

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SUB-COMMITTEE</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> March 2020
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	Croydon Council Emergency Preparedness
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Rachel Flowers- Director of Public Health
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	Councillor Jane Avis – Cabinet Member for Families, Health & Social Care Councillor Hamida Ali – Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities
<b>PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:</b>	Rachel Flowers- Director of Public Health

**POLICY CONTEXT/AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON:**

Include here a brief statement on how the recommendations address one or more of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities:

[Corporate Plan for Croydon 2018-2022](#)

<b>ORIGIN OF ITEM:</b>	The Sub-Committee is scrutinising emergency preparedness as part of its work programme.
<b>BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:</b>	The Sub-Committee is provided with an update on emergency preparedness in Croydon with a view to informing a discussion on the information contained.

**1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of emergency preparedness and the work that Croydon Council does to ensure that it is ready and resourced to respond to any emergency or major incident
- 1.2. Croydon is not an island, and this report also covers how the council works with other emergency response organisations to be able to effectively, and jointly prepare for, respond to, and recover from, emergencies.
- 1.3. This report also covers how Croydon Council has prepared for the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, what people should do if they believe they have come into contact with someone with suspected coronavirus, and what would happen if there was a suspected case within Croydon.
- 1.4. The recommendations of this report is to review the content, endorse the council's coronavirus preparedness approach, and to encourage the public to go to

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> for the latest, accurate coronavirus information.

## **2. CROYDON COUNCIL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

### **Emergency preparedness within Croydon Council**

- 2.1 Under the Civil Contingencies Act, local authorities have a responsibility to plan for, and respond to, major incidents. This includes the coordination of information sharing (internally and with partners) as well as response and recovery activities. Croydon Council's responsibility not only lies with on-borough incidents, but those within London and the UK that may have an impact on our staff and community.
- 2.2 The role of a local authority in an emergency or major incident includes:
- Supporting the emergency services and other organisations involved in the response;
  - Providing support and care for the local and wider community; and
  - Working with the local community to ensure recovery and restoration of normality as soon as possible.
- 2.3 Services the local authority will provide in an emergency or major incident include the provision of:
- Assistance in the evacuation of the affected population;
  - Engineering services and structural advice;
  - Rest Centres for evacuated residents;
  - Information to those affected by the incident;
  - Temporary accommodation;
  - Humanitarian Assistance activities such as welfare and psychosocial support;
  - Counselling to survivors and council employees; and
  - Short, medium, and longterm recovery activities such as memorials, commemorations, regeneration.
- 2.4 The council works to the emergency management cycle, indicated in the diagram below, which comprises four main phases:
1. Preparation (plan development, training, and exercising);
  2. Response (reducing an immediate risk or stopping things getting worse);
  3. Recovery (a longer-term activity of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community); and
  4. Mitigation (learning lessons, and ongoing work to build resilience and reduce vulnerability).



*Figure 1 - Emergency management cycle*

- 2.5 The Corporate Resilience Team maintain the council’s generic Corporate Emergency Response Plan which describes the way the organisation responds to emergencies. Among other things, this plan outlines the council’s emergency command and control structure and links to other documented capabilities and emergency plans that the Corporate Resilience Team maintain, such as the Fuel Disruption Plan, Emergency Centres Plan, and the Severe Weather Plan. Emergency plans are reviewed and updated on a 3-year basis, or sooner if they are activated.
- 2.6 If required in the response to an incident, the Chief Executive (or her deputy), known as Council Gold, will be the representative for the Council in multi-agency Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) meetings. Likewise, in an incident where the Council is the lead agency (e.g. flooding), the same may occur.
- 2.7 A corporate resilience board (CRB) was introduced by the chief executive in 2019, to maintain oversight of the corporate resilience programme and assist in setting the priorities for the resilience team and organisation. The board meets bi-monthly and is chaired by the chief executive.
- 3. Wider emergency preparedness (across Croydon and London)**
- 3.1 As a category one responder, Croydon Council works within the emergency response frameworks of JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme), LESLP (London Emergency Services Liaison Panel Major Incident Manual) and the London Resilience Strategic Coordination Protocol (SCP).
- 3.2 The Croydon Resilience Forum (CRF) is a statutory borough forum with the aim to co-ordinate, develop and implement an integrated approach to emergency response and management for the borough of Croydon. Its membership is varied and includes emergency planning officers/ representatives from a number of sectors with a role in emergency preparedness and response, including local authority (the chair), health, police, fire, voluntary, utility, environment, community, business, faith, and transport. CRF members are required to keep their organisations informed of actions and developments agreed in the meetings and associated training and exercises. Regular reports of CRF activity are made to the Croydon Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

- 3.3 The Corporate Resilience Team work closely within the London Resilience network in support of the London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) arrangements for emergency planning and response within London.
- 3.4 In addition to, and in support of, a collective local authority emergency response there exists a suite of regional local authority coordination functions; namely London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) and the London Local Authority Coordination Centre (LLACC).

