

Public Accounts Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 3 – Senedd

Meeting date:
18 February 2013

Meeting time:
14:00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



For further information please contact:

Policy: Tom Jackson
Committee Clerk
029 2089 8597 / 029 2089 8032
Publicaccounts.comm@Wales.gov.uk

Agenda

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2. Civil Emergencies in Wales – Evidence from the Welsh Government and Cabinet Office (14:05 – 15:30) (Pages 1 – 19)

PAC(4) 05–13 – Paper 1

June Milligan, Director General, Local Government and Communities, Welsh Government

Alysh Francis, Deputy Head of Community Safety, Welsh Government

Wyn Price, Head of Emergencies, Welsh Government

Christina Scott, Director, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office

3. Civil Emergencies in Wales – Evidence on the local position (15:30 – 16:30) (Pages 20 – 36)

Welsh Local Government Association

PAC(4) 05–13 – Paper 2

Simon Wilkinson, Regulatory Services Policy Officer, Welsh Local Government Association

Gavin Macho, Emergency Planning Manager, Cardiff County Council

Local Resilience Forum

PAC(4) 05–13 – Paper 3

Anne Evans, Local Resilience Coordinator, North Wales Resilience Forum Secretariat

Joint Emergency Services Group

PAC(4) 05–13 – Paper 4

Superintendent Claire Parmenter, Emergency Services Civil Contingencies
Coordinator Wales, Joint Emergency Services Group

**4. Civil Emergencies in Wales – Evidence from the Voluntary Sector
(16:30 – 17:00)** (Pages 37 – 39)

St John Cymru Wales

PAC(4) 05-13 – Paper 5

Rhodri Jones, Operations Adviser, St John Cymru Wales

James Shaughnessy, Director of Operations, St John Cymru Wales

5. Papers to note (Pages 40 – 42)

**6. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the
public from the meeting for the following business:**

Item 7.

**7. Consideration of evidence on Civil Emergencies in Wales (17:00 –
17:30)**

Public Accounts Committee PAC() -13 – Paper 1

Evidence paper from the Director General, Local Government and Communities, Welsh Government and the Director, Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office to the Public Accounts Committee in response to the Wales Audit Office Report on Civil Emergencies in Wales (6 December 2012)

Constitutional Position

Whilst civil contingencies, as a discrete function, is not devolved to the Welsh Government, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and its supporting regulations recognise the important role the Welsh Government plays in the legislative process and the fact that it has significant interest in this area given that it has devolved responsibility for a number of organisations which are Category 1 and 2 responders under the Act. The Act also recognises the differences in requirements which the Regulations place on Category 1 and 2 responders in Wales because of the unique administrative arrangements in Wales. The WAO report states that the Welsh Government provides 'effective support for the partners delivering the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.'

The Welsh Government has a statutory role to play in the introduction of regulations and guidance which relate wholly or partly to Wales. Where action is taken by the UK Government under Part 1 of the Act i.e. (making regulations or orders, giving directions, issuing guidance or taking enforcement action), which applies to bodies in relation to which the Welsh Government has functions, the UK Government must seek the consent of the Welsh Ministers (Section 16(2)). In other cases where such action applies to Wales, the UK Government must consult the Welsh Ministers (Section 16(1)).

It is only the UK Government and responders under the Act who can bring proceedings against responders in Wales for failure to comply with the duties contained in the Civil Contingencies Act. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 assigns UK Ministers and Ministers in Scotland and Northern Ireland power to monitor performance of the civil protection duties. Welsh Ministers do not have these powers and therefore have no direct role in monitoring performance or enforcing proceedings for non-compliance.

The statutory guidance supporting the Civil Contingencies Act defines the relationship between the Welsh Government and the UK Government as:

UK Government and the Welsh Government work together on the development of civil protection policy. Both parties consult with each other and exchange information on civil protection planning and response in a timely and constructive manner. The UK Government consults the Welsh Government as early as possible on any policy proposals (eg. strategic guidance and national frameworks) relating to emergencies which affect, or may affect, Wales.

As part of the Civil Contingencies Act a Concordat has been agreed which establishes a framework for co-operation between the UK Government and the Welsh Government on

issues pertaining to Part 2 (Emergency Powers) of the Act. The concordat sits alongside the Regulations and Guidance supporting Part 1 of the Act.

Emergency Planning

The Role of the UK Government

UK Ministers have a range of powers under Part 1 of the Act. Most of these powers relate to the issuing of guidance and Regulations to support the delivery of the main duties under the Act. These have not been used as a matter of course but could be used, should the need arise, on the discretion of the Minister and with the approval of Parliament. They fall into three categories - legislative powers, urgent direction powers and monitoring powers. With regard to monitoring the Act gives UK Ministers powers to require:

- the provision of information about actions taken by a Category 1 or 2 responder in the performance of its Part 1 duties; and
- an explanation as to why the responder has not taken action to comply with its duties under Part 1 of the Act.

The Cabinet Office manages the legislative framework for civil contingencies planning. In practice, the Government largely relies on established management, audit and regulatory bodies across the Category 1 and 2 organisations to assess performance; and on the promotion of good practice in performance management.

The Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat provides cross-cutting oversight and co-ordination of resilience activity. This is overseen via a number of overarching programmes and committees, including the National Resilience Capabilities Programme and the officials' Resilience sub-committee of the National Security Council.

In England, the Department for Communities and Local Government Resilience and Emergencies Division plays a similar role to that undertaken in the Wales Government by the Resilience Team for example, it –

- acts as a critical friend, questioning rationales, suggesting alternatives, sharing good practice and supporting local planning activities;
- provides a support mechanism: helping local partners develop an appropriate response capability and brokering advance mutual aid agreements between areas.

The Role of the Welsh Government

Although civil contingencies is not devolved there is a public expectation in Wales that Welsh Ministers will provide political leadership in building resilience and responding to emergencies. The fact that the fuel crisis and foot and mouth occurred soon after devolution reinforced this expectation. Welsh Ministers have provided political leadership in emergency planning through the First Minister chairing the Wales Resilience Forum and have supported the emergency services and other responder agencies in Wales in developing and strengthening resilience.

The Welsh Government has built up a close working relationship with the Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and responder agencies in Wales which has developed significantly since devolution. The Welsh Government co-ordinates the gathering of information on an all-Wales basis as part of the process which feeds into COBR during emergencies. The Welsh Government supports civil emergencies by leading on the co-ordination of all-Wales multi-agency planning, supporting local activity, acting as a link between the Local Resilience Forums and also linking in with Cabinet Office, Wales Office and other UK Departments. The Welsh Government co-ordinates planning on an all-Wales basis through its Resilience Team which facilitates the all-Wales planning structures and is seen by the WAO as a 'an effective mentor and critical friend to Category One responders and to other responders as part of a broader approach to improving public services in Wales'.

The Wales Resilience Forum is chaired by the First Minister with the Local Government and Communities Minister acting as Deputy Chair. The Forum meets three times a year to promote good communication and the enhancement of emergency planning across agencies and services in Wales by providing a forum for Chief Officers to discuss with Welsh Ministers strategic issues of emergency preparedness. The role of the WRF is also captured in the statutory guidance supporting the Act. However, the WRF, like the Local Resilience Forums, is not a statutory body nor does it have powers to direct its members, Local Resilience Forums or individual Category 1 or 2 responders as defined under the Act.

The Wales Resilience Partnership Team (WRPT) has set up a number of sub-groups to develop resilience on a all-Wales level and shares good practice across LRFs and responder agencies. The team recommends to the Wales Resilience Forum appropriate actions to be taken in Wales in the light of the assessments made.

