

Annex 2. Morning Session. DCC Scrutiny 20.3.19.

Llantysilio Fire 2018. Natural Resources Wales Timeline.

The majority of the information in this timeline has been taken from the Natural Resources Wales(NRW) Situation Reports (Sitreps)

Sitreps are produced by the Duty Tactical Manager (DTM), the on duty Incident Manager who will lead the internal co-ordination of the NRW response to an Incident. Sitreps are distributed internally to other senior managers within NRW and are also shared with other organisations as deemed appropriate by the DTM e.g Welsh Government, Public Health Wales etc.

19.7.18 (Thursday) Fire reported to NRW via Denbighshire Countryside Service. WIRS opened.

19.7.18 Denbighshire Country Council Countryside Service staff and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) attending on site. Fire on private land. NRW do not attend unless there is a request for assistance from the NWFRS.

Thursday 19.7.19 NRW Sitrep 6pm (18:00)

Executive Summary

Denbighshire Countryside Service have reported a fire on the southern side of Mynydd Llantysilio. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service are in attendance.

This area is within the Mynyddoedd Llantysilio/Ruabon and Minera SSSI and also within the Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC.

We will be providing advice to the FRS. Initial assessment is that any fire runoff is unlikely to cause any pollution issues.

Friday 20.7.19 NRW Sitrep 16.30

Executive Summary

Denbighshire Countryside Service have reported a fire on the southern side of Mynydd Llantysilio. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service are in attendance.

This area is within the Mynyddoedd Llantysilio/Ruabon and Minera SSSI and also within the Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC.

We will be providing advice to the FRS. Initial assessment is that any fire runoff is unlikely to cause any pollution issues.

New Developments

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service continue to deal with the fire on Mynydd Llantysillo. There are 7 appliances in attendance (3 pumps and 4 off road vehicles) with support damping down away from the main are being provided by Denbighshire Countryside Services. NRW has offered the use of an additional tracked vehicle to support if required but this is not required at this time.

Thursday 26.7.19 NRW Sitrep 10 am

Executive Summary
Denbighshire Countryside Service reported a fire on the southern side of Mynydd Llantysillo, near Llangollen on Wednesday 18 th July. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service have been in attendance since then and several hectares of heathland have been burnt. This area is within the Mynyddoedd Llantysilio/Ruabon and Minera SSSI, the Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC and Clwydian Range AONB.
New Developments (since previous SITREP)
Fire appeared to be out on Tuesday 24 th however it re-ignited on Wednesday 25 th and a change in wind direction moved the fire south towards a forest plantation. A trench is being cut along the boundary of the Common to try to prevent the fire reaching the forest. The wind subsequently changed direction again and ignited hot spots to the north resulting in a plume of smoke spreading north-eastwards which was visible 20 miles away.
Outlook and Predicted Escalation
Without significant rain the fire is likely to continue to burn in peat for days if not weeks. The key issue is preventing the fire reaching woodland around the mountain. Fire run-off is unlikely to cause any pollution issues. A significant flare-up could have air quality issues for Llangollen if the wind blows from the west or north-west.
Operational Response
NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service and may occasionally visit site if necessary

Thursday 26.7.19 NRW Sitrep 4 pm

Executive Summary
Denbighshire Countryside Service reported a fire on the southern side of Mynydd Llantysillo, near Llangollen on on Wednesday 18 th July. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service have been in attendance since then and 10ha + of heathland have been burnt. This area is within the Mynyddoedd Llantysilio/Ruabon and Minera SSSI, the Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC and Clwydian Range AONB. The Fire appeared to be out on Tuesday 24 th however it re-ignited on Wednesday 25 th and a change in wind direction moved the fire south towards a forest plantation.
New Developments (since previous SITREP)
The wind has increased and moved to SW today, resulting in the area affected by the fire expanding, pushing the fire across the east-west running ridge towards the A542. The burnt area is now estimated to be into the 10's of hectares. The change in wind direction may have saved the forest plantation. 7 fire appliances and 4 off-road appliances are on site. No houses are currently threatened, however many of the houses around the mountain rely on spring fed water supplies and there is a risk that these may be impacted by the fire
Outlook and Predicted Escalation
Without significant rain the fire is likely to continue to burn in peat for days if not weeks. The key issue is preventing the fire reaching houses and woodland around the mountain. Currently it appears that the wind is blowing the fire away from woodland

but wind direction is likely to change. Fire run-off is unlikely to cause any pollution issues. A significant flare-up could have air quality issues for Llangollen if the wind blows from the west or north-west.

Operational Response

NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service and may occasionally visit site if necessary

Friday 27.7.19 NRW Sitrep 10 am

On Friday morning the wind is blowing from the south sending a plume of smoke across north-east Wales to Merseyside. The Horseshoe pass (A542) has been shut as the fire is moving towards it. 7 fire appliances and 4 off-road appliances are on site. No houses are currently threatened, however many of the houses around the mountain rely on spring fed water supplies and there is a risk that these may be impacted by the fire

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

Without significant rain the fire is likely to continue to burn in peat for days if not weeks. The key issue is preventing the fire reaching houses and woodland around the mountain. Currently it appears that the wind is blowing the fire away from woodland but wind direction is likely to change. Fire run-off is unlikely to cause any pollution issues. WAQTA contacted for advice on air quality issues.

Operational Response

NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service. We have arranged for NRW moorland fire fighting equipment to be sent to the site

Saturday 28.7.19 NRW Sitrep 10 am

On Saturday morning cooler temperatures and some overnight rain has dampened the fire down, so it is now smouldering across a large area of the Mountain, however strong winds are pushing the smouldering front of the fire on. At least 7 fire appliances and 4 off-road appliances are on site. NRW Ops delivery tractor and flail is being used to cut fire breaks across the Mountain to try to prevent the front of the fire spreading. This appears to be having some success. United Utilities have provided a large water tanker to help with fire fighting.

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

It is hoped that the heavy rain forecast for Sunday will help put the fire out, although the peat may continue to smoulder for some weeks. The key issue is preventing the fire reaching houses and woodland around the mountain. Fire run-off is unlikely to cause any pollution issues.

Operational Response

NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service. 2 Ops Delivery staff will be on site for most of the day operating the tractor and will return on Sunday if required.

Sunday 29.7.19 NRW Sitrep 10 am

On Saturday cooler temperatures and some rain, NRW Ops delivery tractor cutting fire breaks across the Mountain and other fire fighting activities initially dampened the fire. Smoke continued to blow across large areas to the north and north-east (eg Wrexham and Deeside and beyond). However during Saturday evening and night, high winds whipped the fire up and it spread to the A542, resulting in the Ponderosa Café at the top of the Horseshoe Pass being evacuated and Incident Command Centre moved. Fortunately heavy rain since 5am Sunday has dampened the fire down and there is much less smoke than on Saturday. Reduced number of FRS personnel on site. A542 remains closed.

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

The heavy rain on Sunday will help dampen the fire down and cooler temperatures and some rain during the coming week may result in it going out, although the peat may continue to smoulder for weeks. There is a risk that if hot weather returns in August the fire could re-start, so there may be a need to tackle hot spots over the coming week.

Operational Response

NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service. 2 Ops Delivery staff are currently on site ready to operate the tractor and flail if needed but this seems unlikely at present.

