

# **ECC Emergency Response Plan: Annex 5**

## Elected Members Emergency Response Information & Guidance

Version: 3.0

Date: April 2023

Classification: OFFICIAL

# Contents

<b>1. Annex Overview.....</b>	<b>2</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	2
1.2 ECC Emergency Response Structure Diagram .....	2
<b>2. Political Leadership Team (PLT) .....</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Internal Role .....	3
2.2 External Role.....	4
<b>3. All Elected Members .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Principles of Resilience.....</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1 Pitfalls to be avoided .....	6
<b>Appendix A: Glossary .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Document Control .....</b>	<b>8</b>

# 1. Annex Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

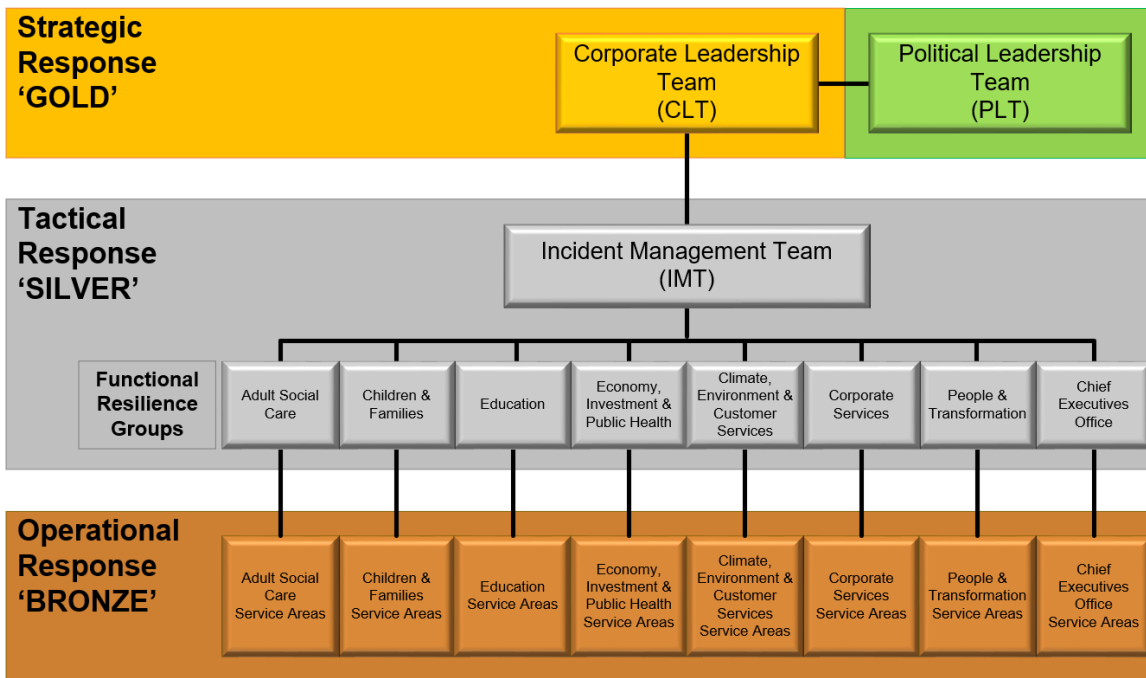
Essex County Council has a key role to play in responding to major emergencies and other significant incidents.

The local authority response to incidents is more visible than ever due to several high-profile emergencies and incidents such as Grenfell Tower fire, the Manchester Arena bombing, Croydon tram crash, and the national response to the coronavirus pandemic, to name just a few examples. In all those incidents the local authority played a vital role and their response has been carefully scrutinised.

When these incidents occur in Essex, the people of the county and beyond will expect ECC to be able to respond quickly and effectively alongside our partners, whilst continuing to deliver essential ‘business-as-usual’ services.

Councillors have an important part to play in civil resilience. This annex will provide information on the roles and responsibilities that are expected of both PLT and other Elected Members.

## 1.2 ECC Emergency Response Structure Diagram



## 2. Political Leadership Team (PLT)

This section outlines some of the actions PLT should be considering during an emergency.

