

PLACE, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY BOARD

***Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Agenda***

Date Tuesday 21 January 2025

Time 6.00 pm

Venue Crompton Suite, Civic Centre, Oldham, West Street, Oldham, OL1 1NL

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Oldham
Council

Item No

6 Annual Report - Emergency Planning (Pages 3 - 10)

7 Licensing (Pages 11 - 16)



Report to Place, Economic Growth & Environment Scrutiny Board

Oldham Council Civil Contingencies Training & Exercise Summary Report 2024/25

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Goodwin – Cabinet Member for Don't Trash Oldham

Officer Contact: Nasir Dad, Director of Environment

Report Author: Darren McGrattan, Interim Assistant Director
Waste, Cleansing Greenspace

21 January 2025

Reason for Decision

The reason for this report is to provide an update of Oldham Council's training and exercising in relation to emergency planning and civil contingencies up to the end of 2024.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

EMERGENCY PLANNING UPDATE

1 Background

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of Oldham Council's training and exercising in relation to emergency planning and civil contingencies at the end of 2024. It outlines the current level of training across Oldham Council's on-call officers, exercises completed during 2024, as well as the programmed planned for 2025 to further develop the capability of Oldham Council's on-call officers to respond and recover to civil emergencies and major incidents. It also provides a reflection on the incidents that have occurred in the past 12 months that have resulted in the activation of Oldham's emergency arrangements.

2 Training Summary for 2024

- 2.1 There are currently 5 Strategic Officers, 9 Tactical Officers, and 6 Forward Incident Officers on Oldham Council's 24/7/365 emergency rota. They provide the immediate command and control structure for the local authority in the event of a civil emergency or major incident, which may then be expanded upon should the council's involvement in the incident require further resource and co-ordination across services.
- 2.2 The mandatory training requirements of on-call staff are set via the Chief Officers Group for Civil Contingencies to ensure a consistent level of competency across all Greater Manchester local authorities.

3 Training Programme for 2025

- 3.1 The Training courses are offered and arranged via the Greater Manchester Resilience Unit. These include emergency management courses for Strategic and Tactical levels, JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles) courses, Resilience Direct familiarisation training and more. Opportunities for all of these courses are already available for on-call officers to book onto for 2025, with further course dates being arranged by the Resilience Unit for the rest of the year.
- 3.2 Oldham's business partner from the Resilience Unit will continue to work with the council's emergency planning and civil contingency function to promote the training opportunities on a monthly basis throughout 2025, in line with the Resilience Unit's monthly publishing of the 'training brief'.
- 3.3 In addition to this, a targeted promotion strategy will be adopted throughout 2025 communicating directly with individual on-call officers who have gaps in their mandatory training requirements to ensure they are aware of the opportunities available to them. This aims to increase engagement at an individual level within the on-call community, so the training and exercising opportunities they are receiving are directly relevant to their individual training needs, with the ultimate aim of achieving a greater number of fully trained on-call officers.

- 3.4 Oldham’s business partner from the Resilience Unit will also work together with the council’s emergency planning and civil contingency function to offer some bespoke training sessions where this is suitable and feasible to enable on-call officers with specific gaps in knowledge and gaps in training to attend.

Table 1: Upcoming Training Courses available in 2025

Training Course	Upcoming Available Dates
Multi-Agency Gold Incident Commander (MAGIC) Training	10.03.25 - 13.03.25
Strategic Emergency Management Course	03.02.25 - 04.02.25
Tactical Emergency Management Training	07.01.25
JESIP (Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles) Course	31.01.25
	13.02.25
	13.03.25
	27.03.25
ACT Counter Terrorism Operational Training	09.01.25
Protect UK Counter Terrorism Workshop	22.01.25

4 **Exercise Summary for 2024**

4.1 The below exercises have been conducted within Oldham Council during 2024:

- February 2024 – Exercise of the Oldham Multi-Agency Flood Plan.
- March 2024 – Exercise of the Oldham Sheltering Evacuees (Reception Centre) Plan.
- April – June 2024 – Introduction to Emergency Planning Sessions – Offered to all Council staff.

