



MINUTES

Those attending included the Minister for Local Government as Chair, in addition to senior representatives from the following organisations:

BAA Ltd
British Telecom
British Transport Police
Cabinet Office
City of London
City of London Police
Communities and Local Government
Department of Health
Environment Agency
Government Office for London
Greater London Authority
Health Protection Agency
Home Office
London Ambulance Service
London Coroner's Group
London Councils
London District (Military)
London Fire Brigade
London Resilience Team, GOL
London Underground
Metropolitan Police Service
Network Rail
NHS London
Port of London Authority
Representative for the London Local Resilience Forums
St John Ambulance
TRANSEC, Department for Transport
Transport for London

Observers

London Development Agency
Metropolitan Police Service

1. CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the twenty-sixth meeting of the London Regional Resilience Forum.
- 1.2 The Chair passed on apologies from The Minister for London and The Mayor of London

1.3 Apologies were received and noted

1.4 The Chair welcomed new Forum Members.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS OF THE LAST MEETING

2.1 The Minutes of the 25th London Regional Resilience Forum, held on 31 October 2007 were agreed and accepted as an accurate record.

2.2 All actions from the previous minutes had been completed or were underway.

3. THREAT & HORIZON SCAN

3.1 The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) gave a detailed update on the current position and threat levels.

3.2 The Chair thanked the MPS and invited The Cabinet Office to provide the horizon scan.

3.3 The Cabinet Office explained that the current key risks were:

- Flood Risk – this would continue to be a concern throughout the winter and into spring;
- Avian Flu;
- Bluetongue – likely to be an increase in cases from April onwards;

3.4 The Cabinet Office also drew the Forum's attention to the recent publication of the National Flood Review interim findings and the imminent publication of the Anderson Foot and Mouth review by the end of February

3.5 The Chair thanked The Cabinet Office. There were no questions or comments.

4. NATIONAL CAPABILITES SURVEY (Paper LRRF (08) 01)

4.1 The Chair invited The London Resilience Team (LRT) to introduce paper LRRF (08) 01.

4.2 The LRT explained that the National Capability Survey (NCS) had been discussed at the last meeting of the LRRF. They explained that since then a number of partners in London (MPS, LFB, LAS, NHS, London Borough of Brent and London Borough of Islington) had taken part in the NCS Pilot in the autumn.

4.3 The LRT explained that two key lessons learnt from participation in the pilot were: the need to ensure that individual organisation's responses acknowledge the regional dimension; and the need to ensure that the questions which focus specifically on the work of the Local Resilience Forums are relevant and are answered at the appropriate level. (As

London is structured differently and much of the planning is conducted at a pan-London, regional level, many of these questions should be answered by the LRRF.)

- 4.4 The LRT concluded by urging all partners to ensure that the survey was completed on time by their organisations and to ensure that it was filled out by appropriate persons at an appropriate level. The LRT explained that the survey was now available online to be completed by Friday 7 March. If anyone had any questions or concerns about the survey they could contact LRT.
- 4.5 The Chair thanked The LRT, there were no further questions or comments.

5. NATIONAL FLOOD REVIEW INITIAL FINDINGS

- 5.1 The Chair invited The Cabinet Office to update the group on the initial findings of the National Flood Review.
- 5.2 The Cabinet Office explained the background to the review, outlining that it had been commissioned following the floods of June / July 2007. The Cabinet Office explained that the review had looked at: flood risk management, the emergency response to floods, critical infrastructure and flood recovery. The review team had considered submissions from members of the public, the Emergency Services and from other key organisations and identified 15 urgent recommendations and 72 interim conclusions which were open for public consultation.
- 5.3 The Cabinet Office outlined the urgent recommendations the review had made. These included:
- That the Environment Agency, supported by local authorities and water companies, should urgently identify areas at highest risk from surface water flooding;
 - That all Local Resilience Forums urgently review their current local arrangements for water rescue to consider whether they are adequate;
 - That all Local Resilience Forums should undertake an urgent review of designated rest centres and other major facilities;
 - Category 1 responders should be urgently provided with a detailed assessment of critical infrastructure in their areas to enable them to assess its vulnerability to flooding;
 - That Local Resilience Forums urgently develop plans to enhance flood warnings;
 - That Local Resilience Forums urgently make arrangements to involve local media representatives;
 - That members of the public increase their personal state of readiness and resilience to floods.
- 5.4 The Cabinet Office explained that the next steps for the review were to continue gathering the evidence base through public consultation and to host a series of regional and local events. The consultation period will close on 31 March and the final report will be published in the

summer. The Cabinet Office concluded by reminding all Forum members that the consultation period was still open and so if anyone wished to contribute to get in touch with the flood review team, contact details were available on their website:

