

A MULTI AGENCY REPORT SPONSORED BY  
THE SOUTH WEST  
REGIONAL RESILIENCE FORUM

**MAJOR FLOODING AT BOSCASTLE  
AND SURROUNDING AREAS OF  
NORTH CORNWALL  
16<sup>th</sup> August 2004**

**A SUMMARY OF  
LESSONS IDENTIFIED**

This report records the outcomes of debriefs undertaken soon after the events in August 2004. Since that time the gaps identified in processes and procedures have been addressed by the relevant local, regional and national agencies in order to develop improved responses. The Local Resilience Forum has implemented an Exercise and Training sub-group who manage this process throughout Devon and Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The Regional Resilience Team at Government Office for the South West has worked with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat to incorporate the lessons into national guidance.

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## The Incident

During the afternoon of Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2004, heavy rainfall in north Cornwall caused a flash flood in the village of Boscastle on the north Cornwall coast, within North Cornwall District Council's area of responsibility. The first rainfall was recorded above Boscastle at about 12.30 p.m., with heavy rainfall over a concentrated area falling for the next hours. It is estimated that 1,422 million litres of rain fell in just two hours, with some areas in North Cornwall recording 200+ mm of rainfall between 11.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. The River Valency, which runs through the centre of the small village, quickly became a torrent and overflowed. An estimated three-metre depth of water poured through the village, washing away cars, trapping residents and tourists and leading to a major rescue operation.

The first call to the emergency services resulting from the weather was at 2.33 p.m. reporting the A39 flooded at Otterham Station. At 3.09 p.m., people were reported trapped in vehicles at Otterham Station, to which the Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and Cornwall County Fire Brigade responded. At 3.31 p.m., a report was passed to Cornwall County Fire Brigade that three people were trapped in woods above Boscastle, to which a Fire Appliance from Launceston was dispatched.

A local resident auxiliary coastguard informed the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Falmouth at 3.46 p.m. of the significant rise in the level of the River Valency, and two Search and Rescue helicopters were initially dispatched to the incident. Based upon feedback from the first helicopters on the scene, a Major Incident was declared by H.M. Coastguard at 4.35 p.m. on the same day.

The pilot of the rescue helicopter from R.N.A.S. Culdrose (Rescue 193) reported at 5.10 p.m., *"Pass to all emergency services, this is a Major Incident. We request all the standby aircraft available and all available land based emergency services as we are in danger of losing Boscastle and all the people in it."*

As a result, a major rescue operation commenced. Additional helicopters were requested from the Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre at Kinloss, and the land based emergency services built up their response.

About 200 people were rescued by the helicopters and others on the ground. There were only 8 minor injuries reported, and no-one is known to have died. However, damage to properties and infrastructure was substantial. The event was subject to considerable media coverage, both on a national and international basis.

This report focuses on the events in Boscastle, but it must be acknowledged that severe flooding affected other communities in North Cornwall, not just Boscastle.

## Debrief Summary

The emergency response phase of this major incident was hampered in the early stages by problems with communications, both within responding agencies and between them. This came about due to the location of Boscastle, combined with the scale of the swiftly developing emergency and an expectation – and perhaps reliance - that mobile phone communications would provide responders with adequate inter-agency communications. The circumstances resulted in a developing appreciation of the real scale of the emergency, leading to responders being slow in putting in place their individual plans. This led to what was described as ineffective integrated emergency management for some hours. That said, there was evidence of some excellent work at the scene and the prompt deployment of military and coastguard helicopters ensured there was no loss of life, with almost one hundred people being airlifted to safety. As a consequence of this activity, there were no fatalities and no serious injuries.

The media response to the incident at Boscastle was swift and it was early pictures on broadcast television that gave responders' control room staff a real appreciation of the scale of the problem, in the absence of direct communication with their staff at the scene. In brief, radio communications from the scene to the 'blue light' services' control rooms did not work until remedial measures were put in place several days later. This also applied to mobile phone communications with only one service provider with coverage at the scene.

Media coverage was extensive, the incident drawing local, national and international attention. Whilst the overall coverage was considered to be very positive, the early lack of a co-ordinated response by emergency responders and the absence of a single point of contact at the scene led to inconsistencies and 'mixed messages'. This was eventually overcome when regular emergency services co-ordinating meetings were established and, in particular, when the Chief Executive of the local authority – North Cornwall District Council (NCDC) – began providing frequent and daily briefings.

Despite the early setbacks on the first day, all responders worked well together to achieve a co-ordinated response, much of which was due to the benefits of regular training and exercising, especially in a multi-agency context. However, an emerging theme at the debrief, was the lack of multi-agency training and exercising at the strategic level. Participants agreed this was an area they could take measures to improve on a local or sub-regional basis.

One area of concern was the 'handover' of the lead co-ordination role from the police to the local authority (North Cornwall District Council) on Day Four, to effectively mark the transition from the emergency phase to the recovery phase. The police service, through custom and practice, are experienced in co-ordinating other organisations in emergency situations. The same is not true with local authorities. There is a clear need to equip local authorities with appropriate training and advice as to what their role and responsibilities are when co-ordinating other organisations and agencies in such testing circumstances.

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## Major Flooding North Cornwall – The Lessons Identified

During the recovery phase, the provision of information to the local community appeared to work very well, underpinned by the Chief Executive of NCDC providing twice-daily public briefings in a local hall in Boscastle. This continued until the village was 'passed back' to the community on Day 11, marked by the removal of police cordons. Some sensed an 'information gap' when this facility ended, and a lesson to emerge is the need to ensure other measures are put in place to keep the community informed of developments when such regular emergency service briefings terminate.

During the recovery phase, work to clear the site of debris and restore essential services progressed in a co-ordinated manner, although there was no single point of contact to deal with an array of insurance assessors. The placing of 'skips' (for debris removal), and co-ordinating the work of utility companies and contractors appointed by insurers could also have been managed better by a single point of contact. There is clearly scope for advice to be produced for local authorities faced with co-ordinating the response to major emergencies by insurance companies, contractors and others involved in clearing up a 'disaster site'.

Thanks are due to Nick Johns and Andy Hunt who facilitated the Gold and Silver groups at the multi-agency debrief at Camelford , Cornwall on 27 October 2004, and to Superintendent Mike Long and Tracey Quinn who took notes for the two groups. Also to Tony Thompson of GOSW.

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report contains the outcomes of a multi-agency debrief into the emergency response to the flooding that affected North Cornwall on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2004, and the village of Boscastle in particular.
- 1.2 A multi-agency structured debrief was held on Wednesday 27 October 2004, in the Council Chamber, North Cornwall District Council, Camelford, Cornwall, and 22 organisations and agencies were represented, either as participants or observers. A list of participants and observers is at **Appendix A**, and shows the specific group each individual took part in. This was either at the strategic (Gold) or tactical (Silver) levels.
- 1.3 The debrief was facilitated by Nick Johns of the Police College (Centrex), and Andy Hunt of British Transport Police.
- 1.4 This report does not describe what the responding organisations and agencies actually did, or the individual challenges they faced. This report is concerned with the lessons identified as presented at the debrief. It examines the emergency response and recovery phases, and considers key elements of these two phases that were the least successful and those that could be improved. It concludes with some action points the participants agreed to take forward either individually, or within their own organisations, to improve future performance in the case of a major emergency occurring.

