

Background and Context

In March 2010, West Midlands Police (WMP) initiated a multi-agency recovery exercise, with the objective of identifying and considering the multi agency strategic challenges of recovery and consequence management following terrorist attacks across the West Midlands.

How the Topic was Handled

Exercise Little Owl Two, focused on recovery from a multi sited terrorist attack in the West Midlands, played out in a previous exercise held in November 2009. The previous exercise explored the response to a terrorist attack resulting in a substantial number of people being killed or injured and with severe damage to local infrastructure.

Exercise Little Owl Two took place over a full working day and explored the actions of partner agencies throughout the recovery phase of an incident. The exercise involved delegates working through scenarios which were set at 24hrs, 1 week, 1 month and then 6 to 12 months post incident. The scenarios were interspersed with presentations from relevant subject area experts who discussed their actions during the relevant phases of recovery.

Responses to the scenarios were discussed with delegates from individual tables feeding back their thoughts to all delegates. Following the scenario discussions, a number of suggested actions and considerations were shown to delegates for comparison.

Each table had a facilitator and note taker to record future learning opportunities.

The exercise was funded by WMP utilising in house facilities and the WMP Testing & Exercising Team and as such was made available, at no cost, to participating organisations.

Organisations involved included:

- Birmingham City Council
- British Red Cross
- British Transport Police
- Camden Council, London
- Central Networks
- Civil Contingencies Secretariat
- Coventry City Council
- Disaster Action
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Government Office East
- Government Office South East
- Government Office West Midlands
- Greater Manchester Police
- Health Protection Agency
- Highways Agency
- Home Office

- Metropolitan Police
- Network Rail
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- Staffordshire
- The Military and Special Forces
- The National Health Service
- Walsall Council
- West Mercia Police
- West Midlands Ambulance Service

Lessons Identified

Exercise Little Owl Two identified the following key lessons:

- Partners should engage in further preparations focused at recovering from a major incident. These preparations should include multi agency training and exercising;
- Exercises, events and meetings across the LRF should be attended by the appropriate level of representation, i.e. strategic representation at strategic events and tactical representation at tactical level events;
- The current level of recovery planning / plans across the 7 local authority areas should be assessed, with a view to exploring the feasibility of creating a Standardised or Generic Recovery Plan;
- Communication is key during the recovery process. Methods of improving communication between partners, the public and businesses should be investigated;
- An agreed method of communicating a consistent message on behalf of partners should be produced;
- Exercise Little Owl Two highlighted the importance of partnership working and showed that when partners work together in a cohesive manner, they are far more effective than when working in isolation. Further opportunities for partnership work and collaboration should be examined as opportunities arise.

Contacts for Further Information

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Additional Documents

Organisations wishing to obtain any further information should approach WMP via contact details above.