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview.aspx>

- 5.5 The Chair thanked The Cabinet Office and invited any questions or comments.
- 5.6 The Cabinet Office commented on what the Government was doing in response to the findings of the National Pitt Review. They explained that work was proceeding as a result of the 15 urgent recommendations and that the Government would issue a statement by the summer explaining what it had achieved.
- 5.6 The Environment Agency (EA) explained that, from their perspective, there were a number of areas that they were concerned about. Firstly, they explained that there were real concerns regarding the number of people who were currently able to receive flood warnings (currently estimated at less than 40% of those living in flood risk areas). Secondly, further clarity was required about who was the lead agency for flooding, as whilst the EA were responsible for river flooding, there was currently no clear lead for other types of flooding and during the June/July floods two thirds of the flooding was a result of surface water flooding. The EA explained that in London they were working with LRFs to identify areas of risk.
- 5.7 The Chair thanked The Cabinet Office and The Environment Agency and asked for further clarification from the Environment Agency about what was meant when he said that people were unable to receive flood warnings.
- 5.8 The Environment Agency clarified that the current system for issuing flood warnings to the public was based on an opt-in system whereby members of the public can sign up and receive flood warnings. For a number of reasons, including myths around higher insurance costs for those who sign up to these warnings, the current sign up rate is only around 40% in high risk areas. The EA explained that they were investigating the possibility of making sign-up to these warnings an opt-out process, in the meantime, they were targeting vulnerable areas to try and encourage increased participation.
- 5.9 The Chair thanked The Environment Agency and remarked that it was a matter for all Forum members to help with this and encourage public participation in these types of alert systems where they can.
- 5.10 The City of London commented that they agreed with earlier comments about the importance of identifying critical national infrastructure. The City of London explained that a number of the Pitt review recommendations placed responsibility on LRFs and that it was important that we were clear exactly what was required of the LRFs to ensure they are clear about what they are expected to deliver.

- 5.11 The Chair of the Utilities Sector Panel explained that the Utilities Panel was working with the Cabinet Office to identify critical national infrastructure interdependencies and identifying the links and vulnerabilities in the supply chain. The Chair of the Utilities Sector Panel explained that they were also liaising with the relevant lead government departments to share information. The Chair of the Utilities Sector Panel also welcomed the forthcoming review of the Civil Contingencies act and the proposed review of category 2 responders.
- 5.12 The Chair thanked everyone for their involvement in flood planning so far. He explained that although London was less affected by the floods than many areas of the country, it was still a high risk area and there was a great deal to follow up from that discussion. There were no further questions or comments.

6. EXERCISING AND TRAINING (Paper LRRF (08) 02 & 03)

Exercising and Training Strategy

- 6.1 The Chair invited The LRT to present paper LRRF (08) 02.
- 6.2 The LRT explained that the paper LRRF (08) 02 updated the Forum on progress with developing the training and exercise strategy. The LRT explained that one key change in this workstream was that the overview of the exercise work programme would now be done by the London Resilience Programme Board and the Exercise and Training Panel had been disbanded.
- 6.3 The LRT explained that the training and exercise strategy was a three year rolling programme that would have a clear means for measuring success and for identifying and taking forward lessons learnt. The programme would incorporate any priorities identified in the National Capability Survey. The LRT finished by saying that they hoped the LRRF would endorse this approach and that all partners would fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- 6.4 The Chair thanked The LRT. The Forum agreed to the recommendations in the paper. There were no further comments or questions.

