Gravesham Borough Council Major Emergency Plan

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All enquiries relating to this document should be sent to:
adrian.hickmott@gravesham.gov.uk

Issue, Review and Distribution

Date and by who	Version no	Summary of changes	Approved by	Distribution
May 2019 Adrian Hickmott (GBC) and Siân Deller (KRT)	V1.0	New layout and Function Plan refresh	MN	RD/ /Staff net
December 2022 Adrian Hickmott (GBC)	V1.1	Minor updates to text	MT	RD/H Drive
March 2026 Adrian Hickmott (GBC)	V1.2	Minor updates to text	MT	RD/H Drive

Review

The GBC Major Emergency Plan is formally reviewed every three years.
The Contact Directory and Welfare Directory will be reviewed annually:

GBC Contact Numbers

Kent County Council Duty Officer contact:

Main Number [redacted]

Gravesham Borough Council during Working Hours (request Chief Executive/ Duty Director):

Switchboard [redacted]

Outside Normal Office Hours contact should be made with the Duty Officer:

Mobile [redacted]

Gravesham Borough Council Duty Director (Emergency Co-ordinator):

On a weekly rota system – Rota and associated numbers provided to GBC 'out-of-hours' service provider (via [redacted] and to Kent Resilience Team contacts etc.

Gravesham Borough Emergency Planning - Single Point of Contact (SPOC):

[redacted]

Landline [redacted] Mobile [redacted]

Distribution

An up-to-date copy of this document is available within the council's Emergency Planning electronic folder or available via the Resilience Direct site at [redacted]

A hard-copy of this plan is stored in the Emergency Centre at the Civic Centre within the black storage box.

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Contents

1 Introduction 4
1.1 Aim and Objectives 4
1.1.1 Aim 4
1.1.2 Objectives 4
1.2 Legislation 4
1.3 Community Risk Register 5
1.4 Staff Welfare 5
1.4.1 Risk Assessments 5
1.4.2 Staff Wellbeing 5
2 Alerting, Determination and Activation 6
2.1 Alerting Procedure 6
2.2 GBC Contact Numbers 6
2.3 Determination 6
2.3.1 Major Emergency Determination Guidance 8
2.4 Activation of Major Emergency Plan and Function Plans 9
3 Emergency Command Structure 10
4 Local Authorities Responsibilities and Plans 10
4.1 Function Plans and Handbooks 11
4.2 Kent County Council Response 12
4.2.1 KCC Social Care, Health & Wellbeing Emergency Plan 12
4.2.2 KCC Education & Young People's Services Emergency Plan 12
4.2.3 KCC Highways, Transportation & Waste 12
4.2.4 KCC Environment, Planning & Enforcement 13
4.3 Community Resilience and Flood Plans 13
5 Training and Exercising 13
6 Business Continuity Management 14
7 Recovery 14

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1 Introduction

Local authorities have a legal obligation to mobilise resources to respond and deal with a broad range of emergencies as defined under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

"an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK"

This plan also supports a Business Continuity event and works alongside the Councils Business Continuity Plan.

This document has been prepared with the assistance of Officers from the Kent Resilience Team to comply with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Plan is a corporate document overseen by the Council's Corporate Management Team.

1.1 Aim and Objectives

1.1.1 Aim

The aim of the Major Emergency Plan is to provide up to date information that will allow the Activating Officer to respond with appropriate and proportionate arrangements to any emergency in the Borough, County of Kent or neighbouring authority under Mutual Aid.

The plan is supported by

- Function Plans that detail how specific responses are carried out;
- Staff contact directory;
- Management structure for responding to and recovering from an emergency;
- Other GBC or multi agency framework handbooks and plans.

1.1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Define the local government responsibilities in an emergency in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act legislation;
- Outline GBC and Kent County Council (KCC) emergency response capabilities and the services they may bring to bear, on a singular basis or jointly;
- Confirm the alerting and callout arrangements for Duty Officers, Emergency Coordinators and responding staff;
- Confirm the mobilisation process for out of hour's services;
- Outline the alerting arrangements for key staff, mobilising services or activating mutual aid;
- Outline the management and communications structure in an emergency;
- Supporting function plans will;
    - Confirm roles and responsibilities during response and recovery;
    - Describe the set up and management process of the Borough Emergency Centre.

1.2 Legislation

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 all County and Borough/District authorities have a responsibility to:

- Assess the risk of an emergency occurring;
- Plan for and to respond to a broad range of emergencies;
- Be resilient as an organisation, putting into place suitable Business Continuity measures;
- Share information with other responders;
- Warn and inform the public before, during and after an emergency;
- Cooperate with other responders;

- Promote Business Continuity and other good resilience practice to local businesses and the voluntary sector.