## 2.0 The Events

- 2.1. During the afternoon of Monday 16 August, heavy rainfall in north Cornwall caused a flash flood in the village of Boscastle on the north Cornwall coast, within North Cornwall District Council's area of responsibility. The River Valency, which runs through the centre of the small village, quickly became a torrent and overflowed. An estimated three-metre depth of water poured through the village, washing away cars, trapping residents and tourists and leading to a major rescue operation. Miraculously, no-one died and there were only several minor injuries. However, damage to properties and infrastructure was substantial.
- 2.2. A local resident who is an auxiliary Coastguard informed the MRCC at Falmouth of the deteriorating situation at 3.46 p.m. and the MRCC scrambled two Search and Rescue helicopters to the incident. Based on the feedback from the first helicopters on scene, (Rescue 169 and Rescue 193) MRCC at Falmouth advised the other emergency services of the developing situation. The MRCC declared a 'Major Incident' at 4.36 p.m.. MRCC at Falmouth requested additional helicopter assistance as available. Eight helicopters responded in total. These were deployed from R.N.A.S. Culdrose (three), R.M.B. Chivenor (two), R.A.F. St Mawgan (one), H.M. Coastguard at Portland and the Air Ambulance. They were co-ordinated by the Aeronautical Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre at R.A.F. Kinloss. A total of 97 people were airlifted to safety by the six military helicopters. MRCC Falmouth also requested the launch of the three R.N.L.I. lifeboats to stand off the harbour entrance.
- 2.3. Many fire-fighters, police and other emergency workers and staff from the county and district councils were involved in the initial response. On Monday fire-fighters worked through the night to help rescue people trapped by the floods, whilst local authority staff spent the first night working on the A39 and surrounding roads, setting up diversions, placing flood boards and clearing drains to keep the road network safe.
- 2.4. A rest centre was opened at Camelford Sports Centre, several miles from Boscastle, to initially provide shelter for some 100 evacuees, mainly tourists and holidaymakers. It was operated jointly by staff and volunteers from the Salvation Army and WRVS with the Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust providing health cover. The rest centre provided shelter, food and bedding for some 50 people and pets for the night of Monday 16 August. It closed at 5.00 pm on Tuesday 17 August.
- 2.5. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary co-ordinated the overall emergency response to the major incident, including the search and rescue phase, through their strategic (or 'Gold') command centre at Police Headquarters, Exeter, and through a tactical (or 'Silver') command post at Boscastle. The police led the co-ordination arrangements until 12:00 on Thursday 20 August when responsibility for the recovery phase passed to the Chief Executive of North Cornwall District Council.

- 2.6. Some 76 badly damaged motor vehicle were recovered from Boscastle. The immediate recovery work included the making safe of all damaged properties and the demolition of three on safety grounds; temporary repairs to bridges and roads; emergency repairs to the sewage system; restoration of fresh water supplies to all properties and electricity re-instated at street level and to meters.
- 2.7. North Cornwall District Council launched an emergency appeal to help people affected by the flooding throughout north Cornwall. The British Red Cross supported the Council by setting up and managing the fund until the fund trustees were appointed and able to take over this responsibility.
- 2.8. Fire-fighters remained on the scene for nearly two weeks, initially involved with the other emergency services in the search and rescue operation, and then helping to make the area safe for some people to return to their homes. They also escorted people to and from their homes in the area affected. Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust provided health assistance during the first week.
- 2.9. The severe weather also caused major problems in other parts of North Cornwall, particularly in Otterham and Crackington Haven, where a number of bridges and footbridges were washed away, together with large stretches of road. The worst affected areas were:
- Otterham Mill and Otterham Church
  - Crackington Haven
  - Higher Crackington
  - Jacobstow Bridge
- 2.10. Floods also caused damage to roads in Stratton, Widemouth Bay, Kilkhampton, Week Ford, Canworthy Water, Warbstow, Whitstone, Helebridge and Marshgate.
- 2.11. The Chief Executive of North Cornwall District Council ‘handed back’ the cordoned-off site to the community on Thursday 26 August and people were allowed to return to their properties.
- 2.12. The clean-up operation, repairs and renovation will take some time. A multi-agency task force has been established, led by North Cornwall District Council to deal with a range of issues including:
- Regeneration
  - Economic development
  - Heritage
  - Tourism and marketing
- 2.13. A detailed programme of remedial work has been drawn up to tackle the damage to roads in the area.

- 2.14. The Deputy Prime Minister visited the Camelford Sports Centre on day two, Tuesday 17 August, and also went to the scene where he met representatives of the emergency and support services.
- 2.15. H.R.H. The Prince of Wales visited the scene on day three, Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> August, and met local residents in the village.
- 2.16. The Environment Minister visited Boscastle on Thursday 16 September, where he met many people affected by the flooding.

### 3.0 Principles of Command and Control – A Combined Response

- 3.1 Irrespective of the particular responsibilities of the numerous organisations and agencies involved in the emergency response, they all worked to the following common objectives:
- Saving and protecting life
  - Relieving suffering
  - Protecting property
  - Providing the public with information
  - Containing the emergency and limiting its escalation or spread
  - Maintaining critical services
  - Maintaining normal services at an appropriate level
  - Protecting the health and safety of personnel
  - Safeguarding the environment
  - Facilitating investigations and inquiries
  - Promoting self-help and recovery
  - Restoring normality as soon as possible, and
  - Evaluating the response and identifying lessons to be learned
- 3.2 In order to achieve an integrated response to an emergency, the capabilities of the emergency services must be closely linked with those of local authorities and other agencies. The national generic management framework has a common structure irrespective of the cause or nature of the incident, but remains flexible to varying circumstances. This framework defines relationships between differing levels of command and control, and allows each agency to tailor its own response plans to interface with the plans of others. It also ensures that all parties understand their own and each other's roles in a combined response to a major incident.
- 3.3. Under the framework, the management of the response to major emergencies will normally be undertaken at one or more of three ascending levels – **Operational**, **Tactical** and **Strategic** – that are defined by their differing functions rather than by specific rank, grade or status,
- 3.4. The terms '**Bronze**', '**Silver**' and '**Gold**' (for 'operational', 'tactical' and 'strategic' respectively) are in common use in many organisations, particularly the emergency services.
- 3.5. At the start of an incident for which there has been no warning, the operational level will be activated first. Escalation or a greater awareness of the situation may require the implementation of a tactical level and, finally, a strategic level should this prove necessary.

- 3.6. In major incidents that occur without warning and where there is an incident scene – or scenes – the police usually assume the role of overall co-ordination of all other organisations and agencies during the emergency response.
- 3.7. The response to the Boscastle flood led to the implementation of all three levels of command, and the terms Bronze, Silver and Gold were used by most of the organisations involved in the emergency response. These terms feature throughout the multi-agency debrief.

## 4.0 The Multi-Agency Debrief – The Approach

4.1 It was decided to review, in a multi-agency context, the Gold and Silver elements of the response to the Boscastle flood, examining two distinct phases, referred to as the **emergency phase** and the **response phase**.

4.2 Representatives from key organisations that responded to the emergency were asked, in advance, to nominate delegates to participate in either the Gold group, or in the Silver group, or both, as appropriate to their organisation's involvement in the incident.

