
A Proposed Shared Emergency Planning Service for Berkshire – Supporting Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out in summary what is being proposed with regard to a shared service for Emergency Planning in Berkshire. It varies in what was put forward in a business case prepared by BGG Associates and presented in December 2015, largely in terms of cost and associated staffing structure. This revised proposal was approved by the Berkshire Chief Executives at their December 2016 meeting and is now subject to Executive approval at each of the Unitary Authorities.
- 1.2 The original business case prepared by BGG Associates in 2015 was based largely on improved resilience as opposed to financial savings. Only four unitary authorities supported it and it was taken no further. The 2015 business case followed an earlier business case which was put together by the Berkshire Improvement and Efficiency Partnership in 2009. This was based on the assumed delivery of financial savings. The business case could identify no significant savings through the creation of a shared team and it was subsequently abandoned.
- 1.3 Interestingly, when the 2009 business case was prepared the total cost of the Emergency Planning function in Berkshire was estimated to stand at just under £600k. In the intervening period, budget reductions, largely in the form of staff reductions, have reduced the net budget to an estimated £404k in 2014/15. The shared service proposal set out in this paper is based on an assumed budget of £371k.
- 1.4 There remains significant interest from some partners, notably Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS), in joining a shared service. This had been discounted from this paper which focuses only on sharing amongst the six unitary authorities. Wider engagement is however a real option going forward should it be seen as desirable.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The BGG report highlighted what it saw as a number of key issues which were undermining the effectiveness of the current service across Berkshire. They were;
 - a lack of resilience in each authority due to a reliance on one or two key individuals. Where vacancies or prolonged absences occurred, the individual authority was seen as vulnerable in the event of an incident, and the shared planning workload inevitably fell more heavily on the officers in post with other authorities;
 - no managerial resource empowered to drive through initiatives to deliver standardisation and improve efficiency. This resulted in duplicated work, wasted resource and the parties moving at the speed of the slowest;

- a disparity in the resourcing of Emergency Planning between some of the Councils, resulting in the cost of multi-agency work being funded inequitably;
- a lack of a career structure/personal development framework with opportunities for succession planning to aid retention;
- multiple points of contact for communication with partner agencies.

- 2.2 In conclusion, the BGG report stated, 'whilst the Emergency Planning officers have demonstrated a high level of professional commitment and a willingness to work together, the lack of overall management and the inequitable funding arrangements across the partners have resulted in wasted effort and, overall, an ineffective use of resources'.
- 2.3 Little has changed since these issues were highlighted by BGG over 12 months ago. In fact, in some respects, the situation has deteriorated further with more gaps now evident in the staffing structure.
- 2.4 The fundamental basis on which the service was originally structured in 1998 does now need to be questioned both in terms of its effectiveness and sustainability. The original model was based on each Unitary Authority (UA) having its own dedicated Emergency Planning resource with a range of activities being shared and these being managed through a Memorandum of Understanding. A key element of this approach was the retention of a local presence. Whilst this brings some reassurance to individual authorities, it must now be questioned whether such an approach is affordable.
- 2.5 It could also be questioned whether such a model is the most effective. It has led to a somewhat fragmented approach across the County, in a Service where a consistent and unified response is often particularly important. Leadership is vague and, in an area where engagement with partners and the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) is important, this has become an increasing problem and concern.

3. The Service – what needs to be delivered

- 3.1 The local authority Emergency Planning function is driven by the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act within which there can be seen to be seven key requirements;

1. *Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning*

This is largely done at a Thames Valley level although each UA will carry out an overview of their own risks which would usually contribute to the Corporate Risk Register. There is a TVLRF Risk Group that produces an LRF Risk Register which is kept regularly updated. This Group has until recently been chaired by Reading BC.

2. *Put in place emergency plans and maintain those plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs, or is likely to occur, the person or body is*

able to perform its functions.

Plans are developed based on legislative requirements or identified risk. Some are based on specific requirements e.g. the need for an emergency mortuary – others are based on specific geographies most notably Berkshire and the Thames Valley. Each local authority has a Major Incident Plan which seeks to provide an authority specific overarching response in the event of a major incident. In Berkshire responsibility for the development of many Plans is designated to a specific UA within the Memorandum of Understanding.

Perhaps the most visible element of Emergency Planning is when there is actually an emergency. From a local authority perspective the function will usually be the first ‘port of call’ and is seen as performing an essential coordinating role. In addition to assisting with the response to the emergency, the local authority also takes the lead in recovery work in relation to any major incident. This role will fall to emergency planning to coordinate.