This Plan is intended to meet the requirements outlined by this legislation by detailing the emergency response as well as the response measures required under the Control of Major Accident Hazards 1999, Pipeline Safety Regulations 1996 and the Radiation Emergency Preparedness Public Information Regulations (REPPIR) 2019.

1.3 Community Risk Register

The Kent Community Risk Register is maintained by the KRF Threat and Risk Assessment Group and displays details of the County risks. The Register will support common risks identified within the Local Council's Register.

The Borough risks are currently being developed as an additional layer to the Kent Community Risk Register. Several consequences, current mitigation and future actions are being identified, with the Register to be formally reviewed on an annual basis. Any escalation of risk levels into a risk score rated as Red will be raised at the Council's Management Team where required.

1.4 Staff Welfare

1.4.1 Risk Assessments

Existing standards and requirements for health and safety at work will apply to major emergency responses by the Council. This includes risk assessments. However, due to urgency and the rapidly changing nature of major emergencies, it is likely that more reliance will be placed on dynamic risk assessments. Awareness of hazards and their potential to cause harm will need to be addressed by all levels of response. It must be remembered that this is a continuous process.

It is important that managers and staff recognise when their limit of knowledge and understanding of the potential hazards has been reached and that they need to seek competent advice before proceeding with an activity.

Emergency planning and training will also need to include measures to manage risks.

1.4.2 Staff Wellbeing

Staff engaged in a major emergency response may find the experience emotionally challenging. Exposure to traumatic sights or close contact with people who have just experienced or witnessed a traumatic event can be distressing.

Crisis management involving long working hours combined with intense activity that demands quick decision making is potentially stressful. Careful selection of staff for such roles can help to minimise any risk. Management awareness of those staff with personal links to individuals directly involved in the disaster or direct links to similar events in the past should also form part of the criteria for responding personnel selection.

Managing shift lengths and rotation of staff, structured breaks with adequate refreshments and opportunities to engage in informal discussion with colleagues away from the "front line" can also help to minimise potentially damaging stress.

Staff should be made aware of the Council's counselling service, how they can access it, and also participate in training and exercising so that they are better prepared to cope in an emergency.

2 Alerting, Determination and Activation

This section provides information on the arrangements in place for alerting on a 24/7 basis.

2.1 Alerting Procedure

Alerts or warnings regarding an emergency could reach the Borough Council from a variety of sources, including members of the public or the media. There is however an established alerting chain for any emergency in the county area, shown in Section 1 of the Pan-Kent Strategic Emergency Framework. [redacted] For most major incidents/emergencies, the KCC Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO) will be contacted in the first instance, who will then make contact with the relevant local Borough Council depending on the location and scale of event.

During normal office hours -
During normal office hours the initial notification of a major incident should go via the Contact Centre to the Chief Executive. If the Chief Executive is not able to respond immediately, or is not contactable, their PA will have details of the Duty Director (Emergency Activation Officer) on rota. If in doubt, any Director or Assistant Director can be contacted in the first instance.

Outside normal office hours -
The initial contact to the Borough Council for the majority of incidents will come via the Council's Out of Hours Service to the Duty Director (Emergency Activation Officer) using the dedicated landline telephone number. Contact may also come direct from the Council's Duty Officer or from the KCC – Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO).

2.2 GBC Contact Numbers

Kent County Council Duty Emergency Planning Officer contact:

Main Number [redacted]

Gravesham Borough Council during Working Hours (request Chief Executive/ Duty Director):

Switchboard [redacted]

Outside Normal Office Hours contact should be made with the Duty Officer:

Mobile [redacted]

Gravesham Borough Council Duty Director (Emergency Activation Officer):

On a weekly rota system – Rota and associated numbers provided to GBC 'out of hours' service provider (via [redacted]) and to Kent Resilience Team contacts etc.

Gravesham Borough Emergency Planning - Single Point of Contact (SPOC):

[redacted]

Landline [redacted] Mobile [redacted]

All notifications received should be reported to the GBC Duty Officer/Duty Director.

2.3 Determination

On receiving an incident notification or alert to/of a potential emergency, the Duty Officer with support from the Duty Director will need to assess the information received.

Under the JESIP principles the gathering and sharing of information should be completed by using the METHANE report:

M – Major emergency declared – Yes/No (is this at County or local level? / by which organisation);
E – Exact location including postcode;
T – Type of incident (fire/disruption to utilities or transport network/homelessness etc);
H – Hazards present or suspected (unstable building/chemicals/flooding);
A – Access to site including RVP;
N – Number of casualties or people/houses affected (welfare centre/housing);
E – Emergency Services and other organisations involved.

The Duty Officer/Duty Director must be satisfied that they have sufficient information for an accurate assessment of the potential impact on GBC which will inform the level of response required. This will be documented in the decision log.