4.3 The overall aim of the debrief was:

*'To use the experiences of nominated representatives from agencies involved in the incident to conduct a review, in order to learn lessons from those experiences and to inform the process of developing improved future responses to other multi-agency incidents'*

4.4 **Response Phase** - The response phase was defined to cover the emergency response from the time the emergency arose on Monday 16 August, until Thursday 19 August when overall co-ordination was passed from the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to the Chief Executive of North Cornwall District Council.

The objectives in this phase were to:

- Examine the response phase at Gold and Silver levels for all agencies, and
- Identify Lessons identified at these levels

4.5 **Recovery Phase** - The recovery phase was defined as commencing on day four, from the time the Chief Executive of North Cornwall District Council formally took over the lead co-ordination role from the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. It is recognised that some elements of recovery work took place earlier than day four but the broad division of phases occurred at 'handover' from the police to the local authority.

4.6 The objectives of this phase were to:

- Examine the recovery phase at Gold and Silver levels for all agencies, and
- Examine the hand-over of the incident from the police to the Chief Executive of North Cornwall District Council.

- 4.7 A further objective was to invite the participants to consider actions that they could take to improve their own agency's response to future incidents requiring a multi-agency emergency response. This is known as 'action planning'.
- 4.8 **Methodology** - The participants were divided into Gold and Silver groups. The groups were then led through parallel simultaneous debriefs that followed an identical format. The results are presented here retaining the separation of the output from the groups.

## 5.0 The Emergency Response Phase

**5.1 GOLD GROUP** - The Gold, or strategic level, group was facilitated by Nick Johns.

Agencies represented at the Gold level were:

- Cornwall County Fire Brigade
- Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
- Environment Agency
- Forrabury and Minster Parish Council
- 43 (Wessex) Brigade (Armed Forces)
- HM Coastguard
- North Cornwall District Council
- RSPCA
- South West Peninsular Health Protection Unit
- South West Peninsular Strategic Health Authority
- South West Water
- Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust

**SILVER GROUP** - The Silver, or tactical level, group was facilitated by Andy Hunt.

Agencies represented at the Silver level were:

- Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RAF Kinloss)
- Cornwall County Fire Brigade
- Devon and Cornwall Constabulary
- Health and Safety Executive
- HM Coastguard
- National Trust
- North and East Cornwall Primary Care Trust
- North Cornwall District Council
- RAF Regional Liaison Officer SW Region
- Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust
- Western Power Distribution
- WRVS

### 5.2 Least Successful Aspects

5.2.1 There was a delay in the incident being declared and accepted by all agencies as a 'Major Incident'.

- Whilst this was a relatively short delay, the declaration of a major incident has some practical implications for many agencies. The delay was a result of a number of factors, many of which, like communications, feature later in this report. Others, like a lack of early appreciation of the scale of the incident, aggravated this delay.

- ii. There is a need to reinforce the principle that any agency can declare a major incident.
- 5.2.2 Directly linked to the delay in declaration of a major incident, many agencies felt that their response was in a ‘catch up’ mode for the early part of the incident.
- i. One example concerns Cornwall County Council, who, due to the delay, lost the opportunity to contact many of their staff before 17:00, when they would still have been at work.
- 5.2.3 Communications problems caused significant negative aspects during the initial stages of the emergency response.
- i. The ‘blue light’ agencies’ initial responders were unable to communicate with their control rooms, as Boscastle was found to be a communications blank spot. As more resources were committed to the scene, they successively found themselves out of radio contact. Mobile telephones also did not operate at the incident location. Whilst this was later rectified, the inability to utilise their usual communication channels, hindered the expected and planned for disaster response.
  - ii. In the reflections of the Silver group, it was suggested that there were potential solutions available to the communications problem. It was, however, perhaps unrealistic to expect these solutions to be immediately recognised in the early stage of the incident. For example, HM Coastguard, who was in communication with other agencies at the scene, and the SAR Helicopters suffered from poor communications with their MRCC from the Boscastle valley as Coastguard remote radio sites are understandably situated to provide radio cover offshore, not inland.
  - iii. This lack of communication successively impacted on other agencies as they committed resources to the scene.
- 5.2.4 Initial ineffective integrated emergency management
- i. There were many examples of individuals taking initiative and working very effectively, but early command and control, and integrated, organised response was patchy, or in some cases lacking in the early stages of the operation. True joint command and control working practices at the scene were slow to develop.
- 5.2.5 Initial ineffective co-ordination of media handling
- i. Media management was another area where there were some concerns. The point was made that it is essential that all agencies co-ordinate their media releases through the lead agency, rather than “getting picked off individually” as one participant put it, the assets at the scene found the physical intrusion of the media operation was initially problematic.
- 5.2.6 Lack of resilience in ability to handle multi-site incidents

- i. The wide area of other potential flooding incidents in North Cornwall at the same time, limited many agencies' ability to fully commit to Boscastle. An anticipated incident at Bude, for example, needed monitoring.

### **5.3 Most Successful Aspects**

#### **5.3.1 Multi-agency training**

- i. The benefits of regular joint training were emphasised. When Gold was set up, all the major players were known to each other. This greatly aided the establishment of control over the incident.

#### **5.3.2 Implementation of emergency plans**

- i. Agencies' emergency plans were effectively put into operation and, in general, worked very well.

#### **5.3.3 Longer-term media management**

- i. The eventual media management of the incident was very effective.
- ii. The physical handling of the media to lessen their intrusion into the community and to deal with the large numbers attending worked well as the incident developed. Also, the information flow, or 'story management', using a single point of contact, allowed a consistent message to be delivered. For example, allowing media access, at one stage, to details of the RSPCA work during the incident, gave a full and positive picture of the response work going on.

#### **5.3.4 Provision of public information**

- i. The manner in which the local community was provided with information about the operation, and its effects on their situation, was singled out by local elected representatives for favourable mention.

#### **5.3.5 Solo contributions – personal initiatives**

- i. There were a number of examples of excellent work from individuals from many agencies. These had a significant contribution to the overall success of the operation.

#### **5.3.6 Longer-term effective combined response**

- i. Once the initial difficulties were dealt with, the extent to which each agency contributed its individual skills to the integrated response meant that there was a true combined response to the incident.

- 5.4 Suggested changes to improve future multi-agency performance in the RESPONSE PHASE.**
- 5.4.1 Increase, or in some cases initiating, joint training at Gold or chief executive level.
- 5.4.2 Extend the scope of joint training and exercises to include a wider range of agencies.
- 5.4.3 Develop a cascade contact system, or group e-mail or other alerting system for major incident notification.
- 5.4.4 Introduce an 'index' of roles and responsibilities for each agency to increase awareness of capabilities.
- 5.4.5 Produce a joint 'master' incident log that each agency could access – a possible move towards this interoperability is to design generic templates for joint use.
- 5.4.6 Assemble a master list of resources available, locally and regionally.

## 6.0 The Recovery Phase

As the operation passed from the acute/emergency phase to the longer-term recovery phase, control passed from Devon and Cornwall Police to North Cornwall District Council, and the Gold Control was relocated. This gave rise to a number of different issues.