Regional Gold Exercise

- 6.5 The Chair invited London Fire Brigade – Emergency Planning (LFB-EP) to update the Forum on progress with developing the Regional Gold Exercise.
- 6.6 LFB-EP explained that, linking in well with the previous agenda item, the Regional Gold Exercise would test London's GOLD arrangements in response to a fluvial and surface water flooding scenario. They explained that the exercise was due to take place in February 2008.

- 6.7 LFB-EP confirmed that all cells would be taking part in the exercise including a media cell. They explained that there would be a briefing event at the Southwark Training centre. LFB-EP outlined the intention to film the exercise and make this DVD available to all afterwards and explained that the post exercise report and DVD would be presented to the April LRRF.
- 6.9 LFB-EP explained that there would be some publicity for the exercise the day before and that this was a good opportunity to raise awareness amongst the public on London's emergency arrangements.
- 6.10 The Chair thanked LFB-EP, there were no further questions or comments.

Exercise Atlantis

- 6.11 The Chair invited The LRT to present paper LRRF (08) 02 on Exercise Atlantis.
- 6.12 The LRT explained that Exercise Atlantis had taken place on the 25 Oct and was attended by approximately 50 delegates from across the London Resilience Partnership. The aim of the exercise had been to exercise the London Strategic Flood Response Plan and to identify any areas to be improved, particularly in the roles and responsibilities section.
- 6.13 The LRT explained that Annex A to paper LRRF (08) 02 identified the key lessons learnt from the exercise. These had been split into 6 categories: Roles and responsibilities, media/communications, local response issues, command and control, response phase and recovery. Some of the key issues identified were around: defining trigger points for action, bottom-up activation of the plan, identifying vulnerable groups, sandbag distribution, the creation of a logistics cell and the identification of critical national infrastructure.
- 6.14 The Chair thanked The LRT and invited any comments or questions.
- 6.15 The Cabinet Office commented that a lot of work had been going on at a national level regarding the creation of a logistics cell and how this could work. They explained that they were developing a national capability of logistics advisors. The Cabinet Office explained that they would be happy to help LRT with this work as they develop it.
- 6.16 The MPS explained that a lot of warning and informing work had been developed in the USA. A member of the MPS had recently been on a visit and had compiled a report which they would share with partners.

ACTION 1: MPS to share report on warning and informing in the USA with partners when it is available.

- 6.17 The Chair thanked The Cabinet Office and MPS. There were no further questions or comments.

7. OLYMPICS

Update on Progress

- 7.1 The Chair invited The Cabinet Office to update the Forum on the Olympics.
- 7.2 The Cabinet Office updated the Forum on the work they had been doing to review the risks to the Olympics. Essentially, this involves looking at what could happen and the consequences this would have. This is then compared to the current capability to deal with this threat/hazard, whilst retaining the ability to respond to any non-olympic emergencies. The Cabinet Office explained that this work would be completed by the summer.
- 7.3 The Chair thanked The Cabinet Office, and asked at what point they would be able to come to the LRRF with a full briefing to enable the LRRF to scope what work it can take forward.
- 7.4 The Cabinet Office explained that it was an incremental process but that the risk assessment would be in place by the summer and so this could be reviewed at the LRRF in July.
- 7.5 There were no further questions or comments.

Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC) (Paper LRRF (08) 05).

- 7.6 The Chair invited The MPS to update the Forum on the latest developments with the SCC.
- 7.7 The MPS explained that there was a clear need for strategic coordination during the Olympics, however, there were two areas for debate. Firstly, what an SCC would look like during the Olympics and whether there was a strong business case for a permanent build. Secondly, what the legacy use of such a building would be.
- 7.8 The Cabinet Office commented that they agreed that a legacy SCC would be a very valuable resource for London. The Cabinet Office explained that it was clear following the 7 July that the current facilities were not fit for purpose.
- 7.9 The Chair thanked The MPS and The Cabinet Office. The Chair suggested that partners would wish to go away and consider the detailed business case for the SCC before committing to any funding.

8. PANDEMIC FLU PLANNING

National Update

- 8.1 The Chair invited The Department of Health (DH) to update the Forum on progress on National Flu Pandemic planning.

