

Sellafield Recovery Exercise “Reassure” 7th June 2005



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1. Introduction

Cumbria County Council are required by the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations (REPPPIR) to organise an exercise once every 3 years to demonstrate the effectiveness of off-site emergency arrangements appropriate to the Sellafield Site. These are known as OSCAR exercises.

As part of the last two OSCAR exercises held in 2000 and 2003, some aspects of the recovery phase (the return to normality) were also exercised. After OSCAR 7 in 2003 it was decided to hold a separate recovery phase exercise before OSCAR 8 due in 2006.

The exercise was held on Tuesday 7th June 2005 at the Summergrove Off-Site Emergency Control Centre, Hensingham, Whitehaven.

2. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this exercise was to progress planning for the recovery phase for a nuclear incident.

An exercise planning group has been meeting to debate and agree a structure to the recovery process based on exercises and experiences in the past. Another major issue is the acceptance by the community of the recovery strategy proposed by “the experts”. This needs to be achieved by consultation and the emphasis of the planning team and this exercise aimed to look at the most effective and acceptable means of achieving this.

i. Aims

To explore:

- The operation of the Recovery Working Group for a nuclear incident under the new proposed structure (see Annex B).
- The process of consultation with community representatives about the proposed recovery strategy.

ii. Objectives

- a. Agreement on the structure for a Recovery Working Group for a nuclear incident.
- b. To explore best practice for communication and presentation of a proposed recovery strategy.
- c. Determine the membership for the various groups within the structure.
- d. Preparation of guidelines for the groups within the structure.
- e. To test agency and inter agency working within and outwith the Recovery Working
- f. Group.
- g. To test the application of resources and guidance currently available.
- h. To contribute to the new Recovery Chapters in NEPLG Guidance.
- i. To consider the facilities and resources necessary for the Recovery Working Group to operate.
- j. Identification of any monitoring issues, resources, etc.
- k. Introduction of a new range of agencies to the recovery process.
- l. To test the interface and communications between the local, regional and national levels of Central Government.
- m. To explore how the Environment Agency would fulfil the GTA role during recovery.

3. Scenario

The exercise was set 6 days after a major incident at the Sellafield site. In order to achieve significant effects for the purposes of the exercise, the incident was not realistic and deposition figures were exaggerated. BNGSL produced technical information which included a deposition map, which was circulated in advance to the technical agencies in order to consider the implications and to identify the key issues for the recovery working group to address.

The situation as it stood on the day of the exercise 6 days after the incident, was given at a briefing at the commencement of the exercise for the benefit of the non-technical agencies. This identified the key issues for each specialist advisory group to address in the proposed recovery strategy.

4. Participation

All the agencies that participated in the exercise to date are detailed in Annex A. 76 people from 27 agencies attended. A further 7 agencies sent apologies.

5. SUMMARY

Many comments were made about the lack of time to fully meet some of the aims and objectives. The planning team accepted that the timescale was challenging and tried to ensure with the briefings that all participants were aware of the limited nature of the exercise activities. Despite this the exercise was affected by the lack of understanding of what would have gone on in the 6-day period between the incident occurring and the “day” of the exercise.

It was suggested by several organisations that more effort could be put into educating the communities and representatives about the emergency planning arrangements on an ongoing and regular basis so that if something does occur, or when participating in exercises, and indeed when responding to requests from the public, they are better informed. The Community Liaison Group have made some very good suggestions that will be explored and developed.

The other main issue is the amount of pre-planning that could be done. For example, at every exercise the problems in explaining the difference between the extent of food bans and risks to the public arises. The issues that each sub group will have to face are similar for most incidents and checklists can be produced that give the sub groups a good start. Also a pre-prepared set of recovery strategies could be developed.

In the acute and recovery phases information leaflets explaining terms such as “dose” and “contamination” could usefully be available – for responders as well as members of the public.

When considering the structure, the planning group discussed whether there should be community representation on each sub group as the strategy was being developed. Following the exercise and comments made, this is worthy of being revisited.