Using the Major Emergency determination guidance at 2.3.1 below, the Duty Director in consultation with the Duty Officer will decide whether to declare a Major Incident/Emergency for the Council.

2.3.1 Major Emergency Determination Guidance

The decision to declare a Major Emergency will be authorised by the Duty Emergency Co-ordinator.

		If 'Yes' go to	If 'No' go to
1	Has an event or situation occurred which threatens serious damage to human welfare? • loss of human life • human illness or injury • homelessness, damage to property • disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel • disruption of an electronic or other system of communication • disruption of facilities for transport • disruption of services relating to health	4	2
2	Has an event or situation occurred which threatens serious damage to the environment? • contamination of land, water or air with harmful biological, chemical or radio-active matter, or oil • flooding • disruption or destruction of plant life or animal life	4	3
3	Has an event or situation occurred which threatens serious damage to security of all or part of the UK? • war or armed conflict • terrorism	4	4
4	Has an emergency occurred which seriously affects the ability of the Council to continue to perform its functions?	6	5
5	Has an emergency occurred which makes it necessary or desirable for the Council to perform its functions for the purpose of preventing the emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects or taking any other action in connection with the emergency?	6	7
6	Can the emergency be dealt with as part of the Council's day-to-day activities without significantly changing the deployment of our resources and without acquiring additional resources?	7	8
7	**Not a major emergency for GBC**	9	
8	**MAJOR EMERGENCY for GBC**	11	
9	Is there potential for more than one department to be involved in the response/recovery.	11	10
10	**Duty Officer to monitor and review (with support from Duty Director if required)**		
11	**Duty Director (Emergency Co-ordinator) to be notified and the Borough Emergency Centre (BEC) to be activated**		

The Duty Officer/Duty Director actions may include:

- Monitoring the situation;
- Deploying an Incident Liaison Officer to site to report on the situation;
- Putting appropriate staff on stand-by;
- Activating specific Function Plans.

2.4 Activation of Major Emergency Plan and Function Plans

The Council Departmental Function Plans and supporting emergency plans can be activated by the Duty Director when information gathered indicates that an emergency has occurred or is likely to

occur, will seriously impact upon the Councils functions and could exceed its capacity to deal with effectively using normal day-to-day response arrangements.

3 Emergency Command Structure

The level of Command and Control implemented will depend on the size and scale of the incident, as well as which level of local government is required to respond.

When an emergency is entirely within the Borough of Gravesham, the Council will co-ordinate the Local Authority response. If the incident affects more than one Borough/District Council area, or if it is too large for a Borough/District Council to manage, then Kent County Council (KCC) will take the co-ordinating role.
This Council works under a Strategic, Tactical and Operational Command structure.

Strategic (Gold)	**The CEO of Gravesham Borough Council** Will determine a major emergency for GBC. Will activate the Councils Function Plans. Will make decisions and produce the Gold Strategy on behalf of GBC Will oversee a major emergency by way of the Emergency Co-ordinator within the Borough Emergency Centre. Will liaise with Members. Will ensure the transition from response to recovery is planned and managed. Will sign off Media and Communications Public Warning and Informing (PWI) **Multi-Agency Response** Will attend or arrange for GBC to be represented at the Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordination Group.
Tactical (Silver)	**The on-call Duty Director receiving all incident notifications for GBC** Will manage the tactical decisions and assess each incident and the response level required by GBC. Will alert Strategic and give tactical advice and updates on the incident. Will support the activation of the Councils Function Plans to support response and recovery. Will support the set-up of the Borough Emergency Centre. Will send an Incident Liaison Officer to the scene who will liaise with the Borough Emergency Co-ordinator. **Multi-agency Response** Will represent the GBC at the Multi-Agency Tactical Co-ordination Group. Will be the main link to KCC Duty Emergency Planning Officer and the County Emergency Centre. Will represent the Council during a Severe Weather Advisory Group Teleconference. **Borough Emergency Co-ordinator** Role within the Borough Emergency Centre The Borough Emergency Co-ordinator will work alongside the County Emergency Centre (if activated)
Operational (Bronze)	**Incident Liaison Officer** **Welfare Centre Manager and Staff** **Front line services** deploying resources linked to Function Plans for response and recovery to all incidents.

	Borough Emergency Centre trained staff covering specific roles/responsibilities.

4 Local Authorities Responsibilities and Plans

The following list covers the responsibilities of all local authorities and shows how these are split between the County Council and Borough/District Councils. Where a responsibility falls to one party, others may agree to carry it out on their behalf, through mutual aid arrangements, or to provide support. The list does not include the day-to-day functions which Local Authorities may carry out as part of the response, nor does it cover internal management activities.