3. *Put in place business continuity management arrangements*

With the exception of West Berkshire, this role is undertaken by Emergency Planning. At the moment it sits outside of the scope of the proposed shared service. The responsibility lies both internally within the Council and more broadly within the wider business community.

4. *Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency*

Each UA will do this to some degree through their own website, but this is an activity that is also supported through the LRF which has its own groups that develop and support this area of work. A range of leaflets are also produced both locally and at LRF level.

5. *Share information with other local responders to enhance coordination*

Given the local geography there is an extensive and fairly complex governance structure focused around Berkshire based activities and more extensive LRF activities which have a Thames Valley focus. There are a wide range of LRF sub groups which are in the process of being consolidated. At the moment these Groups tend to be disproportionately resourced by Berkshire EPOs which is an issue which has been raised at the LRF and is currently being reviewed.

6. *Cooperate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency*

As above.

7. *Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management*

This is largely done through UA websites and through the Berkshire Business Continuity Forum.

3.2 It is clear from the above that a significant amount of this work is already being undertaken jointly and through the MOU. There are further opportunities to 'join things up' and thereby improve effectiveness – the collective preparation of Major Incident Plans being just one example.

4. Critical Success Factors

4.1 BGG's report highlighted the following success factors. Each of these was delivered by BGG's original shared service proposal but the lower cost proposal outlined in this report does potentially increase the risk of delivering on some of them;

- 1) *Enhanced resilience* – a shared team will allow resources to be deployed much more effectively to where they are needed rather than rely on mutual aid arrangements. Under the revised arrangement reducing the Team from 6.5 FTE to 5 FTE will weaken this resilience although it could be argued that it is better than the current arrangement where there are 4.5 FTE located in just four authorities with two of those already operating a shared arrangement; (the 4.5 fte actually provides more than emergency planning);
- 2) *Enhanced effectiveness* – there is considerable scope to reduce or eliminate duplication most notably in plan development, training and exercising and in attendance at meetings. A shared service, even a smaller one, should still deliver these benefits through the appointment of a single manager. At present leadership is diffuse and all but non-existent at a strategic level;
- 3) *Strengthened mutual aid arrangements* – this will be much more easily coordinated in a shared arrangement;
- 4) *No increase in costs* – the original BGG proposal delivered a small saving going forward. This revised proposal would deliver a more significant saving overall, although the distribution of those savings varies significantly depending on the UAs current financial contribution to emergency planning;
- 5) *Local presence* – the original proposal allowed for a local presence in each Authority since it comprised 3 teams of 2 (or 1.5 FTE in one case) plus a manager. This will not be possible under the revised lower cost arrangement set out in this report. The proposal in this report is to create 2 teams of 2 FTE with one being based in Berkshire West and the other in Berkshire East. The Team Manager would be based within the Lead Authority. Each Authority will need to be comfortable with this. Under the new arrangement there will not be an Emergency Planning resource sat in each of the six Council offices five days a week.
- 6) *Enhanced working relationships with the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF) and Berkshire Resilience Group (BRG)*. The appointment of a single manager should greatly enhance these relationships. Berkshire is not acting as one and in the arena of Emergency Planning where planning and operational work is increasingly undertaken across a Thames Valley geography this is increasingly important. There are

significant efficiencies that could be achieved at Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and Berkshire Resilience Group (BRG) meetings by rationalising the attendance of Emergency Planning officers. This would bring savings in time and money and the added benefit of Berkshire speaking and acting with one voice.

5. Initial Recommendations from BGG Report

5.1 The original BGG report made a number of recommendations which are reflected below. Most but not all would appear to be appropriate to the revised proposal that is set out in this paper;

- (a) *The six unitary authorities in Berkshire set up a shared Emergency Planning Service governed by a Joint Committee.*

At this time this is considered to be unnecessary and it is proposed that governance at a strategic level is undertaken through the Berkshire Chief Executives' meeting. A more formalised arrangement is probably going to be required to effect this.

- (b) *The Joint Committee appoints an officer group to act as an operational board for the shared service*

This is also not considered necessary at this time. Quarterly meetings with the Team Manager either collectively or individually would provide the necessary operational link between the Shared Service and each of the six unitary authorities.

- (c) *A host authority is agreed to employ the team and provide support services as appropriate*

The Berkshire Chief Executives have suggested that West Berkshire acts as the Lead Authority since it currently has that role for trading standards, environmental health and licensing for a number of Berkshire authorities. It is proposed that eligible staff joining the Shared Team would TUPE to West Berkshire Council.