Other civil contingencies partners also provide co-ordination and leadership. The Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG) is chaired by the Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys Police and brings together all the emergency services, Welsh Government and Armed Forces in Wales to consider how to take forward their contribution to civil protection in Wales. The Chair of JESG is also a member of the WRF and provides a direct link between the two groups.

As in England, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 led to the creation of Local Resilience Forums in South Wales, Gwent, North Wales and Dyfed-Powys Police Force areas responsible for multi-agency planning at the local level.

Joint working between the Welsh Government, WRPT, JESG, Welsh Local Government Association and the LRFs has seen the development of a national programme of strategic training which will commence later this month. Similar collaboration took place on the development of strategic co-ordination centres in Wales.

Links between Welsh Government and Cabinet Office/Other Government Departments

The Welsh Government has been working closely with Cabinet Office since the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) was established in 2001. The Welsh Government worked with CCS on the development of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and on developing the UK Capabilities programme. There has also been very close working with CCS on the response to emergencies such as swine flu.

The Cabinet Office is a permanent member of the Wales Resilience Forum and reports on initiatives being taken forward at the UK level at each meeting. This allows CCS to engage directly with senior representatives of responder agencies in Wales and Welsh Ministers.

Welsh Government officials are permanent members of the UK Capabilities Programme Board and the officials level of the National Security Council sub-committee on resilience. There are regular meetings between Welsh Government, Cabinet Office and the other devolved administrations.

The Capabilities Programme is the core framework through which the Government is seeking to build resilience across all parts of the United Kingdom. It aims to ensure that a robust infrastructure of response is in place to deal rapidly, effectively and flexibly with the consequences of civil devastation and widespread disaster.

The Welsh Government holds regular meetings with Wales Office and ensure that timely communications are made during incidents which occur in Wales. Welsh Government work directly with the responder agencies: whenever Gold Groups are established to respond to emergencies the Welsh Government attends and acts as Government Liaison and remains in regular contact with the Wales Office and Cabinet Office.

Welsh Government also has direct links with Lead Government Departments where the sector is not devolved. For example, Welsh Government works directly with the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) on fuel contingency planning and co-ordinates the work in Wales on DECC's behalf. It also works with Home Office on the CONTEST strategy on counter-terrorism and on developing interoperability between emergency services.

Emergency Response

Role of the UK Government

Where an emergency occurs in Wales and it falls within Welsh competence, there will often be little if any involvement for UK government. Where an emergency occurs in Wales and the scale or complexity of the emergency is such that some degree of UK central government support or co-ordination is necessary, but competence is non-devolved, the relevant UK government department will lead the response in close liaison with the Welsh Government. The level of central government involvement will vary and could range from a lead government department offering only advice and support, to the activation of the full-scale central government crisis management machinery (COBR).

The UK government will ensure that the Welsh Government is properly briefed and engaged throughout any incident response led by a UK department and recovery work will usually be led by the Welsh Government.

It is anticipated that the First Minister, or a designated Welsh Minister, will wish to act as a political spokesperson for any central Wales response. The detail of these arrangements is set out in the *UK Central Government Response Concept Of Operations*.

Role of the Welsh Government

The response to emergencies is managed on a multi-agency basis at the local level with plans in place in each Local Resilience Forum area to establish operational, tactical and strategic levels to co-ordinate the response. The response is managed at the strategic level by the Strategic Co-ordinating Group or 'Gold Group' which is formed primarily from agencies which comprise the LRF. The principle governing the response to most emergencies is based on subsidiarity; acknowledging the fact that the most effective response is managed at the most local level where a clearer understanding of local circumstances exist. In such cases, it is the role of the Welsh Government to provide any assistance it can to support the local level response by drawing upon wider resources where required and linking in with the UK Government for any broader national support. This capability has been demonstrated recently by the Welsh Government involvement in the response to the Gleision Colliery incident.

Case Study 1 – Gleision Colliery

In response to the Gleision Colliery incident in September 2011 the Welsh Government acted as Government Liaison on the Strategic Co-ordinating Group. Its role was to represent Government and to act as a single point of contact for Welsh Government and Whitehall Departments for the responder agencies operating on the ground. The Welsh Government representative kept Welsh Ministers informed of the developing situation and also linked in with Wales Office and Cabinet Office on any broader UK support that may have been needed. The Welsh Government attended teleconference meetings facilitated by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat involving all Whitehall Departments to ensure that any support required could be deployed without delay.

Pan-Wales Response Plan

In Wales, the response to major emergencies is governed by the Pan-Wales Response Plan, which links into the UK Government's Concept of Operation (CONOPs) structure governed by COBR. The plan provides a all-Wales picture of the impact of the emergency which can be used to inform Ministerial decisions on consequence management issues. The plan is a culmination of the multi-agency working at both local and all-Wales level and epitomises the close working relationship which has developed between responder agencies and government in Wales.

Links with the UK Government

The all-Wales co-ordination to an emergency and the links with the UK Government is best demonstrated by the response to Swine Flu in 2009.

Case Study 2 – Swine Flu

During the swine flu pandemic Welsh Ministers were members of Ministerial COBR meetings along with other devolved Ministers to provide political leadership to the response. Senior officials from Welsh Government attended the officials level of COBR to implement the political decisions taken on handling in each devolved areas.

In Wales, the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales) was established and remained operational for 9 months to provide co-ordination across Wales. A Civil Contingencies Group comprising

Welsh Government Departments and key responder agencies met daily to facilitate the response in Wales. At the local level multi-agency Strategic Co-ordinating Groups were established in each Local Resilience Forum areas, the chairs of which met regularly with the Civil Contingencies Group to ensure that consistent implementation of the response across all areas. The Wales Resilience Forum also met to be kept informed of the developing situation and was provided regular updates from the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales).

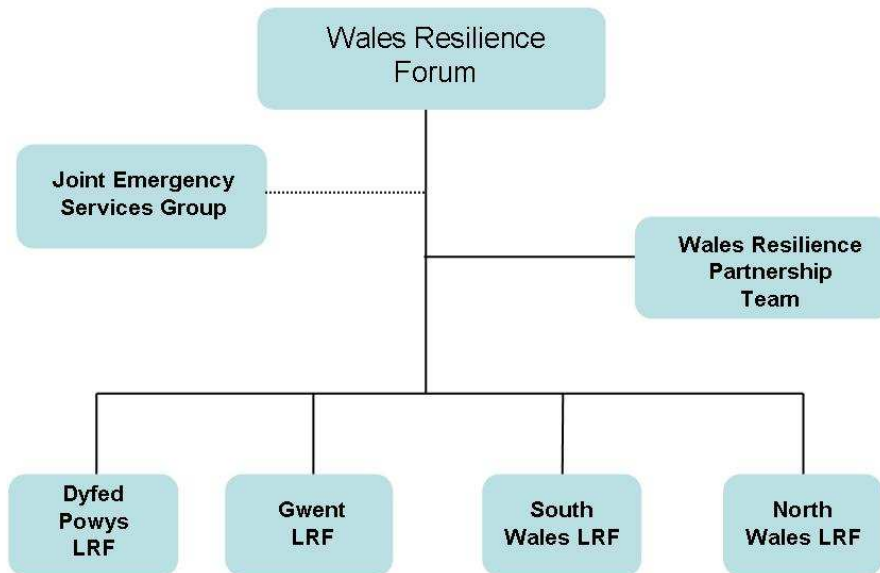
Following every daily UK Communications meetings held at the News Co-ordination Centre the Welsh Government held teleconference meetings with the Communications leads in each LRF area to ensure that consistent, accurate and effective public messaging was delivered.