		County	Borough/ District
1	Provide a 24-hour point of contact to receive alerts and warnings, and for the management of a large volume of public calls	✓	✓
2	Co-ordinate the Local Authority response where more than one Borough/District council is involved	✓	
3	Take on the Lead Agency responsibility for appropriate incidents	✓	✓
4	Deploy Incident Liaison Officers (ILOs) or similar to incident sites	✓	✓
5	Alert Health Authorities where action other than direct casualty care is required	✓	✓
6	Liaise with central government	✓	✓
7	Request military aid (MACA)	✓	✓
8	Alert and co-ordinate voluntary organisations	✓	✓
9	Support other responding agencies with council resources	✓	✓
10	Warn & inform residents, businesses, and communities	✓	✓
11	Open and manage welfare centres as required		✓
12	Staff welfare centres as required	✓	✓
13	Provide alternative, transit or temporary accommodation for homeless people		✓
14	Provide care for people in transit who have been affected by the incident	✓	
15	Provide welfare for evacuees, including specialist care (in partnership with other responding agencies)	✓	✓
16	Make available council-owned premises for use in support of the response	✓	✓
17	Establish, operate and close down temporary mortuaries, in co-operation with other responding agencies	✓	
18	Maintain the capability to keep the local road network running	✓	
19	Arrange emergency transport for survivors / evacuees	✓	
20	Provide a Building Control service, including inspections of dangerous buildings and other structures		✓
21	Initiate and lead Severe Weather Advisory Groups for surface water flooding and severe weather	✓	
22	To lead on recovery working	✓	✓

		County	Borough/ District
23	Provide a scheme for the response to oil pollution or contamination of the shore by hazardous substances and maintain a Tier 2 oil pollution clean-up contract	✓	
24	Beach clean-up of oil pollution, hazardous substances and cargo washed ashore		✓
25	In addition to maintaining traffic flows, arrange for routing signs on the Highway for directing resources as necessary	✓	
26	Advise on the availability of road passenger transport, and arrange for emergency redeployment	✓	
27	Implement off-site emergency plans for 'Top Tier' Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) sites	✓	
28	Implement emergency plan for Major Accident Hazard Pipelines–	✓	
29	Support NHS accelerated patient discharge plans	✓	
30	Director of Public Health, with PHE leads response to public health emergencies	✓	
31	Implement Business Continuity Plans	✓	✓

4.1 Function Plans and Handbooks

The Council has a number of Function Plans and Handbooks which outline the Borough's specific emergency response and departmental activities and activation. Please refer to individual Function Plans for more details.

MEP-02	Borough Emergency Centre Response Plan
MEP-03	Duty Director/Duty Officer Handbook/Crib-Sheet
MEP-04	Media warning and informing
MEP-05	Finance, Insurance and Legal Plan
MEP-06	Human Resources Plan
MEP-07	Environmental Health and Housing Service Plan
MEP-08	GBC Local Flood Plan
MEP-09	Care of the Homeless Emergency Procedures
MEP-10	Dangerous Structure and Building Control Plan
MEP-11	Community Plans
MEP-12	Welfare Centre Directory
MEP-13	Move to Critical Framework
MEP-14	Multi-Agency & Other Supporting Groups
MEP-15	Business Continuity Plan

If a multi-agency response is activated this Plan should be used in conjunction with Kent & Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) Multi-Agency Plans along with National and Regional Plans:

- Pan Kent Emergency Response Framework;
- Pan Kent Emergency Recovery Framework;
- KMRF Evacuation, Shelter and Transport Plan;
- KMRF Identifying Vulnerable People Plan;
- Maritime Oil Pollution and Shoreline Pollution;
- KMRF Multi-Agency Flood Plan;

- Fuel Shortage
- Regional and National plans linking to the incident or site specific;
- KCC Plans;
- Other KRF subject specific plans.

Hard copies of the Councils Function Plans and Handbooks are stored in the Borough Emergency Centre cupboard, Civic Centre, Gravesham Borough Council. Electronic versions of the plans are available on the Councils Resilience Direct site and H:Drive.

4.2 Kent County Council Response

This section details the County Council's specific roles in accordance with its role in a major emergency response.

4.2.1 KCC Social Care, Health & Wellbeing Emergency Plan

The Social Care, Health & Wellbeing (SCHW) directorate provides a range of social care and public health services. The Director of Public Health has specific duties in relation to public health emergencies, in partnership with Public Health England. These include:

- Providing staff to support a Welfare Centre, Survivor Reception Centre, Friends and Families Reception Centre or Humanitarian Assistance Centre;
- Providing liaison with the County Emergency Centre and other external emergency centres during an emergency;
- Identifying vulnerable people;
- Out-of-hours services;
- Supporting an emergency affecting a care home;
- Supporting a response to a health emergency (including supporting accelerated hospital discharge of patients into the community);
- Assisting people with learning or physical disabilities and sensory impairment;
- Providing or supporting specialist mental health care;
- Maintaining communications with clients and vulnerable people;
- Specific Director of Public Health duties.

