

JOINT RESILIENCE COMMITTEE

Friday 1st November 2013

JOINT REPORT of the Corporate Health, Safety & Joint Resilience Unit Manager for Neath Port Talbot CBC and the City and County of Swansea

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of the resilience challenges facing both Councils, to explain how these challenges are currently being addressed and to provide an insight into the wider resilience framework which exists at a local, regional and national level.

2 FIRE SERVICE STRIKE

2.1 Current Situation

- 2.1.1 On the 25th September the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) held an initial 4 hour strike in dispute of pensions. A further strike was due to be held in England and Wales on 19th October 2013 from 6.30pm to 11.30pm, however after a last minute shift in stated positions of the government and the employees, the strike action was temporarily postponed so that further discussions could take place.
- 2.1.2 The Government response to this industrial action has been coordinated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in close liaison with the Scottish and Welsh Government. These Departments have been working with Local Fire and Rescue Authorities to ensure that appropriate contingency plans are in place to deliver any alternative arrangements needed.

2.2 Background

- 2.2.1 The fire fighters' dispute is a national dispute and is about pensions. The dispute is, therefore, with UK Ministers. Fire policy is a devolved matter in the UK. This means that it is dealt with by four different Government Ministers and departments; separately for England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and for Wales. The devolved arrangements significantly complicate matters when the negotiations are taking place.

2.3 Actions

- 2.3.1 MWWFRS had requested that all businesses and communities do all they can to reduce the risk of fire and other emergency situations from arising. This would assist MWWFRS in ensuring that the most serious and or genuine incidents can be prioritised and dealt with.

In line with this request the JRU circulated a briefing paper outlining the latest developments in the dispute and guidance to review procedures and practices relating to fire precautions.

3 SECURE RESILIENCE WEBSITE UPDATE

- 3.1 A Secure Web Application was developed during 2012 by the Joint Resilience Unit for Neath Port Talbot and Swansea Councils, initially for use by both local authorities but with an option of rolling out to other interested organisations.
- 3.2 Following on from a presentation of the JRU secure website to the Central and South West Wales Regional ICT Programme Board, we have a positive position moving forward which will help to ensure that we remain resilient.
- 3.3 It is intended that the site be hosted regionally to start by Ceredigion and mirrored by Carmarthen with access and shared working practices extending over the 6 Local Authorities of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthen, Powys, Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion with further options for other multi agency partners to join.
- 3.4 The idea is that we will "donate" the development to the group of four and between them they will host the system in Ceredigion and provide a fail over facility in Carmarthen. It will be a devolved model with each of the six Councils holding their own overlay data and being held responsible for keeping their specific information relevant.
- 3.5 The regional commitment to both us and Swansea is that we will never have to pay for any hosting charges for the lifetime of the application and it's use.
- 3.6 Any future changes will be authorised and managed by a governance group made up from the services and not from IT and I believe that that group is in the throes of being set up.
- 3.7 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Members **endorse** this approach to building greater resilience in conjunction with our partner agencies.

4 BUSINESS CONTINUITY UPDATE

- 4.1 The BC process and plans for both authorities have not been reviewed for approximately 5 years, are therefore out of date and need to be reviewed. At present the current BC plans are available on the JRU secure site.
 - 4.1.1 A review programme was established as set out below:
 - 4.1.2 BC Review Programme
 - 1. JRU to review all BC documentation
 - 2. JRU to meet with all Heads of Service to review critical services within their area
 - 3. JRU to meet with the relevant plan authors to complete a business impact analysis (BIA)
 - 4. Author to complete new BC plan template and publish on secure site (with assistance from the JRU)
 - 5. JRU to audit plans (once all plans are complete)
 - 6. JRU to implement an exercise programme to test plans
 - 4.1.3 As a result of reviewing the BC documentation, the JRU (in association with Cardiff County Council) developed a new process to identify critical services and created a more user friendly BIA and BC plan template.

4.2 Neath Port Talbot

4.2.1 Review is well underway and the JRU has met with all Heads of Service and the majority of critical services have been reviewed. A small number of plans have been updated on the secure site. Further meetings with authors are being or have been arranged.

4.3 City & County of Swansea

4.3.1 The work was initially on hold until confirmation of the new restructure. However, the review is now underway and meetings with Heads of Service are currently being arranged.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that this report is **NOTED**.

5 RISK REGISTER

5.1 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and City and County of Swansea work together to plan for emergencies. We do this as part of a Resilience Partnership. To help with this planning we prepare a “Local Risk Register” which provides information on potential emergencies that could have a major impact on our area.

5.1.1 The public facing ‘Risk Register’ helps to inform people in the area about the risks that could occur where they live so they can be better prepared in their homes, communities and businesses.

5.1.2 This register looks at the likelihood and impact of a range of hazards linking in to a national UK wide system to allocate resources which could be called upon in the event of a civil emergency.

5.1.3 Just because a ‘risk’ is included doesn’t necessarily mean that we expect it to happen. It means there is a possibility of it happening, and we have made plans and arrangements to reduce its impact if it does.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that this report is **NOTED**.

6 JRU EXERCISES

6.1 JRU officers have attended the following exercises/seminars:

- Recovery Exercise hosted by Rhondda Cynon Taff Emergency Planning Unit, representatives from local authorities across south and east Wales
- Exercise JOEM, reservoir inundation exercise hosted by Merthyr Tydfil CBC, exploring the problems faced with a catastrophic failure of the Pontsticill Reservoir
- Live rest centre exercise devised by Swansea Social Services using day centre service users
- ARCOPOL Counter Pollution seminar at Cardiff Metropolitan University

6.1.1 Plans are under way for a table top exercise to be held at VALE (INCO) Europe on the 18th December 2013 to test the off site response plan.

7 COMAH Exercises

- 7.1 The next multi-agency COMAH exercise with Vale Europe (formerly known as INCO) is scheduled to take place on 18th December. The aim of the exercise will be to test the off-site plan for Vale Europe, Clydach as a result of its top tier status under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations 1999. Participating agencies include representatives from City and County of Swansea, South Wales Police, Welsh Ambulance Service, Mid and West Wales Fire Service, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales and ABMU Health Board.

7.2 COMAH Operators Emergency Preparedness Action Committee (COEPAC)

- 7.2.1 A local forum has been established where representatives from each of the top-tier COMAH sites in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot (Vale Europe, Tata Steel, BOC Gases, Flogas and Calor Gas) meet quarterly to share best practice and discuss learning from incidents and exercises conducted in order to improve emergency plans and responses. Membership of the group is made up of representatives from all five local COMAH sites, Local Authority (JRU), South Wales Police and Mid and West Wales Fire Service. The group is chaired by Ben Cromie from the Joint Resilience Unit. Each meeting is held at a different COMAH site and includes a site familiarisation tour. The COEPAC has met twice since May 2013 and has gained strong support since its inception. Despite being outside the CCS/NPT area, The Royal Mint (Llantrisant) have subsequently requested they form part of the group.

It is **RECOMMENDED** that this report is **NOTED**.

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