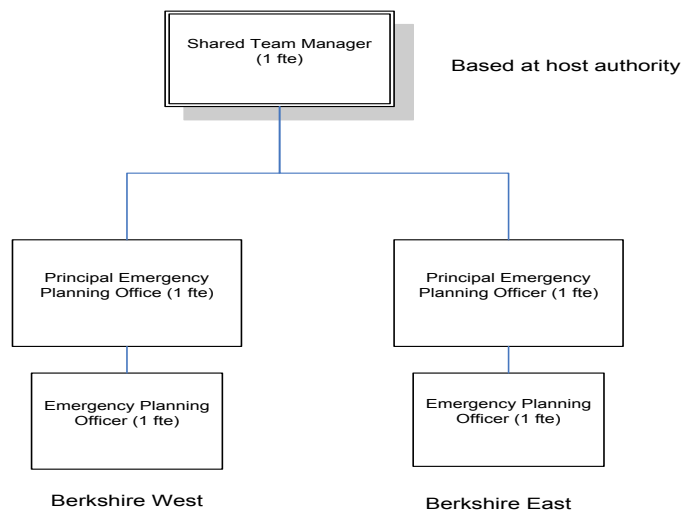
Staffing Structure

5.2 The implications of a lower cost model are that there will be fewer staff. The original model was for two officers to be assigned to two UAs (in one case 1.5 fte) plus a team manager. The new model proposes 2 officers for three authorities with a team manager working within the host authority.

5.3 The appointment of a team manager is seen as key. BGG comment 'appointing the right manager with the required skill set/experience to motivate the team and with sufficient influence and access to decision makers will be critical to the success of the enterprise. It will be important for the 'business need' to drive the selection approach to ensure that the new service gets the right person to lead the implementation. If this fails the subsequent change will be put at risk.'

- 5.4 The overall proposed staffing structure is set out in Fig 1. It is proposed that existing staff are transferred under TUPE. Table 2 includes some indicative staffing costs which have been used to build the indicative budget.
- 5.5 Emergency planning staff currently do more than Emergency Planning. All but one Authority has their Emergency Planning function supporting Business Continuity Planning. Following further discussion it has now been agreed that this role should be undertaken by the Shared Team.
- 5.6 Out of hours coordination is another area that is frequently undertaken by Emergency Planning. The position in each unitary authority is not entirely clear but in four authorities the Emergency Planning Officer either coordinates a rota of out of hours officers or is part of the rota (or both). Some Emergency Planning Officers are also responsible for managing the contract for the out of hours contact centre. Once again, following further discussion it has been suggested that these responsibilities are taken on by the Shared Team.

Fig 1 – Proposed staffing structure for the Shared Emergency Planning Service



Operating Base

- 5.7 The BGG report suggested that the Shared Service should have a central base with a strong local presence maintained in each Authority’s office. Some budget was allocated to achieve this. Given the desire to operate at lower cost it is now proposed that the Team Manager is based at the Lead Authority and the two teams located in their respective areas with either a main base chosen for the teams in one authority in Berkshire West and Berkshire East or the staff work more flexibly. This would be determined by the Team Manager once appointed. The accommodation costs would be absorbed by the respective Authority given the small size of the Team.

6. Financial Appraisal

- 6.1 The BGG report did suggest that setting up the Shared Service would create one off transitional costs which were estimated at £8,500. These costs require further investigation. If realised they will need to be shared between the six Authorities.
- 6.2 The ongoing Shared Service costs of the original shared service proposal were £405k in Year 1 falling to £395k in Year 3. These costs were very similar to the total cost of the current arrangements when assessed in 2014/15.
- 6.3 The financial appraisal has been completely revisited given the desire to operate on a lower cost model and the following information is set out in accompanying tables;

Table 1 - The anticipated costs associated with retaining the current Emergency Planning arrangements in 2017/18;

Table 2 -The costs associated with a new shared service model in 2017/18 based on the assumptions set out earlier in this report;

Table 3 - Proposals for how the costs of the proposed shared service might be apportioned across the six UAs.

