

LONDON RESILIENCE



preparing for emergencies

London Multi-Agency Regional Flooding Debrief
Thursday 20th September 2007

Summary of issues raised and actions required

No.	Category	Summary of Potential Issue	Potential Remedy / Action required	Suggested Ownership	Comments
Flood Risk Management					
1	National Local	EA issued Flood watch warnings in advance but organisations were slow to respond to these warnings. Flood Watch should be a trigger for action not Flood Warning / Severe Flood Warning.	Organisations to develop clear understanding of actions required when Flood Watch alerted. Regional Flood Plan to be amended accordingly	Cat 1 and 2 responders, LRT	
2	Regional Local	Need to clarify who is responsible for surface water management in London. Currently responsibility is widespread ranging from local authorities to water companies, private landlords, and Transport for London.	Responsibility for Surface Water Management to be given to the Environment Agency. Drain London Project to look into issue of surface water management. The aims of the project are	GLA, London Councils, EA,	Request Pitt review to consider

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			require significant investment into automated call systems due to the numbers of customers and the cost may not be accepted by the water industry regulators.		
8	National Regional Local	Need to ensure all messages are consistent and use same terminology.	Central Guidance on messages to give to the public in flood incident.	CCS / DEFRA / EA	
Managing Public Expectation					
9	National Regional Local	Unrealistic expectations by the public on what local authorities are able to provide.	Public education programme	CLG / EA / DEFRA / CCS	
10	National Regional Local	Need to raise awareness among the public about flood risk and encourage them to take precautionary measures themselves.	At least in part the public perception must be influenced by the differing nature of LA flood policies. E.g. Some LAs provide sand bags and similar assistance while others do not. Guidance on the issue of what LAs might / should provide to customers in the event of a flood would be of use.		
11	National Regional Local	Need to change perception of responsibility. Householder's responsibility to be aware of flooding – especially in areas that have experienced previous flooding.			
12	National Regional Local	Tendency for public to fallback on emergency services and LA to deal with a problem rather than prepare for themselves.	Culture Change – Public campaign to change behaviour		
Critical Infrastructure					
13	Regional Local	Need to identify vulnerable Infrastructure across the capital.	Scoping project to build on the work already in the GLA draft Regional Flood Risk Appraisal and EA National Flood Resilience Index to identify Critical Infrastructure and include in the London Flood response Strategic Plan. Scope out how this information should be used to best effect and at what level (national, regional and local interests). All critical infrastructure providers need to consider resilience of key stations and their flood defences	LRT / GLA / Utilities / Local Authorities / NHS London / Blue Lights / TfL	
14		Some schools built on floodplain – were fortunate due to term times not to be worse affected.			
15		Coppermill lane substation located on flood plain – need to consider resilience.			
16	Regional Local	Water treatment plant overtopped in Sutton – some areas issued boil notices.	Need to consider preparedness for dealing with large scale water contamination or disruption to water services in London and clarify if there is sufficient risk to require a regional strategy for the distribution of emergency water supplies.	LRT / GLA / London Councils / Water Companies	

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			- Hospitals do not have ability to boil water and rely on bottled water.		
17	National Regional Local	Insufficient capacity of drainage pipes and systems. Most are only built to 1 in 10 year event design standard.	Local Authorities / Water Companies / Regulators to review	Local Authorities / Utilities / Regulators – DEFRA / CLG	
18	National Regional Local	Single points of failure: Cross utility company work needs to be done to consider risks at key sites and the impact its failure may have on other utilities. Which sites are dependent on each other? Mutual aid agreements.	Staged process. Initial meeting between utilities companies then meeting with wider partners including the GLA, all utilities (elec, gas, water, telecoms). Should also include dialogue with utility regulators.	Utilities companies. (Thames Water & others) Local Authorities / GLA / Util regulators	
19	National Regional Local	Impact on Retail Industry when roads / access routes were closed due to flooding.	Raise awareness – identify key roads	Local Authorities / TfL	
20	National Regional Local	Some of the surface water flooding was the result of waterways being blocked due to illegal dumping.	Need to raise awareness among Local Authorities of the impact this could have and encourage Local Authorities to liaise with the Environment Agency when blockages are discovered. Local Authorities to try to reduce levels of dumping. Potential trigger point at Flood Watch for LAs and TfL inspect hot spots and make efforts to clear blockages in advance.	Local Authorities / EA	
Emergency Response					
21	National Regional Local	Emergency Operations Centres should be opened as soon as the Flood watch arrives to allow maximum preparation.	All responders to consider triggers for opening EOCs	Cat 1 and 2 responders	
22	Regional Local	Difficulty in establishing when the incident should be escalated to a regional response due to nature of many small local incidents rather than instant “big bang” trigger. Who presses trigger?	Shadow Gold called in other areas (Surrey) could have been usefully employed. Suite of triggers for flood warnings. When to take what action.	LRT	To be discussed across the London resilience partnership and The London Flood Response