### 6.1 Least Successful Aspects

- 6.1.1 A number of issues in respect of co-ordination arose. The District Council expressed concerns that it was unable to 'instruct' other agencies to take any certain specified action during the recovery phase of the operation.
- 6.1.2 The police Gold pointed out that his organisation had no power over other agencies during their period of co-ordination of the incident; it was more a matter of requesting courses of action.
- 6.1.3 Concern was expressed over co-ordination of repair agencies. South West Water found that their repairs were being affected, and in some cases damaged, by other organisations' repair work
- 6.1.4 There was no single point of contact to co-ordinate insurance assessment work. This led to duplication and division of effort
- 6.1.5 The work of contractors and the siting of skips were uncoordinated.
- 6.1.6 There was no central point of contact for utilities and insurance work. This is a distinct issue from that of insurance assessment.
- 6.1.7 The lack of a regional call centre for both agencies and the public was noted.
- 6.1.8 An 'information gap' was noted for local residents once the regular 'in person' briefings ended.
- 6.1.9 The fire service noted the community impact on recovery of having Retained Fire-fighters deployed long term. These officers were being kept away from their roles in day jobs. A decision was taken to continue local deployment, as this increased local links, despite potential needs to utilise them elsewhere.
- 6.1.10 Health and safety continued to be an issue at the scene, especially in relation to waste management. While there were no adverse outcomes, this further highlighted the point, mentioned in the response phase, that some co-ordination and integration of work was necessary.
- 6.1.11 Financial issues were also mentioned as, for example, the Bellwin scheme was felt to be an incomplete and inefficient way of dealing with the necessary extra expenditure of this type of incident.

**6.2 Most Successful Aspects**

- 6.2.1 The clean-up operation went very well, including the removal of general debris, and removal of cars from the lower village and harbour area.
- 6.2.2 Good continued short-term (week 2) communication and provision of information for residents. The press conference was particularly mentioned, as was provision of health information to residents.
- 6.2.3 The operation to restore utilities was efficient and effective.
- 6.2.4 The reassurance role for locals of a continued ‘uniform’ presence was a strong point. This was particularly mentioned in respect to the mediation role played by local fire service personnel.
- 6.2.5 The good working relationships established between agencies’ personnel continued to bear fruit.
- 6.2.6 The flood relief fund was extremely effective. The Parish Council, amongst others, had a significant number of donations.

**6.3 Suggested changes to improve future multi-agency performance in the RECOVERY PHASE**

- 6.3.1 The further development of a local forum to address recovery issues, and / or the expansion of existing groups that have this purpose.
- 6.3.2 Improved networking for all local agencies to continue to build on existing strengths, ensuring that all are involved.
- 6.3.3 Conduct a scientific study of the potential effects of water pollution.
- 6.3.4 Increased awareness of the capabilities of each agency.
- 6.3.5 Health and safety issues, sharing expertise and better co-ordination.

## 7.0 Future Intentions – Action Plans for Responders

7.1 In this part of the debrief, participants were asked the question:

***What personal objectives would most improve your organisation's performance in future multi-agency incident working?***

These issues are similar to the suggested improvements to improve multi-agency incident working in the response (Section 5.4) and recovery (Section 6.3) phases.

- 7.1.1 **Plan** for the future – particularly to take account of matters arising from the new Civil Contingencies Act
- 7.1.2 Ensure chief officers (and those involved at the Gold or strategic level) take part in joint **training and exercising**
- 7.1.3 Develop joint **training** exercises at other levels (namely at operational and tactical) ensuring that other relevant agencies are included. This has added value in that the relationships established in these exercises aid multi-agency working in other aspects of local work.
- 7.1.4 Improve **inter-agency communication** and introduce some form of cascade contact system, or group e-mail, to ensure that contact is more easily established when emergencies occur. This proposal would need careful management, to ensure that such a system of alerting was fit for purpose, and very regular editing to ensure that the information remains accurate and up-to-date.
- 7.1.5 An **index of roles and responsibilities** for each agency was suggested to increase awareness of the capabilities of each.
- 7.1.6 Consideration of collating a **master list of resources**. The parameters for this, if pursued, would need to be tightly drawn up, as little use would be served by merely listing capabilities in terms of equipment
- 7.1.7 Consideration of having a joint '**master**' **incident log** that each agency could access was proposed. As a possible step along the road to this interoperability, designing certain generic templates was also suggested.

**8.0**

**Conclusions**

Boscastle was one of a number of coastal locations affected by the adverse weather, and it is doubted whether local responders had sufficient resilience to be able to deal with similar multi-site emergencies at the same time over a wide area without significant mutual aid from other parts of the region.

Overall, the emergency response was a success – no-one lost their lives – but there are clear areas for improvement in terms of communications. This underpins the effective co-ordination and deployment of resources. It is highly likely that the initial struggle to assess the scale of the emergency – and put emergency response measures into action – were hampered by poor communication from a remote rural coastal location. This affected all responders to varying degrees.

The recovery phase, whilst not without its challenges, appeared to be handled effectively, receiving positive comments from the local community. Nevertheless, there were specific areas where better co-ordination would have improved the early clearance of the affected site. This is particularly true in relation to matters of insurance assessment and the management of contractors and their ‘skips’. It is considered that guidance should be developed to provide advice in this area of ‘consequence management’ following emergencies of this type.

Regular and appropriate training and exercising are vital for a swift and co-ordinated emergency response. It was recognised by responders that these are areas where improvements should be made, particularly at the strategic level. There appears to be little or no training available for agencies or organisations tasked with the responsibility of dealing with recovery aspects of a major emergency.

**APPENDIX A | List of Participants in Multi-Agency Debrief**
**GOLD GROUP**

<b>43 (Wessex) Brigade</b>	<b>Colonel Christopher Price</b> <i>Joint Regional Liaison Officer</i>
<b>Cabinet Office (Observer)</b>	<b>Lucinda Armstrong</b> <i>Civil Contingencies Secretariat</i>
<b>Cornwall County Council</b>	<b>Steve Winston</b> <i>County Emergency Planning Manager</i>
<b>Cornwall County Fire Brigade</b>	<b>Brian Crowle</b> <i>Divisional Commander West</i>
<b>Devon and Cornwall Constabulary</b>	<b>Richard Stowe</b> <i>Assistant Chief Constable</i>
<b>Devon and Cornwall Constabulary</b>	<b>Mike Sarsfield</b> <i>Superintendent</i>
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<b>Mat Carter</b> <i>Environment Manager</i>
<b>Forrabury and Minster Parish Council</b>	<b>Bob Smith</b> <i>Parish Council Member and resident</i>
<b>HM Coastguard</b>	<b>Simon Rabett</b> <i>District Operations Manager</i>
<b>North Cornwall District Council</b>	<b>Mark Hall</b> <i>Director of Technical Services</i>
<b>North Cornwall District Council</b>	<b>Neil Pendleton</b> <i>Director of Community Services</i>
<b>RSPCA</b>	<b>Les Sutton MBE</b> <i>Chief Inspector</i>
<b>South West Water</b>	<b>Julie Byrne</b> <i>Customer Relations Manager</i>
<b>Cornwall &amp; Isles of Scilly Health Protection Unit</b>	<b>Lisa Johnson</b> <i>Health Protection Nurse</i>
<b>SW Peninsular Strategic Health Authority</b>	<b>Neil Le Chevalier</b> <i>Peninsula Emergency Planning Co-ordinator</i>
<b>Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust</b>	<b>Peter Allum</b> <i>Emergency Planning Officer</i>

Nick Johns facilitated the Gold Group debrief.

Notes were taken during the Gold Group debrief by Tracey Quinn, Government Office for the South West.

