

Response by the Joint Emergency Planning Unit**MULTI-AGENCY SILVER GROUP**

1. General. The Major Incident Response Plan was not activated. That said, the Multi-Agency Silver Group, chaired by West Mercia Police's Superintendent Purcell, met a number of times a day (as appropriate and including the weekends) via tele-conference. These tele-conferences enabled a cohesive and coordinated response from the County's responders, being facilitated and administered by the Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU). Representatives were:
 - a. Local Authority – Highways & Contractor, JEPU, Schools & Media.
 - b. Provider Services.
 - c. HHT Operations Director
 - d. ASC
 - e. Police
 - f. Fire
 - g. WMAS
 - h. Primecare OOH
 - i. Patient First – Non Acute patient Transport
2. What Went Well. Partnership and multi-agency working, through the Silver Group, was both effective and synergistic. Moreover, the JEPU received laudatory comment from Superintendent Purcell.
3. What Improvements Could Be Made. Whilst the role of the Silver Group was to coordinate the priorities of the multi-agencies to ensure these agencies needs were known and addressed, the process could be improved by detailing 'priorities' as a specific agenda item. In turn, the JEPU would produce an agreed and visible prioritisation of tasks available to multi-agencies. This priority list could encompass details such as road clearance, actions surrounding school closures and access to key infrastructure, such as GP surgeries.
4. What Relevant Policies Are In Place.
 - a. Respective organisations' Major Incident Response Plans.
 - b. The Herefordshire Multi-Agency Silver Group Activation Plan – published and maintained by the JEPU.
5. Whether Any Reviews Have Already Been Undertaken At Service Level Of Policies Or Service Delivery Arrangements Or Are Proposed And Whether Any Action Plans Have Already Been Put In Place To Generate Improvement. The JEPU have produced an overarching multi-agency Major Incident Plan (applicable to police, NHS, council etc) to make sure we have a shared understanding of the policy and all know what the other should be doing in a major incident. The aim of this plan is to provide a framework to enable Herefordshire's Multi-Agencies (including Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire) to carry out their responsibilities in dealing with an emergency or major incident. Whatever the cause of a disaster or emergency, the range of actions which will be required of the County's Multi Agencies will follow these generic arrangements. Under

this document will be annexes pertinent to specific areas (ie, PCT, HHT, Council). The overarching document and most of the annexes are in draft form and, pending completion of the HHT annex, will be distributed for comment.

COUNTY VOLUNTARY EMERGENCY COMMITTEE – 4x4 RESPONSE

6. General. Herefordshire 4x4 Response Group is a registered member of the National 4x4 Response Network. There are currently 26 volunteer groups around the UK that are involved in helping the country's emergency services and local community. The Herefordshire Volunteer 4x4 Group offer assistance to Emergency Services, Herefordshire Council and the residents of the County by providing all-terrain vehicles and advanced off road driving capabilities across uneven terrain, flooded roads and to other areas inaccessible to most vehicles. The Response Group voluntarily provided support 24 hours a day. Similarly, St John provided a limited 4x4 capability when available, alongside Primecare (Out of Hours), whose vehicles and drivers were made available inside core working hours, and Patient First. The British Red Cross provided additional patient transport at weekends, allowing the HHT to discharge or transfer patients, therefore make hospital beds available.
7. What Went Well. Vehicle support was coordinated through the JEPUs allowing these County Voluntary Emergency Committee (CVEC) organisations and Primecare to provide transportation of essential staff for the County's Community Hospitals, HHT, District Nurses and Mental Health.
8. What Did Not Go Well. It was considered that some journeys undertaken were not justified when taking in to account factors such as priority, location, distance, road conditions and access to alternative transport. Moreover, some staff took it for granted that this limited capability would be made available and did not actively pursue self help.
9. What Improvements Could Be Made.
 - a. The requesting organisations should establish key information to pass to JEPUs and volunteer services to allow a coordinated and tailored response, reducing the number of journeys undertaken.
 - b. Business Continuity Plans across The Partnership should incorporate a contingency for severe winter weather and contain a questionnaire template to confirm the need for a journey.
10. What Relevant Policies Are In Place. CVEC Plan – published and maintained by the JEPUs.
11. Whether Any Reviews Have Already Been Undertaken At Service Level Of Policies Or Service Delivery Arrangements Or Are Proposed And Whether Any Action Plans Have Already Been Put In Place To Generate Improvement.
 - a. As there is no dedicated 4x4 plan that allows future operations to be organised in line with the lessons identified and best practice, the JEPUs need to improve the 4x4 Volunteer Group details within the CVEC Plan.
 - b. Highways should include the 4x4 Volunteer Group on the distribution list for road conditions. When passed, this information allows the response group to plan their

routes. Also, they have real-time experience of roads which could be used in the updates.

SURGE INFORMATION LINE¹.

12. General. As the snow impacted on the people of Herefordshire, the JEPU activated the Surge Information Line (SIL), based at the Brockington Annex, in accordance with the guidance contained within the Council's existing Major Incident Response Plan. Activation of the SIL prevents disruption to existing switchboards and can be requested by multi-agency partners. The SIL, operated on a single dedicated number (publicised on local media) and manned by volunteers, provided:
 - a. A public telephone information service, largely relating to school and road closures along with public transport disruption.
 - b. Accurate and up to date information to all callers.
13. What Went Well. Without the willingness of volunteer staff from within the Council and PCT, many critical services within the County would have been disrupted.
14. What Improvements Could Be Made. Without Council and PCT volunteer staff, the SIL facility would not have been available. Yet, there is not a HR policy for those partner employees wishing to volunteer to respond during an emergency/incident; confusion exists on issues such as budget reimbursement, TOIL and pay.
15. What Relevant Policies Are In Place. SIL Activation Guidance and rota – published and maintained by the JEPU.

{Brief prepared by Erica Hermon, Emergency Planning Manager}

¹ Previously known as the Emergency Information Line.