#### **4. COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Preparedness in Croydon**

- 4.1 This is a rapidly evolving situation due to the nature of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). There are limitations and uncertainty in what is currently known about the virus.
- 4.2 The Government has judged for over a decade since the first National Risk Register of Civil Emergencies, that one of the highest current risks to the UK is the possible emergence of an influenza pandemic – that is, the rapid worldwide spread of influenza ('flu') caused by a novel virus strain to which people would have no immunity, resulting in more serious illness than caused by seasonal influenza. In a pandemic, the new virus will spread quickly and potentially cause more serious illness in a large proportion of the population, due to the lack of immunity.
- 4.3 Pandemic influenza preparedness arrangements are well established across the system, and so these planning assumptions have been used as a basis to inform planning until further information is known about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19).
- 4.4 Given the uncertainty about the scale, severity and pattern of development of any outbreak, three key principles underpin pandemic preparedness and response activity:
- Precautionary: the response to any new virus should take into account the risk that it could be severe in nature. Plans must therefore be in place for a coronavirus outbreak with the potential to cause severe symptoms in individuals and widespread disruption to society.
  - Proportionality: the response to a coronavirus outbreak should be no more and no less than that necessary in relation to the known risks. Plans therefore need to be in place not only for high impact pandemics, but also for milder scenarios, with the ability to adapt them as new evidence emerges.
  - Flexibility: there will be a need for local flexibility and agility in the timing of transition from one phase of response to another to take account of local patterns of spread of infection, within a consistent UK-wide approach to the response to a novel coronavirus outbreak.
- 4.5 Croydon Council has a Pandemic Response Plan that was due to be updated later this year, however this review has been brought forward and the plan is currently out for consultation with key internal stakeholders until 5<sup>th</sup> March. The existing version of this plan was tested during Exercise Pandemic in November 2017, evidenced by the post exercise report.

- 4.6 Croydon CCG, Croydon Health Services and South London & Maudsley all recently updated their Pandemic Flu plans. These health partners also participated in a CHS led table top exercise on 29 January 2020. The Croydon Resilience Forum have a Multi-Agency Pandemic Response Plan, which was also due to be updated later this year, but this review has been brought forward and the plan is currently being reviewed by key stakeholders. The existing version of this plan was tested during Exercise Fever in October 2017, evidenced by the post exercise report.
- 4.7 The Director of Public Health, Resilience leads and Communication leads from Croydon Council, Croydon CCG and Croydon CHS receive daily Sitrep from the London Resilience Forum.
- 4.8 The Director of Public Health has a weekly teleconference with the London Regional lead of Public Health England and participates in regular teleconference with the Chief Medical Officer of England.
- 4.9 Representatives of relevant, key teams within Croydon Council and Croydon Resilience Forum are meeting and conversing on a regular basis to ensure our response is proportionate, and that robust plans are in place for escalation should that be required.
- 4.10 Croydon Health Services are holding twice weekly operational meetings and daily conversations to manage the response to COVID-19. The CCG attends to ensure a link to Primary Care planning. Health planning for testing and the management of potential patients suffering from COVID-19 are well established. In terms of testing an in hospital and community process is now operational and has been working well. As numbers of those affected potentially increases these plans will be reviewed and updated as required.
- 4.11 Weekly webex meetings for health care organisations are held nationally to further disseminate updates and provide a channel for questions directly to the national team leading on the NHS response
- 4.12 Situation reporting is being used by the regulator NHSE/I (NHS England and NHS Improvement) to ensure appropriate actions are being taken within primary care and secondary care settings. There is a current focus is to establish appropriate pathways to ensure people with suspected COVID-19, but otherwise non-symptomatic, are self-isolating and tested (swabbed) away from critical health services.
- 4.13 Pandemic infectious disease presents a unique scenario in terms of prolonged pressures through a reduced workforce and potentially increased workload for some responders. Organisations are therefore expected to have business continuity plans to ensure that critical services and outputs continue to be delivered throughout a pandemic. Croydon Council annually reviews its business continuity preparedness, and has service reporting mechanisms should this be required to monitor the impact to council service delivery.
- 4.14 The planning for seasonal influenza (flu) and other communicable diseases is overseen by the Croydon Health Protection Forum. The Health Protection Forum is a multi-agency group, which supports the collaboration between local organisations as

well as lead government and commissioning organisations like Public Health England (PHE) and NHS England in non-emergency situations.

## **5. What should people be doing now to protect themselves?**

- 5.1 All communications should reflect the most up to date situation report available at: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)
- 5.2 The UK Chief Medical Officers have raised the risk to the public from low to moderate. But the risk to individuals remains low.
- 5.3 The symptoms of coronavirus are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu, and public messaging is focused on normal hand and respiratory illness advice (e.g. frequent hand washing with soap and water throughout the day and 'catch it, bin it, kill it').

## **6. Key messages on what to do if you think you've been in contact with someone with suspected coronavirus**

- 6.1 Do not go to a GP surgery or hospital. Call 111, stay indoors and avoid close contact with other people.

## **7. If there is a case in Croydon**

- 7.1 Public Health England (PHE) is the lead government organisation for ensuring all the necessary follow up and contact tracing is carried out from any confirmed cases that are identified in this country.
- 7.2 In the event of an incident, the relevant health protection team from PHE will contact local authority public health teams regarding confirmed cases in their borough and will provide management of the associated contact tracing/ infection control measures.
- 7.3 Where there is an urgent health need in addition to suspected COVID-19 infection, these patients would be isolated and treated for the urgent health need by health professionals wearing appropriate Personal Protection Equipment.
- 7.4 Once tested, if a case is confirmed, a patient would be transferred to designated Infectious Disease Units.
- 7.5 Croydon University Hospital is not a designated site for infectious diseases but is prepared for testing and immediate management of patients as required.
- 7.6 Guidance on establishing a local home testing service is due to be published by NHS England. The intention of this service is to further protect critical services from unnecessary demand and ensure the continuity of urgent and emergency care services, as well as protecting primary care services.
- 7.7 Within Croydon, options are being considered for a home testing service, with a timescale for early March implementation.
- 7.8 The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) is the lead organisation for announcing confirmed cases.

- 7.9 Every day at 2pm, DHSC publish the total number of negative and positive tests performed in the UK here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>
- 7.10 If there are rumours around a case in your local area, please refer enquirers to the above link, and explain the process for confirmed cases in the UK.

---

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Hari Mollett, Resilience Officer, 07771843008, Rachel Flowers 07939502403

**APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT**

*None.*

**BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:**

*None.*