- 8.2 The DH explained that a huge amount of progress had occurred regarding National Flu Pandemic planning. In November 2007 the “Overarching Government Strategy to respond to a Flu Pandemic” was published. This incorporated all strategic guidance and was supplemented by detailed guidance clearly mapping what local planners need to take forward.
- 8.3 The DH explained that they were now moving into the implementation phase of this policy and that it was critical that all sectors and local partners have their plans in place. They explained that they would be looking to Regional Resilience Teams to ensure that these plans were in place at a local level.
- 8.4 The DH also explained that they were engaged in a phase of public engagement to increase awareness of what to do in a flu pandemic and to help people have confidence in the emergency plans. They have also launched a series of public hygiene campaigns “Coughs and Sneezes” and “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it”. The DH encouraged partners to help promote this campaign.
- 8.5 The Chair thanked The DH and invited NHS London to update on the Regional perspective

Regional Perspective (Paper LRRF (08) 04).

- 8.6 NHS London explained that following the recent revised central government guidance on Pandemic Flu planning, as well as the results of Exercise Winter Willow, there was a need to revise the existing “London Regional Resilience Flu Pandemic Response Plan”. NHS London also explained that they were currently in the process of assessing NHS readiness and exploring how to best take this forward in London.
- 8.7 NHS London explained that local Influenza Planning Committees (IPCs) were reviewing their plans and will feedback to the NHS. He finished by emphasising the importance of this workstream and by reminding forum members of the high risk that pandemic flu poses and the importance of effective planning for this risk.
- 8.8 The Chair thanked NHS London and invited and questions or comments.
- 8.9 The City of London enquired about the proposed national stockpiles. They asked if it was clear who would have access to these stockpiles and how that access would be granted and what the current government guidance was on the use of facemasks. They also asked who would take the final decision to close schools in a flu pandemic.
- 8.10 The DH responded, they explained that regarding the national stockpiles, in the event of a flu pandemic the message to anyone displaying any symptoms would be to “stay at home”. They would then

be advised to phone the national flu-line (or use the online system) where they would receive further guidance on their symptoms and, if advised accordingly, they would be directed to send their "Flu-buddy" to the local collection centre to pick up their antivirals. The antivirals stockpiles are to be distributed across the country and it is up to local planners to identify where the local collection centres will be positioned.

- 8.11 Regarding the guidance on facemasks, The DH explained that they would be available nationally, but that guidance was that they would only be of benefit to frontline workers such as healthcare professionals. They were not recommended for day-to-day use and she advised employers to undertake a risk assessment before deciding whether to stockpile their own supplies.
- 8.12 Regarding the closure of schools, The Cabinet Office explained that the legal decision to close a school ultimately rests with the head teacher. However, they explained that in the event of a flu pandemic central government will provide advice on the spread of the disease and whether to shut schools or not, and when it is appropriate to reopen them.
- 8.13 The Chair thanked all for their contributions. On the issue of facemasks he explained that there were a number of important decisions to take and that The DH and The Cabinet Office should take this forward. There were no further questions or comments.

9. LONDON PREPARED WEBSITE (www.londonprepared.gov.uk)
(Paper LRRF (08 06)).

- 9.1 The Chair invited the Chair of the Communications Sector Panel to present paper LRRF (08) 06.
- 9.2 The Chair of the Communications Sector Panel outlined that at the LRRF meeting in April 2007 the Forum had agreed an outline strategy for promoting the London Prepared website. The Chair of the Communications Sector Panel explained that this strategy had now been delivered through a publicity campaign. The campaign's objectives were to raise awareness of the website, increase the use of the website, increase the number of registered users and to produce a body of marketing materials to support the website.
- 9.3 The Chair of the Communications Sector Panel explained that the campaign had been taken forward through three strands. A direct mailout and PR campaign targeted at businesses, a newsletter aimed at promoting the work of the partnership and a suite of publicity materials such as mugs and posters to encourage people to visit the website. He explained that the campaign had been a success and that the use of the website went up by 50%.
- 9.4 The Chair of the Communications Sector Panel explained that he wanted two things from Forum members: Firstly, for them to help raise

awareness of the site by helping distribute the publicity materials – these were available on order from LRT. Secondly, for them to provide contributions to the London Prepared Newsletter.