Further multi-agency exercises have been conducted throughout 2024 via the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, which Oldham Council colleagues have had the opportunity to attend:

- November 2024 – Exercise ‘Scorpion’ for a CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear) attack in the form of a white powder incident.
- December 2024 – Exercise of a Dam Inundation scenario for Entwistle Reservoir, with generic relevance to all boroughs across Greater Manchester.

5 **Exercise Programmed for 2025**

5.1 An exercise programme for 2025 has been developed to provide Oldham Council’s on-call staff and wider services with the opportunity to practice their response to emergencies in a safe environment and learn from each other.

5.2 The 2025 programme consists of a number of internal exercises specifically for on-call officers, some exercises via the Oldham Emergency Planning Forum to involve wider council services and partners, as well as some exercises organised through the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum to enable joint preparedness across the multi-agency space.

- 5.3 The programme provides a healthy mix of exercise opportunities for all levels of on-call officers in the council, focusing on a range of different risks from flooding to fire. This sits in line with the top risks identified in Greater Manchester's Community Risk Register as well as the top risks in Oldham's local borough profile, including local iconic sites such as Standedge Tunnel.
- 5.4 Oldham's business partner from the Resilience Unit will work with the council's emergency planning and civil contingency function to implement the exercise programme and promote the exercise opportunities to relevant staff, with the aim of filling the gaps in on-call officers mandatory training requirements.

The exercise programme is provided overleaf in Table 2.

Table 2: Exercise programme for 2025

Date	Exercise	Participants				
		FIOs	Tactical Officers	Strategic Officers	Wider Council Services	Multi-Agency Partners
Feb (TBC)	Exercise 'Boost' No-notice test of the immediate response to a Marauding Terrorist Attack (MTA) at Oldham Athletic Stadium to validate the learning implemented from Manchester Arena.	✓	✓	✓		✓
Feb 4 th	Exercise 'Tollard' Government exercise 'in a box' being rolled out to test the local processes to identify and support vulnerable persons set in a severe weather scenario.		✓	✓	✓	✓
Feb 27 th	Oldham EP Forum Mini discussion exercise as part of the forum meeting to explore how Oldham Council's services and local partners respond to a flooding incident.				✓	✓
Apr	HazMat Exercise Table-top exercise to test the council's response to a hazardous material incident requiring disposal following a fire service response.	✓	✓			
May	Oldham EP Forum – Summer Prep Discussion exercise as part of the forum meeting to explore a moorland fire incident and the associated community impacts including air quality.				✓	✓

July	Care Home Exercise Table-top exercise to test the council's response to a fire at a significant care home requiring evacuation and shelter of vulnerable persons.	✓	✓	✓		
Sep	Standedge Tunnel Exercise Familiarisation visit and discussion exercise for a rail incident inside Standedge Tunnel resulting in mass evacuation of trapped persons and requirement for humanitarian support.	✓	✓			✓
Nov	Oldham EP Forum – Winter Prep Discussion exercise as part of the forum meeting to explore an infectious disease outbreak and associated health system impacts during the winter peak period.				✓	✓

Throughout 2024, there have been 41 activations of Oldham Council's emergency arrangements. This process is directly supported via the First Response Centre control room who handle the initial calls 24/7/365 and notify the relevant on-call officers and activate the relevant processes, as per Oldham Council's Emergency Response and Recovery Plan.

The First Response Centre also provide a function as part of the Greater Manchester major incident notification cascade, in which they pass on incident notifications to the Greater Manchester Resilience Unit for major incidents affecting any of the 10 boroughs across Greater Manchester.

As shown below in Figure 1, of the 41 activations during 2024, 23 were for incidents in Oldham requiring a response from the council's on-call officers, 13 were to cascade the message onwards for an incident occurring in another GM borough and 5 were for exercises.

Table 3 overleaf provides a comprehensive list of all 41 emergency activations during 2024. There were a broad range of incidents throughout the calendar year, however fires and severe weather were the most common themes when reflecting on the 23 incidents that required a response from the council's on-call officers (as seen in Figure 2 below).