- 6.4 Further discussion at the Berkshire Chief Executives' meeting has led to an agreement that the contribution of each UA to the Shared Service should be based on a combination of population base and inherent risk. Some unitary authorities present an inherently greater risk and therefore potentially greater workload in terms of emergency planning. The largest risk is seen to be in West Berkshire (a combination of land area, AWE and major rivers), followed by Reading and RBWM (major rivers). Proposed contributions reflect this. In every case the proposed contribution to the Shared Service is seen to be close to, or below, the cost of maintaining an 'in house' service.
- 6.5 Further discussion is required on the provision of support services. A small allocation has been put within the budget.
- 6.6 Overall the final analysis highlights the need for a budget of £371k per annum would be required for a new Emergency Planning Shared Service. This includes a contingency of £14k per annum for the Team Manager as they see fit.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 There is a general view that the operating framework established in 1998 for Emergency Planning is no longer sustainable. Ongoing financial constraint is perhaps at the heart of this but the need for Berkshire to present a stronger single voice coupled with opportunities to avoid duplication of effort are clearly evident.
- 7.2 The desire to find savings in what is a staff dominated service means that the current proposal is somewhat thinner than that put forward by BGG Associates 12 months ago. It is now proposed to operate a team of 5 fte with 2 teams of 2 fte providing support in both Berkshire West and Berkshire East. The Team Manager would be based in the Lead Authority. Whilst there is a geographical alignment the emphasis will be on deploying resources to where they are needed and in moving towards formulating a Berkshire wide approach to working practices, rather than one focused on each unitary authority. Each unitary authority will need to come to

terms with the fact that it will not have a dedicated resource sat in its Authority. In addition to Emergency Planning it is also proposed that the Shared Service would undertake Business Continuity Planning and Out of Hours Coordination.

- 7.3 On current assumptions the expectation is that the new shared service will operate with an annual budget of £371k per annum. Contributions from each unitary authority have been based on a combination of population base and risk. Contributions should be close to, or below, current expenditure.
- 7.4 In terms of governance it has been suggested that West Berkshire should be the Lead Authority and that the Berkshire Chief Executives' Group will act as the governance mechanism. This will need to be finalised.
- 7.5 Staff transition may cause issues and some form of salary protection may be required. If this proposal gets unanimous support across the six unitary authorities, then a target date of 1st October 2017 has been set for implementation.

8. Proposed Recommendations

- 8.1 The six unitary authorities in Berkshire set up a shared Emergency Planning Service under the lead authority model. It is proposed that West Berkshire will act as Lead Authority. Under the lead authority model, one authority would be responsible for the shared service. There will be a collaboration agreement and the governance of this arrangement would be through the Berkshire Chief Executives' Group.
- 8.2 The Shared Service will provide Emergency Planning, Business Continuity Planning and Out of Hours Coordination (where appropriate), to all six unitary authorities.
- 8.3 A Joint Team of 5 fte is established. The Team Manager will be based in the Lead Authority. 2 teams of 2 fte will be based in Berkshire West and Berkshire East. It is proposed that no fixed base is established. The Team Manager will be responsible for deciding on work locations in liaison with the six unitary authorities.
- 8.4 The budget for the service is set in the first year at £371k and apportioned to each unitary authority as an annual payment as follows;
- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| Bracknell Forest - | £45k |
| Reading - | £65k |
| RBWM - | £71k |
| Slough - | £48k |
| West Berkshire - | £82k |
| Wokingham - | £60k |
- 8.5 Permanent staff would TUPE to the Lead Authority on their existing terms and conditions and will be slotted into the staffing structure set out in this report where appropriate. Vacancies will be filled through internal/external recruitment where required. Subject to Executive approval in all six unitary authorities, the Service will commence on 1st October 2017.

