



TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT

Committee Report

Meeting : CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE : 10 December 2007

Subject : THE REGIONAL CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL
AND NUCLEAR (CBRN) CHAIRS GROUP

Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware from previous reports that the North East Regional CBRN Working Group (NE CBRN WG) was established in 2003 and meets on a four monthly cycle. The work of the WG resulted in the publication of the North East Regional Capability Co-ordination Plan for CBRN which details the multi-agency response arrangements agreed at Regional level.
- 1.2 Single agency CBRN arrangements (ie Local Authority Major Incident Plans) focus on response at a local level using the Regional Plan as an overarching guidance document.
- 1.3 The NE CBRN WG is one of a number of similar groups around the UK working at Regional level, set up to co-ordinate multi-agency CBRN response arrangements.
- 1.4 A national document has been released outlining the multi-agency arrangements to be put in place should a CBRN incident take place. The document is a protectively marked as 'Restricted' and is held on file at the EPU.

The document, issued by the Home Office (HO) in July 2006 is the main driver for CBRN strategy over the next four years. The document has recently been made available to responders via membership of the Regional CBRN Working Groups. The NE Regional CBRN Working Group has been involved with the development of the document since early 2005.
- 1.5 Response, Recovery and Restoration phases of a CBRN incident have been identified for Chemical, Biological and Radiological events. The timelines set out a model response to guide identified main responders:

The document provides a summary of the responder key decisions or actions highlighted at a relevant time point. These time points enable agencies to address both internal and multi-agency CBRN response issues.

- 1.6 The document is designed to:
- Provide a holistic, multi-agency picture of an ideal response
 - Cover all phases of an incident from start to finish
 - Assist in identifying capability gaps
 - Establish a shared vision for continued development of CBRN resilience within the UK.
- 1.7 The basis for the model response is a set planning assumptions based on numbers for decontamination, casualties requiring specialist treatment and fatalities, for single incidents involving, Chemical, Biological and Radiological substances.

2 Background

- 2.1 In June 2007 a National Group was convened, inviting the Regional CBRN Issues Groups Chairs to assist the Home Office in the provision of a national overview of CBRN planning and address future CBRN requirements for the future. The Group met for the second time in October 2007. The North East Region is represented on the Group by an officer of the T&W EPU.

The inaugural meeting was also attended by a Officer of the Home Office (HO) CBRN Readiness and Response Office for Security and Counter Terrorism. The Officer will continue as HO representative for the Group.

- 2.2 The Aims and Objectives of the Group were agreed and Terms of Reference proposed.

Aim

To evaluate the current status of CBRN multi-agency planning across the Regions.

Objectives

- Identify good practice across Regions
- Highlight areas of concern
- Identify lessons learned
- Compare multi-agency training strategies
- Identify key priorities for Regional CBRN planning
- Consider future remit of group
- Terms of Reference

3 National Arrangements - Future Developments

- 3.1 The second meeting, held in October 2007, focussed upon involvement of the Group in future CBRN developments. Most Regions have formal CBRN arrangements in place or under development.

- 3.2 The next stage of the National Strategy is to develop 'Site Specific' CBRN plans. The HO considers the Group to be central to future planning in this area.

4 Implications for North East CBRN Planning

- 4.1 The requirements of 'Site Specific' CBRN planning have been outlined in a Report to the T&W District Liaison Officers.

As the named Local Authority, Newcastle City Council will provide the primary LA input into the process. The other LAs will be informed of developments and progress made on the 'Site Specific' Plan and will become involved in the detail of the planning as required. It is intended that the Plan should be adopted across Tyne and Wear, then via the Regional CBRN Group to other agencies in the North East.

- 4.2 The process will formally start at the NE Regional CBRN Group Meeting, to be held at the offices of the EPU in November 2007. The HO representative from the Regional CBRN Chairs Group will address the meeting and outline the 'Site Specific' process and update group representatives on current national CBRN developments.
- 4.3 A draft 'Site Specific' Plan template has been produced and the National CBRN Chairs Group has been consulted during development. The template will be adopted across the UK. Plans whilst under development will be peer assessed by the Regional CBRN Chairs Group.
- 4.4 A 'Site Specific' Plan Working Group will be tasked with taking the project forward and officers designated from responding agencies to help formulate the plan and produce an Action Plan for management of the project.
- 4.5 The time frame for production, testing by multi agency exercise and ratification of the plan is two years. Progress on the Newcastle plan will be regularly reported back to the NE Regional CBRN WG, T&W DLOs and to this committee.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 Site Specific CBRN planning will have significant impact on current resilience work, particularly for local authorities (LA's) and the EPU. The long established partnership working environment in the Tyne and Wear area will enable the benefits of this work to be shared by all LA's and partners.
- 5.2 The Regional CBRN Chairs Group has in its short lifespan established its effectiveness in National multi agency CBRN planning. The Group is considered by the HO to be pivotal in helping deliver the proposed response.
- 5.3 The work of the Group in 'peer assessing' CBRN multi agency work will help facilitate national consistency in this challenging area of resilience planning.

6 Recommendation

6.1 Members are asked to note this report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Papers relating to this report are held in the appropriate file in the EPU Offices.