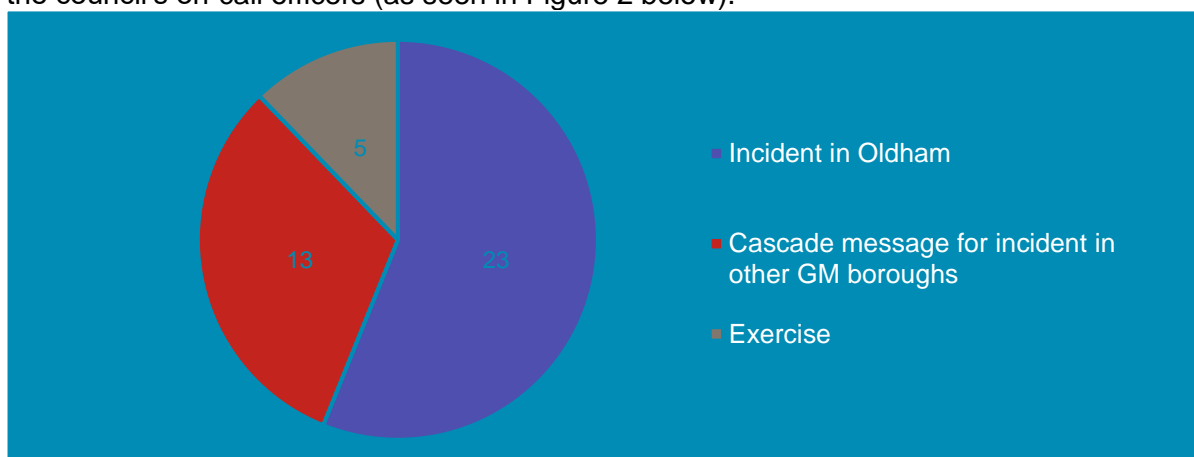


Figure 1: Breakdown of First Response Centre emergency activations during 2024

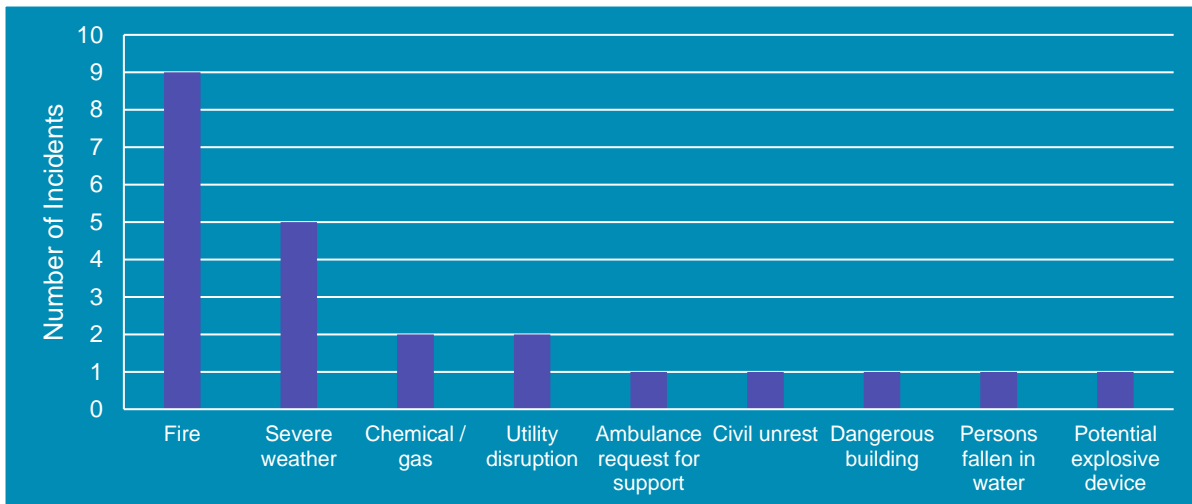


Figure 2: Incidents by type that required a response from council on-call officers in 2024.

Table 3: List of all emergency activations during 2024. Where the incident required a response from the council’s on-call officers, the theme of the incident is boldened.

