

**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

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**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.

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## **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

<b>Training Course</b>	<b>Upcoming Available Dates</b>
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)	<b>Exercise 'Boost'</b> 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 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Exercise 'Tollard'</b> 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 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Oldham EP Forum</b> 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	<b>HazMat Exercise</b> Table-top exercise to test the council's response to a hazardous material incident requiring disposal following a fire service response.	✓	✓			
May	<b>Oldham EP Forum – Summer Prep</b> Discussion exercise as part of the forum meeting to explore a moorland fire incident and the associated community impacts including air quality.				✓	✓

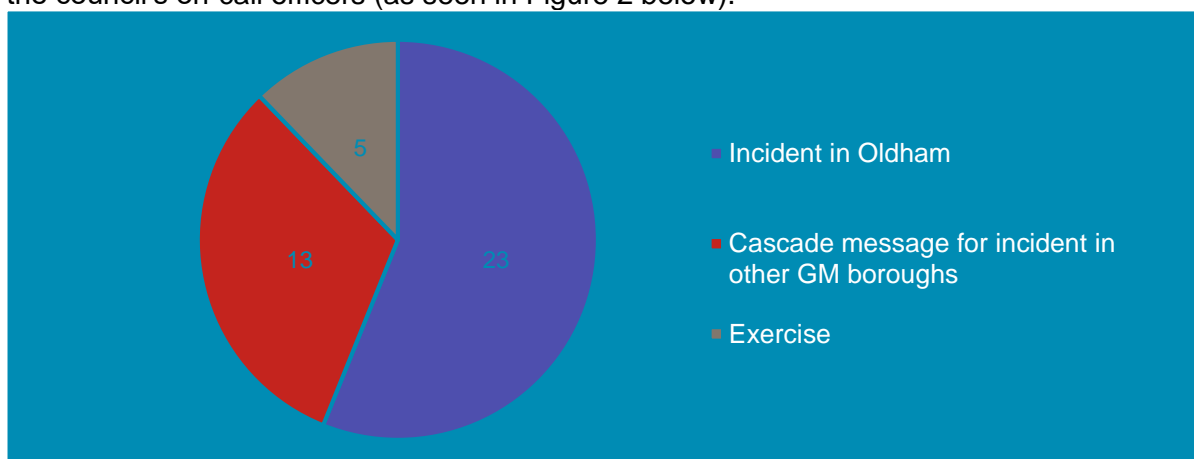
<b>July</b>	<b>Care Home Exercise</b> Table-top exercise to test the council's response to a fire at a significant care home requiring evacuation and shelter of vulnerable persons.	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Sep</b>	<b>Standedge Tunnel Exercise</b> Familiarisation visit and discussion exercise for a rail incident inside Standedge Tunnel resulting in mass evacuation of trapped persons and requirement for humanitarian support.	✓	✓			✓
<b>Nov</b>	<b>Oldham EP Forum – Winter Prep</b> 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.

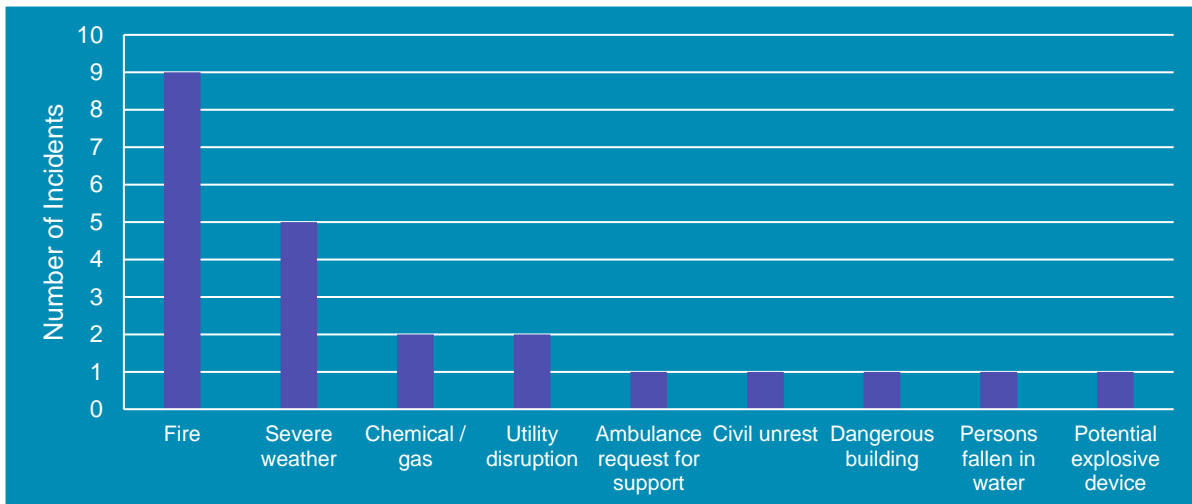
The First Response Centre also provide a function as part of the Greater Manchester major incident notification cascade, in which they pass on incident notifications to the Greater Manchester Resilience Unit for major incidents affecting any of the 10 boroughs across Greater Manchester.

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 bolded.

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	<b>Storm Isha</b> 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	<b>Chemical incident and evacuation</b> in Failsworth	Yes	Yes
15.03.24	Cascade message - Bolton	No	Yes
22.03.24	Cascade message - Salford	No	Yes
23.03.24	<b>Gas bottles</b> discovered on Huddersfield Road	Yes	No
30.03.24	<b>Fire and evacuation</b> on Shaw Road	Yes	No
24.04.24	<b>Fire incident</b> 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	<b>Heavy rain</b> Amber weather warning	Yes	Yes
11.06.24	<b>Fire incident</b> on Roman Road	Yes	No

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