## SILVER GROUP

<b>Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RAF Kinloss)</b>	<b>Jamie Green</b> <i>Pilot Officer</i>
<b>Cornwall County Fire Brigade</b>	<b>Matt Littmoden</b> <i>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</i>
<b>Devon and Cornwall Constabulary</b>	<b>David Ellis</b> <i>Chief Superintendent</i>
<b>Health and Safety Executive</b>	<b>Jonathon Harris</b> <i>HM Inspector</i>
<b>HM Coastguard</b>	<b>Frank Jones</b> <i>Sector Manager</i>
<b>National Trust</b>	<b>Andrew Davey</b> <i>Area Manager</i>
<b>North and East Cornwall Primary Care Trust</b>	<b>Lynne Kendall</b> <i>Director of Public Health</i>
<b>North Cornwall District Council</b>	<b>David Pooley</b> <i>Director of Finance</i>
<b>RAF</b>	<b>Alasdair Campbell</b> <i>Regional Liaison Officer SW Region</i>
<b>South West Water</b>	<b>Sally Skelton</b> <i>Customer Contact Manager</i>
<b>Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust</b>	<b>William Martin</b> <i>Assistant Emergency Planning Officer</i>
<b>Western Power Distribution</b>	<b>David Gilbert</b> <i>Team Manager</i>
<b>WRVS</b>	<b>Angela Currie</b> <i>Head of Emergency Services</i>

Andy Hunt facilitated the Silver Group debrief.

Notes were taken during the Silver Group debrief by Superintendent Mike Long, Civil Contingencies co-ordinator for the emergency services in Wales

**APPENDIX B | Response Phase - Least Successful Aspects**

**TRANSCRIPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES**

**Response Phase**

The written responses made by the debrief participants are reproduced here. They are divided into the Gold and Silver groups.

In the debrief, participants were asked to consider three questions:

1. What were the least successful aspects of the response phase for your organisation?
2. What were the most successful aspects of the response phase for your organisation?
3. What changes would most improve response phase performance in future multi-agency incident working?

**What were the least successful aspects of the response phase for your organisation?**

## GOLD GROUP

### CATEGORY 1 RESPONDERS

#### Cornwall County Fire Brigade

- *Arguably wrong rank nominated for Gold*

#### Cornwall County Council

- *Putting Silver at Boscastle compounded communications problems and meant Crackington, Bude, Canworthy and other communities were disadvantaged. North Cornwall inter-agency flood plan calls for Silver to be at NCDC offices at Trenant, Wadebridge (Cornwall Contingency planning)*
- *Silver not set up in planned location focus settled on Boscastle but we (CCC) were reacting to 100sq miles of North Cornwall./ some communications problems resulted*

#### Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

- *Radio communications with Silver & Bronze*
- *Slight delay in declaring Major Incident*
- *Communication Silver to Gold*
- *Communications initially non existent until new radio technology could be deployed – lack of comms Silver to Gold*

#### Health Protection Agency

- *For the Health Protection Agency, the least successful aspects related to the sharing of information mainly the initial notification cascades*

#### HM Coastguard

- *Coastguards are not equipped or trained for these types\* of incidents. By day two coastguards were wet and contaminated with sewage*

\*We take this to mean “fast-water rescue”.

## CATEGORY 2 RESPONDERS

### South West Water

- i. *Not being able to get an onsite presence earlier, provision for our incident caravan*
- ii. *Clarity of 'critical path' between all agencies to help manage expectations between agencies about what could be done when*

## OTHER AGENCIES

### THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

#### RSPCA

- i. *Communications problems i.e. mobile phones down*
- ii. *No notification as to whether our assistance was required as the reception base*

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

- i. *Communication failure, no contact with anybody on north side of Valency river was possible for 3 / 4 hours*
- ii. *Communications with Silver and North Cornwall almost impossible at times*
- iii. *Telephone communications with Boscastle and other affected areas – technical problems*
- iv. *Continuing reliable communications. Ongoing comms in the first instance is essential*
- v. *Initial comms with Boscastle – mobile phones failed – some helicopters unable to communicate with RAF Kinloss*
- vi. *Lack of clear communications from the scene i.e. initial situation report regarding casualties should have been made clearer (Health)*
- vii. *Difficulties in receiving information from the scene to strategic (incident control room) due to difficult conditions – geographical location – weather conditions – compound incident – land telephones limited due to lines being cut – identification of parameters/ scale of incident – most notably with safe access route*
- viii. *Must recognise the difference between Silver and forward control point.*
- ix. *Previously agreed (and used) inter agency Gold arrangements not implemented, familiar method (previously successful) for managing major incidents dispensed with without consultation.*
- x. *Bypassed Silver in Wadebridge and sent specific Silver to Boscastle. Concern over ability of this to cope with dual incidents across North Cornwall if situation elsewhere worsened*
- xi. *Set up arrangements at Trenant worked up from scratch i.e. call centre, recording systems and contact lists. Delay not a problem*
- xii. *Co-ordination of media centre from the start*
- xiii. *Shortage of staff trained in emergency procedures response*
- xiv. *Delay in calling RSPCA representative sooner rather than later. This delayed organising equipment to get on site*
- xvi. *Perceived delay between MCA involvement and informing other emergency services of the situation*

**What were the least successful aspects of the response phase for your organisation?**

## SILVER GROUP

### CATEGORY 1 RESPONDERS

#### Cornwall County Fire Brigade

- i. Command and Control – Not multi-agency*
- ii. Communications – Poor coverage and equipment*
- iii. Limited resources, massive strain, day job still continuing, time to build resources*
- iv. Overall co-ordination was slow in coming which hampered our cascade system to partner organisations*
- v. Need intelligence at an early stage*

#### Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

- i. Police are the lead authority but a significant number of incidents area- wide (15 sq. miles) resulted in inability to respond immediately to Boscastle.*
- ii. Prioritising of conflicting incidents. Resources overwhelmed, concern that Bude was going to succumb to flooding*
- iii. Communications link impossible to Silver for first 5/6 hours. Police playing catch up for the first few hours.*
- iv. Police Gold has Sky for best communications*
- v. Frustrated that Silver was unable to have assistance from the National Trust until the following morning*
- vi. Required deployment of Health and Safety advisors to support emergency services at scene*

#### HM Coastguard

- i. Initiated the response following reports of water rising, commenced evacuation and tasking of aircraft.*
- ii. Arrival of other services*
- iii. Were the lead authority for first hour, fire service then took authority*
- iv. Unable to communicate with resources on the ground*
- v. Aerial observation would have given us the more strategic overview and scale of what we were facing.*
- vi. Could we have airlifted the Silvers to scene?*

- 
- vii. *Two media helicopters on scene prior to Coastguard. Did deploy to search sea for people swept out to sea in cars*
  - viii. *We have mobile handsets available if we had had initial liaison at incident we could have deployed mobile communications for other organisations*
  - ix. *It is not our primary role to co-ordinate, we are not equipped\**
  - x. *We needed information from the ground*
  - xi. *Lack of essential services for rescuers at the front line such as toilets, refreshments when Silver had facilities*

\* It is not the role of the MCA to coordinate inland incidents, and staff are not equipped or trained for “fast-water” rescue at this time.