Monday 30.7.19. 10 am

Heavy rain and cooler temperatures meant that the fire dampened down on Sunday with less smoke. FRS remain concerned about fire at three locations – near Ponderosa Café, above Quarry and at another location towards Bryneglwys. NRW Ops delivery staff are continuing to cut firebreaks and an additional NRW tractor is being brought to site to assist. A542 remains closed.
Outlook and Predicted Escalation
Cooler temperatures, lighter winds and some rain on Monday should help fire fighting, however hotter weather is predicted to return from mid-week and this could cause the fire to re-start. FRS focusing on preventing fire spreading east of A542 onto Rhiwabon Mountain (3000ha of moorland) and west towards Corwen (where half of Llantsilio mountain remains unburnt). Peat could smoulder for weeks and so FRS staff are likely to be present for sometime.
Operational Response
NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service. 2 Ops Delivery staff are currently on site with tractor and flail. Another NRW tractor with hedge cutter attachment is being brought to site this morning (at request of FRS) to enable steeper areas to be cut.

From the Monday 30 July to Monday the 20 August NRW staff from the Denbighshire NRM Team attended the on site Incident Command Unit every morning to discuss the latest situation and who further assistance may be required from NRW.

Tuesday 31.7.19. 10 am

Denbighshire Countryside Service reported a fire on the southern side of Mynydd Llantysillo, near Llangollen on Wednesday 18 th July. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service have been in attendance since then and a minimum of 310ha of moorland have been burnt. This area is within the Mynyddoedd Llantysilio/Ruabon and Minera SSSI, the Berwyn and South Clwyd Mountains SAC and Clwydian Range AONB. The Fire appeared to be out on Tuesday 24 th , however it re-ignited on Wednesday 25 th and approximately half of the Mountain has now been burnt, resulting in the closure of the Horseshoe Pass Road (A542) and smoke spreading across a large area of north-east Wales and Merseyside.
New Developments (since previous SITREP)
The situation on Tuesday 31st is much improved with fires mostly out and much less smoke, although some areas are still smouldering where the fire is burning in peat. FRS are trying to tackle these hot spots. Two United Utilities tankers have been ferrying water to fire appliances since Thursday. NRW Ops delivery staff are continuing to cut firebreaks and an additional NRW tractor is flailing vegetation along the A542, in case the fire re-ignites, to prevent it crossing the A542 and getting onto Rhiwabon Mountain, a much larger area of moorland, surrounded by forest. The road remains closed from the Ponderosa café at the top of the Horseshoe Pass towards Llangollen.
Outlook and Predicted Escalation
FRS will be on site Tuesday and Wednesday but are hoping to leave before end of week. With warm dry weather predicted from Wednesday, possibly for several weeks, there is a high risk of the fire re-igniting, particularly in strong winds, so FRS will be monitoring the Mountain daily for weeks to come.
Operational Response
NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service. Two Ops Delivery tractors are operating – one with flail cutting fire breaks on western side of Mountain and one with hedge-cutter attachment cutting along A542.

Wednesday 1.8.18 10 am

<p>Whilst fires are out (ie no flames) much of the Mountain is still smouldering as peat continues to burn underground, with smoke wafting around the local area, although much reduced compared to the weekend . FRS are trying to tackle hot spots by digging into peat and then spraying water below ground. NRW Ops delivery staff are on site and may continue to cut firebreaks as required by FRS. The A542 remains closed from the Ponderosa café at the top of the Horseshoe Pass towards Llangollen.</p>
<p>Outlook and Predicted Escalation</p>
<p>With warm dry weather predicted over the coming week, there is a high risk of the fire re-igniting, particularly in strong winds. FRS are likely to be on site until the end of the week continuing to tackle hot spots and will need to monitor the situation for weeks to come.</p>
<p>Operational Response</p>
<p>NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service. Two Ops Delivery tractors are on site available to cut fire breaks if needed</p>

Wednesday 1 August pm. Meeting at Incident Command Unit of the Fire and Rescue Service. Police, Local Councillor. Denb CC Highways, Denb Countryside Service, NRW Operational Delivery and Local Denbighshire Team of NRW . Discussion on the re-opening of the main road.

Thursday 2.8.18 NRW Sitrep 10 am.