Response Infrastructure

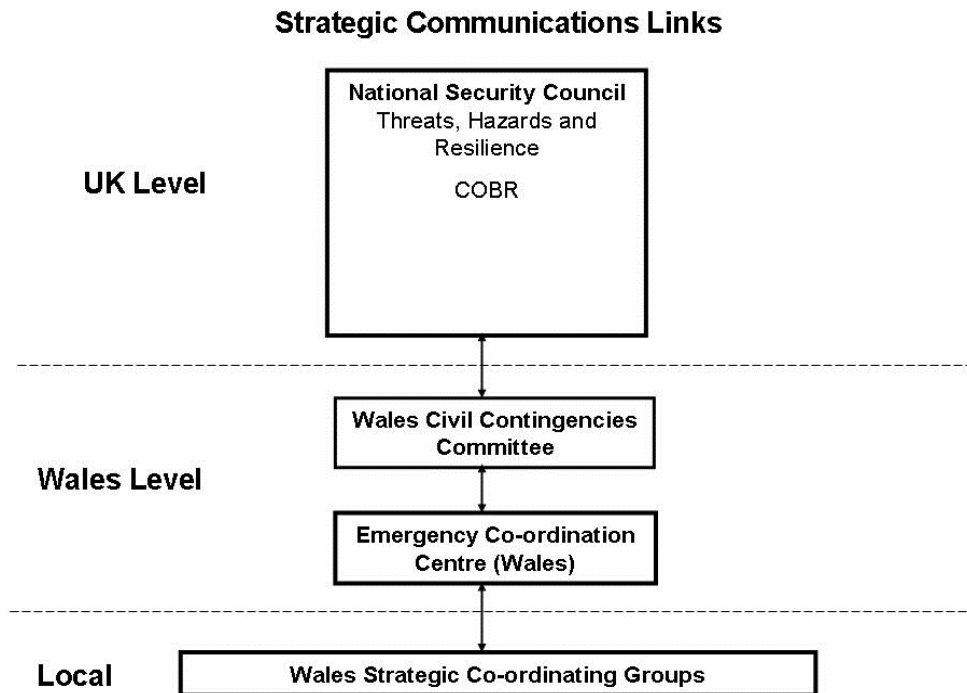
Since the response to Swine Flu in 2009 there have been significant developments in building the infrastructure to help facilitate effective multi-agency response to emergencies at the local level in Wales. The Welsh Government and the 4 Police Forces have funded a project to build a network of interconnected strategic co-ordination centres at Cardiff Gate, Colwyn Bay and Carmarthen. The centres were formally opened by the First Minister in September 2011. The centres in Dyfed-Powys and North Wales now house the Co-ordinators and partnership teams whilst the centre in South Wales was the permanent base for the multi-agency Olympics Planning Team. The Welsh Government established an Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales) in 2003 which has been developed further to form part of the network with the strategic co-ordination centres.

Annex 1

Wales Resilience Structure



Pan-Wales Response Plan Communications Structure





Darren Miller AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

19 February 2013

Dear Mr Miller,

Re: Civil Emergencies in Wales

I was grateful for the chance to appear before the Public Accounts Committee yesterday afternoon to give evidence on behalf of the Cabinet Office on Civil Emergencies in Wales. You will recall that I promised to write to the Committee on the question of whether statutory guidance proscribed Category 2 responders, or indeed those with no duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004), from chairing working groups of the Local Resilience Forum. I know this is a subject you returned to later in the day and you were assured by Gavin Macho and Anne Evans that there was no such restriction. They were indeed correct.

Emergency Preparedness, the statutory guidance supporting the Act, is clear that the governance of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and the membership of its groups and sub-groups is a matter for agreement by the Chief Officer Group of the forum and Regulation 4(4) states that cooperation "shall take such form as may be agreed between the relevant responders". Indeed, the regulations were amended in April 2012 to enable a greater degree of flexibility in the ways in which responders might work together to ensure that Category 2 responders, in particular, were able to fulfil their duties in the most efficient and effective way.

Members of the LRF can agree their own means of facilitating communication at the right level. Most cooperation will be informal, routine, day-to-day liaison. Working groups are, however, an important part of the LRF, and these more formal methods of co-operation and information-sharing can be agreed at local level and may be supported by protocols which may or may not be legally binding, depending on the precise nature of the agreement.

I hope you will find this information useful. I should, of course, be pleased to provide any further information you may need.

A copy of this letter goes to June Milligan, Director General for Local Government and Communities at the Welsh Government.

Yours sincerely,

Christina Scott
Director



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

**EMERGENCY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME
FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN WALES
(EFAS)**

WELSH GOVERNMENT

Guidance Notes for Local Authorities in Wales

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These guidance notes are published on the Welsh Government website at [Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme](#)

Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme (EFAS)

Background & General Information

1. These guidance notes set out the terms under which the Welsh Government would usually make available financial assistance to local authorities pursuant to a scheme established under section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (the Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme, formerly known as the “Bellwin” Scheme).
2. The Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme is a discretionary scheme, which may be activated to give special financial assistance to local authorities that would otherwise be faced with an undue financial burden of providing relief and carrying out immediate work due to large scale emergencies.
3. There is no automatic entitlement to financial assistance, local authorities have statutory functions to deal with emergencies and are required to plan accordingly. Any incident for which assistance is sought must involve conditions which are exceptional by local standards and damage to the local authority infrastructure or communities must be exceptional in relation to normal experience. The Minister responsible will decide whether or not to activate a scheme after carefully considering the circumstances.
4. The scheme has in the past been activated most frequently for the effects of severe weather, such as flooding or storm damage, although it may be invoked for other types of emergency incident.
5. Emergency Financial assistance will predominantly relate to the immediate aftermath of an incident i.e. the response phase.
6. Support for recovery from exceptional emergencies may be provided in addition to EFAS and further guidance can be found in paragraphs 20-25.
7. The scheme, set up under section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, is available to all County and County Borough Councils and Police & Fire Authorities. However, it is most likely that emergencies will be dealt with by the local authority whose area is affected and the police or fire authority will provide assistance to that authority. Under these circumstances it has been the practice for the police or fire authority to recoup its additional costs directly from the unitary authority it assisted, rather than apply for separate activation of a scheme. For the sake of financial and administrative efficiency we would wish to encourage continuation of this practice.

Qualifying Expenditure

8. A scheme would normally provide that expenditure qualifying for grant is expenditure which is incurred:

- as a result of one or more local authorities incurring expenditure on, or in connection with, the taking of **immediate** action (whether by carrying out works or otherwise) to safeguard life or property, or to prevent suffering or severe inconvenience, in their area or among its inhabitants;
- as a result of the incident(s) specified in the scheme;
- on works completed before a specified deadline (usually within a period of 2 months from the incident but the Welsh Government will be prepared to consider departures from this rule where this is justified by the nature and scale of the incident and falls within the Welsh Government's statutory discretion);

and which is:

- not in respect of costs which are insured or would be normally insurable;
- net of any receipts (e.g. from the sale of trees felled by a storm covered by the scheme);
- not of a capital nature or capitalised.

9. The Welsh Government recognises that insurance policies include some excesses and as such an authority may include sums in respect of insurance excesses as eligible expenditure. When a scheme is activated, grant will normally be paid for losses incurred by the authority at the following rates;

- a maximum of £250 per property for housing (owned by the local authority), and/or its contents;
- a maximum of £500 per property for general/educational buildings, and/or its contents;
- a maximum of £1,250 per property for industrial buildings, and/or its contents

10. The following are **examples** of expenditure likely to qualify under a scheme, provided the criteria in paragraph 8 are met. This list is indicative only and consideration would be given to the individual circumstances of each incident that occurs.