### **North and East Cornwall Primary Care Trust**

- i. *Frustrations of symptoms, local hospitals put on alert but we had no knowledge of what was happening. Was a major incident called? We did not know whether to clear beds.*
- ii. *Media*
- iii. *First on scene with helicopters*
- iv. *Requires better media management.*

### **North Cornwall District Council**

- i. *Command and control lacking*
- ii. *Local knowledge not implemented for liaison in village*
- iii. *Inundated for first 48 hours to resource call centres,*
- iv. *Lack of experience in handling appeal fund co-ordinators*
- v. *Not aware of what was going on. Technical communications, and command and control*
- vi. *Rest centre at Camelford difficult due to media intrusion, required media support.*
- vii. *Lack of resources, key personnel, holidays, out of hours availability*
- viii. *Local volunteers not activated or utilised*
- ix. *Learning process required of equipment that was available but not used*

## CATEGORY 2 RESPONDERS

### South West Water

- i. Lack of communications and mobile phones*
- ii. Our own organisation was slow in responding with an incident team at Head Office although this did not affect the work with the water and sewerage gangs on site who were present as the event unfolded.*

### Western Power Distribution (Electricity)

- i. Information to call centres did not give us specific information*
- ii. We had to isolate a wider area than was probably necessary*
- iii. Had to isolate as danger to public and helicopters*
- iv. Require some training by the Emergency services of procedures required isolating and re-establish electricity supplies*

### Health and Safety Executive

- i. Not an Emergency Service, and not involved in initial response to incident*
- ii. Difficult to know what to do, no-one likes us*
- iii. Would not seek more practice in response stage, but are now involved in safety measures during recovery stage on site*

## OTHER AGENCIES

### THE ARMED FORCES

#### RAF Liaison

- i. *Communication age-old problem between partner organisations*

#### Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RAF Kinloss)

- i. *Internal organisation good*
- ii. *Too much tasking from individual organisations*
- iii. *If ground-to-air communications were available, would have been better*
- iv. *Police and fire cannot talk to us*
- v. *Coastguard can speak to us*
- vi. *Future incidents would launch the Nimrod to provide surveillance*
- vii. *Availability of assets dependent on military requirements and serviceability of aircraft.*

### THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

#### WRVS

- i. *No information on managing the media*
- ii. *People getting restless and lack of information due to the mobile phone failure.*

#### RNLI

- i. *Boats could not cope with the conditions*
- ii. *Staff could have helped with the communications problems linking with Police or Fire*

#### National Trust

- i. *No contact with the police at the scene.*
- ii. *Own a lot of the land and buildings*
- iii. *Have local knowledge of buildings and structures*
- iv. *Needs to be put in context*
- v. *Could have helped with decision making*

**APPENDIX C**

**Response Phase – Transcripts of the Most Successful Aspects**

***What were the most successful aspects of the response phase for your organisation?***

**GOLD GROUP**

- i. West country Ambulance Service (WAST) achieved all aims / objectives / responsibilities as outlined in the WAST major incident Plan – casualty management was successful – all appropriately triaged and those that needed treatment received treatment (thankfully no loss of life, casualties apparently treated at scene or airlifted to active hospitals at Truro / Barnstable) – good integration with health responders at Gold and Silver – provision made for incident escalation by liaising with neighbouring ambulance services*
- ii. Flood warning across Cornwall worked effectively with local knowledge to minimise flooding impacts*
- iii. Sufficient plant / equipment were obtained for works at Boscastle and many other sites. This worked through good co-operation with other organisations*
- iv. Nationwide support and offers of assistance some of which were utilised*
- v. Salvation Army feeding van volunteers*
- vi. Early contact with NCDC rest centre set up with all support services including police. Public (users) opinion showed high level of satisfaction (social Services, WRVS critical contribution)*
- vii. Highways issues addressed with police very successful*
- viii. Press / PR office supplied high levels of support to NCDC and effective press arrangements*
- ix. Getting into the village was no problem for us as we do work closely with the authorities (recognised) and being part of the Silver Team enables us to report back to the incident commander good news / bad news with the media*
- x. Once on site had no problems in getting into exclusion zone with fire service – good working relationships receiving the right information as to location of animals was useful in returning animals to owners*
- xi. The initial work done by the Boscastle coastguard team in moving people out of their homes and in setting up communications and a Community Centre*
- xii. Flexibility within the organisation and commitment*
- xiii. Well focused*

## Major Flooding North Cornwall – The Lessons Identified

- 
- xiv. *Quality of people involved practical use common sense*
  - xv. *Everything worked well, joint ability in the process was new theory*
  - xvi. *Cross-border co-operation CCFB DFRS multi agency co-operation testament to the planning and training*
  - xvii. *Provision of staff from partner companies meant all required skilled resources were available and quickly in good numbers (South West Water)*
  - xviii. *Distribution staff on site to shut down mains/waste water staff to review impacts and issues (South West Water)*
  - xix. *Key technical people (building Inspectors/cleaning /environmental health) got to Boscastle and did their essential jobs effectively – ‘can do’ people with ‘can do’ attitude*
  - xx. *Good co-operation with NCDC and other agencies we knew the people we were working with*
  - xxi. *Excellent co-operation between agencies because of familiarity and inter agency training – excellent contact with local community through local councillors – inter faith plan drew local clergy to great effect supporting visitors and local people.*
  - xxii. *The speed we were able to mobilise helicopters to the scene. This done in conjunction with ARCC Kinloss. The tasking of the Helicopter from Portland was also a good move (Coast Guard)*
  - xxiii. *Liaison between Police (Gold) and other responders enabling representatives to get to Gold in a timely fashion.*
  - xxiv. *RAF Search and Rescue LO at Silver was an invaluable link between the ARCC (RAF Kinloss) and Silver control.*
  - xxv. *Good understanding by police of how to link into military for advice / assistance – response well tested excellent and well tested as expected*
  - xxvi. *At a local level the most successful aspects of the response phase for the organisation was the instant availability of comprehensive flood advice from the agency website. This was quickly cascaded at an early stage and formed a solid basis for the specific advice released by NCDC after consultation with local Health Protection Unit*
  - xxvii. *First use of major incident control room at Exeter central ambulance control – staff worked well with new facilities and procedures*
  - xxviii. *Excellent co-ordination i.e. Strategic Health Trusts and Primary Care Trusts using the facilities at a health incident room based at ambulance central (Health)*
  - xxix. *Good utilisation of Health resources at scene. GP’s Community nurses at the survivor centre (health)*
  - xxx. *Good local knowledge through the local chairman in dealing with daily briefings communicating with villagers (Parish Council)*
  - xxxi. *Police engagement with the community appeared to work well especially at some of the locations away from Boscastle which were not in such sharp focus*
  - xxxii. *Well planned and executed media strategy Gold & Silver*
  - xxxiii. *Support of local community worked well – excellent communications with community /support to individuals directly affected*

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xxxiv. *Media handling – this went very well. A good location for the media to view the incident which got them the images and contacts they needed, any problems were relatively minor*

## SILVER GROUP

### Health and Safety Executive

i. *No reports of accidents or concerns from people involved*

### Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

- i. *Effective Command and Control and co-ordination at Silver.*
- ii. *Silver meeting extremely productive and focussed with little tension*
- iii. *Cannot ever overestimate the thanks to the RAF for rescuing the people as, if they had not rushed the picture and recovery would have been so different*