The benefit of having a communications person in each sub group has been previously agreed, however the lack of attendance by such professionals prevented this at the exercise. Other working groups within Cumbria are looking at this issue (associated with the BAE Systems Submarine off site emergency arrangements) and hopefully will address it.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. Recovery planning group continue to meet to further the preparation for the recovery from an incident at the Sellafield site including multi agency strategies for milk disposal and explanation of food restrictions..
- b. Consultation with the community is conducted primarily through the involvement of community stakeholders in the Specialist Advisory Groups and the continuing liaison between individual agencies and their own stakeholder forums. Once the Recovery Strategy is agreed by the Management Team discussions will take place to agree the process by which the strategy will be communicated to the public.
- c. Prepare explanatory statements for use in the event of an incident.
- d. Prepare terms of reference, strategy guidance and advisory checklists for use by the groups within the recovery structure.
- e. Consider training requirements, e.g. chairs of groups.
- f. Monitor progress by the BAE working group on communications arrangements, and incorporate in future.
- g. Feed back to NEPLG for amendments to Recovery Chapters. In so doing consider consistency of terminology.
- h. Consider the issue of resources for monitoring and clean up.

ANNEX A – Participating Organisations

Allerdale Borough Council
British Nuclear Group Sellafield Limited
British Red Cross
Business Link
Churches Together
Copeland Borough Council
Cumbria County Council
Cumbria Strategic Partnership
Department of Trade and Industry
Environment Agency
Fire
Food Standards Agency
Government Decontamination Service
Government News Network
Government Office North West Regional Resilience Team
Health Protection Agency Radiological Protection Board [formerly NRPB]
Health Protection Agency Local and Regional Services
MOD 42 (NW) Brigade
North West Development Agency
Police
Samaritans
State Veterinary Service
United Utilities
West Cumbria Local Strategic Partnership
West Cumbria Primary Care Trust
West Lakes Renaissance
WRVS

ANNEX B – Comments from the hot debrief

**SELLAFIELD RECOVERY EXERCISE “Reassure” held 7th June 2005 at
Summergrove Off-Site Emergency Control Centre, Hesingham, Whitehaven**

DEBRIEFING MEETING

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
Allerdale B. C.	Commitment of participants and approach given to communications.	Exercise lacked continuity.
BNGSL	Commitment and structure to build on.	No approaches to BNGSL as part of the exercise. Resources and expertise available. More can be pre-planned. Put in guidance.
Business Link	Groups worked well.	Community consultation cover business.
Copeland B. C.	All groups worked well.	Communications not involved in each group.
British Red Cross	Inclusivity.	Communication/consultation should be earlier.
Cumbria County Council	The way we identified a hole in the structure – we have to be in a position to respond. Pre-planned economic recovery.	In a recovery exercise we need more information. Nothing in documentation to make it clear what had already been done. Day 6 was considered too late.
Cumbria Police	Excellent that we are moving into this area.	Handover with link from acute phase. Definition of FEPA needs resolving.
DEFRA	Being able to identify DEFRA issues and be able to feed back.	Not enough detail must be built on. Confusing because 6 days in.
Environment Agency	Great enthusiasm by all – wide recognition of pre-planning. Good to see so many taking part – excellent representation. All issues discussed before, therefore pre-planning/pre-consultation. Captured feed back from a lot of learning points e.g. Carlisle flooding.	Very limited interaction between groups. Little exchange of ideas/communication between groups.
Fire Rescue Service	Great opportunity to get together and understand priorities and issues.	
Food Standards Agency	Opportunity to meet with local representatives. Milk dealt with very well.	Artificial start date.
Government Decontamination	Good start - exercise took place.	Assumption about resource capability

