

Title of meeting: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 21st March 2023

Subject: Proposed extension to Shared Service Provision of Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Services with Southampton City Council

Report by: Laura Betsworth

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

To recommend extending the service level agreement with Southampton City Council in relation to the full provision of the emergency preparedness, resilience, and response (EPRR) function.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Director: Culture, Leisure, and Regulatory Services (CLRS) be given delegated authority to extend the Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Southampton City Council for the continued provision of the joint emergency preparedness, resilience, and response function with effect from 1st April 2023 at the latest for a further 5 years upon such terms and conditions as the Service Director: CLRS considers appropriate.
- 2.2 That the Director: Culture, Leisure, and Regulatory Services (CLRS) be given delegated authority to employ such staff as are reasonably required to undertake the services under the SLA.

3. Background

- 3.1 Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils entered in to a shared service for the provision of EPRR arrangements in 2018, in accordance with the authorities' statutory obligations, including the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and associated resilience legislation.
- 3.2 The consolidation of the EPRR provision provided opportunity to address the steadily increasing workload of the emergency planning teams in Portsmouth and Southampton and provide a more robust, resilient, and effective response in emergency and business continuity incidents.



- 3.3 Since the creation of the EPRR shared service in 2018 (hosted by Southampton City Council), the service has gone from strength to strength, benefitting both authorities with compliance in relevant statutory obligations, good value for money and increased income opportunities.
- 3.4 The work of the EPRR team is overseen by the Joint Emergency Preparedness, Resilience and Response Board to ensure appropriate scrutiny of resilience activities across statutory and contractual obligations, including financial management and ensuring the interests of all partners is served. The Board is co-chaired by the Directors of Public Health and membership comprises of the Strategic Leads for EPRR, representatives from relevant services such as Finance and Communications, relevant Portfolio Holders and representatives of the three Borough Councils that contract services under a Service Level Agreement.
- 3.5 The provision of a shared service across the authorities has proven invaluable in response to a number of significant Major Incidents across the wider Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Partnership area and smaller scale incidents that have affected the residents and communities in both cities. The flexible nature of the service ensures resilience in responding to protracted periods of response (such as with planning for the reasonable worst case scenario EU Exit and the Covid-19 Pandemic) with support to both internal and multi-agency arrangements.
- 3.6 Since 2018, the EPRR service has responded to over 730 incidents, ranging from Major Incidents such as significant water disruption, adverse weather events (storms, snow, heatwave, flooding) and coastal pollution, to significant incidents including fuel disruption, animal disease and utility failure. This also includes smaller scale incidents such as fires, unexploded ordnance, house collapse, gas leaks/explosions and preparations for events such as the death of the monarch, industrial action and severe weather alerts.
- 3.7 The PCC provision of the service remains at £177,000, with income streams from the provision of emergency planning professional services to partner agencies. The shared service would remain a 50/50 partnership with Southampton City Council.
- 3.8 The EPRR team comprises 7 FTE who are suitably qualified and trained in core EPRR competencies and are dedicated to delivering a high quality professional service whilst pursuing development and growth; 3 officers successfully completed a Level 7 Masters Apprenticeship in relevant subjects, with another officer in her final year.
- 3.9 The UK Resilience sector is in a period of change, adapting to address lessons identified in significant recent incidents such as Grenfell Towers, Manchester Arena Attack and Covid-19, strengthen areas for improvement in relevant legislation and guidance and prepare for a future with a more volatile risk picture than ever before (higher likelihood of more frequent/severe emergencies). The

EPRR service has a proven record of understanding and implementing complex legislation/guidance and is well placed to support the authorities with forthcoming activities associated with the new UK National Resilience Strategy and Protect Duty (Martyn's Law).

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 The EPRR Service is considered a successful partnership with SCC, benefitting both authorities in their preparedness and readiness to respond effectively to emergencies and business disruption events.
- 4.2 The alternative to the proposal is to not extend the SLA with SCC but this is not considered viable on the basis that the SLA offered good value for money, economies of scale, resilience, and increased income for both authorities.

5. Integrated impact assessment

- 5.1 Details of the IIA are included with this paper as Appendix A.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The councils are entitled to enter into these arrangements by virtue of Section 113 Local Government Act 1972, Sections 9EA and 9EB Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 6.2 There are no other legal implications arising from this proposal, which it is understood is for the continuation/extension of the existing arrangements

7. Director of Finance's comments

- 7.1 The recommendation in this report proposes to continue the SLA with Southampton City Council for the provision of EPRR for a further 5 years.
- 7.2 The SLA has offered good value for money, economies of scale, and increased income opportunities for both authorities.
- 7.3 The total PCC budget allocation towards the EPRR service in 2022/23 is £177,200. Any additional costs above the approved PCC revenue budget would be absorbed within existing budgets.

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Signed by:

Appendices: A - Integrated Impact Assessment

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: