

Report To: Partnerships Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 30 July 2015

Lead Officer: Corporate Director for Economy & Public Realm

Report Author: Rebecca Maxwell/Jonathan Williams, North Wales Councils' Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS)

Title: Regional Emergency Planning Service - Update

1. What is the report about?

This report provides Partnerships Scrutiny with an update on the transition to regional Emergency Planning arrangements across North Wales, the creation of the North Wales Councils' Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS) and sets out the work programme currently being followed.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

In March 2013, Cabinet agreed to move to a regional model for emergency planning across all 6 Councils in North Wales. The new service became operational in July 2014. Partnerships Scrutiny requested an update on the new arrangements once they had bedded in.

3. What are the Recommendations?

Partnerships Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the update on establishment of the Regional Emergency Planning Service and provide comment on the work programme now underway.

4. Report details.

- 4.1 The new regional service – North Wales Councils' Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS) - went live with effect from 1 July 2014. The change for Denbighshire County Council was less than for other North Wales Councils as we had been operating with a remote service hosted by Flintshire for some years. Under the arrangements, each Council has a dedicated Emergency Planning Liaison Officer as well as access to full back up from the regional planning service as a whole. Officers are based formally in two hubs – in Flintshire & Conwy – with the liaison officer spending significant time hot desking in their designated authority.
- 4.2 The regional team work to an agreed service plan with operational management provided by a Regional Manager and Deputy Manager. Oversight of the service is maintained by an Executive Board comprising

senior officers from each Council. Denbighshire County Council is represented by the Corporate Director for Economy & Public Realm.

4.3 The benefits intended from establishing the regional service were:

- Improved resilience and improved focus of available resources by sharing specialist support and common tasks
- Greater consistency and dissemination of best practice
- Improved communication channels
- Cash releasing efficiency savings

On the whole these are being achieved. The latest Service Update (May 2015) is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

4.4 Future work priorities for the regional service include:

- Updating various regional risk specific response plans – Maritime Oil Spill, Mass Fatalities, Flood Warnings, Chemical, Nuclear
- Developing a regional Emergency Response standard
- Implementing the web-based Resilience Direct tool as an information sharing and archive facility
- Improved Rest Centre training and exercising

4.5 With regard to Denbighshire County Council's Emergency Planning response, the following activities have been supported:

- Training & Exercising – An audit of training has been carried out and a programme established to ensure sufficient coverage across the Council of officers trained to Gold, Silver & Bronze level. In addition, various exercises have been supported including Exercise Dragon (Coastal Pollution), Exercise Cygnus (Pandemic Disease) and Exercise Elwy (Flood Response). Top up Rest Centre training has also been provided.
- Business Continuity Planning – A region wide audit of all Business Continuity Plans was carried out and improvement plans for each Council were developed. Support will now be provided to ensure recommendations are implemented.
- Review of Response Arrangements – Support was provided to review and overhaul Denbighshire's Emergency Response arrangements. A clear structure and set of reporting arrangements has been established with lead officers identified. These are currently being refreshed following changes to senior management arrangements. A 'Gold' on-call rota has been established to ensure senior cover is always available should an emergency incident occur. An improved Emergency Management Policy is close to being completed, including easy to access guidance and checklists for officers at different levels within the emergency response arrangements.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

It is important that the Council is able to demonstrate robust and resilient arrangements for dealing with emergency that make occur within the County. The regional service enables this by sharing capacity and expertise across the area.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

Costs to the Council have reduced as a result of engaging with the Regional Emergency Planning service.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision? The completed EqIA template should be attached as an appendix to the report.

An EqIA is not required for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Consultations were carried out when the decision to enter the regional arrangements was made.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

N/A

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

Risks were fully considered when the decision was made to enter into the regional arrangement.

11. Power to make the Decision

No decision is required, but Articles 6.1, 6.3.3(d) and 6.3.4(d) outline Scrutiny's powers in relation to the Service's work.

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