4.2.2 KCC Education & Young People's Services Emergency Plan

KCC Education, Learning and Skills have emergency plans that cover their own arrangements for supporting schools during an emergency and, for major emergencies:

- The provision of schools as Welfare Centres;
- Liaison with the County Emergency Centre and other external emergency centres during an emergency;
- The provision of staff from the Educational Psychology Service to support schools and young people in a school environment in dealing with the effects of traumatic events;
- Out-of-hours services.

4.2.3 KCC Highways, Transportation & Waste

KCC Highways, Transportation & Waste are responsible for the majority of the roads in Kent, excluding motorways and trunk roads. The services that may be provided during an emergency response include:

- The provision of a 24/7 emergency and fault reporting help line;
- Liaison with the County Emergency Centre and other external emergency centres during an emergency;
- The provision of forward control support;

- The provision of equipment and resources to deal with highways emergencies, maintenance and road closures;
- The provision of specialist services, including tree surgeons, drainage, lighting and street furniture, structural engineering specialists, abandoned vehicle recovery.

The Highways Management Centre monitors the road network and the wider environment and will alert staff as required. The Waste Resource Management Team are responsible for the disposal of waste (waste collection is a Borough/District Council responsibility) and can provide equipment, resources and trained staff to deal with waste issues, and hazardous waste disposal through contractors.

4.2.4 KCC Environment, Planning & Enforcement

Staff from Environment, Planning & Enforcement can provide advice and support to an emergency response regarding the impact of flooding, pollution and wide area weather related incidents. They will also support many aspects of long-term recovery.

Staff can also provide a range of advisory services, including Kent Scientific Services, Community Safety and Community Wardens, and the Resilience and Emergencies Service. In addition to their ongoing delivery of normal services, these teams may provide specific support to an emergency response. This support forms part of the relevant specific emergency plans, and can include:

- The use of Community Wardens as Incident Liaison Officers and for support to, and links with, affected communities in an emergency;
- The use of Libraries as public information hubs in an emergency;
- Specialist support in any Welfare Centre, Survivor Reception Centre, Friends and Families Reception Centre or Humanitarian Assistance Centre;
- Providing services in the event of mass fatalities.

4.3 Community Resilience and Flood Plans

Individual Town and Parish Councils may choose to produce their own Local Community Resilience and/or Flood Plans. These Plans are owned, maintained and administered by the Town or Parish Council and may cover general arrangements to support the local community, i.e. severe weather event, through specific arrangements, such as localised warning and informing through Flood Wardens and community help groups.

These are not statutory plans and are intended to allow the community to support itself in the early stages of an incident, before wider support can be arranged.

Electronic copies of Town and Parish Community Resilience and/or Flood Plans are available on their public facing website and on the Councils Emergency Planning H-drive and Resilience Direct site.

5 Training and Exercising

A schedule for training members of staff is maintained in The Emergency Planning Training file [redacted] This is to ensure that skill sets are maintained, and a training record is kept of staff who are able to support the Councils response to an incident.

Regular in-house and KRF training and exercise events for both Emergency Planning and Business Continuity are delivered to help staff gain a better understanding of their role/equipment and raise awareness of partner plans and agency working.

The annual KRF exercise tests the Strategic, Tactical and Operational elements of the emergency response. Depending on the exercise scenario the setting up of a Welfare Centres within a Local

Authority may be included. Localised Borough training and exercising provided on demand and organised by the Councils Emergency Planning Lead and KRT Resilience Officer.

6 Business Continuity Management

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Local Authorities have a duty to put in place Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements. BCM is designed to provide a framework for building organisational resilience with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interest and reputation of the organisation. The Council uses British Standard for BCM, BS25999.

The Business Continuity Plans for the Council include:

- Business Impact Assessment and identification of critical services;
- Loss of Staff;
- Loss of Premises;
- Loss of ICT;
- Loss of Utilities (i.e. telecoms, gas electricity);
- Loss of contractor/supplier;
- Loss of vehicles and essential equipment;
- Shortage of fuel supplies.

7 Recovery

Recovery is the process of restoring and rebuilding the community in the aftermath of a disaster. The recovery process can be started at any point within response and will continue after the immediate response is completed and remain in place until a community has reached the new norm. Recovery will consider the physical rebuilding of the community; the welfare needs of residents and the financial implications for the affected businesses and Council itself.

Although recovery is a multi-agency activity, the Local Authority will be the lead agency.