Service		
Government News Network	Good all here.	Poor turnout from professional communicators.
Government Office Northwest	Good representation.	Good work but could be undermined when presented to community. Needs right person – maximise on the work done.
HPA Local & Regional Services	Good groups getting together.	Felt it would have been better to meet as one group initially then divide into smaller groups as strategies were duplicated.
HPA RPD	Having separate groups enabled groups to explore more.	Would be useful if strategic monitoring coordination group involved. Would have appreciated more Local Authority input in remediation group.
MOD 42 (NW) Brigade	Identified another working group for transport issues. Pre-planning needs to support Cumbria Strategic information about Cumbria.	Assumption across the board of resources – over optimistic. Needs based on reality.
Northwest Regional Development Agency	Good exercise.	Pre-planning tool. Template/timescales recognised format would be helpful.
Samaritans	Appreciate exercise.	Trivial. Could be more serious. Plan for the worst.
United Utilities	A lot more scope for pre-planning.	Lack of other agencies involved. Does this building help?
West Cumbria PCT	Benefited from expert advice of other agencies involved in the exercise.	What is H. A. Group's role in this exercise. Would H. A. Group have used these groups. Explore structure.
West Lakes Renaissance	Good that it has taken place. Highlighted previous learning particularly business recovery, pre-planning for incidents.	Needs private sector input and NDA.
WRVS	Gained a lot through working with professionals.	Appreciated the exercise but how valid would be the conclusions. Exercise based on a specific incident should be more general.

ANNEX C – Individual agency comments

1. Pre exercise documentation and organisation

“Very well organised – looks like you’ve really cracked it.”

“A brief regarding the previous 6 days would have got the exercise flowing quicker.”

“Good.”

“The documentation was fine. Our players felt that the organisation was good too, particularly the fact that each groups Terms of References had been pre-prepared (improving on exercise Avon). The players did feel that the 5-day time jump caused a number of artificialities though.”

“Good.”

“OK.”

“Not received.”

“OK.”

“Comprehensive concerning the running of the day. The pre-circulated technical information was difficult to understand. Pre-circulation of the history of the incident up to the start of the exercise would have been useful and saved time on the day. That the release was made unrealistically large for the purposes of the exercise was not understood by all participants.”

“OK”.

2. Were the aims of the exercise met? i.e. to explore:

- **The operation of the Recovery Working Group for a nuclear incident under the new proposed structure**

“ In reality the groups may not be based in the same building. Tracking, management and communications will be more difficult. Suggest an administrative support team to provide a link. Chairs needs to fully understand the remit of their working and then educate the members of their teams. All need to understand remits of the other groups and understand what a strategy is. There may be a need for an EPU support officer on the shoulder of each chairperson to keep them on the straight and narrow.

Inclusion of a local representative in each group may be worthwhile.

Some stakeholders missing, e.g. Dti?”

“Very much so.”

“Yes – provided all the key organisations attend e.g. Business Link and the NDA.”

“Yes.”

“Yes. Using sub-groups worked well and the group was well chaired by EA.”

“The structure worked well in that the groups moved further forward to develop a strategy that covered all aspects. However, there was not time for liaison between groups and for discussing cross-issues.”

“Yes largely. But given the time constraint the main group could not debate and challenge the input of the subgroups. So we did not test whether new information could be brought to the table quickly to assist in resolving challenges.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“The operation of the RWG was explored and it ran successfully generating some useful lessons which are identified below, so the aim was met.”

“Yes, but more needed.”

- **The process of consultation with community representatives about the proposed recovery strategy**

“Local communities need an involvement in pre planning, e.g. presentations to community groups, around Sellafield and further. Need clarity about the role of the Community Liaison Group, greater involvement in the Working Groups during the discussion phase. The roles of the Cumbria Strategic Partnership (CSP) and Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as community stakeholder groups could then be helped if the recovery strategy could be presented in two parts: a. immediate recovery proposals, grass cutting, delivery issues etc – clearly an issue for local community groups etc through the LSP and b. Longer term strategic issues – long term economic recovery linked to strategic priorities for Cumbria, linked to the CSP”

“Needs further thought.”

“Looked good from where I was sitting, even though they were struggling with the time concepts.”

“Should have worked but was thwarted by parochial agendas.”

“Yes.”

“The players felt it was good to have members of the community present, but felt that the interaction was limited and it wasn’t really a consultation, so the aim was not fully met.”

“The Groups needed to be involved earlier in the process. It still felt a bit as if they were being presented with ‘the strategy’ even though there were a number of options.”

“Not completely as they did not seem to understand what was supposed to have gone before.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“The duration of this part was too short and lacked focus. There was no agreed output so it is not clear whether the aim was met.”