- emergency works required to safeguard dangerous structures including making them secure (where not insurable);
- evacuating people from dangerous structures, and temporarily rehousing them;
- supplying food, other stores, and key services to affected communities;
- maintaining key communications, in particular clearing roads;
- in relation to non-administrative purposes, setting up temporary premises, including costs of removal, increased costs due to rent, rates, taxes, lighting, heating, cleaning and insurance;
- hire of additional vehicles, plant and machinery, and incidental expenses;
- removal of trees and timber which are or may be dangerous to the public including trees in public parks, local authority trees on highways, and trees owned by private householders which have fallen on or threaten public highways or rights of way;
- initial repairs to highways, pavements and footpaths, where a tree or an item of street furniture or debris from a damaged building has fallen, and the surface of the road must be replaced at the time or temporarily patched (subsequent permanent repair would not qualify);
- where repair is insufficient, the removal and replacement of street lighting, street signs, bus shelters and other street furniture, fences, railings and uninsured outbuildings damaged by the incident, where in its damaged state it presents a danger to public safety or security;
- initial land drainage works to clear debris and unblock water courses which are or may be the cause of danger to the public (however, long-term repair or replacement of previously dangerous or damaged structures would not qualify);
- other work to clear debris causing obstruction or damage to highways, pavements and footpaths;
- additional temporary employees or contractors, to work on the emergency or replace permanent employees diverted from normal work;
- special overtime for employees, either during the emergency or afterwards to catch up on work from which they were diverted by the incident.
- costs of temporary mortuaries

Non-Qualifying Expenditure

11. The following are **examples** of expenditure which would usually not qualify under an Emergency Financial Assistance scheme:

- any costs which are insured or would be normally insurable whether by the authority or any other party (e.g. household or business insurance policies)

The definition of what is normally insurable for the purpose of schemes set up under section 155 shall be derived by reference to the Zurich Municipal's SELECT Policy for costs exceeding £100,000. Authorities should in particular note that

- a. the shoring-up or dismantling of damaged buildings is an insurable cost;
 - b. authorities whose policies bear less risk than the Zurich Municipal SELECT Policy would still be bound by its definition of normally insurable risks as regards qualifying expenditure under an Emergency Financial Assistance scheme; authorities whose policies include cover for greater risks than the basic SELECT Policy should exclude from their qualifying expenditure all costs for which they are covered and will be compensated;
 - c. damage caused by terrorism remains an insurable cost.
- loss of income (e.g., from facilities or businesses closed as a result of an emergency), as this falls outside the scope of section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989;
 - the normal wages and salaries of the authority's regular employees, whether diverted from their normal work or otherwise, and the standing costs of the authority's plant and equipment;
 - any expenditure which is of a capital nature or capitalised;
 - any element of betterment, e.g. repairs to buildings to a significantly higher standard than their condition on the day before the incident;
 - any amounts in respect of specific works on coastal protection or flood defence which had already been allocated within the budgeted expenditure to these works before the incident occurred (however, subsequent amounts for emergency work resulting from the incident above the level of any amounts thus allocated would usually be eligible for assistance);
 - or any expenditure on coast protection or flood defence which will be compensated by the Welsh Government by means of specific grant;
 - longer term works of repair and restoration, such as tree planting and repair or refurbishment of damaged but not dangerous structures;

- payment to householders or others under section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972, in respect of non-insurable items such as garden fences and trees and shrubs, unless action has been taken immediately because they presented a danger to the community (such costs may be recoverable from those on whose behalf they were incurred).

Grant Rates and Thresholds

12. Authorities are expected to make reasonable provision in their budgets to deal with contingencies. Therefore if an Emergency Financial Assistance scheme is activated, the authority / authorities affected will be expected to meet (or to have already met during an earlier notified emergency event) all eligible expenditure up to the level of its threshold. Thresholds are calculated at 0.2% of authority's annual budget requirement and apply to the whole financial year, not to each incident within the financial year.
13. It should be noted that costs which are the responsibility of one local authority cannot be claimed by another, just to take advantage of the lower threshold.
14. For qualifying expenditure above the threshold, grant would normally be paid at the rate of 85% of qualifying expenditure. For significant incidents where the eligible expenditure exceeds 10 times the threshold, 100% of the qualifying expenditure above this will be reimbursed.

Notification of an Incident

Reporting an Incident

15. The Local Authority must notify the Welsh Government in writing of the emergency incident within 1 month from the start of the event occurring. It is recommended that this is done even if the expenditure is unlikely to exceed the threshold. This is because if another incident occurred within the same financial year taking the total spend for the year above the threshold, the earlier spend cannot be taken into account unless the incident was reported at the time. Within 1 month of notifying the Welsh Government of the event, the authority must provide full details of the expenditure incurred and information about the scale of the incident and remedial actions taken.

Activation of a Scheme

16. If the information provided by the authority is considered sufficient, Ministers will decide whether to invoke an Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme. However it may be necessary for us to request additional information about the incident and the costs arising before a decision is made. In cases where a scheme is opened, the Welsh Government will announce activation and issue guidance on how the scheme will operate.

Completion of Eligible Works

17. The local authority must ensure that all works are complete within 2 months of the

incident; however the Welsh Government may consider departures from this rule depending on the nature and scale of the incident.

Submission of Claim

18. A claim form for use in making initial and final claims will be sent to authorities if a scheme is activated. Full details will be provided at that time for the completion and return of the form, including any deadlines for each stage of the claim. The application form will be required within 6 months of the date of the incident occurring, after which time if no application has been submitted the claim will be deemed lapsed.

Claims

19. Authorities may find it useful to bear in mind the following general points which will apply to claims:

- claims must be signed by the Chief Finance Officer of the authority to the effect that it complied in all respects with the terms of the scheme in question;
- records in support of any claim should be kept in such a fashion that they will be readily accessible for audit;
- authorities intending to use agents to undertake work should note that the claiming authority's procedures should be capable of demonstrating that any claim is based on qualifying expenditure, and that proper arrangements have been employed both for specifying the work and ensuring it has been satisfactorily completed;
- details of qualifying costs under other schemes in the same financial year will be provided where relevant when any scheme is issued;
- claim forms must be certified at the final stage by the appointed auditor;
- claims should be completed in duplicate, with a copy being supplied simultaneously to the Welsh Government and the auditor by a deadline which will be specified under any scheme; in the event that a claim is not submitted to the auditor by this date, the authority will be asked to submit an early estimate of the likely size of the final claim;
- the figures included in the final claim form should be related to actual expenditure and should be precise.

Financial Assistance for Recovery from Emergencies

20. The Welsh Government may *consider* providing financial assistance to local authorities, in addition to the Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme (EFAS), to help meet recovery costs incurred in the event of a large scale emergency.
21. Any such assistance would be discretionary and may be activated by the Welsh Government to help meet recovery costs related to an emergency which has a major impact on communities, schools, roads, housing, environment etc in urban and rural areas. There is no automatic entitlement to financial assistance in such instances; Ministers will decide whether or not to provide funding for recovery after carefully considering the circumstances of a particular incident.
22. Any recovery funding made available will be limited to helping with costs that are over and above the costs normally incurred by local authorities and outside those met by alternative funding schemes such as EFAS.
23. Whilst a major emergency event may well lead to consideration of both EFAS and financial assistance for recovery, the two schemes would operate separately and activation of an EFAS scheme would not automatically result in assistance for recovery.
24. Any recovery funding could provide financial assistance for both capital and / or revenue expenditure.
25. Payments could be made via a grant under section 31(2) of the Local Government Act 2003. Under section 31(4) conditions by which payment is made can be determined by the Welsh Government and this may include, in particular, provision as to how the grant is to be used and the circumstances in which whole or part of the grant must be repaid.