### South West Water

i. *Once co-ordination in place worked well*

### Environment Agency

i. *Once co-ordinated communication with media good*

### North Cornwall District Council

- i. *Media management by chief executive very good*
- ii. *Good support for services working together to provide emergency services, supplies, clothes.*
- iii. *Once established district council worked very well*
- iv. *Many volunteers and staff turning their hand to all jobs to support council*
- v. *Must not forget all the other emergencies and issues that were going on in the county*
- vi. *Coordination centre worked well to engage contractors and communities*
- vii. *Very good use of our web site*
- viii. *Good support from County Council*

### **HM Coastguard**

- i. Once we had got our act together we worked very well with other Emergency Services*
- ii. Identifies the need and invests in training*
- iii. Acknowledge the unselfishness and professionalism of rescuers who worked tirelessly.*

### **British Red Cross**

- i. Activated within 2 hours and worked very well*

### **WRVS**

- i. Response from volunteers overwhelming once scale of response and incident realised.*
- ii. Attributable to our preplanning and response plans which we have developed with Cornwall Emergency Planning*
- iii. Once systems in place Co-ordination structures worked well worked efficiently.*

### **National Trust**

- i. Important to involve local knowledge as early as possible*

### **RNLI**

- i. Able to quickly repair boats and get back into service*

### **Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre (RAF Kinloss)**

- i. Rescued 91 people in atrocious conditions*
- ii. Command and control worked very well*
- iii. Level of helicopter response was fortunate at the time*
- iv. Amazingly pleased with our response*

### **Cornwall County Fire Brigade**

- i. Excellent use of national resources and mutual aid*
- ii. Good command and control*

**APPENDIX D**

**Response Phase – Transcripts of ‘Changes for the Future’**

***What changes would most improve response phase performance in future multi-agency incident working?***

**GOLD GROUP**

- i. Kick off Gold quicker, more consistent with expectations*
- ii. Simultaneous information exchanges (potentially by email) may have helped all agencies to gather a wider picture of incident- especially when normal methods of communication are not working*
- iii. A dedicated emergency number / disaster information sheet*
- iv. Radio satellite communication, and training in its use.*
- v. Communications – just because some of the land-line telephones were not in action doesn’t mean all of them are not*
- vi. Improved communications plan to deal with reception areas for future incidents*
- vii. Better communications / multi agency exercise Gold command post exercise is done already but better co-ordination and audit any log of activity*
- viii. Improved communications systems / more inter-agency training at all levels / research into interaction with Bronze / Silver / Gold*
- ix. Communications systems / video conferencing with other agencies / live ‘down link’ from helicopter to land*
- x. Inter-agency training at chief executive level for handover of command & control and discussion of issues surrounding handover (include MCA) / use of a group system like London just for alerts*
- xi. The need for more integral / cross-agency training / processes are clearly understood*
- xii. Better planning and training for participating councils re relationships / media / communications / understanding roles / key points Bronze Silver Gold etc / planning for recovery stage after day 3 and agree protocols / identifying who does things /plans for victim support*
- xiii. More involvement of all agencies in exercising plans to improve planning & training for a real event*
- xiv. Raise the profile of emergency planning issues in the Civil Contingencies Act*
- xv. A multi-agency resilience co-ordinator with automatic links to all emergency services*
- xvi. Establish some templates for action to get in gear more quickly on all key areas, reduce delay and avoid reinventing wheels*

***What changes would most improve response phase performance in future multi-agency incident working?***

## **SILVER GROUP**

- i. Improvement in radio communication and inter-agency co-ordination*
- ii. Use more local knowledge such as the National Trust or Parish Council*
- iii. More basic training required on electricity procedures*
- iv. More media control and management*
- v. Establish a media centre quicker*
- vi. Compile a multi-agency equipment and resources list*
- vii. Establish a funding stream*
- viii. Better generic emergency planning.*

**APPENDIX E**

**Recovery Phase – Transcripts of Least Successful Aspects**

Four days after the flood, overall co-ordination of the operation passed from the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to North Cornwall District Council, and Gold was relocated from the police headquarters at Exeter to the Council's main building at Wadebridge. This gave rise to a number of different issues.

***What were the least successful aspects of the recovery phase of the Operation for your organisation?***

**Issues Arising**

- i. A number of issues in respect of co-ordination arose. The District Council expressed concerns that it was unable to 'order' other agencies to take any certain specified action during the recovery phase of the operation.*
- ii. The police Gold pointed out that his organisation had no compulsive power over other agencies during their period of co-ordination of the incident; it was more a matter of requesting courses of action.*
- iii. Concern was expressed over co-ordination of repair agencies. South West Water found that their repairs were being effected, and in some cases damaged, by other organisations' repair work*
- iv. There was no single point of contact to co-ordinate insurance assessment work. This led to duplication and division of effort*
- v. The work of contractors and the siting of skips were also uncoordinated.*
- vi. There was no central point of contact for utilities and insurance work. This is a distinct issue from that of insurance assessment.*
- vii. The lack of a regional call centre for both agencies and the public was noted.*
- viii. An 'information gap' was noted for local residents once the regular 'in person' briefings ended.*
- ix. The fire service noted the community impact on recovery of having Retained Fire-fighters deployed long term. These officers were being kept away from their roles in day jobs. A decision was taken to continue local deployment, as this increased local links, despite potential needs to utilise them elsewhere.*

- x. *Health and safety continued to be an issue at the scene, especially in relation to waste management. While there were no adverse outcomes, this further highlighted the point, mentioned in the response phase, that some co-ordination and integration of work was necessary.*
- xi. *Financial issues were also mentioned as, for example, the Bellwin scheme was felt to be an incomplete and inefficient way of dealing with the necessary extra expenditure of this type of incident.*

**APPENDIX F**

**Recovery Phase - Most Successful Aspects**

**TRANSCRIPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES**

***What were the most successful aspects of the recovery phase for your organisation?***

**GOLD GROUP**

- i. Clean up was completed without any major problems and there was a reassuringly orderly handover to property owners*
- ii. Have sought to maintain the momentum of the recovery by setting up a steering group to plan to oversee renewal at Boscastle*
- iii. For the Health Protection Agency at a local level a successful aspect of the recovery phase was the regular update of information from South West Water on the control of potential hazard from sewage allowing continued accurate health advice and reassurance to be given*
- iv. Press coverage involving agencies engaged by police was good. Fire service gave us time with no pressure while searching premises for animals. Understand that animals are not considered a priority in such an emergency, but they do provide a good story for the media (RSPCA)*
- v. Morale during such a difficult operation has meant people connect with animals in some way.*
- vi. Having been of service to all agencies involved, also to the people of Boscastle, in particular those who owned animals.*
- vii. Seeing a crying child reunited with her two pet cats she thought had died (RSPCA)*
- viii. Wrapped and finished on customer connections in 10 days, all infrastructure repair/cleaned/replaced within three weeks of the initial call (SW Water)*
- ix. Taking responsibility for all connection work water & waste regardless of responsibility – sharing of plant & materials (SW Water)*
- x. Relief flood fund the British Red Cross / Rotary instant cash hand-outs FMPC church donations. Difficulty in giving money away (FMPC)*
- xi. Despite the fact the property in the village had been affected, access to the sea & harbour had been recovered early so that the emergency response to Boscastle Coastguard rescue was not affected (Coastguard)*
- xii. Cover was maintained in the early part of the recovery stage – feedback from crews said they were integral to the feeling of well-being and morale (Ambulance)*
- xiii. Continued involvement during the recovery stage to support the community and NCDC over and above the normal service provision (Fire)*

