

Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority

10 September 2014

Item 12

Adverse Weather Debrief Report

Report by the Chief Officer

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1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this paper is to update Members on the outcomes of the multi-agency debrief process following the severe and widespread flooding at the beginning of 2014. Overall the response to the flooding was seen as well managed and with successful outcomes for the county. Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) are seen as having performed well, both individually and as part of the coordinated partnership approach. A key element of the success of the operation was multi-agency working as coordinated through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) arrangements. The significant finding has been that communities believe the response was good, but if a similar event was to occur again their expectations will be greater in the future. The LRF needs to ensure good planning with finite resources, as well as taking account of the changes in society, such as the use of social media and the access to information.

1.2 By ensuring that all partners and affected communities were involved and gathering as wide arrange of evidence as possible on the period of adverse weather, the following emerged as the key areas to consider for the future:

- Pre-planning;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Communications and quality of information;
- Training and exercising.

1.3 As this was a multi-agency debrief process the recommendations were presented to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum Executive Group on the 15 July 2014. The recommendations were accepted and passed to the LRF Delivery Group to implement.

2 Recommendation

That Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority (HFRA) acknowledge the recommendations put forward to the LRF Executive Group (see Paragraph 5) and support HFRS in their part of the multi-agency implementation plan.

3 Introduction and background

- 3.1 Following the ending of the response phase of the adverse weather in February and March 2014, HFRS offered to facilitate the debrief of the LRFs multi agency response. Normally this would have been done by Hampshire Constabulary (HC) but due to the unusual circumstances, the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Constable agreed to adopt an HFRS led debrief.
- 3.2 The Local Resilience Forum's response to the adverse weather in 2014 was the longest response to an incident in Hampshire since the Civil Contingency Act established LRFs in 2004.

4 Methodology

- 4.1 As this was such a wide area and protracted event there were many agencies and communities involved which lead to a huge amount of evidence to gather. The key to learning from this event depended on how we captured the experiences of people involved or affected. This was done via a multiple view approach, survey questions, comments and face to face debriefs.
- 4.2 The debrief was divided into groups for clarity and ease of process. The groups were:-
Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG)
Response Working Group (RWG)
Tactical Co-coordinating Group (TCG)
 - Test Valley
 - Basingstoke and Deane
 - Winchester
 - New Forest
 - Isle of Wight
 - Havant and East HampshireFlood Action Groups
Parish Councils
Hampshire County Council (HCC) Members
LRF Warning and Informing Group
- 4.3 Each group was given the opportunity to complete an electronic survey with a comprehensive range of questions covering the whole of the adverse weather events. Over 120 responses were received. Physical site specific debriefs were held for the Response Working Group (RWG), Test Valley, Basingstoke, New Forest, Havant and East Hampshire Tactical Co-ordinating Groups, and the Warning and Informing Group. Winchester and Isle of Wight conducted their own debriefs and shared the outcomes with us.
- 4.4 The findings were collated and analysed, and to ensure an independent view, Dr. Keith Smith from 'RiskCovered' was commissioned to validate the findings.

5 Proposals for improvement

The following eleven recommendations were agreed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight LRF Executive Group on the 15 July 2014, and were passed to the LRF Delivery Group for implementation

Key areas for improvement	Actions needed
<p>5.1 The new knowledge and experience gained from the recent flooding must be captured, understood and used to update the county's resilience plans. It was widely recognised that pre-planning would benefit from greater multi agency involvement.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a multi agency task and finish group to review the relevant multi-agency Flood Response Plans 2. Expand, develop and integrate Community Resilience Groups into the LRF.
<p>5.2 The new reality is the need to be flexible in structure, which in turn puts a higher demand for clarity in roles, responsibilities, aims and objectives of a multi agency response. Access to limited expertise is also an issue.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Terms of reference for the Response Working Group (RWG) to include the determination and maintenance of a suitable and flexible structure to respond to an event. 4. The RWG to determine and maintain roles and responsibilities of RWG, Tactical Coordinating Groups, and supporting cells. 5. RWG to ensure suitable aims and objectives are maintained throughout the response structure.
<p>5.3 Response effectiveness, structural flexibility and wider engagement of community groups rely on a high standard of communications and shared situation awareness.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Identify and implement a suitable system for the sharing of live, accurate, timely and rich information. Information quality within the system should be managed as part of the event response. 7. Develop and implement best practice incident logs and decision logs. 8. Establish codes of conduct for teleconference and information sharing.
<p>5.4 The scale of the event exposed the lack of availability of suitability</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Review of current training to ensure it is fit for purpose in the light of new

<p>trained and experienced leaders at all levels.</p>	<p>information.</p> <p>10. Develop a team of personnel capable of participating or leading in a prolonged multi agency response event.</p> <p>11. Establish a programme of exercises to practice and confirm the suitability of the response capability developed.</p>
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6 Risk analysis

HFRS has played its part in successfully dealing with the widespread flooding and has led on identifying improvements that can be made to the multi-agency response. Failure to do act on these would mean that our response was not as effective as it could be should another such flooding event occur.

7 People Impact Assessment

The proposals in this report are considered compatible with the provisions of the equality and human rights legislation.

8 Resource implications

HFRS is committed to supporting the work of the Local Resilience Forum as one of the statutory partners in the Civil Contingencies Act. Improvements identified from the HFRS led multi-agency debrief will deliver a better service to the public of Hampshire. It is considered that any resource implications from this paper will be absorbed within the pre-existing work that we already undertake with the LRF and should not constitute an additional commitment for HFRS resources.

9 Consultation

The recommendations have been shared with and agreed by the LRF Executive Group, as well as all of the various LRF partners themselves.

10 Conclusion

10.1 The general feedback was that the county response to the flooding was successful. This was the most protracted and wide spread event in memory affecting many parts of the county. The planning and preparations were effective and meant that both the response and recovery phases were well managed and received widespread public support. Multi-agency co-ordination and co-operation was identified as the most successful element, along with management of resources. The river management schemes implemented at Romsey and Winchester were examples of innovative thinking and critical decision making.

- 10.2 The full report will be published in September and will contain all the data, and a full set of recommendations.
- 10.3 The management of the debrief process by HFRS has also been seen as a success with partner agencies recognising the sheer scale of the work and the time and effort this has required. Additional learning for HFRS in running large scale debrief processes has also been identified and will be incorporated into future planning.

11 **Background papers**

The following documents disclose the facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of the report.

None

Note: the list excludes: (1) published works; and (2) documents that disclose exempt or confidential information defined in the Act.