“Yes in the sense that this highlighted the need for more pre-planning and pre-consultation for the recovery phase. Stakeholders should be consulted on pre-prepared recovery strategies.”

3. If not please suggest how these aims may be progressed

“Welfare group needs stronger representation from the statutory bodies.”

“Communications team given the task of providing the Community Reps with a briefing prior to meeting the management team.”

“Greater dialogue with the ‘community’, rather than just presenting to them at the end. Also, including more community concerns in the player briefing may help. Perhaps an experienced presenter and/or the Chairman of the Management Group could do the consultations, rather than each Working Group chair.”

“Community participants having more briefing on the stage of the process reached.”

“Aims were to “explore” which was done but no outcome suggested so not sure what is wanted here?”

“Re the consultation with the community: There was a mismatch between what they were expecting and what (we) the RWG had prepared for. Further work with them is needed so that mutual expectations are understood and ground-rules agreed both for exercising and for ‘real’ incidents (see also 4 b.).”

4. Were the objectives of the exercise met? Please comment on those that are relevant to your agency.

a. Agreement on the structure for a Recovery Working Group for a nuclear incident

“Yes”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Yes, this was fine.”

“The structure was a big improvement and the use of the Working Groups enabled all the aspects of a recovery strategy to be addressed.”

“Yes – structure seemed to work to time constraints.”

“Wasn’t aware this was an objective. Wasn’t met.”

“We participated in the Management Team, Remediation and Communications Groups and are satisfied that these groups are required and should be constituted more or less as currently proposed. It is preferable to start off with larger groups and enable them to subdivide as the specifics of the situation demand.”

“Need to consider requirement for an ‘infrastructure’ group.”

b. To explore best practice for communication and presentation of a proposed recovery strategy

“Yes”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“The process of consultation with stakeholders became slightly confrontational at times, but our players suspected this to be an artificially of the exercise. Our players felt that the stakeholders wanted options to choose from and that this could have been achieved in a better way, but progress was definitely made on the experience from Oscar 7.”

“The communication of the Working Group proposals on a strategy were clear and fairly concise when presented (given the time constraints). However, still too scientific for most community representatives. This may have been improved if LA had provided briefings, eg of recovery options in the area, local knowledge.”

“Very little time given to this in reality.”

“Was achieved.”

“Wasn’t aware best practice was explored – certainly not evident.”

“This did not work well and possibly those best placed to say why are the community reps. However the environment for the process was inappropriate in respect of room layout and too full. The RWG needed more time to prepare and rehearse the presentation. As it is intended to be a RWG strategy should there be a single joined-up presentation and not individual presentations from each part of the RWG?

The plan might usefully include a default plan for the presentation meeting.

The turn-out from community groups was disappointing and we need to understand why.”

“Due to the artificial nature of the exercise this was a bit rushed, so needs further work.”

c. Determine the membership for the various groups within the structure

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“It would have been useful for FSA if Defra had been present.

It would be useful to have a Monitoring Working Group (HPA, FSA, MoD etc)

It would be better if there were a media professional in each Working Group.”

“As HPA-RPD, we were not expecting to take the lead in determining recovery options in the remediation group, having provided some preliminary input to the exercise. However, there were not LA representatives to take the lead on this, who I would envisage using people from HPA-RPD, EA, GDS etc to provide the technical and scientific support.”

“Yes – clear need for some transport/suppliers/logistics input.”

“Briefly in group.”

“Although the main contributions to the Management Team were, correctly, from the leaders of the SAGs it was appropriate that other agencies were represented. In an real event it is likely that the Management Team and SAGs would be meeting in parallel with different membership and over a longer period so contributions from all parties would more naturally arise. We believe the Remediation Group worked well. It understood the issues within its responsibility. The membership seemed to be substantially correct for the scope of the issues discussed. Sometimes it was diverted from the core issues to less important matters. This might have been an artefact of the exercise environment – i.e. that some issues were boxed as ‘off limits’.

The Communication Group would have benefited from wider representation from all participating organisations and resourcing so that it could support the other groups in developing the presentation of their strategies.”

