as the 'public face of the council'
- ii. Put in place arrangements for reporting progress to Leading Members on the development and delivery of a Recovery Strategy
- iii. Support Leading Members to ensure that regular progress updates are communicated to communities and other stakeholders
- iv. Support Leading Members to ensure that frequent messages on progress are conveyed to staff and councillors
- v. Support Leading Members in communicating key messages to staff and councillors that they should convey on behalf of the council
- vi. Support the Leader/Directly-elected Mayor in establishing protocols for any involvement of external political stakeholders in the recovery operation
- vii. Support Leading Members in making the case for financial assistance to support the recovery operation
- viii. Provide necessary support to the process of establishing and managing any 'disaster funds' set up to collect and distribute charitable donations
- ix. Support Leading Members in attending memorial or remembrance services
- x. Support Leading Members to engage in post-incident reviews, scrutiny, inquests and Public Inquiries

5. PART B – SUPPORTING WARD COUNCILLORS

The guidance contained in this section of the document should be applied such that Ward councillors are able to follow the good practice set out in Part 2 of this Handbook:

5.1. Officer support in ensuring necessary preparedness

Supporting Personal Preparedness of Ward councillors

In order to support Ward councillors to be personally prepared to fulfil their agreed roles during the response to, and recovery from, major emergencies, officers should:

- i. Make guidance associated with the role of councillors in civil resilience readily available to elected members
- ii. Make copies of the local authority's key emergency and business continuity plans readily available to elected members
- iii. Make initial and refresher training courses available, to assist Ward councillors to understand their role, and how to exercise it in practice
- iv. Run exercises that enable Ward councillors to perform their role in a simulated environment.

Supporting Ward councillors as community representatives

In order to support Ward councillors to exercise their role as community representatives in connection with preparedness effectively, officers should:

- i. Provide routes by which Ward councillors can feed-in local intelligence on community risk, to inform civil resilience policy decisions and associated planning activity
- ii. Make plans available to Ward councillors associated with managing risks that may impact upon the communities that they represent

Supporting Ward councillors as community leaders

In order to support Ward councillors to exercise their role as community leaders in connection with preparedness, officers should:

- i. Develop and communicate details of arrangements that are available to support Ward councillors in developing community resilience
- ii. Provide routes by which Ward councillors can feed-in local knowledge on individuals and groups who could play a part in preparedness, response and/or recovery, to inform central planning activity
- iii. Establish and disseminate details of reliable, resilient and secure communication routes through which information can be passed to-and-from Ward councillors during an emergency response
- iv. Put arrangements in place to ensure that the safety of councillors will be protected when they are providing direct support to communities during an emergency response and through the recovery phase

- v. Put arrangement in place to ensure the personal welfare of councillors when they are providing direct support to communities during an emergency response and through the recovery phase.

5.2. Officer support in the response phase

Supporting Ward Councillors as community representatives

In order to support Ward councillors to exercise their role as community representatives during an emergency response, officers should:

- i. Provide resilient and reliable routes by which Ward councillors can identify the needs of individuals and the wider community and feed them in to the appropriate response organisation/s via council officers

Supporting Ward Councillors as community leaders

In order to support Ward councillors to exercise their role as community leaders during an emergency response, officers should:

- i. Provide details to Ward councillors of locations/facilities, such as rest centres, where they will be able to present as a visible, trusted and reassuring presence for their constituents
- ii. Provide briefings and regular updates on the response operation to Ward councillors, so that they are able to communicate key messages and reliable information to the public and media on behalf of the council
- iii. Ensure that details of welfare support arrangements for councillors are communicated

5.3. Officer support in the recovery phase

Supporting Ward Councillors as community representatives

In order to support Ward councillors to exercise their role as community representatives during the recovery phase, officers should:

- i. Provide routes by which Ward councillors can articulate the needs and aspirations of the communities they represent in ways that are able to inform and influence the recovery process
- ii. Make details of the recovery strategy readily available to Ward councillors, and provide them with regular updates on progress in delivering it
- iii. Provide routes by which Ward councillors can feed-in details of any local impact that is being experienced by their constituents on the delivery of front-line services during the recovery phase
- iv. Support Ward councillors to engage in post-incident reviews, scrutiny, inquests and Public Inquiries, as appropriate

Supporting Ward Councillors as community leaders

In order to support Ward councillors to exercise their role as community leaders during the recovery phase, officers should:

- i. Provide regular updates to Ward councillors, so that they are able to communicate key message and information to the public and media on behalf of the council
- ii. Provide routes by which Ward councillors can feed-in emerging local knowledge about individuals and groups who may be able to assist with the recovery operation
- iii. Support Ward councillors to participate in the proper administration of funds from any disaster appeals, as necessary
- iv. Support the attendance of Ward councillors at memorial and remembrance services, as necessary.

6. FURTHER READING

1. **Resilience Standards for London.**
2. **[A councillor's guide to civil resilience](#) – Local Government Association.** This is a generic guide for councillors in all roles, which also signposts readers to useful reference documents in Appendix 4.
3. **[Local authorities' preparedness for civil emergencies: A good practice guide for Chief Executives](#) – Solace and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.** A guide that sets out the types of issues local authorities should consider in order to be fully prepared to respond to a civil emergency. Whilst primarily written for Chief Executives, the guide is also considered to be a useful resource for councillors.
4. **[The life cycle of an emergency: learning from recent experience](#) – Solace and Local Government Association.** Detailed case studies of the Manchester Arena bomb attack and a wide area flooding event in Suffolk – examined during the different stages of the integrated emergency management cycle, i.e. preparedness, response and recovery