

**OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE TASK AND FINISH GROUP held in the Committee Room, Saffron Walden on TUESDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2024 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillors C Criscione and B Donald (Chair)  
Councillors G Driscoll and G Sell

Officers in attendance: R Auty (Director of Corporate Services), B Brown (Director of Environmental Services), C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer) and Peter Holt (Chief Executive).

Also present: Councillors P Lees (Leader of the Council) and N Reeves (Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Climate Change).

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest received.

**2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 were approved as an accurate record with an amendment made to item 10, Epping Forest District Council instead of Epping Council.

The request for a copy of the current draft of the Council wide resilience review will be sent to Members of the Task and Finish Group when available.

**3. OPERATIONAL RESILIENCE DRAFT FINAL REPORT**

Councillor Donald went through the report with the meeting.

Councillor Driscoll made a general comment that the report was too long and wordy. He said it should be short, sharp and to the point.

Other Members agreed but thought that the context and background was important.

The following amendments were requested, the page numbers used were those within the agenda documentation:-

Page 8 – 1 Introduction

To add in the wording 'no new information was shared' within the final paragraph which started 'We met as the task and finish group'.

Page 9 – 1 Introduction

To add in some extra wording in the second paragraph to acknowledge that the Chief Executive had been open and transparent in bringing to light that there could be weaknesses not yet identified in other departments.

Page 9 – 2 Severity of the Waste Service Disruption

To include the total number of complaints received to give context.

To take out the words 'just about' in the first line of the first paragraph, as bin collection was the most universal service as it affected all residents and many businesses.

Page 10 – 2 Severity of the Waste Service Disruption

A date needed to be added to the second paragraph 'alternative provision was maintained until \*\* February'.

Although there was no specific evidence to support the use of '50 year history' in Conclusion B it was decided that the use of the wording 'amongst the least' made it acceptable as it conveyed the gravity of the situation.

Page 10 – 3 How This Happened

To change the word 'their' to 'our' within the second paragraph and to consider changing the wording 'private session'.

Page 11 – 3 How This Happened

To remove the wording 'behind closed doors' in the first paragraph.

To add in wording in the fourth paragraph under Conclusion D, to include that Scrutiny Committee had concerns about the waste collection service and had a presentation at it's meeting in November 2023. This had highlighted that the service was under pressure. Wording suggested and agreed 'We noted that there were several discussions between senior staff and councillors, including Scrutiny Committee and an all Member briefing, in the second half of 2023'.

Within the same paragraph to change the word 'regularise' to 'put into good order' to give clearer meaning to the sentence.

After further discussion it was decided to change the whole sentence as it implied that evidence had been seen regarding the advertising and interviewing of potential candidates. It would be changed along the lines of 'we were advised that some candidates were interviewed'.

Page 11 – 4 Operational Response

The second paragraph to be changed to include the acknowledgement that Council staff outside of the Waste Services department were redeployed to assist. This paragraph would also be shortened.

Page 12 – 5 Communication and Engagement

In the final paragraph to add that modern methods of communication were discussed.

Page 13 – 6 Cost – and Refund/Rebate Considerations Communication and Engagement

Take the word 'absolutely' out of the Conclusion G paragraph.

The final cost number was not yet available, it would be changed in the document when it was known.

Page 13 – 7 Broader Questions of Resilience for the Council

Remove the word 'urgently' from the first paragraph.

The final paragraph before Conclusion H to be re-written to make it clearer.

To add to the final paragraph that members of the public would have sight of any documents relating to other identified single point of failures across the Council.

To add that there was on going work across the Council to identify other single points of failure in each department.

After discussion it was decided that Number 8, Conclusions and Recommendations would be made into a separate appendix.

Page 16 – further actions recommended

Paragraph 3 'absolutely' to be removed.

Paragraph 4 last sentence to remove 'an' as there were two.

To make it clear that the process had not yet been concluded and a further

meeting of the Task and Finish group would reconvene in a couple of months, in particular to monitor what progress had been made on Council-wide single points of failure.

A contents page would be added.

The appendices would be reconfigured in the final report for Scrutiny to put them in chronological order and take out documents that were not relevant, for example the minutes. The appendices would be referenced in the main report at appropriate points.

The changes to the document would be made before the finalised papers were published for Scrutiny.

The draft document was a public document and had been published in this meetings agenda.

Councillors needed to be treated more like part of the team rather than stakeholders.

Other comments made by the meeting were:-

- Concern that the Blueprint Uttlesford work and the likelihood of less staff at the end of the process would mean even less resilience within the Council. The Council as a whole needed to address this issue.
- The Council can demonstrate that it has learnt from this and other mistakes. However it was acknowledged that it was not possible to avoid every eventuality but only to be as prepared as possible with robust systems in place to flag up problems that could arise in the future.

*The meeting ended at 8:03pm*