

**IN THE UK COVID-19 INQUIRY**

**Before the Right Honourable Baroness Hallett D.B.E**

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**STATEMENT OF REG KILPATRICK**

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**I, REG KILPATRICK, will say as follows:**

**Introduction**

1. This statement is prepared in response to a request dated 21 March 2023 (the request) that wishes to draw on my experience as the Director for Local Government (2017-2020), with respect to my responsibility for civil contingencies and resilience. I have drawn on support from my office in preparing this statement.
2. Covid-19 was a terrible time for many individuals and families across the UK. I wish to extend my most sincere condolences to those who lost loved ones. I understand that the pain and sadness of their loss will last for a lifetime. While the memory of those who have been lost will live on, there can be no replacement for those parents, siblings and friends and their loss leaves an unfillable gap in so many lives. I wish also to recognise the suffering of those who continue to experience the effects of the virus and who have to live with the debilitating after effects of the virus. I truly hope that they make a full recovery as quickly as possible and have the strength and determination to live the fullest possible life until then.

**Background**

3. I have worked in the Welsh Government since 1989 in a range of financial and policy roles. I began in the statistical profession and was Director of the Wales Cancer Registry between 1994 and 1996. I then worked in health finance managing the public

spending round and allocating some £3 billion to the NHS in Wales; developing economic policy working with and sponsoring the Welsh Development Agency; and in culture policy, sponsoring the National Museum and supporting the establishment of the Wales Millennium Centre.

4. In 2003, I moved into the Senior Civil Service (“SCS”) as Deputy Director for the Budget, Planning and Management Division of the Welsh Government, and then moved across to Deputy Director of the Local Government Policy Division of the Local Government Directorate in 2007.
5. In 2011, I became Director of the Local Government Directorate (“LGD”) with responsibility for local government corporate and financial policy, performance and improvement; and structural and service reform. In that role, I was responsible for managing the Welsh Government’s relationships and communications with local authorities in Wales on the policy matters listed above. LGD has a total annual budget of some £5 billion.
6. In 2013, following a restructuring of Ministerial portfolios by the then First Minister, further areas were transferred to me. I became additionally responsible for the Welsh Government civil contingencies and emergency planning function; community safety policy and the Fire and Rescue Services. In that role, I remained responsible for managing the Welsh Government’s relationships and communications on the policy matters above with local authorities in Wales, and for liaising with and briefing the police services (including the Police and Crime Commissioners) and the three Fire and Rescue Services.
7. In September 2020, I became Director General for Covid Coordination and Director of LGD, which involved continuing to manage LGD as well as assuming responsibility for the emergency preparedness and response function of the Welsh Government during the pandemic. In broad outline, the Covid-19 aspect of my portfolio since September 2020 has involved directing and coordinating the development and implementation of Covid-19 policy across Welsh Government, including the 21-day review process, and managing the operational relationship between the UK governments in respect of control and containment measures, intelligence sharing, situational awareness, and the Joint Biosecurity Centre. The Health and Social Services Group (“HSSG”) led NHS and public health programmes such as Test, Trace and Protect and the Vaccination Programme.

8. I have completed accredited training for my civil contingencies role through the Exercise Wales Gold course. This training prepares individuals to operate and take decisions at the strategic level in multi-agency emergency response groups, for example, within Strategic Coordinating Groups **Exhibit RK01 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000128980**. I have used this this training to lead teams within the Welsh Government (but often including colleagues from other external organisations) in a number of exercises, including those relating to marauding terrorist firearms incidents. I directed the Welsh Government element in the planning and response to major events, including the 2014 NATO Summit in Newport, the 2014 Fire Services strikes, and the 2017 UEFA Champions League Final in Cardiff. I acted as Wales Gold for Operations Dragon and Springtide (the ceremonial aspects of the demise of Queen Elizabeth II and King Charles III's first visit to Wales as King). I have also overseen the response to a number of emerging events such as floods, snow and, more recently, the impact of hot weather.
  
9. I have a degree in Behavioural Science, a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Statistics, and a Master's degree in Public Administration.

### **The r.9 request**

10. I understand that a number of requests for information, under r. 9 of the Inquiries Rules 2006, have been made by the Inquiry in relation to Module 1. I also understand that the substance of the Welsh Government's preparedness arrangements has been set out in statements, provided by senior officials, in response to those requests.

### **Context**

11. In order to help the Inquiry, it is important for me to provide the context of civil contingencies in Wales as it stood at the time and how the position had evolved since the implementation of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 ("the Act").
  