“We attended HAG to see if they had any questions for EA after their 1st Meeting which they did. We didn’t get a chance to do that again. Communication between the groups other than at SCG was limited.”

d. Preparation of guidelines for the groups within the structure

“There should be TORs and proformas available to each impact group to specify their role and reporting mechanisms.”

“Yes.”

“Yes, should allow improved guidelines.”

“Poor.”

“Not convinced more detailed guidelines would be helpful, these might constrain SAGs not ‘empower’ them. However the chairs of each group should prepare an agenda and terms of reference specific to the history of the incident and consider how the group might be organised. This did happen in the Remediation Group and was of benefit in getting the group going. The SAGs do not easily fit into the ‘gold / silver / bronze’ levels of the incident response phase so organisations should consider preparing briefs for staff attending the RWG covering the skill sets and levels of authority expected of their participants.”

“More development needed. SAGs should have got more help from the communications sub group in getting our message across but time was very restricted. A real challenge is the explanation of the food restriction area compared to the area of other countermeasures.”

e. To test agency and inter agency working within and out with the Recovery Working Group

“Suggest an internal communications network should be installed and linked to an exercise team briefed with appropriate answers to questions that might be put to external organisations during the exercise.”

“Process started.”

“Yes.”

“Communication in the groups was good. However, the nature of the exercise and compressed timescales did not enable cross-group working and discussions.”

“Yes – subject to qualifications above. I recognise it was a limited exercise.”

“Poor – how was this expected to be done in such a restricted exercise?”

“Participant worked well within the RWG. There was a gap between the expectations of the RWG and those of the community reps (see elsewhere in this report).

Outside of exercises, agencies need to work on ensuring that identified participants in multi-agency incident teams are made better aware of the role, capabilities, responsibilities of other agencies.”

“This worked well in the run up to the exercise day with good collaborative working between EA, HPA-RP, FSA and UU. Everyone went into the 2nd SCG and that stopped the work of sub groups & therefore other interactions from developing further.”

f. To test the application of resources and guidance currently available

“Yes.”

“A small amount of this was carried out, but the format of the exercise did not allow for much of this.”

“OK.”

“Can’t judge.”

“A good proportion of remediation is to do with logistics: transporting people, clean and contaminated materials, disposal routes, transportation of food and fuel. This major challenge was (purposefully) left off the agenda for this exercise but should be revisited by the agencies represented at the exercise and other organisations with interests in this area (maybe including commercial enterprises). Pre agreed Interagency memoranda of understanding on realistic options would be desirable.”

“A reasonable test given the constraints. It may be due to the artificiality of a recovery day without a ‘day one’, but BNGSL seemed to be able to have a more hands off role than we would think acceptable.”

g. To contribute to the new Recovery Chapters in NEPLG guidance

“Suggest the recovery part of the MANERS course is revised in line with these.”

“Yes.”

“The testing of the management structure allowed for this.”

“Yes.”

“Can’t judge.”

“Yes. These chapters should include more on recovery strategy pre-planning eg a specific strategy for milk disposal according to the local conditions around different sites – amount of milk produced, suitability of alternatives, availability of land suitable for land-spreading of milk, availability of long sea outfalls, reaction of local NFU, reaction of milk collectors, reaction of STW owners etc other pre-prepared strategies should include infrastructure, radioactive/non rad waste disposal, environmental monitoring and clean-up.”

h. To consider the facilities and resources necessary for the Recovery Working Group to operate

“Internal communications – when it is for real you don’t want people disappearing from their posts to have other meetings or conversations. Consider having messengers.”

“Partly.”

“Not really.”

“More LA representatives on remediation working group were needed.”

“Yes.”

“Would rooms exist for sub groups?”

“Minimally.”

“Summergrove facilities are excellent and would be suitable for a real recovery event.

Management Team should not use the ‘big table’ as that approach to meetings at the recovery stage is not appropriate making substantive discussions difficult.

The room used for the presentation to the community groups was not appropriate and neither were the presentation materials/techniques – a more formal approach might be justified.”