**Welsh Government
July 2012**

Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Local Government and Communities

Cyfarwyddwr Cyffredinol • Director General



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Darren Miller AM
Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

4 March 2013

Dear Chair

Civil Emergencies in Wales – Financial Support

Further to the Public Accounts Committee's consideration of the Wales Audit Office report into Civil Emergencies in Wales on 18 February, please find attached a copy of the guidance provided to all local authorities in Wales on financial assistance for emergencies. This guidance is also published on the Welsh Government website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/localgovernment/finandfunding/emergency/publications/efas1213/?jsessionid=8602AB689A8DB187A93616BFA2C18AC5?lang=en>

I also agreed to provide some recent examples of where financial support has been granted.

In 2011, Welsh Government provided a grant of £1 million to Swansea City Council as a contribution towards expenditure incurred in dealing with the recovery phase following a major fire incident at Fforestfach. The funding provided recognised the exceptional circumstances of the incident and the significant costs borne by the authority and its partners in dealing with the fire and its aftermath.

Ceredigion County Council received an award of £34k under the Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme (EFAS) in relation to the emergency response to manage the immediate impact of the major flooding incident in June 2012.

Ceredigion was also awarded a further grant of £110k as a contribution to the costs incurred in dealing with the recovery phase. The recovery costs mainly relate to the repair and replacement of bridges, footpaths and roads that were significantly damaged during the floods as well as providing some council tax relief to residents forced out of their homes due to the flooding.

Prior to 2012, the last EFAS payment known then as “Bellwin Scheme” was to the Isle of Anglesey for flooding in 2004 when a total payment of £568k was awarded.

June E Milligan

National Assembly for Wales, Public Accounts Committee – Civil Emergencies in Wales

18th February 2013



WLGA • CLILC

INTRODUCTION

1. The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) represents the 22 local authorities in Wales, and the three national park authorities, the three fire and rescue authorities, and four police authorities are associate members.
2. It seeks to provide representation to local authorities within an emerging policy framework that satisfies the key priorities of our members and delivers a broad range of services that add value to Welsh Local Government and the communities they serve.

Wales Audit Office Report - opportunities

3. The WLGA is pleased to be able to provide written and oral evidence to the Welsh Assembly Public Accounts Committee regarding the recent Wales Audit Office (WAO) report "Civil Emergencies in Wales" dated 6th December 2012
4. The WLGA and the WAO have met since the report was published and discussed its content. Although not always in complete agreement regarding some of the finer detail, the WLGA recognises the importance of the report, and its clear role in helping the local authority emergency planning function move forward in the next period.
5. The report shines the spotlight on a small but crucial local government service – inevitably raising some concerns, and providing some useful information which can inform and assist the improvement of the service.
6. The report indicates that the total spend on emergency planning services in local government in Wales is only £3.2 m. The report also confirms that the arrangements for emergency planning, does provide protection to the public, but that issues of efficiency, and best use of resources may be in question.
7. We believe that credit is therefore due to the very small number of committed professionals who underpin the emergency response of local authorities in extreme situations, examples of which have recently arisen, and are well highlighted in the WAO report.

8. However, the fact that only £3.2m is spent in Wales by local authorities, is an indication of where emergency planning services are sited within authorities, and consequently have a tough battle for finite and reducing resources alongside other services.
9. The WLGA therefore welcomes the opportunities which flow from this report to reshape and realign the service.

Simpson and the Compact for Change

10. The report makes a number of references to the Simpson report and the Welsh Government / WLGA Compact for Change. Members of the Committee may be aware that significant progress has been and continues to be made in relation to the emergency planning commitment.
11. The WLGA sees the Compact and the WAO report as complimentary, and the WAO report will continue to inform the improvement process for local government.
12. For information, the Compact commitment states "Welsh Government and Local Government to regionalise the delivery of emergency planning services within two years (September 2013) and with other partners on a multi agency basis within four years where practicable (September 2015).
13. Overseeing and approving the progress of this work is the Organisation Delivery and Simpson Implementation (ODSI) Board – comprising senior figures from Welsh Government, Wales Audit Office, WLGA, Local Authority Chief Executives, the Police Service, and others.
14. The emergency planning work stream champion is Mr Peter Vaughan, Chief Constable of the South Wales Police Force.
15. A working group exists below the ODSI Board to drive the progress of the emergency planning work – and roughly reflects, in terms of the organisations involved, the ODSI Board.
16. Since the sign off of the Compact in December 2011, work has progressed against the first stage of this challenging commitment.

17. The approach to the Compact commitment on emergency planning recognised that regional collaboration and multi-agency work is already integral to the way in which this service is delivered, but it also acknowledges that there is scope for making this collaboration more cohesive, effective and efficient.
18. The Local Resilience Forums (LRF) in South Wales, North Wales, Gwent and Dyfed-Powys established working groups to consider the options for regionalisation, using the LRF existing regional boundary as the collaboration model. The working groups examined existing practices and structures and evaluated where effective and efficient collaboration existed.
19. The LRFs made an assessment of potential areas of improvement and where change could enhance multi-agency working. They also identified efficiencies which could be realised and assessed the impact of the proposed changes on the quality of service delivery.
20. The work was undertaken on the principle that services must strive to continue to improve and there are areas where emergency planning can and must improve. Those improvements should be informed by those delivering at the front line and the key focus must be the communities they serve.
21. At its most recent meeting on 17th January 2013, Mr Peter Vaughan reported to the ODSI Board the preferred options for the regionalisation of local authority emergency planning services.
22. Whilst there was no single approach identified for local authority collaboration in Wales, across each LRF area there are a number of areas of commonality.
23. In assessing the various options available all LRF areas have taken into account the evidence of effective collaboration which is already taking place at the local level and which has evolved under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, with the LRFs providing platforms for regional joint-agency activity.
24. Each collaborative area has proposed retaining a local presence in each local authority area and to work on joint programmes. There are also similar approaches with establishing senior local government management arrangements to ensure greater co-operation and consistency on a regional basis.

25. The preferred options reflect not only the local and regional arrangements but also the challenges, priorities and the appropriate support services in the region. As presented, these options will effect improvements in operation and efficiency, remove duplication of effort, increase sharing of specialist support, increase resilience and achieve more effective communications.
26. After hearing from Mr Vaughan, the Board considered and endorsed the preferred options and were satisfied that the compact commitment to regionalising local authority emergency planning services would be met if the preferred options were duly delivered.

Regional Collaboration – preferred options

27. The first part of the Compact commitment to regionalise the delivery of local authority emergency planning services by September 2013 is on target with the preferred options proposed by the LRFs all being achievable by this time.
28. An area by area summary of the new regional delivery teams is below.
29. **Dyfed Powys** - Dyfed-Powys is geographically the largest LRF in England and Wales covering 50% of the land mass of Wales. The assessment of options for regionalisation therefore needed to take geography into consideration in determining what option most appropriately meets the Compact commitment.
30. The existence of the small dedicated multi-agency Partnership Team at the core of the LRF means that Dyfed-Powys finds itself in an already advanced position in meeting the regionalisation commitment of the Compact. The preferred option to take this position further forward is to develop and enhance current arrangements through the Partnership Team.
31. The team will provide coordination and oversight for over arching regional planning, training & exercising. They will also develop greater coordination and collaboration of emergency planning functions, training, exercising and work streams within/between agencies at the local level.
32. In addition to this, the Partnership Team will be joined by representatives from all other agencies once a week to drive forward the regional work on a multi-agency basis. The concept of bringing together all the agencies on a 'Working on Wednesdays' basis has been trialled in Dyfed-Powys during 2012, but will be formally instigated as part of the preferred option going forward.