### 2.1 Internal Role

- The on-duty ECC Gold Officer will contact you to provide an initial briefing and agree any urgent actions to be taken.
- Decide which member of the Cabinet should be the 'public face' of the council in its civic leadership role.
  - Usually this will be the Leader of the Council, but they may be unavailable to initially take on the role. Make sure to work closely with ECC's communications team to agree messages and tone.
- Decide which member of the Cabinet will lead on 'business-as-usual'.
  - If the incident is prolonged it may be appropriate to allocate responsibility for political leadership of ECC's routine business to another Cabinet member.
- Decide which member of the Cabinet will lead on providing political support to initial work associated with the recovery phase.
  - Recovery is always lead by the local authority. As a result, good practice will see ECC officers commencing work on recovery whilst the operational response is ongoing. Political leadership is necessary to support and complement the recovery operation.
- Confirm that arrangements have been put in place for briefing both themselves and other councillors.
  - Providing regular communication with all Councillors cannot be overstated. It can be challenging when reliable information is difficult to come by or if information is limited for security reasons. However, generic messages of reassurance or confirmation that 'there is no more news at this stage' can reduce the risk of councillors feeling isolated.
- Confirm that business continuity plans have been deployed to enable ongoing delivery of essential services.
- Provide support and encouragement to council staff and others involved in the response effort.
  - Leading members with support from ECC comms should send out regular messages of thanks to the council officers who are working long hours.
- Maintain a record of significant actions and events for use in subsequent debriefs, scrutiny activity and official enquiries etc.
  - Leading Members may be asked to contribute details of their involvement during a debrief or other post-incident review. These may take place months or even

years after the incident, therefore it is highly advisable to maintain a written record of actions and decisions.

## 2.2 External Role

- Work with ECC's communications team to act as the public face of the council in interactions with the media and local communities affected by the incident.
  - The assigned Cabinet member should communicate regular, appropriate, and reliable information on behalf of the local authority via the variety of communication channels available.
  - It will be particularly important to take care to avoid issuing contradictory or unconfirmed information to the media and the public. The key messages agreed with the communications team should be clearly and consistently reiterated in all communications, including social media and face to face interactions with residents.
- Represent the council during visits by VIPs and ensure that such visits are sensitive to the needs of the community.
  - PLT should liaise with the on-duty Gold officer regarding any operational implications for the VIP visit. PLT should also attempt to influence the detail of the visits, based upon intelligence they are able to gather about the 'mood' on the ground, for example, via discussions with local Ward councillors.
- Consider initiating dialogue with MPs whose constituencies are being impacted by the incident.
  - Many MPs wish to be seen to be involved in some capacity when a major incident occurs. It might be advisable for PLT to take the initiative and make contact to discuss how the MPs would like to contribute, they should, however, not attempt to involve themselves directly in the operational aspects of the response.
- If necessary, lead on making representations to the Government for financial assistance.
  - If a scenario occurs that exceeds the financial reserves that ECC has available, Leading Members will need to make the case to Government for emergency financial assistance to be provided.

### 3. All Elected Members

This section outlines how other Elected members in affected areas could consider supporting the emergency during the response phase:

- Provide community leadership in their own divisions.
  - The most important role for local councillors in the event of an emergency will be in their communities, providing support and reassurance to residents, calming tensions if these have become inflamed and providing as much information as possible, including correcting inaccuracies and rumours.
- Be present locally to identify the needs of individuals and the wider community and feed them into the appropriate response or recovery organisation via council officers.
  - As a member of the community, councillors have unique access to the thoughts and opinions of, and information relating to, their local community. For example, local awareness that could be used to identify problems and vulnerabilities the community may have, and which may require priority attention.
- Signpost members of the public towards the right agency to get the support they need.
  - Councillors can play a role in signposting communities to support, including working to ensure that vulnerable residents are assisted.
- Communicate information to the public and media as required by the communications team.
  - Feedback from councillors and officers involved in emergency responses has emphasised the importance of regular communication by councillors, for example using social media and in person. Councillors will need to have realistic expectations about the information that will be available to them if the emergency involves a major criminal investigation, such as a terrorist attack, but should be open with residents about the level of information that is available and provide regular updates, even if the update is that there is no further news at that time.
- Support and assist those affected in how they engage with the media.
  - Experience suggests that if residents have had to evacuate, the key concern for them will be when they can return to their homes, and that it is advisable to avoid offering anything other than firm details on this.

## 4. Principles of Resilience

If you are in a position where you are interacting or speaking with residents who have been impacted by an emergency or traumatic incident, it is worth considering the 5 principles of resilience (Hobfoll et al. 2007)

[http://www.disasteraction.org.uk/leaflets/helping\\_people\\_after\\_emergencies\\_key\\_principles\\_and\\_practical\\_tips/](http://www.disasteraction.org.uk/leaflets/helping_people_after_emergencies_key_principles_and_practical_tips/)

The World Health Organisation has been using this model for years with great effect and it applies to how we deliver support to people in the aftermath of an emergency.