“Facilities at Summergrove were adequate for the day. The EA would operate its emergency room for supporting the recovery effort.”

i. Identification of any monitoring issues, resources etc

“As real events seldom fit neatly into the working day, consideration should be given as to how resources are managed and when reliefs are needed.”

“Yes.”

“No, monitoring was not considered during the exercise.”

“Liaison between monitoring WG and remediation WG was not close enough due to time and people resource constraints.”

“Yes.”

“Minimally.”

“The natural limitations of an exercise (i.e. limits on the level of detail in the history of the response phase) mean that this was not realistically tested. There was enough data etc given the time available for the exercise.”

“There would have been a huge demand for radiological monitoring of people, food, water etc. therefore monitoring co-ordination and the steer of a pre-prepared monitoring strategy will be very important. It will be useful to get an input from the Govt Decontamination Service as to how much can be done on clean-up.”

j. Introduction of a new range of agencies to the recovery process

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Interactions with the SVS were useful to FSA.”

“Can’t judge.”

“Were we not all new to the process being exercised?”

Agencies new to exercising (e.g. some of the community groups) need briefing and maybe ‘we’ need to amend our approach in view of their needs.”

“It was disappointing that NDA could not participate. We hope that they are copied in on the lessons learned so that they can see what may apply to them. Funding issues will become progressively more important as time goes on.”

k. To test the interface and communications between the local, regional and national levels of Central Government

“This went very well and we would be looking to replicate these arrangements across the country.”

“The interface between local, regional and national levels of Central Government was tested. Our players found GONW input helpful. Some players felt that interaction between levels of government was at a more superficial level, due to the artificial nature of the exercise, than it would have been in reality.”

“Part tested within sub groups. Not really tested in main recovery group.”

“Was achieved.”

“Wasn’t aware of this happening.”

“We weren’t aware of much communication outside of Summergrove on the day, although different levels of Govt were represented there, there will be pressures from other centres.”

I. To explore how the Environment Agency would fulfil the GTA role during recovery

“The EA fulfilled the GTA role very well in this particular exercise.”

“Yes – OK.”

“UU are happy with the leading role taken by the EA.”

“The interface between the groups and the GTA was explored. This was fairly superficial due to time constraints. What was clear was that there was little evidence of a strategy being developed. The outputs tended to be very task orientated. GTA was more interested in the development of 1 or more strategies and the issues this raised. Liaison with the GONW was reasonable but processes need to be developed to make visible what each of these is charged with doing.”

5. Please suggest any amendments to the issues covered by the objectives

“Need to record meetings and actions. Little evidence to suggest the recovery operation could stand up to external scrutiny.”

“Realistic limiting of resources available for the exercise should be considered e.g. there are only a limited number of decontamination and clean-up teams available irrespective of the size of area affected.”

“What does this mean?”

6. What lessons have you learnt/outcomes identified?

“Much more can, and arguably should be done by way of planning ahead, e.g. explaining wide area food bans.”

“Need to start to inform local people as early as possible and involve people trusted by the community. Only if they can make informed choices will they be prepared to consider returning to the affected area. Pre-planning and testing of plans in discussion with local people would pay dividends. Could assess how to monitor how much of the information issued has actually reached individuals and families, thus identifying any gaps and who should address them.”

“We feel that there is a need to ensure that the right community representatives are involved at every stage; therefore we propose that three tiers of Community involvement are considered all linking different community groups at different stages of the process.”

1. Pre incident Planning (the ‘what if’ group)

Involvement would be from a wide range of community groups the remit would include preparing the local community for a ‘what if’ and informing them of any relevant facts they need to know, including the phases of emergency planning, acute, recovery etc..-Better understanding of the terminology and the approach used would help to avoid misunderstandings later. Initially this could involve organisations such as the LSP, the CEN, the Older Peoples Homes and Youth Councils. A way of getting out now a positive message “We are able to deal with this incident this is how we plan to communicate with you and is this the right way?” All of the tiers have to be about two way communication and forums to break down barriers of fear or lack of understanding etc