Linked plan:

- KRF Pan-Kent Emergency Recovery Framework – describes the core process for a Kent wide multi-agency recovery.
- KCC Recovery Plan – details the KCC obligations under the KRF Pan Kent Emergency Recovery Framework
- GBC Recovery Plan (TBC) – detailed arrangements of how the Borough will accomplish their obligation under the KRF Pan Kent Emergency Recovery Framework

Appendix 1- Mutual Aid Agreement

1. Statement of Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerns the provision of mutual aid during an emergency or other incident between the following local authorities:

1. Kent County Council
2. Medway City Council
3. Ashford Borough Council
4. Canterbury City Council
5. Dartford Borough Council
6. Dover District Council
7. Folkestone and Hythe District Council
8. Gravesham Borough Council
9. Maidstone Borough Council
10. Sevenoaks District Council
11. Swale Borough Council
12. Thanet District Council
13. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
14. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Each of the named authorities will endeavour to assist (as a Supporting Authority) another of the named authorities (as a Requesting Authority). The support provided could be in the form of provision of personnel, accommodation, or equipment in the event of an emergency or other incident and when able and asked to do so in accordance with the guidelines agreed.

The assistance available to local authorities includes, but is not limited to:

- Provision of staff such as:
    - Emergency response staff (Strategic and Tactical managers, Emergency and Welfare Centre trained staff)
    - Environmental Health Officers
    - Oil pollution response trained staff
    - Building control officers
    - Media officers
    - Housing officers
    - Highways and Waste officers
    - Enforcement officers (e.g. parking)
    - Social care officers
- Provision of buildings (because of loss of premises or as additional welfare centres).
- Use of contractors may be considered but will be restricted due to terms of contracts.

2. Legal basis for the Memorandum of Understanding

“In order to facilitate co-operation….responders may enter into protocols with each other.”
Regulation 7.1, The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005
“A Protocol is a formal agreement between Category 1 responders detailing how they will undertake or allocate responsibilities to deliver a task. Protocols may cover matters of broad agreement or detailed procedures for working together, including how to hand over tasks or obtain additional resources. Protocols may or may not be legally binding, depending on the nature of the agreement reached between the parties.”

Section 2(1) of the Local Government Act 2000 empowers local authorities to do anything they consider likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area. This is commonly referred to as the ‘well-being power’.

Section 2(4) expressly provides that the well-being power includes the power to enter into arrangements or agreements with any person, cooperate with, facilitate or coordinate the activities of any person, and provide staff, goods, services or accommodation to any person.

Although it is a power to make provision for the well-being of the authority's area, section 2(5) provides that it includes the power for a local authority to do anything in relation to, or for the benefit of, any person or area situated outside their area, if they consider this likely to achieve any of their well-being objectives. The reciprocal benefits of mutual aid are likely to place such agreements within this power.

Additionally, powers for the making of arrangements for mutual aid can be found in sections of the Local Government Act 1972. For example, Section 113 (dealing with the placing of staff of local authorities at the disposal of other local authorities) and Section 111 (dealing with powers of expenditure and the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights in the discharge of functions).

This MOU is not intended to be a legally binding contract, but it is meant to provide a mutually agreed framework for the timely resolution of requests for mutual aid where required.

3. Definitions

Meaning of "emergency"

- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom,
- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom, or
- war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.

Mutual Aid:
"An agreement between Category 1 and 2 responders and other organisations not covered by the Act, within the same sector or across sectors and across boundaries, to provide assistance with additional resource during an emergency, which may overwhelm the resources of an individual organisation."
Glossary, Emergency Response and Recovery
(Non-statutory guidance to complement 'Emergency Preparedness')

Requesting Authority:
Any member of the Local Authority Partnership (as at Section 1) in need of assistance during the management of an emergency.

Supporting Authority:
Any member of the Partnership providing resources to a Requesting Authority during an emergency.

Co-ordinating Authority
Any partner that is requested to co-ordinate requests and support during an incident.

Participating Authorities
All members of the partnership engaged in mutual aid during an incident.

Suitable Person
This is a person loaned by a Supporting Authority who is expected to be able and competent to complete the task outlined in the mutual aid request.

4. Responsibilities as an Employer

As responsible employers, the local authorities who are signatories to this MOU will ensure that any staff deployed under the mutual aid agreement are cared for and supported by the Requesting Authority.

In receiving loaned staff, the Requesting Authority will assume the welfare responsibilities it holds for its existing workforce but with due reference to the substantive contractual arrangements of the staff provided by the Supporting Authority.

