Resilience Standards for London

Background

Following the independent peer challenge on London’s collective resilience arrangements, which was considered by London Councils Leaders’ Committee in early 2018, the London Resilience Forum - Local Authorities’ Panel is overseeing implementation of the recommendations.

As part of this work, the Local Authority Panel commissioned a review to examine ways in which London boroughs can individually and collectively provide assurance of their organisational preparedness, capacity and capability to respond to and recover from emergencies credibly, transparently and efficiently.

The resulting report identified the need for London local authorities to enhance the assurance of their preparedness and capability to respond to and recover from emergencies. To support this, the report recommended that the Minimum Standards for London, which were introduced in 2007 to ensure a baseline standard of resilience planning across London local authorities, be replaced.

Analysis

The new standards have been developed through engagement with a broad range of relevant professionals across the boroughs, representatives from the government, London Councils, the LGA, CQC and the Resilience Advisors Network. The content draws on national government guidance and legislation, LGA guidance and other recent London specific guidance.

The Resilience Standards for London are significantly different from the Minimum Standards for London in that they have an increased focus on operational capacity and capability rather than due process. Each new standard is comprised of a desired outcome which is complemented by a summary of legal duties, good practice guidance and links to supporting documentation.
The standards clearly set out the role of elected members in civil protection and offer guidance on how to achieve leading practice in the area of each standard.

The desired outcomes are:

- **Risk Assessment**: boroughs have a robust and collectively understood assessment of the most significant risks to the local area and their likelihoods.
- **Governance Arrangements**: boroughs operate with effective political and managerial governance.
- **Culture**: boroughs have a positive culture towards Emergency Planning and resilience which is embedded and seen as ‘everyone’s business’.
- **Capabilities**: boroughs have risk-based emergency plans which underpin an agreed set of arrangements for the response and recovery phases.
- **Resources**: boroughs have sufficient resources to both support organisational resilience arrangements and maintain delivery of frontline services during the response to and recovery from an emergency.
- **Partnerships**: boroughs demonstrate a high level of partnership working and interoperability between themselves and emergency responders and supporting organisations.
- **Training**: Members and officers across the organisation are competently trained to fulfil their roles in emergency preparedness, response and recovery.
- **Business Continuity**: boroughs can demonstrate a high level of resilience in their critical functions and emergency response and recovery capabilities.
- **Community Resilience**: boroughs have a strategic and coordinated approach to activity that enables individuals, businesses, community networks and voluntary organisations to behave in a resilient way and act to support other members of the public.
- **Recovery Management**: boroughs have robust, embedded and flexible recovery management arrangements in place to support the rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitation of the community following an emergency.

**Commentary**

The nature of the emergencies London may face are becoming increasingly varied and there is heightened pressure on authorities to provide the individual and collective leadership required during incidents. The Resilience Standards for London provide a vital framework for Members to understand the wider capabilities of their organisations. They have been designed to allow for progressive and continual improvement; rather than assessing borough capabilities on a one-off occasion, the standards encourage boroughs to measure on-going progress and continually ‘raise the bar’. The standards have the potential to be a valuable tool for boroughs in managing their exposure to risks and enhancing their resilience capabilities.

The standards should be viewed as one component of a wider ongoing programme to improve capability across resilience activities, including training for elected members which is currently under development. Progress will be reported to London Councils Leaders’ Committee in July 2019. As a package, these tools will strengthen collaborative working, support efficiency in organisations and encourage more robust emergency arrangements.

The review is out for consultation for the elected Members and officers of the 32 London boroughs and the City of London Corporation. Following the consultation phase, it is anticipated that the standards will be piloted in a small number of boroughs from June 2019. Pending completion of the new standards, interim assurance arrangements are being utilised, which will also be reported to London Councils Leaders’ Committee in July 2019.
The deadline for completed responses is 28 February and they should be sent to Robert. Ennis@cityoflondon.gov.uk.

If you would like more information or wish to clarify any point, then please email Robert. Ennis@cityoflondon.gov.uk.