

<b>ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Partnership &amp; Regeneration Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>17 October 2023</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>North Wales Council's Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS)</b>
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	<b>Annual Report 2022/2023</b>
<b>Scrutiny Chair:</b>	<b>Councillor Dylan Rees</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder(s):</b>	<b>Councillor Llinos Medi</b>
<b>Head of Service:</b>	<b>Dylan Williams, Chief Executive</b>
<b>Report Author:</b>	<b>Helen Kilgannon, Regional Manager NWC-REPS</b>
<b>Tel:</b>	<a href="mailto:Helen.Kilgannon@nwc-reps.org.uk">Helen.Kilgannon@nwc-reps.org.uk</a>
<b>Email:</b>	<b>Susan Owen Jones, Executive Manager (LT)</b> <a href="mailto:SusanJones4@anglesey.wales.gov">SusanJones4@anglesey.wales.gov</a>
<b>Local Members:</b>	<b>Relevant to all members</b>

25

### **1 - Recommendation/s**

1.1 The Committee is asked to note the progress of the North Wales Council's Regional Emergency Planning Service work 2022/23.

### **2 – Link to Council Plan / Other Corporate Priorities**

2.1 The Council has responsibilities for emergency planning and response under the Civil Contingencies Acts 2004, the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001, and the Pipeline Safety Regulations 1996.

2.2 The Council is a principal responder and meets its obligations by collaborating with the North Wales Local Authorities through the North Wales Council's Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS).

2.3 The North Wales Council's Regional Emergency Planning Service is required to report annually to this committee each year through an Annual Report.

### **3 – Guiding Principles for Scrutiny Members**

**To assist Members when scrutinising the topic: -**

**3.1** Impact the matter has on individuals and communities [focus on customer/citizen]

**3.2** A look at the efficiency & effectiveness of any proposed change – both financially and in terms of quality [focus on value]

**3.3** A look at any risks [focus on risk]

**3.4** Scrutiny taking a performance monitoring or quality assurance role [focus on performance & quality]

**3.5** Looking at plans and proposals from the perspective of:

- Long term
- Prevention
- Integration
- Collaboration
- Involvement

[focus on wellbeing]

**4 - Key Scrutiny Questions**

4.1 To what extent did the North Wales Regional Emergency Planning Service fully deliver on its functions during the last municipal year?

4.2 How does the regional service contribute to the resilience and security of communities in Anglesey?

4.3 What are the immediate key priorities for the service to support the Council and North Wales?

4.4 What are the key risks facing the Island?

4.5 What is the Council's preparedness level with regard to future emergencies?

**5 – Background / Context**

5.1 The Council has emergency planning and response duties under the Civil Contingencies Acts 2004, the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001, and the Pipeline Safety Regulations 1996.

5.2 The Council is a principal responder and meets its obligations by collaborating with the North Wales Local Authorities through the North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS), for which Flintshire County Council is the host authority.

5.3 Following consultation and ratification through the political process in each Local Authority, Emergency Planning functions for all 6 local authorities in North Wales were amalgamated into one service under an inter-authority agreement hosted by Flintshire in 2014.

5.4 Within the Council, responsibilities for emergency planning and response are shared across services and nominated service representatives are identified within the Emergency Management Response Team structure.

5.5 Whilst much progress has been made, work is underway to further consolidate how the activities provided by the service are undertaken, particularly by strengthening performance management and training delivery. This will enable the service to more effectively prioritise areas of work and resource allocation but also ensure that councils benefit fully from the range of expertise held within the service.

**Regional Activity**

5.6 NWC-REPS continue to provide the primary link between the Council and the North Wales Local Resilience Forum (LRF), with contributions from service staff being fundamental to multi-agency groups, events, processes and plans. Continuity is greater strengthening as relationships are built with key partners. We are following this up with workshops with partners to allow them to have a clearer understanding of what the Service and more importantly the Council is responsible for during an emergency.

5.7 NWC-REPS staff were instrumental in the planning and facilitation of a bomb threat exercise at one of the 3 major hospitals across North Wales. Planning is ongoing to roll this out across the other 2 primary care sites. Council staff will be invited to attend to share the learning and participate in the scenario.

5.8 NWC-REPS are the lead organisation for the call out of the Voluntary Sector in an Emergency. To ensure contact details are up to date a Scenario-based call-out Exercise was undertaken in July. Exercise Vargo results have been shared with the Voluntary Sector and follow-up work is being undertaken to ensure details are accurate.

5.9 NWC-REPS continues to provide out-of-hours support to the local authority and blue light services in response to queries and incidents 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. To test responses within local authorities NWC-REPS carry out Exercise Cooper quarterly to test both the contact details we hold and the out-of-hours availability of key staff. The results are shared with the Board on a quarterly basis.

5.10 The service is working with the LRF looking at several Training Courses such as Loggist Training and a TNA for partners which have been circulated to the Council to review and complete to ensure that we are offering courses that meet the needs of staff. This will enable the service to effectively prioritise areas of work and resource allocation but also ensure that the council benefits fully from the range of expertise held within the service.

5.11 NWC-REPS have arranged several informative workshops with guest speakers who were pivotal in the led local authority responses to the following incidents:

- The Manchester Arena Attack
- A Fire at South Oxfordshire Headquarters
- The Salisbury Novichok Attack
- Tottenham Riots

This will allow Council staff the opportunity to see the implications of events and benefit from their reflections on the incident and their response.