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			Thames Water will review its customer service IT systems to ascertain whether it would be possible to recognise when there is a proliferation of local reports and can alert the emergency services or local authorities to these anomalies.	Thames Water	Strategic Plan amended accordingly
23	Regional Local	Everyone is looking to the Police to lead and incident but from Police perspective there were a lot of low level incidents but nothing to warrant a wider response – no requests for assistance were received.	Organisations with a regional control centre (MPS, LFB etc) to consider triggers for notifying MPS / LRT of the potential need for regional coordination / multi-agency strategic oversight. Revised triggers should feature in the regional Command & Control / activation protocol.	Relevant Cat 1 and 2 responders. LRT	
24	National Regional Local	Information should have been shared at the outset between all responders.	Information sharing systems to be reviewed. Consider wider Command and Control implications	Cat 1 and 2 responders. LRT	To be included in revised London Flood Response Strategic Plan
25	Regional Local	Potential role for London Local Authority Coordination Centre to have been set up – but no mechanisms to activate from bottom up, only when LLAG activated by the MPS.	Local Authorities / LFBEP to consider options Old Local Authority mutual aid arrangements would potentially have worked well in this situation – review whether these might be an option.	Local Authorities / LFBEP	
26	Local	Difficulties for people dealing with local incidents to recognise wider impact.	Cat 1 and 2 responders to review internal alerting systems	Cat 1 and 2 responders	
27	National Regional Local	Reluctance of organisations to set up Emergency Operations Centres – possibly due to cost or culture of not wanting to set up Emergency procedures unless absolutely necessary.	Tackling cultural change Cat 1 and 2 responders to review internal alerting systems	Cat 1 and 2 responders	
28	National Regional Local	Blue Lights response slowed to specific incidents by lack of information on which roads were affected by flooding.	Strategic Flood Risk assessments by Local Authorities would enable them to identify likely areas to flood and be prepared to close roads quickly and alert other responders.	Local Authorities Blue Lights	
29	Local	Some Local Authorities benefited from having a script for use in contact centres, which allowed operators to ask the correct questions and identify priority cases first.	Roll out best practice across all local authorities.	Local Authorities	
Rest Centres					
30	Local	Rest centres set up, but some not used or with very few numbers.	Review triggers	Local Authorities	
31	Regional Local	Need to consider vulnerability of rest centres. In one incident a rest centre had to be closed and relocated as it was in danger of flooding itself.	Link in with work on identifying vulnerable infrastructure – Issue number 13.	Local Authorities	
32	Regional	Local Authorities unlikely to have the capacity to	Local Authorities to identify options for longer term	Local	

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	Local	staff rest shelters for long periods (beyond 48hrs).	shelter	Authorities / Voluntary Sector	
Health Issues					
33	National Regional Local	Affected hospitals instigated individual emergency procedures successfully, but did not alert regional NHS team who would have maintained London wide picture and identify vulnerabilities to network.	Reconfirm trigger mechanisms and alerting systems.	NHS London	
Transition to Recovery					
34	Local	Local Authorities provided free pickups for bulky waste which helped prevent fly-tipping and other problems	Good Practice.		
35	Regional Local	As with the incident, recovery was dealt with at a local level.	Clarify trigger points for action. Regional Flood Plan to be amended accordingly. As per issue number 2	LRT	
36	National Regional Local	Difficulties for Local Authorities to collect the information requested by Central Government. Systems not in place to collect information.	Advice from Central Government in advance about what sorts of information it might need after an incident. Local Authorities to consider putting systems in place to record / collect information during incident. Closer liaison with Environment Agency	CLG / EA / DEFRA / CCS Local Authorities	
37	National Regional Local	Difficulty getting information from Private residents and businesses. Needs to be awareness in central government about what information local authorities are able to collect.	Raise awareness about what data can be collected from LAs. Data could be sought from the insurance industry.	CLG / EA / DEFRA / CCS Local Authorities	
38	National Regional Local	Difficulties for Local Authorities to distribute flood recovery grant quickly and efficiently to communities. This was not helped by inconsistent messages in the media about what this funding was available for, which led to confusion amongst the public.	Clearer Guidance from Central Government about how flood recovery grants money and schools money can be distributed. Consistent messages to the media / LAs about how this money can be spent. Consistent messages about the level of monitoring central Government will place on the spend of this money. Consistent messages from Central Government	CLG / DCSF	

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			about what the money is intended for and how it should be used.		
39	Local	Useful role of elected members in working in the communities. Sending out messages and helping recovery effort.	Good Practice.		

Organisations represented at debrief:

Government Office for London, London Resilience Team, Environment Agency, Transport for London, Greater London Authority, Royal Borough of Kingston, London Borough of Merton, London Borough of Sutton, London Borough of Wandsworth, British Telecom, Cabinet Office (Flood Review Team), London Fire Brigade Emergency Planning, Thames Water, London Borough of Harrow, South West London Health Protection Unit, London Borough of Richmond, Three Valleys Water, London Borough of Bexley, St. Georges NHS Trust, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London Ambulance Service, London Borough of Lambeth, NHS London, London Fire Brigade, Haringey Council, St. John Ambulance (Voluntary Sector), Metropolitan Police Service.