<p>Whilst fires are out (ie no flames) much of the Mountain is still smouldering as peat continues to burn underground, with smoke wafting around the local area, although much reduced compared to the weekend . FRS are trying to tackle hot spots by digging into peat and then spraying water below ground. NRW Ops delivery staff are on site and may continue to cut firebreaks as required by FRS. The A542 remains closed from the Ponderosa café at the top of the Horseshoe Pass towards Llangollen.</p> <p>Update 2/8/18- There is continued pockets of fire and smouldering peat, thermal imaging shows a wide extent of hotspots on the mountain. Due to local business pressure, the FRS are intending to re-open one lane of the road today, 2 August 2018, with traffic management in place. NRW have been requested by the FRS to suspend open access to the mountain under CRoW, however this is not possible under the parameters set in the CRoW Act, NRW can only advise people not to access the burnt areas and not visit the remainder of the mountain. With regard to the cutting of fire breaks, due to a FRS Health and Safety incident which occurred yesterday, 1 August 2018, all vehicle access has been suspended. The use of contractors to undertake the required work is currently being progressed by Denbighshire LA.</p>
<p>Outlook and Predicted Escalation</p>
<p>With warm dry weather predicted over the coming week, there is a high risk of the fire re-igniting, particularly in strong winds. FRS are likely to be on site until the end of the week continuing to tackle hot spots and will need to monitor the situation for weeks to come.</p> <p>Update 2/8/18 – Due to continued dry weather further outbreaks of fire are likely</p>
<p>Operational Response</p>
<p>NRW staff liaising with FRS and Denbighshire Countryside Service. Two Ops Delivery tractors are on site available to cut fire breaks if needed</p> <p>Update 2/8/18 – NRW will continue to advise on the management of the land whilst reignition is likely. NRW can support with the cutting of fire breaks, however NRW have requested that the use of specialised contractors for this work is progressed.</p>
<p>Health & Safety</p>
<p>Care needs to be taken with tractor on steep ground (double wheels are available for tractor). Staff have appropriate PPE, equipment and training.</p> <p>Update 2/8/18 – Due to H+S incidents which have occurred to other partner organisations during this incident, no vehicles are currently allowed into the area. This will be reviewed later today however the use of specialised contractors is also being progressed.</p>

Thursday 2 August. Further on-site inter agency meeting attended by NRW. Road re-opens. NRW unable to apply for closure to Access Land as Fire Severity Index criteria not met.

Friday 3.8.18. NRW Sitrep. 12.00 Mid day.

Update 3/8/18 – Fire service remain on site as the hill is still smouldering. The main road re-opened yesterday, however the FRS are still concerned about members of the public wandering into areas where the ground is still hot.

Fire service remain on-site. A watching brief to be maintained by NRW over weekend, 4+5 August 2018.

No further help is required from NRW operational team, all equipment has been removed from the area. Input is still being provided from the NRM team and contact will be maintained over the weekend.

Saturday 4 August. NRW staff visit the ICU. Wind changes direction. Road Closed Pm.

Sunday 5 August NRW staff visit the ICU. Wind changes direction. Road Closed Pm.

Monday 6.8.18. NRW Sitrep 12.00 Mid day.

Update 6/8/18 – NRM met with the FRS Incident commander this morning and the issue today, 6/8/18, is that the fire has restarted and burnt down to the road (A542) in the corner of the horseshoe pass and is very close to 3 houses. The homeowners are wanting to undertake some vegetation management themselves however there are safety concerns for this to be undertaken whilst the fire is burning. NRW would have no objections to the actual cutting in these circumstances. NRM are trying to establish if further mowing is required by NRW Ops elsewhere on the mountain. The (A542) has been re-closed.

Update 6/8/18 – Due to the fire re-igniting and being close to properties we are currently waiting on further updates. NRM are continuing to input re the SSSI/SAC impact.

Tuesday 7.8.18. NRW Sitrep 12.00 Mid day.