33. **Gwent** - The Gwent local authorities will establish Board of Director level officers to oversee and co-ordinate joint working on emergency planning projects in a more formal way.
34. A single Local Authority will lead on emergency planning on behalf of the other 4. This responsibility will rotate every 2 years across the 5 local authorities.
35. The role of the Lead Local Authority will be to act:
- as the LRF secretariat, supported by the other local authorities as necessary;
 - via the Chief Executive, as chair of the joint Local Authority Board and provide its secretarial services; and
 - as the focal point for the co-ordination and monitoring of joint local authority activities and the management of ongoing work programmes, if necessary via the Chief Executive and respective board directors.
36. Gwent also suggests a role for the WLGA in providing greater co-ordination of local government emergency planning at an all-Wales level. This role would involve the creation of a post to co-ordinate project work across all 22 local authorities.
37. **South Wales** – A team has been created by each council linking their service delivery structures; through a shared Terms of Reference, a joint business plan and a branded team identity. The work of the virtual team is being delivered within defined collaborative working arrangements.
38. These arrangements are brought together through the South Wales Emergency Planners Group which develops and delivers a unified work programme. The team across the South Wales LRF area, and the strategic direction over the unified work programme, is managed by the Local Authority Resilience Board (LARB). This unified work programme and joint business plan could also assist in the development of a multi-agency approach through engagement over time.
39. Whilst the region as a whole will not take on the unique challenges of the capital there will be the opportunity for enhanced learning and an opportunity for the virtual team to work together to provide support.
40. **North Wales** - The agreed model for regionalisation will create a single emergency planning support function for local authorities in North Wales formed around two hubs – one in the East and one in the West. A Civil Contingency Officer will be located at each authority who will be responsible for:

- general liaison in all aspect of emergency planning and recovery planning;
 - support local authorities in risk identification;
 - ensuring that strategies, plans, and exercises developed by the hubs are converted into local action at local authority level; and
 - ensuring that local authorities developed their business continuity plans.
41. These individuals will be supported by officers/assistants located at the two hubs who will be charged with developing plans in particular areas and ensuring that best practice is identified, disseminated and promoted.
42. The service will be managed by a manager located at one hub area and he/she will have a deputy who, in order to ease administration and facilitate the distribution of workload, would be located at the other hub area.
43. Commissioning of the required service will remain with individual authorities. The purpose of the new Unit will be to ensure that each authority is in the optimum state of readiness to cope with an emergency and thus each authority will need to be able to discuss their requirements at an appropriately senior level.

Conclusion

44. The WLGA has played a key role in helping local authorities on their way to achieving significant change. We are confident that the momentum, and opportunities for improvement, which have been created via the Compact for Change will be maintained over the next period.
45. The WLGA will continue to work closely with the emergency planning managers to ensure that the service they provide takes account of the issues raised within the WAO report.
46. The next phase of work will be equally as challenging, if not more so, as the multi agency partners become engaged in the collaboration conversation.

For further information please contact:

Simon Wilkinson, Regulatory and Frontline Services Policy Officer
simon.wilkinson@wlga.gov.uk

Welsh Local Government Association
Local Government House
Drake walk
Cardiff
CF10 4LG
Tel: 029 2046 8600

PAC(4) 05-13 - Paper 3

Submission to Select Committee 19/02/2013

The aims and objectives of the North Wales Resilience Forum (NWRF) are an amalgam of those contained within various guidance documents applicable to Civil Contingencies in Wales.

They can be defined more explicitly as follows:

Aims:

- The North Wales Resilience Forum will sit at the apex of local civil protection arrangements for the area covered by North Wales Police
- To ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi-agency response to incidents which may have an impact upon the communities of North Wales
- To ensure effective delivery of those duties under the Civil Contingencies Act that need to be developed in a multi-agency environment
- Provide support for the preparation of multi-agency plans, protocols and agreements. To support responders develop and implement multi-agency exercises and other training events necessary to address identified or foreseeable local and wider area hazards

Objectives:

- To facilitate integrated emergency and contingency planning across the North Wales area involving Category 1 and 2 responders
- To be a forum for information sharing and co-operation between the organisations on emergency and contingency planning issues
- To implement strategic and policy decisions relating to the North Wales area's preparedness and response, including the ratification of the Community Risk Register
- To ensure the individual approaches, priorities and responsibilities of each organisation complement each other and dovetail with partners' arrangements
- To provide an effective forum for joint consultation and negotiation on issues affecting responders concerning preparedness, response and post actions, relating to:
 - Risk,
 - Planning for serious or major emergencies/incidents,
 - Planning for business continuity,
 - Arrangements to warn and inform the public,
 - Publishing information about risks and plans

- To ensure appropriate resources are made available to working groups to fulfil statutory or task based responsibilities
- To share, where appropriate, lessons learnt from emergencies and exercises both locally and via the National Resilience Extranet (NRE) and take actions forward to improve plans and procedures
- To consider the local implications of legislation, national initiatives and decisions of the Wales Resilience Forum

We face many of the same issues as our colleagues in the other Welsh LRF regions, save that we have both Wylfa and Trawsfynydd nuclear installations within our borders. This will be magnified when the development of the Wylfa B plant goes ahead. However, close working by LRF partners with Magnox and the Nuclear Regulator ensures that plans are in place and are exercised regularly.

The strategic leads of the organisations making up the membership of the LRF will become the Strategic Coordinating Group (Gold) should an emergency occur of any kind occur that requires a multi-agency command and control structure.

The relationships developed through working, planning and training together as part of the LRF help ensure a seamless approach as was demonstrated in the recent Denbighshire floods.

My background:

My background within Social Services involved working for many years with vulnerable adults to help prevent abuse. I feel that there are many transferrable skills in my knowledge, experience and contacts that I have brought to the Coordinators role. Many of the people I work with now were already familiar to me due to the multi-agency training and exercising that takes place. This made for an easier induction into my role and brought with it a smoother transition between the previous Coordinator leaving and my coming into post.

I feel that my background is especially relevant given the increased need for community engagement to promote resilience and to positively highlight the planning work carried out by the resilience community in all areas of Wales. In moving forward to embrace new ways to engage with the population the resilience profile in this geographical area can be brought to the fore with examples of good practice. This in turn provides some reassurance to the communities and in assessing the localised risks provides a platform to highlight to Welsh Government gaps in resilience that may be beyond our control.

The fact that I have a social services background has created some opportunities for North Wales in that I now represent NWRP on the Wales Resilience Partnership Team, Community Resilience Group, the Social Services and Health Group and the Wales Flood Group. These are groups that I feel I can actively contribute to and that can make a difference to the communities of North Wales.

In addition, the four Coordinators come together three times a year to discuss developments, share ideas and highlight any good practice or identified gaps.

NWRP present position and plans – my views

The identification of 'vulnerable' people in an incident is the Holy Grail of information – at any given time anyone within a community could be considered vulnerable – mothers with young families, people off work with illnesses or broken limbs, people whose car has broken down in rural areas etc. It defies the classic 'vulnerable' definitions of elderly or people with a disability and makes the planning and exercising stages of formulating a response to an incident more challenging and imperative. As yet there is no easy answer to identifying these groups, but through liaison with Social Services, GP surgeries, other health colleagues and the utility companies a cross over list can be obtained at the planning stage of an imminent incident.

