

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer People and Technology****Council: 29th March 2023**

Subject: Motion Report - contingency arrangements (nuclear incident)**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To provide an update on the local resilience structures should there be a nuclear incident at Faslane.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Council note:
- West Dunbartonshire Council's response structures; and
 - Specific Nuclear Incident Planning.

3. Background

- 3.1** At December Council, a motion from Councillor Bollan was agreed, the terms of which are set out below:

"Council will be aware of the recent reports of the serious fire on the Vanguard Nuclear Submarine, which was carrying Trident missiles, while it was in the North Atlantic.

The fire was tackled by the crew, then the submarine had to surface to expel toxic fumes.

The incident brings into sharp focus the absolute catastrophe that could have unfolded had the submarine been lost in the North Atlantic.

This dangerous incident will be of great concern to many local people given the location of the incident and that the submarine is being taken back to Faslane Base.

Given the gravity of the situation Council asks the CEO to bring a report to the next Council meeting detailing what contingency plans the Council has in the event of a serious Nuclear incident at Faslane, or the surrounding waters, to support & protect the residents of West Dunbartonshire."

- 3.2** As outlined above, the Royal Navy vanguard-class nuclear submarine, HMS Victorious, aborted its' mission after an on-board fire on Monday 7 November 2022. The vessel's crew responded by dousing the electrical fire. The ship's captain declared an emergency as the fire spread quickly forcing the submarine to surface to expel the toxic fumes. The vessel was then commanded to return to base at HMNB Clyde in Faslane, Scotland.

4. Main Issues

4.1 Response Structures

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents within West Dunbartonshire and the surrounding area, there are well established emergency planning forums and plans in place to mitigate incidents.

4.2 The lead officer for resilience for West Dunbartonshire Council is the Chief Officer People and Technology and this area of work is supported by an established (since October 2016) shared civil contingencies service (CCS) which provides a 6 FTE strong team of support officers, including out of hours standby. The Council has a dedicated Civil Contingencies Officer responsible for reviewing and updating the Council's suite of Incident Response Procedures and relevant plans that would be invoked should the Council be required to respond to an incident in the local area. There are also trained Council Incident Officers (CIO), typically senior officers, who would be deployed to support emergency service partners on-scene, facilitate decision making and resource co-ordination.

4.3 In addition, the West of Scotland has six Local Resilience Partnerships (LRPs), comprising of Category 1 and 2 responders. Category 1 and 2 responders are organisations defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as having specific responsibilities enshrined in the legislation.

4.4 Each responder typically has an emergency planning officer (sometimes called a civil protection officer, civil contingencies officer, or resilience officer) who is responsible for ensuring their organisation is compliant with the Act and works closely with other responders.

4.5 Category 1 responders are known as core responders; they include:

- Local authorities;
- Integrated Joint Boards (from 17th March 2021);
- Police forces, including the British Transport Police;
- Fire services;
- Ambulance services;
- HM Coastguard;
- NHS hospital trusts, NHS foundation trusts (and Welsh equivalents), NHS England, Public Health England, and Public Health Wales;
- Port health authorities; and
- The Environment Agency, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), and Natural Resources Wales.

4.6 Category 2 responders are key co-operating responders acting in support of the Category 1 responders. Category 2 responders are mostly utility companies and transport organisations, such as:

- Electricity distributors and transmitters;
- Gas distributors;

- Water and sewerage undertakers; and
- Telephone service providers (fixed and mobile).

4.7 As highlighted above, the Council and IJB are Category one responders and therefore legally required to prepare, respond to, and aid recovery from any major disruption/incident within the local area. The LRP facilitates the planning and preparation for localised incidents as well as major emergencies. We work with partners to identify potential risks and produce plans to prevent and/or mitigate local impacts.

4.8 In addition, West Dunbartonshire Council have three emergency management response structures (Appendix 1):

Resilience Group – This group is a “peacetime” group that meets every quarter to discuss local incidents, incident response plans/procedures and emerging/concurrent risks. This group is comprised of service managers who would typically be involved in incident response due to the nature of their service. It is chaired by the Resilience Lead, Chief Officer People & Technology and supported by the Civil Contingencies Officer.