Update 7/8/18 – The fire is still smouldering throughout the burnt areas, over the last few days the wind is tending to increase and change direction in the afternoons blowing from a northerly direction and pushing the fire front towards the road. The main A542 remains closed due to the proximity of the fire to the road. A meeting is to be held today, 7/8/18 at 14:30 pm between the Llantysilio Agent, Denbighshire Countryside Service, NWFRS and NRW to discuss next steps.

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

Update 7/8/18 – there are currently no requirements on NRW to undertake any further cutting. The situation is being monitored by NWFRS and fire outbreaks dealt with. NRW continue to offer advice re SSSI/SAC. NRW will continue to liaise with NWFRS and other partner organisations. Unless there are any further developments, it is not intended to update the SITREP until Friday 10/8/18

Operational Response

Update 7/8/18 -NRW continue to liaise with NWFRS and partner organisations. No physical operational response is currently required.

Tuesday 7 August pm. Meeting at the Incident Command Unit of the FRS, Denbighshire Countryside Service, Local Denbighshire Team of NRW, Agent for Llantysilio Estate.

Agreed in principle that the Estate would supply a contractor to undertake further mowing of fire breaks if further assistance requested from the FRS.

Friday 10.8.18. NRW Sitrep 12.00 Mid day.

Update 10/8/18 – FRS continuing their efforts to control fire with 3 appliances on site today following further flareup last night. The A542 remains closed due to smoke though rather than proximity of the fire to the road. FRS applying as much water as

they can to control hotspots. Rain also falling this morning which has helped. FRS hoping to reduce to single appliance later today and will continue to maintain a presence over the weekend.

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

Update 10/8/18 –FRS have made requests for additional equipment this morning but flail requested is not available due to planned maintenance. We are continuing to offer advice re SSSI/SAC. NRW will continue to liaise with NWFRS and other partner organisations. Unless there are any further developments, it is not intended to update the SITREP until Monday 13/8/18.

Monday 13.8.18. NRW Sitrep 12.00 Mid day.

Update13/8/18 –Some rain over the weekend has helped to reduce the number of locations on the mountain where the fire is still smouldering but the fire continues in the area adjacent to the Horseshoe Pass itself. Incident Commander from FRS today considering what further work is required to create further fire breaks, NRW staff continuing to liaise with them on a daily basis. Other than this no NRW presence at the site .

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

Update 13/8/18 –Further rain forecast this week hoped to further improve the situation. Unless there are any further developments, it is not intended to update the SITREP until Friday17/8/18.

Tuesday 14 August pm. Further to request from the FRS on the 13.8.18 NRW arranged a meeting with the Agent for the Estate. NRW , FRS Incident commander and contractor for the Llanstysilio Estate at the Incident Command Unit. FRS advised the contractor where mowing would be beneficial. Contractor decided which locations were suitable based on previous experience and equipment. Mowing carried out that evening.

Friday 17.8.18. NRW Sitrep 12.00 Mid day.

Update17/8/18 –An improving situation resulting in FRS are stepping down in their current response. FRS are continuing to monitor hotspots across the mountain, however they are not expecting to be present overnight. Unless the situation changes the SITREP will be updated on 20/8/18.

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

Update 17/8/18 – Improving situation with the fire out and the monitoring of hotspots to ensure there is no reignition.

Operational Response

Update 17/8/18 -NRW continue to liaise with NWFRS and partner organisations. No physical operational response is currently required.

Friday 17 August Press Release/ BBC news page “Fire out”. Still some smouldering on site.

Closedown 20/8/18 – Due to a reducing presence on site by Fire and Rescue Service it has been decided to closedown this incident. If any further fires flare up on the mountain then a new SITREP will be circulated.

Outlook and Predicted Escalation

Closedown 20/8/18 – Fire Service have withdrawn from site with only some crew members walking the mountain to monitor for further outbreaks. Areas are now re-open to members of the public, however they are being encouraged to remain on the designated paths.

5 September 2018. FRS inform NRW that ICU has been removed from the site.