Recently a Police colleague and I went into Coleg Menai in Bangor to work with ethnic minority students to explain the concept of emergency planning and to promote community and individual resilience. This was so well received it is a theme that is to be continued with visits to Coleg Llandrillo to work with students on the Welsh Baccalaureate course in the promotion of good citizenship. This would include not only promoting self-resilience and risk assessments but also encourage the students to consider their neighbours – especially those with a disability or who are elderly.

In terms of specific advances made within the North Wales area, I can inform the Committee that there have been advances made in the following areas of interest:

- Accreditation of learning and development opportunities: A number of organisations within the North Wales LRF contribute to a Learning and Developing Fund. This delivers training and exercising across North Wales for all multi-agency partners and there is good integration between Cat1, Cat 2 and the Voluntary Sector

Recently the L&D Committee have investigated accreditation of our learning and development opportunities with the Institute of Civil Protection and Emergency Management (ICPEM). The planning phase is 90% complete with just the evaluation stage of the learning experience to be quantified for delegates

- Warning and Informing – the NWRF now has a presence on Twitter and Facebook with a website in development to compliment both the Wales Resilience website and the NRE. All platforms provide another form of communication both within the resilience network, but more importantly in engaging with the public – especially younger members
- NWRF are also monitoring the progress of a funding application by Conwy County Borough Council to undertake a flood mapping exercise in the Morfa Rhuddlan West area. This is an area with mainly single storey dwellings housing people on limited incomes, families, the elderly and those with disabilities.

The results of the study will greatly inform our future planning in working with vulnerable groups across North Wales as we work on not only warning and informing, but evacuation/shelter issues through to the phases of recovery

- Liaison with and close working ties with the Welsh Government Liaison Officers (WGLO) based in Llandudno Junction - During the Fuel Dispute planning of 2012 and the Winter Weather planning of 2012/13 close ties were forged with the WGLO team based locally. This is proving to be a valuable link as it promotes a unified approach to contingency planning for this region. NWRF considers itself to be extremely fortunate to have this resource and link as the WGLO team is a great source of advice and contributes most effectively to our planning phases and workgroups
- Integration of national training events within our local calendar is promoting a nationwide approach to resilience planning that dovetails with the plans objective to amalgamate our individual LRF plans into one national one where possible. This would be extremely positive in terms of Warning and Informing, Evacuation/Shelter, Recovery, Humanitarian Assistance and Flooding with appendices showing the localised detail for each area

- Multi-agency, multi-region exercising – in April 2013 Exercise Berwyn will bring together the three Fire and Rescue Services, Royal Air Force Search and Rescue, representatives from Cat 2 and Voluntary Sector responders and the NWRF. It is an Inland Water Rescue Exercise sponsored by Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG).

NWRF is taking part via a Community Engagement Day scheduled for 19th March 2013. This will bring together all participating agencies at Bala Leisure Centre to promote both the exercise, community resilience, business continuity and risk assessments for individuals

- Many staff members from within the resilience community have attended accredited training courses and those with the experience and skills to deliver that training to colleagues within the LRF should be encouraged to do so. This not only ensures that there is a 'value for money' aspect to any future training, but that the skill sets within each resilience area can be promoted. Again, this can also ensure that the training can be localised to address not only national issues, but to look at risks pertinent to the LRF area concerned. This has been demonstrated nationally and is now being employed as a tool in addressing the training needs of the Badger Clio Task/Logging System roll out, where the Coordinator for Dyfed Powys will deliver some of the training, whilst the localised training will be delivered by a staff member from North Wales Police
- Forging close ties with other LRF areas has shown to have great value and is something that all four LRF Coordinators feel strongly positive about. It demonstrates a cohesive strategy to integrated emergency planning and promotes mutual aid as well as recognising that in many cases emergencies do not recognise geographical borders. Therefore to have an awareness of each other's plans, to observe or participate in exercises and to develop joint plans is not only good practice but a valuable conservation of resources. NWRF not only has close ties with the other three LRF areas in Wales, but works very closely with Cheshire LRF and is forging links with Merseyside LRF and West Mercia LRF
- Prior to me starting in this role, each of the four LRF areas undertook a peer review of each other's plans, resilience and structures. It identified some common themes but also some radical differences in how we are structured and how we formulate our plans. This I feel needs addressing through a rationalisation of the employment terms and duties of the Coordinator and a streamlining of how the work is formulated
- Engagement of the Voluntary Sector is paramount within NWRF and was demonstrated at a Voluntary Services Awareness Day on 19th October 2012. Following on from the Awareness Day, one of the organisations was brought in to and tasked with taking part with the search for April Jones. Voluntary Sector partners not only sit on our work groups and take part in our exercises, if it is felt appropriate they also take the lead in some work – ie Humanitarian Assistance and Recovery. In a practical sense, the links we have made with

our Voluntary Sector partners proved invaluable in responding to the Denbighshire flooding incidents in November 2012

- Rationalising the number of sub-groups within each LRF is not only a Wales Resilience Forum priority but one for each LRF area too. Within North Wales, although we have six local authorities, we have one Fire Service, one Police Force and one Health body. Therefore the attendees at meetings seem to be the same ones time after time. I feel there are two distinct issues here –
 - Promoting the message that civil contingency planning is not just an issue for emergency planners but for all organisational staff, therefore widening the pool of attendees and delegates at training
 - Streamlining the number of groups – once they have done their planning, exercising and reviewing, and if they have met all objectives on their annual work plans, then the groups can go into hibernation and be reinstated once a year or as and when necessary to review any developments as a task and finish event. This would allow for any learning points from exercises or incidents to be integrated into plans

To conclude, from my first ten months in post I would comment as follows:

- The resilience community in Wales communicates with each other well and there is much evidence of cross border cooperation and collaboration
- There is always room for improvement and I think that the differing structures of the LRF Secretariats are in part a barrier to a greater degree of success
- Some of our workgroups are awaiting national legislation or guidance that seems to be exceptionally slow in being published. This causes a delay in the group moving forward with their work plan and we are starting to recognise that these groups may need to fall dormant until the national paperwork is finalised. Otherwise there is no point in the group meeting
- Whilst I appreciate the reasons for restricting the position of Chairperson for a workgroup to be from a statutory agency, I feel that to optimise the skill set within all sectors of the resilience community, it should be extensively encouraged for Category 2 or Voluntary Sector personnel to take on this role. This would also further widen the skill set and pool of staff. This I feel requires further promotion within Wales to recognise the valuable contribution from Cat 2 and Voluntary Sector partners

To finish, I wish to thank the Chair and members of the Public Select Committee for this valuable opportunity to share my views.

PAC(4) 05-13 - Paper 4

Submission to Select Committee 19/02/2013

In reviewing the report I have been asked to comment on and provide any additional evidence in relation to my role as the civil contingencies co-ordinator for the Joint Emergency Services Group. In relation to that request I would like to note the following points,

- The review highlighted a particular gap in testing the recovery phase of emergency incidents. This issue is being addressed by the Wales Learning and Development Group and the introduction of the Wales Gold Multi agency strategic level learning and development package that has been developed. Day 2 of the event is focussed solely on recovery and will require delegates to address the issues faced by strategic managers when recovering from an emergency. Each LRF is participating and courses start in March 2013.
- The Wales Learning and Development group have developed a shared database of learning material that is housed on the NRE (National Resilience Extranet). This has enabled the avoidance of duplication and has assisted consistency across the resilience communities in Wales.
- The report highlighted the fact that exercising and training did not support and test emergency plans. The forthcoming Wales Gold training will take this into account and utilises local emergency plans as both pre-reads and essential content for the 2 day course.
- The review highlighted increasing difficulty in securing sustainable levels of funding for joint resilience activities. The Wales Learning and Development group have been able to achieve significant cost efficiencies by procuring learning and development on a Pan Wales basis. The social media in an emergency package is a good example of this, and this process should continue where appropriate.
- The review highlighted the need for category 1 responders to fully utilise social media tools during an emergency. The recent social media in an emergency training has provided a springboard for this development across Wales with a number of key strategic attendees taking issues back to the workplace to address. A good example being Dyfed Powys Police where their twitter followers have increased from less than 100 to 12,500 in the last six months.