2. Immediate Recovery Response Group

The second is the immediate recovery response, the group that can make that immediate decision if needed. They must have an early involvement in the options and decisions that need to be made and should be active members of the specialist advisory groups. They need a deep understanding of what has happened and the impact of the incident and the ability to communicate that to the wider community. The role of the Community Rep Group needs to be

clarified, is it about consultation? Or the recovery groups simply telling the group of their planned approach. Great involvement in the initial discussions of the working group is more likely to lead to agreement in the proposed strategy. Involvement at the discussion stage would also add to the body of information available to the working group and have to ensure that the recovery strategy answered and dealt with all concerns, not just those that our officers are aware of. Community representatives should include the CBC Leader or Substitute, ABC Leader of substitute, Chair of LSP, Chair of West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group, Chair of CEN, Leader or substitute of Cumbria County council, Representative from Cumbria Association of Local Councils.

3. Strategic Response Group

The third is the strategic response, a group set up to look at wider strategic and more long term implications impacting on environment, economic and social areas. An example of this from Tuesdays event would be strategic discussion about potential rebranding of Copeland as an area focussed on tourism. Their remit will be to ensure the involvement of the wider community, lobby where necessary and have the ability to influence regional and governmental departments. Membership should include local authorities, CSP, LSP, Cumbria Vision, West Lakes Renaissance, Rural Regeneration, NWDA, Government Office Northwest, Chamber of Commerce and others who it was felt was necessary such as the Cumbria Tourism Board.

With regard to the Recovery Working Group, we feel it is essential that the membership include a representative from the local community. It is vital that before decisions are taken that the community view is heard and visa versa.

Hopefully our comments will help the further planning process providing observations about both the exercise on the day and the proposed model and approach.”

“More exercises are needed to develop processes and flexibility of response to what could be one of many very different scenarios.”

“Experience of interagency working increased understanding and knowledge of others roles. Important to establish working relationships that will benefit any response to a major incident.”

“The exercise has again raised the issues of public communication.”

“Communications expertise.”

“Need to become effective in role, or as a group very quickly, because there was a need to interact with other groups at an early stage.”

“Learnt that I hope an incident doesn’t occur.”

“Confirms the need for UU to be represented by our Communications Team and our presence on the Management Team, Remediation and Communications SAGs.

UU and the EA are to explore milk disposal issues specific to Cumbria.

Logistics issues need to be considered in detail.”

“The clear and pressing need for more pre-planning and pre-consultation with respect to the development of a set of recovery strategies (see above). The off-site plan should be greatly expanded to include these. There is a clear need for strong and decisive leadership from the SCG in particular and training should be undertaken on a regular basis by those who will have chairmanship of this group in their job description.”

7. Overall, what went well in the exercise?

“Plenty of enthusiasm and people working well together to complete the task – albeit it under minimal pressure.”

“It was well structured and provided a good framework that encouraged the high levels of involvement.”

“

- The best thing was that the exercise took part at all.
- That so many agencies/gov depts etc took part and with such enthusiasm.
- The stand-up Management meetings were a great success, the process worked whereby only the chairs of the Working Groups spoke but everyone around the table could have a voice if they felt that the chair of their working group had mis-represented their views. In addition all the other participants of the Recovery exercise could gather round and hear the latest info. This saved time by not having to brief people about the outcome from each Management meeting.
- There was relatively good liaison between Working Groups
- The Remediation Group worked well together to resolve the milk disposal issues.
- It worked well having the EA chair the Remediation group.”

“The Working Group structure was good and enabled many aspects of recovery to be taken forward.”

“Sub groups feeding into main group/flexibility to establish additional sub group.”

“People cooperated and pooled experience and skill.”

“Little from my perspective after the initial briefing.”

“Inter-Agency working was good.

The structure of the RWG was seen to be fit-for-purpose.”

“The good turn out and the interest shown in facing the issues related with recovery.”

8. Overall, what did not go well in the exercise?

“Bit too ambitious.”

“Unfocussed presentations from the sub-groups. I got the impression that many people had not read the instructions and were just ‘winging it’.”

“The turn out of communicators was disappointing. Prevented putting a communicator in each working group.”

“Bringing the strategy together for the management team leader. People distracting their group by not focusing on the relevant key issues e.g. debating solutions rather than strategy development.”

“Concerns raised re: FEPA order.