Table 1 – Summary of current emergency planning costs across Berkshire 2016/17

	Bracknell	Reading	RBWM	Slough	West Berkshire	Wokingham
Staff Costs						
Base Salary	£40,330.00	£ 76,492.00			£ 62,050.00	
Allowances	£2,400.00				£ 500.00	£ 5,000.00
NI	£4,780.00	£ 10,200.00			£ 6,830.00	
Superannuation	£5,160.00	£ 9,200.00			£ 11,230.00	
Travel	£1,510.00	£ 100.00			£ 3,320.00	
Subsistence	£560.00					
Training	£250.00	£ 1,900.00			£ 2,180.00	
Sub Total	£54,990.00	£ 97,892.00	£ 69,753.00	£ -	£ 86,110.00	£ 5,000.00
Non Staffing Costs transferable						
IT	£0.00	£ 500.00				£ 100.00
Telephone	£100.00	£ 5,300.00	£ 350.00		£ 5,650.00	
Equipment & clothing	£110.00	£ 3,900.00	£ 4,000.00		£ 2,100.00	£ 500.00
Vehicles & transport	£0.00	£ 4,430.00			£ 1,000.00	
TVLRF contribution	£1,247.00	£ 1,247.00	£ 1,247.00	£ 1,247.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,247.00
Other - please list						
Brought in services/consultants	£780.00					
Refreshments	£0.00	£ 200.00			£ 250.00	
Marketing	£0.00				£ 380.00	
Printing & Stationery	£900.00	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00		£ 240.00	£ 100.00
General	£170.00	£ 600.00			£ 380.00	
Payments to Airwave (radio contact services)						£ 5,000.00
Payments to Reading BC *						£ 40,000.00
Sub Total	£3,307.00	£ 17,177.00	£ 6,597.00	£ 1,247.00	£ 11,250.00	£ 46,947.00
Income - please list						
Plan preparation	£ -	£ 3,300.00	£ 5,000.00		£ 8,000.00	
Wokingham Shared Service *		£40,000 *				
Sub Total	£ -	£ 43,300.00	£ 5,000.00		£ 8,000.00	
TOTAL TRANSFERRABLE	£58,297.00	£ 71,769.00	£ 71,350.00	£60,000**	£ 89,360.00	£ 51,947.00

* - Reading currently provide a shared service to Wokingham BC.

** - this is an estimate. No detailed figures were available.

+ RWBM have stated that they have set aside a budget of £71,000 for Emergency Planning. This does not reflect current spend.

++ The budget for Slough BC has not been provided.

Table 2 – Provisional costs associated with the proposed shared service based on 2016/17

Staffing	£k
Team Manager (SCP 57)	59
Principal Emergency Planning Officer (SCP 48)	48
Principal Emergency Planning Officer (SCP 48)	43
Emergency Planning Officer (SCP 35)	31
Emergency Planning Officer (SCP 35)	31
Additional allowances	6
National Insurance	23
Superannuation	35
Travel costs	7
Training	18
Contingency	14
Sub-total	310
Non Staffing costs	
Comms	16
Equipment & clothing	28
Vehicles & transport	7
TVLRF	7
Other	6
Support Services	5
Sub-total	69
Income	-8
Sub-total	-8
TOTAL BUDGET	371

*- it is suggested that a contingency of £20k is added to the above figure.

Table 3 – Proposed apportionment of costs of the shared service

	Methodology			
	Current Cost 2016/17	Population Base	Risk	Total
Bracknell Forest BC	58	48	-3	45
Reading BC	72	60	+5	65
RBWM	71	66	+5	71
Slough BC	55*	51	-3	48
West Berkshire	89	67	+15	82
Wokingham BC	52	70	-10	60
TOTAL	£397			£371

* estimated figure.

Appendix B

Equality Impact Assessment - Stage One

We need to ensure that our strategies, policies, functions and services, current and proposed have given due regard to equality and diversity.

Please complete the following questions to determine whether a Stage Two, Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Name of policy, strategy or function:	Shared Service Proposal – Emergency Planning
Version and release date of item (if applicable):	25 th January 2017 – version 2
Owner of item being assessed:	Nick Carter
Name of assessor:	Nick Carter
Date of assessment:	24 th January 2017

Is this a:		Is this:	
Policy	No	New or proposed	Yes
Strategy	No	Already exists and is being reviewed	Yes
Function	No	Is changing	Yes
Service	Yes		

1. What are the main aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy, strategy function or service and who is likely to benefit from it?	
Aims:	A shared service across Berkshire
Objectives:	
Outcomes:	A single service which is more resilient and efficient.
Benefits:	As above.

2. Note which groups may be affected by the policy, strategy, function or service. Consider how they may be affected, whether it is positively or negatively and what sources of information have been used to determine this. (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.)		
Group Affected	What might be the effect?	Information to support this

Further Comments relating to the item:		
No specific group will be affected.		

3. Result	
Are there any aspects of the policy, strategy, function or service, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could contribute to inequality?	No
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
Will the policy, strategy, function or service have an adverse impact upon the lives of people, including employees and service users?	/No
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	

If your answers to question 2 have identified potential adverse impacts and you have answered ‘yes’ to either of the sections at question 3, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

If a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment is required, before proceeding you should discuss the scope of the Assessment with service managers in your area. You will also need to refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and Stage Two template.

4. Identify next steps as appropriate:	
Stage Two required	No
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	

Name: Nick Carter

Date: 24th January 2017

Please now forward this completed form to Rachel Craggs, the Principal Policy Officer (Equality and Diversity) for publication on the WBC website