Strategic Resilience Group – This group, comprising of West Dunbartonshire Council’s Chief Executive, Chief Officers, Health, and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) Chief Officer and Heads of Service, Communications Manager and Civil Contingencies Officer, typically stands up during a major incident e.g., Covid. However, the group can be called to stand up if there are specific risks that may have a major impact on the Council and/or local area. This group drives the strategic priorities that the Council need to deliver to support the response. This is also chaired by the Resilience Lead, Chief Officer People & Technology and supported by the Civil Contingencies Officer.

Operational Resilience Group (ORG) – This group’s activities flow from the SRG with tactical actions typically assigned to the Operational Resilience Group (ORG). This group co-ordinates the Council’s operational response to a major incident and escalates issues to SRG for consultation and consideration.

4.9 Specific Nuclear Incident Planning

4.10 Locally, the Council have been involved in the consideration of Radiation Monitoring Units (RMUs) used to determine levels of radioactive contamination in or on people and any subsequent requirement for decontamination. This work is being carried out across the West of Scotland to support Public Health England (PHE) in determining suitable locations.

4.11 The Council has strong relationships with Civil Contingencies teams across the LRPs and particularly those in the West LRP and Argyll and Bute ensuring a joined-up approach to incidents and/or risks that may encroach upon council boundaries. As background, as part of the Radiation Emergency

Preparedness and Public Information Regulations (REPPiR 2019) and the Control of Major Accidents Hazards Regulations (COMAH 2015) both Faslane and Argyll and Bute Council are responsible for testing the on and off-site emergency plan (typically every three years) to ensure both plans are fit for purpose. Additionally, Faslane is mandated by REPPiR to carry out a Hazard Evaluation & Consequence Analysis on a tri-annual basis.

- 4.12** It is worth highlighting that, due to the scale of a nuclear attack/incident, this would constitute a breach of National Security therefore there is a strong likelihood that the Cabinet Office Briefing Room (CoBR) the UK's Civil Contingencies Committee would be convened to support the response (Appendix 2).
- 4.13** West Dunbartonshire Council has a strong and robust emergency planning regime that is well tested. When incidents occur in the local areas, the respective structures stand up to ensure the residents of West Dunbartonshire are looked after and supported accordingly. There is a strong level of resilience awareness, planning and preparedness undertaken year on year, now well embedded in the organisation's culture. The resilience of the organisation is strengthened by the relationships with local responders and agencies which have proved invaluable when dealing with and responding to incidents.
- 4.14** Consequently, reassurance can be taken from the resilience structure within West Dunbartonshire Council being equipped to manage and respond to a nuclear incident and indeed any other incident that may pose a threat to West Dunbartonshire Council.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications associated with this report, other than in relation to the mitigation of nuclear risk.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no financial and/or procurement implications directly associated with this report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** Failure to appropriately plan and prepare as defined by our responsibilities under the CCA 2014 would result in the Council being non-compliant, subject to sanctions and being unable to adequately respond to incidents and events.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 8.1** An equalities impact assessment was not required for this report.

9. Consultation

9.1 Argyll and Bute Council and Faslane Naval Base were consulted in the preparation of this report. The Chief Officers Resources and Regulatory and Regeneration were also consulted as per usual process.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 The following priorities are supported by the actions, planning and preparedness detail in this report:

- Meaningful community engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged.
- Open, accountable, and accessible local government.

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Appendices: 1. Local Emergency Management Structure
2. National to Local Resilience Structure

Background Papers: N/A

Wards Affected: No wards are affected.

Appendix 1 – Emergency Management Structure

Resilience

Emergency Management Structure, West Dunbartonshire Council



West Dunbartonshire Council Resilience Group (RG) meets periodically in 'peace time' to coordinate ongoing development of resilience plans and maintain horizon scanning for emergent and established risks.



Appendix 2 – National to Local Structure

National to Local Resilience Structure