5.12 At the last meeting it was noted that the service was looking to use the In Phase Performance Management System that has been purchased by the host authority (Flintshire Council). Whilst early trials were conducted there have been several personnel changes within the host authority and within the service which has delayed the rollout. An update report will be tabled at the next Executive Board Meeting.

**Activity within the Council**

5.13 The Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT) structure within the Council facilitates the coordination of incidents with Business Continuity implications for the authority. EMRT will coordinate the response on behalf of the Council to any multi-agency incidents.

5.14 The EMRT provides a robust mechanism for the delivery of planning and response functions. Teams meet regularly to review arrangements in place and identify future activities. Oversight is provided via the Leadership Team.

5.15 NWC-REPS supports the EMRT by representing the Local Authorities at the Local Resilience Forum and their sub-groups. In addition, NWC-REPS assists the authority by writing, exercising and testing emergency plans as detailed below.

5.16 On October 21, 2022, structural engineering experts, representing UK Highways, recommended to the Welsh Government officials that the A5 Menai Bridge should be closed to all forms of traffic, including pedestrians and cyclists. This was to allow for the installation of temporary works over the subsequent months. As a result, monthly Tactical Coordination Group (TCG) meetings were held until the bridge was partially reopened in February 2023. Representatives from NWC-REPS attended each of these meetings. They offered their viewpoint on how to handle a major incident and lent their support to both the Anglesey and Gwynedd councils during the response phase and the subsequent session to review the lessons learned.

5.17 The emergency planning working group resumed its activities on September 12, 2022, with its inaugural meeting. Initially, these meetings were held monthly, but from January 2023, they transitioned to a quarterly schedule. The group's primary responsibility is to ensure the effectiveness of the Council's emergency planning and business continuity strategies, thereby managing key risks on behalf of the Leadership Team (LT). The NWC-REPS played a crucial role in reconstituting the group and actively participate in the discussions.

5.18 In November 2022, NWC-REPS introduced a new corporate and service-level business continuity template. This was paired with a new framework. This followed months of development by attending an Emergency Planning College course and liaising with Cardiff and Gloucestershire Council's on best practices. To help service managers understand the template's functions and assist them in adapting it to the new format, NWC-REPS conducted several familiarisation sessions. The plans are now complete. The next stage will include testing and exercising all the plans within their respective services.

5.19 The service has developed several e-learning courses for Ynys Mon staff to enrol in and they are now all available to staff. Courses include rest centre learning, roles in an incident and the role of members in an emergency.

5.20 NWC-REPS were involved in collating evidence related to the resilience and preparedness of the local authority for the pandemic as part of the ongoing COVID-19 inquiry. Module 1 of the Covid19 Inquiry focused on examining the resilience and

preparedness of the UK for the coronavirus pandemic. As part of supporting the Council, NWC-REPS assisted in gathering relevant data, reports, and documents that showcase the preparedness and response of the North Wales Local Authorities to the pandemic. This included internal reports, communication records, action plans, and more.

5.21 On the 12th of July 2022, NWC-REPS organised a unique rest centre exercise at the Holyhead Leisure Centre. The exercise was unique in that it tested not only the standard rest centre procedures but also a specially developed plan to respond to a potential influx of Ukrainian refugees. The Local Resilience Forum (LRF), North Wales Police, and the Border Force provided inputs for the exercise. Their involvement ensured that the exercise was based on realistic scenarios, that the responses were coordinated across multiple agencies and that law enforcement and border control perspectives were adequately considered. Attendees gained valuable insights and experience from the exercise, which would help them respond more effectively in an actual emergency. The exercise was well received, indicating that it was seen as a valuable and successful initiative.

5.22 NWC - REPS are currently developing a live exercise in Rhyl leisure centre for the start of next year. Representatives from the Isle of Anglesey County Council will be participating and observing the exercise to learn practical skills in the event of an incident. The exercise will also be held in Anglesey in the future.

5.23 In March 2023, Storm Larisa affected North Wales with heavy snowfall, causing widespread travel disruption and school closures. Temperatures were forecast to fall to lows of -11°C, with a yellow warning in place for ice from the Met Office. TCG's were set up in the week before the storm, and NWC-REPS officers attended along with members of staff from Isles of Anglesey County Council to ensure sufficient preparations were in place.

5.24 The Isle of Anglesey County Council's annual contribution to the service is £61,844. The contribution is based on a proportion of 10.472% towards the annual budget for the service.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Annual Contribution %</b>
Isle of Anglesey County Council	10.472%
Conwy County Borough Council	16.940%
Denbighshire County Council	14.865%
Flintshire County Council	19.348%
Gwynedd Council	17.979%
Wrexham County Borough Council	20.396%
Total	100%

<b>6 – Equality Impact Assessment [including impacts on the Welsh Language]</b>
<b>6.1 Potential impacts on protected groups under the Equality Act 2010</b>
N/A
<b>6.2 Potential impacts on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in their lives (strategic decisions)</b>
N/A
<b>6.3 Potential impacts on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language</b>
N/A
<b>7 – Financial Implications</b>
7.1 The report does not identify any specific financial implications for the Council.
7.2 The annual contribution to the service by the Council is £61,844.

<b>8 – Appendices:</b>
8.1 North Wales Councils Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS) – Annual Report 2022/2023.
8.2 Emergency Response: Handbook for Elected Members

<b>9 - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):</b>