Date	Incident Details	Required a response from Oldham Council on-call officers?	Involved support from the Greater Manchester Resilience Unit?
18.01.24	Cascade message - Rochdale	No	Yes
21.01.24	Storm Isha Yellow weather warning	Yes	Yes
04.02.24	Op Stratus exercise	No	No
18.02.24	Op Scorpio exercise	No	No
03.03.24	Op Stratus exercise	No	No
04.03.24	Cascade message - Trafford	No	Yes
06.03.24	Op Alamo exercise	No	No
13.03.24	Chemical incident and evacuation in Failsworth	Yes	Yes
15.03.24	Cascade message - Bolton	No	Yes
22.03.24	Cascade message - Salford	No	Yes
23.03.24	Gas bottles discovered on Huddersfield Road	Yes	No
30.03.24	Fire and evacuation on Shaw Road	Yes	No
24.04.24	Fire incident at Royal Oak PH, Union Street	Yes	No
25.04.24	Cascade message - Bolton	No	Yes
09.05.24	Cascade message - Eccles	No	Yes
10.05.24	Cascade message - Salford	No	Yes
22.05.24	Heavy rain Amber weather warning	Yes	Yes
11.06.24	Fire incident on Roman Road	Yes	No

12.06.24	Fire incident on St Thomas Street South	Yes	No
27.06.24	Potential explosive device in OL4	Yes	Yes
01.07.24	Cascade message	No	Yes
22.07.24	Internet / phone disruption to First Response	Yes	Yes
01.08.24	Civil unrest and disorder (Op Rotation)	Yes	Yes
17.08.24	Fire incident on Yorkshire Street	Yes	No
22.08.24	Water supply issue to Oldham Hospital	Yes	Yes
26.08.24	Fire incident at derelict mill in Greenfield	Yes	Yes
02.09.24	Dangerous building incident in Shaw	Yes	No
21.09.24	Fire incident on Duke Street	Yes	No
30.09.24	Heavy rain Yellow weather warning	Yes	Yes
01.10.24	Fire incident at Spinners Arms,	Yes	No
04.10.2024	Cascade message - Manchester city	No	No
08.10.24	Ambulance request for support from Oldham	Yes	No
13.10.24	Cascade message - Manchester city	No	No
20.10.24	Persons fallen in water at Dove Stone Reservoir	Yes	Yes
13.11.24	Major Incident Public Portal exercise	No	Yes
17.11.24	Cascade message - Manchester city	No	Yes
22.11.24	Storm Bert flood warnings	Yes	Yes
23.11.24	Fire incident on Middleton Road	Yes	No
24.11.24	Cascade message	No	Yes
29.11.24	Cascade message - Manchester city	No	Yes
06.12.24	Storm Darragh Yellow weather warnings	Yes	Yes

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recognised in conclusion of this report and in reflection of the wider resilience landscape with recent publishing of the Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 Report, that training and exercise is a crucial element of any emergency planning programme. This is not only to meet the statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 but also to give the council as an organisation, as well as its staff and on-call officers as individuals, the skills, capability and most notably the confidence to be able to handle a major incident and support Oldham's community during a crisis.

The following recommendations are made:

- To note the contents of this report and review the exercise programme for 2025 to ensure suitability.
- To continue supporting and driving the importance of the training and exercise programme at a strategic level within the council.

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Report to Place, Economic Growth & Environment Scrutiny Board

LICENSING UPDATE

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Housing & Licensing

Officer Contact: Nasir Dad, Director of Environment

Report Author: John Garforth, Service Manager

21 January 2025

Reason for Decision

The reason for this report is to update Scrutiny on the activities and work plans in relation to the Council's statutory licensing functions.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

LICENSING UPDATE

1 Background

- 1.1 The Council, acting in its role as Licensing Authority, carries out a range of statutory functions, including taxi and private hire, alcohol, entertainment and late-night refreshment, gambling, and street trading licensing.
- 1.2 This report sets out the activities of the licensing team since April 2024, and also outlines the challenges and demands on the service.