5. Health and Safety

The health, safety and welfare of employees loaned to a Requesting Authority by a Supporting Authority are of primary importance. In accepting responsibility for loaned staff, the Requesting Authority will be under an obligation to ensure that they are deployed in a safe and responsible way. Once again, the responsibilities here to loaned staff will be no different to those of the Requesting Authority's own employees.

6. Insurance

It is expected that the Requesting Authority will provide insurance cover for any persons or equipment being provided to them under the terms of their existing cover. This should be confirmed in relation to staff as well as equipment loan.

7. Recovery of Costs

The responsibility for collating and recovery of costs and meeting all legal requirements for the supervisory control and health and safety of loaned staff rests with the Requesting Authority or, where more than one Participating Authority has been affected by the emergency or major incident (e.g. a cross boundary incident), by each of the Requesting Authorities in respect of the staff deployed to their Authority.

The Requesting Authority undertakes to reimburse the Supporting Authority on a cost recovery basis upon the termination of the aid, and where practicable within 28 days of receipt of the written submission to the Requesting Authority of documented accounts for settlement by the Supporting Authority.

The cost and financial implications of providing mutual aid assistance are likely to include, but are not limited to:

- Staff costs (salary, pension payments, tax, NI, insurance etc);
- Out of pocket travelling expenses (claimed by staff in the normal way but included in cost recovery);
- Provisions/equipment used (see below);
- Damage to rental/leased items;
- Contractor expenses.

8. Activation of Mutual Aid Arrangement

Mutual Aid will be requested by either the Chief Executive or the designated Authorising Person of the Requesting Authority, (this will normally be the person acting as the SCG representative for the organisation). The initial request may be made by telephone, but written confirmation should be sent on the request form at **Annex A** by e- mail as soon as practicable to ensure clarity of the request and assist any subsequent requests for reimbursement.

A Chief Executive/Designated Authorising Person who receives a request for assistance shall take the appropriate action to respond to the request without delay and, in the case of a Designated Authorising Person, shall inform their Chief Executive at the earliest opportunity. As part of the decision process, the Chief Executive of the Supporting Authority must consider whether the resource requested can be made available without putting at risk the authority's service delivery obligations or ability to respond to an emergency of its own. The Supporting Authority should use the response form at **Annex B** to detail level of support.

Once the request has been agreed, action for delivery will be delegated to Tactical level to coordinate requests, and both authorities will appoint a lead officer to manage the supporting resources.

The provision of requested support is voluntary and is dependent on supporting authority being able to meet its own statutory obligations and may be withdrawn on this basis.

The first option for providing mutual aid will be that tasks will be undertaken remotely with staff from support authorities being sent to the Requesting Authority by exception.

As much detail as possible should be provided, although in the initial response to an emergency it may be difficult to assess need. Therefore, the detail of any mutual aid request will be reviewed every 24 hours or at mutually agreed timescales by the Requesting and Supporting Authorities.

The Requesting Authority will:

- ensure that requests made are based on effect and task rather than generic request for resource;
- provide as much detail of numbers, roles and skills required to achieve tasks to enable identification of suitable persons by the supporting authority;
- ensure staff provided by the Supporting Authority are effectively briefed on any roles they are given;
- provide risk assessments, PPE, office space, security access and equipment etc to staff from the Supporting Authority required to complete the task allocated;
- ensure that supporting staff can access relevant networks (eg Gov.roam) IT, systems and technical support;
- ensure that any staff deployed have the appropriate DBS checks/security clearances where necessary;
- where needed, arrange for travel and accommodation for staff from Supporting Authorities;
- collate all associated mutual aid costs for audit purposes;
- have in place adequate insurance cover to include loaned staff or equipment;
- take on responsibility for meeting all legal requirements for the supervision, welfare support and health and safety of loaned staff or, where more than one authority area has been affected by the emergency, by the authority that requested the aid; and
- provide a report to the Supporting Authority of the roles and tasks undertaken by the Supporting Authority's staff including details of any trauma or stressful situations to which the individual may have been exposed. The Requesting Authority will also be responsible for meeting costs of any after care required by supporting staff.

The Supporting Authority will:

- if possible, provide resource and support within the principles of this agreement;
- provide suitable persons to complete the tasks detailed by the Requesting Authority, with the appropriate skills and competencies and who have had previous training relating to the role;
- where staff are required to meet the mutual aid request, agree to provide them for a period of time and for specific tasks, rather than for individual shifts;
- ensure that regular contact is maintained with its employee(s) working for the Requesting Authority and ensure that human resource, health and safety and welfare provision issues are dealt with appropriately by the Requesting Authority;
- collate costs for any mutual aid provided and periodically send them to the coordinating authority to be shared with the Requesting Authority;
- where necessary, share information regarding requests and action with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government/ the Government Liaison Officer;
- provide supporting information to the Requesting Authority to enable audit processes and any claim for central aid via the Bellwin Scheme;
- not outsource a mutual aid request without agreeing the costs and arrangements with the Requesting Authority; and
- Follow direction for personal, building and electronic/document security measures.