## Major Flooding North Cornwall – The Lessons Identified

- 
- xiv. *Good health information from the HPA Cornwall partnerships and the community*
  - xv. *The secondment of skilled colleagues to the benefit of expert help to those in need*
  - xvi. *Public meetings, drop-in centres, assessments to establish the hydrology scale of the event. Pragmatic and effective management of the waste issues, essentially quick response managed to ensure no environmental damage (EA)*
  - xvii. *Current work and assessments occurring within the catchments area in consultation with range of local interests, landowners etc./ clean up operation undertaken to ensure no environmental implications with EA officers on site to provide guidance and assistance (EA)*

**APPENDIX G**

**Recovery Phase Opportunities for Improvement**

**TRANSCRIPTS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES**

***What changes would most improve performance in future multi-agency incident working?***

**GOLD GROUP**

- i. Develop a local forum to discuss local issues and give opportunity to move face-to-face with partner agencies*
- ii. Money to provide best equipment co-ordination of agencies*
- iii. Emphasise that all agencies need to approach recovery by being prepared to act outside their normal limits and help find solutions (get around the lack of executive control)*
- iv. Maintenance of presence on scene as standard operating procedure (Fire)*
- v. Lead insurance company identified at an early stage to co-ordinate/resolve all insurance related issues (NCDC)*
- vi. Co-ordination of insurance companies and their agent/requirements / getting an emergency communications vehicle on site early to support all agencies*
- vii. Given the concern about exposure to sewage, the local Health Protection Unit could have undertaken a survey of health effects for potential infection hazards to provide risk assessment information for future incidents*
- viii. Better networking between partner organisations in the preparation for these incidents (EA)*
- ix. Having a map of the streets was of great help when carrying out searches (RSPCA)*

***What changes would most improve performance in future multi-agency incident working?***

**SILVER GROUP**

- i. Need more specific plans for the recovery stage and how roles will change in recovery*

## Major Flooding North Cornwall – The Lessons Identified

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- ii. *More support for the lead officers*
- iii. *More local information sooner*
- iv. *Clarity on roles and responsibilities on hand over from Police to Local Authority*
- v. *More knowledge of equipment and resources*
- vi. *Better faith and emotional support*
- vii. *Implementation of on site inductions for health and safety*
- viii. *Recognising need for rest and rotation of key players*
- ix. *Clarification of cordon controls post departure of Emergency Services*

**APPENDIX H**

**Personal Objective-Setting**

**Improvement Objectives**

In the final section of the debrief, participants were asked to consider what personal objectives they would take back to their organisations so that they could improve future multi-agency incident working.

Again, working in the groups used in the earlier sessions, this final section was designed to give the opportunity for participants to make tangible undertakings that could benefit future local multi-agency working.

*What personal objectives would most improve your organisation's performance in future multi-agency working?*

**GOLD GROUP**

**CATEGORY 1 RESPONDERS**

**Cornwall Fire and Rescue Service**

- i. Training – inter-agency work across Devon & Cornwall - Education at all levels about incident joint working can be taken forward*

**Devon and Cornwall Constabulary**

- i. Joint training at executive level – I will try to initiate a program of training*

**HM Coastguard**

- i. Coastguard not good at declaring an inland major incident so I will take that on board and make clear that they can declare one*

### Health Protection Agency

- i. *Information cascade system will be designed internally and links with other agencies systems will be progressed*

### North Cornwall District Council

- i. *Writing and putting together a new type of plan – we were unprepared for the changeover.*
- ii. *We need to understand what the police can do for us*
- iii. *New powers that will come out that will affect us – what and how is this going to be implemented?*

### Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust

- i. *Central Ambulance Control – some unfamiliar procedures, will try to improve this*

## CATEGORY 2 RESPONDERS

### South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority

- i. *Senior planning and training is an issue*

### South West Water

- i. *Review how we react to Gold –There are still things we could have done better*

## OTHER AGENCIES

### THE ARMED FORCES

- i. *Regional Forces need a greater understanding of the role of the MCA and the MCA need to be more closely integrated into multi-agency training and exercises.'*
- ii. *Awareness issues. There remains a constant need to educate our partners on the potential role of the Armed Forces, its limitations and operational parameters.'*

### THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

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**RSCPA**

- i. Need to get in place this dedicated hotline.*
- ii. Standardised form for animals. Call-handling proforma will be finalized and circulated*

**Forrabury and Minster Parish Council**

- i. I don't understand Gold Silver etc I will increase my awareness*
- ii. Communications in our own village. Telephone Tree – Neighbourhood Watch?*

***What personal objectives would most improve your organisation's performance in future multi-agency working?***

## SILVER GROUP

### CATEGORY 1 RESPONDERS

#### **Cornwall County Fire Brigade**

- i. Review incident communications*

#### **Devon and Cornwall Constabulary**

- i. Reinvigorate major incident training for officers*
- ii. Ensure delivery of communication pods into the local division*

#### **Environment Agency**

- i. To ensure an understanding of the co-ordinators role within our existing procedures for Silver and Gold*

#### **HM Coastguard**

- i. Ensure technology works at inshore incidents and get Sky TV installed*
- ii. Internal provision for logistical support to operational teams*

#### **North and East Cornwall Primary Care Trust**

- i. Amend and review plans from the knowledge of real incidents*

#### **North Cornwall District Council**

- i. Improve our emergency plan to include media handling and response checklist*
- ii. Review and map our communications strategy*
- iii. Executive resilience within the District Council)*

## Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust

- i. Asset mapping of equipment*

## CATEGORY 2 RESPONDERS

### Western Power Distribution (Electricity)

- i. Improved training and awareness for the emergency services in relation to electricity procedures and dangers*

## OTHER AGENCIES

### British Red Cross

- i. Create an up-to-date list of volunteers*

### RNLI

- i. Reinforce the operational capabilities of the RNLI and disseminate the information to our partners*

### WRVS

- i. Develop a communications plan to support local responders*

### Forrabury and Minster Parish Council

- i. Press for better radio and telephone communications*
- ii. Establish a local contact to collate local knowledge and contacts*

### National Trust

- i. Engage sufficiently with local and district councils to establish involvement*
- ii. Incident response check list*
- iii. The National Trust has local knowledge that could be used in the response to, and recovery from, an incident.*

**APPENDIX I**

**Glossary**

ARCC	-	Aeronautical Rescue Co-ordination Centre
CCC	-	Cornwall County Council
CCFB	-	Cornwall County Fire Brigade
DFRS	-	Devon Fire and Rescue Service
EA	-	Environment Agency
FMPC	-	Forrabury and Minister Parish Council
GP	-	General Practitioner
HM Coastguard	-	Her Majesty's Coastguard
HPA	-	Health Protection Agency
HRH	-	His Royal Highness
MCA	-	Maritime and Coastguard Agency
NCDC	-	North Cornwall District Council
NHS	-	National Health Service
PR	-	Public Relations
RAF	-	Royal Air Force
RNAS	-	Royal Naval Air Station
RNLI	-	Royal National Lifeboat Institution
RSPCA	-	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
SW	-	South West
WAST	-	Westcountry Ambulance Service NHS Trust
WRVS	-	Women's Royal Voluntary Service

**END**