2 Alcohol, Entertainment and Late-Night Refreshment

- 2.1 The team continues to advise, issue, and ensure compliance with a range of premises licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003.
- 2.2 Officers continue to respond to complaints about licensed premises and undertake inspections to ensure compliance with conditions.
- 2.3 Officers continue to work in partnership with Greater Manchester Police and undertake visits to licensed premises to ensure compliance with conditions and meet new premises supervisors. Officers also attend Pubwatch meetings to discuss current issues with the licensed trade, aim to address issues and agree the implementation of best practice. This scheme also provides a forum to discuss changes to policy, legislation and to provide guidance for implementation.
- 2.4 There has been further promotion of the 'Ask Angela' scheme which aims to protect the vulnerable in licensed premises.
- 2.5 Officers further await the implementation of new legislation around the Government's 'Protect' agenda, in order to protect visitors to public venues from terrorism. The Security Industry Authority will become the enforcing body for this new system.
- 2.6 A welcome development is the Government's promise to review Licensing Act 2003 fees, which have not been reviewed since the legislation commenced in 2005. These fees are set by Ministers via Regulations and the majority of licensing authorities report working at a loss due to the passage of time and increased costs of enforcement and service delivery.

3 Taxi and Private Hire

- 3.1 There have been circa. 900 new applications received for dual driver licenses since April 2024.
- 3.2 The total number of licenses now in force are detailed below with comparative figures from May 2023.

Licence Type	December 2024	May 2023
Dual drivers' licence	3384	1305
School contract drivers	86	95
Private hire vehicles	1883	1030
Private hire operators	92	38
Hackney carriage vehicles	85	85

- 3.3 The increase in applications commenced following a change to policy in June 2023 when the Licensing Committee removed the requirement for a driven test in order to obtain a licence together with the removal of the lower age limit of first licensing a vehicle.
- 3.4 This has seen a significant shift in licensed drivers moving to licence more locally from other licensing authorities such as Wolverhampton. This has been further strengthened by lobbying from the Mayor of Greater Manchester to the Department for Transport to stop the process of 'licensing shopping' where applicants travel elsewhere in the country in order to acquire a licence due to cost or an easier application process.
- 3.5 As Members will see from the above figures, the significant increase in licensed drivers has placed an additional burden on Officers within the team. A recruitment exercise is underway to bolster the team with the additional Officers needed in order to meet demand, including extending opening hours of our service reception.
- 3.6 The additional vehicles being licensed has also meant an increase in testing capacity at our testing station at Moorhey Street. A third bay will provide extra capacity and installation is almost complete (at the time of writing this report). In addition, a waiting room and CCTV viewing of the testing bay has been installed for the comfort and safety of all visitors to the site.
- 3.7 Officers are working towards the implementation of a new service database and front facing driver application and account system which is due for delivery in 2025. This will improve efficiency and speed of processes and hopefully make it easier for service users to handle their applications.

3.8 Current statistics for vehicle tests since April 2024 are as follows:

Hackney Carriages	Pass = 49 (64%)	Fail = 28
Private Hire	Pass = 1098 (64%)	Fail = 627
Main reasons for failure	Brakes Suspension Tyres Condition of interior	
Missed tests	140	

3.9 The current pass rate of 64% still needs to improve although it is noted that the figure has increased from 51% in 2021, 52% in 2022, 56% in 2023 to the current figure.

3.10 Since April 2024, there have been 36 hearings before the Drivers Panel. The breakdown of outcomes is detailed below.

Applications granted	Applications refused	Licences Suspended	Licences Revoked	NFA
4	21	3	7	1

3.11 In addition, there have been 4 delegated revocation decisions made by Officers for urgent matters.

3.12 One of the above delegated revocations followed a successful prosecution on 19 September 2024, of an unlicensed driver who was disqualified from driving by the court for 2 years and ordered to pay a fine and costs totaling £4,671.

3.13 In July 2024, a vehicle compliance operation was undertaken in partnership with Greater Manchester Police and VOSA. The results of that operation are outlined below:

Total vehicles checked.	18
Hackney carriages checked	2
Private hire vehicles checked	16
Pass	5
Fail for minor defects	10
Failed and Licence Suspended	3

4 **Future Planned Activities**

4.1 In addition to ongoing service improvement, ensuring compliance and resident safety, the coming year will see Officers focusing on the following priorities and projects:

- Reviewing hackney carriage ranks and the limit on vehicle numbers.
- Implement dementia awareness into our new driver training course.
- Procure a new licensing database to improve effectiveness and customer experience.
- Work more closely with the trade to improve vehicle testing results

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