The Co-ordinating Authority will:

- act as the link between the Requesting and Support Authorities to coordinate the requests for mutual aid;
- maintain contact with the lead officer from the Requesting Authority to provide timely information on any support for tasks or activities requested;
- where the Requesting Authority is unable to do so, arrange for the accommodation of staff from Supporting Authorities; and
- where necessary, share information regarding requests and action with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government/ the Government Liaison Officer to prevent duplication of effort.

Kent County Council (KCC) or Medway Council is to co-ordinate the deployment of mutual aid when a major incident involves more than one supporting organisation, or when the incident crosses a county boundary. Should KCC/Medway be unable to provide this role then other Kent local authorities should be asked in the first instance. However, if there is no capacity in Kent, then further mutual aid may be requested by KCC or Medway Council from the Southeast 7 Group of local authorities.

9. Risks and Limitations of the Mutual Aid Arrangements

Although the mutual aid arrangements are a benefit to the Partnership, the following points are seen as potential risks:

- The impact on the Supporting Authorities' business as usual activities, including any Duty Officer arrangements that are in place. It is important that the Supporting Authority undertakes a proper risk assessment before committing resource, particularly if they are also responding or the incident has a potential local impact.
- Whilst the 'One Kent' approach assures that all emergency response staff receive the same training, it is recognised that there will be differences in the way other procedures (e.g. housing, environmental health) are delivered which may limit the effectiveness of staff providing mutual aid support.

10. Reduction/Termination of Support

The Requesting Authority (via Chief Executive or Designated Authorising Person) is to immediately notify the Supporting Authority when the need for mutual aid can be reduced or terminated. Conversely, if the Supporting Authority is unable to continue with supply of resource, reasonable notice should be given.

Both circumstances should also be confirmed in writing/email as part of the finance/audit trails.

11. Post Incident Arrangements

The Requesting Authority will ensure that the loaned staff from the Supporting Authority have the means to input learning and experiences into the debrief for the incident. The level of this input will be agreed as part of the mutual aid request.

The Requesting Authority will ensure that the Supporting Authority is aware of the roles undertaken by the loaned staff, and in particular if the roles were seen as stressful or potential traumatic. This will ensure that staff are supported as necessary following their involvement in an incident. Loaned staff should be able to access all welfare arrangements that are made available to the Requesting Authority's staff (e.g. counselling).

12. Disputes

Any disputes between the Supporting and Requesting Authorities should be resolved through negotiations between the Designated Authorising Persons or Chief Executives with a view to early resolution. An unresolved dispute should be referred to an independent chief executive, that is, the Chief Executive of an authority named in the mutual aid agreement but uninvolved in the emergency, or if all named authorities are involved, then the Chief Executive of an authority which is not a party to the agreement who shall suggest a solution to the dispute within 14 days of the referral (e.g. via South East 7 Group).

13. Review of the Memorandum of Understanding

The intention is that this MOU will remain the responsibility of Kent Resilience Forum's Local Authority Emergency Planning Group (LAEPG) on behalf of the Partnership.

The document will be reviewed by LAEPG on the following basis:

- Three-year period review.
- Following an activation of the MOU.
- Following a significant change in guidance or legislation that would apply to the MOU.
- Following learning from an incident elsewhere in the UK that would affect the MOU.
- On the direction of the Chief Executives.

Annex A – Mutual Aid Request form Part A

MUTUAL AID REQUEST **Part A – to be completed by the Requesting Authority**			
Requesting Authority		**Date of Request**	**Time of Request**
Contact Details			
Authorised person			
Position		Phone	
Organisation		Mobile	
Location		Email	
Summary of incident			
Detail of requirements			
Staff: Role/numbers/ qualifications/skills/PPE			
Time of Deployment: dates shift times and likely duration			
Location(s) including access and egress if required			
Host organisation lead officer name and contact details			
Equipment request (including need for operatives)			
Welfare arrangements			
Other detail including risk assessment/H&S issues			

Annex B – Mutual Aid Response form Part B

MUTUAL AID REPONSE **Part B – to be completed by the Supporting Authority**		
Contact details	**Date of Response**	**Time of Response**
Contact Details		

Authorised person			
Position		Phone	
Organisation		Mobile	
Location		Email	
Detail of assistance			
Staff: Role/numbers/ qualifications/skills/PPE			
Time of Deployment: availability/likely start time			
Detail of assistance that cannot be supplied and reason			
Welfare arrangements required			
Other detail including risk assessment/H&S issues			
Host organisation lead officer name and contact details (if different from above)			