Agenda Item 4

PAC(4) 05-13 - Paper 5



Response to the Wales Audit Office report 'Civil Emergencies in Wales'

Introduction

St John Cymru Wales (St John) is a national charity in Wales and part of the International Order of St John. It has its Headquarters in Cardiff but relies heavily on its 4,700 volunteers across Wales who in 2011 completed 189,746 duty hours.

In 2011 it treated 6,411 patients, supplied 387 ambulance shifts to the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and transferred over 15,000 patients. It has an extensive fleet of 112 vehicles including a large number of emergency ambulances in addition to 4x4 and other specialised vehicles.

As an organisation it is always prepared to come to the aid of those in need of first aid care. It is an essential part of Wales's emergency response system, working alongside statutory services to support communities when the NHS ambulance service is overstretched – be it during extreme weather conditions, times of flooding or following major accidents.

St John welcomes the opportunity to comment on this report although we were surprised not to be interviewed ahead of the document being produced, especially as we are mentioned in it.

Relationships

We have a very good working relationship with the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and local authority emergency planning officers in certain areas although this seems to vary across Wales. We are perceived by many as the 'Ambulance Reserve'.

As an organisation we have very limited involvement with the Local Resilience Forums and only in some cases are we involved with some of the sub groups.

We believe that as a national organisation there should be a suitable forum for us to plan and coordinate approaches. We are not currently part of the Wales Community Resilience Group.

We think that our capabilities are well known to the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust but this capability needs to be highlighted to other Category One Responders.

Track record

During the recent snow (January 2013) St John Wales provided over 1,100 hours of support to the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust with Silver officers deployed to two of the Emergency Control Centres.

Assisted Emergency Services during the Aberystwyth floods of 2012 deploying a senior officer to the Silver Incident Room and first aid team/ambulance for the Penglais School Rest Centre.

Created an online map of St John resources that were utilised on the Olympic Torch relay (2012). This information showed St John involvement as a graphical representation and was made available to Emergency Control Centres and Silver cells should they wish to contact local resources.

During the Chevron fire of 2011 and within 30 minutes of the request from the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trusts Emergency Control Centre St John had six ambulances available had the incident required it.

Provided extensive support to the NHS during the snow of 2009/10 over 23 days resulting in excess of 1,000 duty hours. As a result the organisation now has a 4x4 strategy in place working towards at least one 4x4 resource in each local authority area.

St John has taken an active part in several exercises over the last few years including Oystercatcher (2006), USAR Cymru (2009) and Pen y Clip tunnels (2010). We also supplied several resources to Liverpool as part of Operation Constant Care in 2006.

We previously in conjunction with the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust and other NHS organisations trained our volunteers to the internationally recognised Major Incident Medical Management and Support (MIMMS) standard. St John has recently become a recognised MIMMS Training Centre and will be running its own courses in future.

Report recommendations

Only two of the recommendations relate to us as part of the voluntary sector.

Recommendation 7 *We recommend that Category One responders, through the Wales Resilience Partnership Team, ensure sufficient representation from, and communication with, all organisations with a substantive role in resilience or in emergency response.*

St John agrees with this recommendation and would be keen to be part of a national forum. Any forum needs to have clear terms of reference, a well defined membership and should not be isolated. We are not sure however what is to be gained if the forum only contains other national voluntary groups. It is also worth considering what role if any this forum would have during a pan Wales incident.

Recommendation 8 We recommend that the organisations developing resilience and managing emergencies should formally recognise the potential contribution of the voluntary sector, and that the voluntary sector should become an integrated part of the emergency plans produced by Category One Responders

Our track record along with other voluntary sector organisations should be formally recognised and emergency plans reviewed annually to ensure that they are up to date and clearly define what is expected of the voluntary sector.

Finances

As a charity St John receives no direct funding for participating in Civil Contingency exercises or meetings and relies on charitable donations to facilitate this. It has however received limited funding for a number of Airwave terminals that can be utilised during major incidents but this is limited to vehicles along the M4 corridor.

James Shaughnessy
Director of Operations
12th Feb 2013

Public Accounts Committee

Meeting Venue: **Committee Room 3 – Senedd**

Meeting date: **Tuesday, 5 February 2013**

Meeting time: **09: – 11:00**

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National
Assembly for
Wales



This meeting can be viewed on Senedd TV at:

http://www.senedd.tv/archiveplayer.jsf?v=en_400000_05_02_2013&t=0&l=en

Concise Minutes:

Assembly Members:

Mohammad Asghar (Oscar) AM
Mike Hedges
Julie Morgan
Gwyn R Price
Jenny Rathbone
Aled Roberts
Jocelyn Davies
Andrew RT Davies (Chair)

Witnesses:

David Rees, Wales Audit Office
Huw Vaughan Thomas, Auditor General for Wales, Wales Audit Office
Emma Giles, Performance Specialist, Wales Audit Office
Alan Morris, Wales Audit Office
Anthony Barrett, Wales Audit Office Partner, Wales Audit Office

Committee Staff:

Tom Jackson (Clerk)
Daniel Collier (Deputy Clerk)
Joanest Jackson (Legal Advisor)

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

1.1 The Chair welcomed Members and members of the public to the meeting.

2. Briefing in the Wales Audit Office report on Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels Internal Drainage Board

2.1 The Chair welcomed Anthony Barrett, Assistant Auditor General and David Rees, Wales Audit Office Governance Manager.

Action points:

The Wales Audit Office was asked to provide:

- A note with additional information on the attendance of appointed members to the Drainage Board's meetings (separated into Local Authorities' Members and Officers).
- A note with information on the past membership of the Drainage Board.

3. Briefing from the Auditor General for Wales on the Wales Audit Office report Operations of the Forestry Commission Wales Follow-up Report

3.1 The Chair welcomed Huw Vaughan Thomas, Auditor General for Wales, Alan Morris, Group Director Performance Audit and Emma Giles, Performance Specialist.

4. Papers to note

4.1 The Committee noted the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business:

Items 6 to 7.

6. Options for handling Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels Internal Drainage Board

6.1 The Committee discussed options for handling issues arising from the Wales Audit Office's report on the 'Audit of Accounts 2010-2011: Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels Internal Drainage Board.'

Action point:

The Committee instructed its clerking team to prepare a scoping paper for a short inquiry into issues raised by the Wales Audit Office's report on the 'Audit of Accounts 2010-2011: Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels Internal Drainage Board.'

7. Options for handling Operations of the Forestry Commission Wales Follow-up Report

7.1 The Committee discussed issues raised by the Wales Audit Office's report: Operations Forestry Commission Wales Follow-up Report.

Action Points

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

The Committee resolved to request a written update from the Chief Executive of Natural Resources Wales on the implementation of a recommendation previously made by the third Assembly's Public Accounts Committee regarding community involvement in decision making.

TRANSCRIPT

View the [meeting transcript](#).