ACTION 2: All members of the Forum to promote the London Prepared Website and to provide contributions to the newsletter.

9.5 The Chair of the Communications Sector Panel concluded that the Communications Sector Panel would be issuing a proposal to further develop the website to the London Resilience Programme Board in March and that depending on the outcome of this they may be asking partners for additional contributions to the publicity fund in the future.

9.6 The Chair thanked The Chair of the Communications Sector Panel. There were no questions or comments.

10. LRF UPDATE (Paper LRRF (08) 07)

10.1 The Chair invited The Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) Representative to update the Forum on the work of the LRFs.

10.2 The LRFs Representative updated the forum on the latest developments from the Local Resilience Forums. He explained that the LRFs met for the ninth time during December 2007. The key issues they addressed were the review of their business plans and the development of training and exercising plans that will complement the regional plan

10.3 The LRFs Representative drew the Forum's attention to three pieces of work which the LRFs had been taking forward, these were:

- A series of Flooding workshops with the Environment Agency to identify local flood issues and develop local flood plans;
- West LRF currently running a pilot project to increase communication links between utility companies and other responders.

10.4 The Chair thanked The LRFs Representative, and asked The Cabinet Office if he could comment on the review of the Civil Contingencies Act and whether it would have an impact on LRFs.

10.5 The Cabinet Office responded explaining that the review would look at what the Act set out to achieve and where those aspirations have not been met – i.e: what is not working and how can it be improved. The review would also look at areas which are developing well and where we can raise the ambition. One of the key areas of interest for the review is whether the list of Cat 1 and 2 responders should be broadened to include new organisations. It was too early to comment on the implications the review could have specifically on LRFs, however, the intention is to bring a paper to the next LRRF detailing the objectives of the review.

ACTION 3: The Cabinet Office to provide a paper to the next meeting of the LRRF on the objectives of the review of the Civil Contingencies Act.

10.6 The Chair thanked The Cabinet Office. There were no further questions or comments.

11. REPORTS FROM THE LRRF SECTOR PANEL CHAIRS (Paper LRRF (08) 08).

11.1 The Forum heard reports from the Chairs or representatives of Sector panels regarding progress made and the key issues facing each (as set out in Paper LRRF (07) 47). Reports were only taken from Chairs with specific items to report.

11.2 Business Sector Panel

The LRT explained that the group continues to work on enhancing communications between the emergency services and the business community in the event of a major incident in London. A limited procurement exercise was conducted in the Autumn, inviting two suppliers to submit proposals for a free-of-charge communication system for a six month “pilot” period. A small evaluation panel has now been convened to assess the proposals.

11.3 Local Authority Panel

The City of London explained that the Business Continuity Promotion Steering Group which sits under the Local Authority Panel was looking at Business Continuity promotion and that they would link up with the work that has been done on the website by the Communication Sector Panel to achieve this.

11.4 Utilities Sector Panel

The Chair of the Utilities Sector Panel remarked that the revised governance structure for the Forum and its associated panels was working very well and had made things much easier for the Utilities sector panel. He thanked all involved in implementing the changes.

11.5 Communications Sector Panel

The MPS commented that some of their team attended the recent air crash at Heathrow and that he would provide an update at the next meeting regarding how their liaison with the media went.

ACTION 4: MPS to provide an update to the next meeting of the LRRF on media liaison at the Heathrow air crash on 17 January.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 There was no further business.

| Summary of Action Points from the 23/01/08 LRRF | | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| No. | Action | Owner |
| 1 | MPS to share report on warning and informing in the USA with partners when it is available. | MPS |
| 2 | All members of the Forum to promote the London Prepared Website and to provide contributions to the newsletter. | All Forum Members |
| 3 | Cabinet Office to provide a paper to the next meeting of the LRRF on the objectives of the review of the Civil Contingencies Act. | Cabinet Office |
| 4 | MPS to provide an update to the next meeting of the LRRF on media liaison at the Heathrow air crash on 17 January. | MPS |