There were too many ‘ifs and buts’ regarding the monitoring capabilities.”

“Involvement of LA / people with local knowledge in developing recovery options would have helped significantly and made the proposed options / chosen areas more appropriate for the local area.”

“Need to have communication people linked to each group, would be valuable. Main group too constrained to cover ground.”

“Arrangements for briefing – could have been done on a team briefing basis – i.e. cascaded.”

“Most of it.”

“Summarising the outputs of the SAGs into a single, coherent plan and presenting it to the wider community.”

“The artificiality meant that certain aspects were not fully considered. Shame that sub groups lost all their members to 2nd SCG & couldn’t continue their work.”

9. Suggestions for improvements and for a future recovery exercise.

“Bring together the Police, Fire and Military representatives for a separate set of discussions on incident management. They have a wealth of experience within their own regularly tried and tested procedures which could be transferred into the nuclear scenario.

Observers should be briefed to steer groups if they detect that they are losing sight of their objectives.”

“The scenario presented seemed to me to be a ‘hopeful’ one involving comparatively little disruption to the local population. It dealt with a hazard that was relatively benign, a threat to the local population that was more emotional than real and left the road and rail communications safe and intact.

However we are at a time when there is real threat of terrorist aggression. Such an incident could involve:

- Loss of life and serious injury on some scale. A need to deal with post trauma stress suggests that other agencies should be represented in the Welfare Group, e.g. the Cumbria Police and Fire Services do make use of Counselling and Psychotherapeutic services from the private sector.
- Major disruption of road and rail communication.
- Radioactive contamination on a major scale.

The question posed is whether the structures provided in the exercise would be sufficient to deal with such a major incident.”

“Consultation/involvement of community groups earlier.”

“

- Perhaps an experienced presenter and/or the Chairman of the Management Group could do the consultations, rather than each Working Group chair, to avoid presentations to the community becoming confrontational.
- It would be useful to have a Monitoring Group (HPA, FSA among others).
- It would be better if there were a media professional in each Working Group.
- It might be useful to start the Recovery Exercise at Day 2 or 3.
- It is vital that Defra takes part next time to advise on options and strategies for supermarket food, agricultural countermeasures and the future of local farming etc.
- It would have been useful to have more time to consult other Working Groups for info, although for exercise purposes the timescales on the day had to be compressed.
- It would be useful if a recovery exercise was held every 2-3 years.”

“Start again.”

“Recovery is a longer-drawn out process than response and does not naturally lend itself to traditional exercise format. To go much further, i.e. test additional issues or readdress weaknesses identified in this exercise a more real-time event would be required. But this would stretch over several days and is it practical to ask for this commitment in ‘peace time’? However meals and ‘home time’ should not stop us doing something if it’s necessary.

“There is value in sub groups of agencies working outside of exercises on developing prepared positions on a range of inter-agency issues, i.e. sorting out in advance as much of the internal negotiations required within agencies before an outward facing statement can be made, a completed example of this is the position statement on water supplies. UU and the EA are to work on milk disposal issues. Work on transportation issues might be useful.”

“Keep SCG focussed & limit membership. Give more time to preparing for consulting the stakeholders. Future recovery exercises will need to be of an entirely different nature – the concept of the single day’s exercise is too similar to the acute phase exercise and leads to similar behaviours when in reality things would hopefully happen in slower time and be more considered.”

10. Any other comments?

“Need to keep training.”

“A good start but in order to maintain momentum more realistic exercises are needed.”

“Thank you.”

“Our players found the exercise very useful and enjoyed the experience.”

“It is probably typical of how an emergency would be run, but it felt as though there was quite a lot of hanging around. This is difficult to cope with if you have a deskful back at the ranch!”

“Economic group prep was very poor – there are a number of scenarios that would be planned for but apparently had not been considered or were not presented. Overall not very professional and quite alarming!”

“Given that real issues for improvement were identified and the structure of the RWG was validated the exercise was more than worthwhile.”

“Overall a useful exercise in that it has provided a clear mandate to get on with recovery strategy development. We would recommend that resource be devoted to this rather than planning any more exercises at this stage.”