CALM	Calmly state the facts and dispel any myths
SAFE	Acknowledge the emotions of people affected to build rapport and ensure that people feel safe
CONNECTED	Emphasis that they are not alone, we are a community
SELF-EFFICACY	Ensure we are listening to people and their needs. It is about avoiding creating dependencies. We are not 'doing recovery to people', we are facilitating them in their recovery. Giving people information and allowing them to make decisions themselves.
HOPE	Provide hope that the situation will improve.

Some good examples of the principles of resilience in action (available online):

- Jacinda Adern's speech following the New Zealand mosque attacks
- Jens Stoltenberg's speech following the terrorist attack on Utoya Island, Norway

### 4.1 Pitfalls to be avoided

- Taking on tasks for which you are not trained (e.g. media, counselling).
- Cutting across communication channels and giving out mixed/wrong messages.
- Putting yourself and/or others in danger.
- Adopting the roles of Councils Officers.
- Issuing individual/personal press statements.
- Making statements which imply failure or placing blame on ECC or any other organisation involved.
- Making promises which cannot be realised.

## Appendix A: Glossary

A complete civil contingencies lexicon is available [online](#).

<p>Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) “Gold”</p>	<p>The strategic management response considers the emergency in its wider context and determines long term impacts and risks; defines and communicates the overarching strategy and objectives for the response; establishes the framework, policy and parameters for lower level tiers, and monitors the context, risks, impacts and progress towards defined objectives.</p> <p>A multi-agency SCG will be established for significant or extended emergencies and will usually be chaired by the chief officer of the police. The ECC representative would usually be the chief executive or another member of the executive board.</p> <p>An SCG does not have the collective authority to issue commands or executive orders to individual responder agencies but ensures coordination as each organisation exercises control of their own operations in the normal way.</p>
<p>Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) “Silver”</p>	<p>The TCG will be formed from senior operational officers from relevant agencies. ECC will usually be represented by a Tier 3 Director.</p> <p>The group’s role is to jointly conduct the overall multi-agency management of the incident: determining priorities for allocating available resources and seeking additional resources if required; planning and coordinating tasks; assessing risks and using this to inform tasking of operational commanders; and ensuring the health and safety of the public/personnel.</p>
<p>Operational “Bronze”</p>	<p>This is the level at which the management of the immediate hands-on work is undertaken at the site(s) of the emergency.</p> <p>While individual agencies retain command authority over their own resources and personnel deployed at the scene, each agency must liaise and coordinate with the other agencies involved, ensuring a coherent and integrated effort. In ECC the operational roles could be social workers, transport operatives, welfare facilities etc.</p>

# Document Control

## Publish Notes

<b>Author</b>	ECC Emergency Planning & Resilience Team
<b>Authorised by</b>	Jo Tyler [28/02/2023 / v3.0]
<b>Date</b>	April 2023
<b>Version Number</b>	V3.0
<b>Classification</b>	Official
<b>Next Review Date</b>	April 2024

## Version Control

Date	Version	Changes	Editors
April 2018	V1.0	First issued	EP&R
Jan 2020	V2.0	Full Review	M Marcheselli
April 2023	V3.0	New template, minor wording amendments, new structure diagram	EP&R

## Distribution

Date	Version	Distribution	Method
April 2018	V1.0	ECC Elected Members	Member's Portal
02/03/2020	V2.0	ECC Elected Members	Member's Portal
May 2023	V3.0	ECC Elected Members, ECC Gold & Silver Officers, Operational Leadership Team, Virtual Incident Response Centre members, and EP&R	Member's Portal, RD,

Official

			Email, MS Teams
--	--	--	--------------------

This information is issued by:  
Essex County Council

Contact us:

[emergency.plans@essex.gov.uk](mailto:emergency.plans@essex.gov.uk)

Emergency Planning & Resilience Team

Essex County Council

County Hall, Chelmsford

Essex, CM1 1QH



**Essex\_CC**



**[facebook.com/essexcountycouncil](https://www.facebook.com/essexcountycouncil)**

The information contained in this document  
can be translated, and/or made available in  
alternative formats, on request.

This is an internal document