12. Following the Commission on Devolution in Wales (the Silk Commission) **Exhibit RK02 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187555**, and reports by the Auditor General for Wales on civil contingencies **Exhibit RK03 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000107113** and the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly for Wales **Exhibit RK04**

**M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000128993**, the Welsh Government actively sought additional powers under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 from the UK Government. Despite these attempts, by 2017 the UK Government had not agreed to devolve these powers; however we continued to build our capability and resilience in order to plan for and respond to civil contingency situations through the Wales Resilience Forum (“WRF”) and its supporting structures. In that way the Welsh Government undertook a leadership and co-ordination role, developing close working relationships with the Local Resilience Forums (“LRFs”) and the individual responder agencies. Some of these were devolved such as health and local government, others were not, such as the police service.

13. The M1/WG/01 Statement provides a detailed description of the resilience structure in Wales, and for that reason I do not intend to repeat it here. Instead, I will provide details of my role in that structure and my views on how it operated and delivered preparedness.

14. As Director, I was a member of the WRF and advised and supported the First Ministers in their role as Chair and Ministerial lead for civil contingency matters **Exhibit RK05 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000107116**. The WRF was created in 2003 and by 2017 it was firmly established as the national forum which set strategic direction and promoted the enhancement of emergency planning across agencies and services in Wales, including those not classed as Categories 1 or 2 and the voluntary sector. The Forum allowed Chief Officers and representatives direct access to Welsh Ministers to raise and discuss issues of emergency preparedness. They also updated Welsh Ministers on the range of initiatives being taken to strengthen Wales’ collective resilience and to provide assurance that the necessary planning work had been identified and was underway. This included updates on pandemic flu planning and the exercises organised to test plans, such as Exercise Red Kite in 2016 which tested our response to a marauding terrorist firearms attack , and Exercise Megacyma in 2015 which tested our response to a catastrophic coastal flooding event.

15. This approach brought order and consistency across LRFs, emergency services and other agencies likely to be involved in responding to a civil contingency situation. The WRF was supported by a more operational group known as the Wales Resilience Partnership Team (“WRPT”) which directed specific agendas of work in a range of subgroups such the Wales Mass Fatalities Group and the Wales Flood Group.

**Exhibits RK06 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000107115 and RK07 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000116450.**

16. Although there was no statutory requirement to do so, developing our collective preparedness was self-evidently a sensible course of action. In my view, the partnerships developed through the WRF and its supporting structures have helped to develop the ambition shared by all concerned to work collectively towards better preparedness. It also allowed individuals and organisations the opportunity to shape our strategic planning, identifying and articulating strengths and weaknesses direct to Welsh Ministers.
  
17. Our engagement in the WRPT and its subgroups provided the means to identify issues and undertake the action necessary to address them and report on completion. While not perfect, and certainly an approach which was very resource intensive both to the Resilience Team and colleagues in partner organisations, the work helped to develop an effective and collaborative group of people whose individual contributions created a relatively powerful and coherent mechanism for planning and responding to emergencies.
  
18. As a general principle, the Welsh Government is committed to working with partner organisations as One Welsh Public Service, to maximise the benefit to citizens of the collective effort of public services for citizens. I believe that civil contingencies planning is a good example of this principle. I have seen how it drives a collective understanding of the threats and risks to Wales and enables a more rapid multi-agency response to issues. For example, the growing threat posed to communities by widespread grass fires caused by arson in 2015 was raised as a concern with Welsh Ministers by the three Chief Fire Officers. The First Minister agreed personally to Chair a summit and was accompanied by three other Welsh Ministers each with their own interests in resolving the problem. The outcome was the establishment of an All-Wales Strategic Arson Reduction Board. The Board produced Operation Dawns Glaw which continues to direct the multi-agency action to minimising and mitigating the challenge of grass fires. It is difficult to overstate the contribution of the shared purpose and common action enabled by our approach to emergency planning and response.

19. In addition to providing advice and support to the First Minister, I have a leadership role internally within the Welsh Government and externally across the responding community in Wales. For example, I represent the Welsh Government on the Joint Emergency Services Group (“JESG”) which brings together chief officers from the emergency services, Welsh Government, armed forces in Wales and others including British Transport Police and the Coastguard Agency at the most senior level to consider how to take forward their joint contribution to civil protection **Exhibit RK08 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000107109**.
20. The role of JESG is to promote inter-operable working between services, working with LRFs to develop preparedness and provide strategic oversight for the capture and implementation of lessons identified from public inquiries and other legal processes. JESG adds considerable value by demonstrating very clear leadership for these issues to their own organisations, individually and collectively, and demonstrating a powerful and visible commitment to partnership working. Although JESG has no formal role in our civil contingencies’ structures, the Chair does sit on the WRF and is a highly valued member representing the views and commitments from key responding organisations.
21. JESG has mostly focused on the delivery of operational services and has proved to be a useful leadership body promoting initiatives designed to continuously improve how resilience is developed in Wales. It has brought a unique view from the most senior leaders in responding organisations which has helped to explain and contextualise (and sometimes add an impetus) to the work of LRFs in planning, and the Strategic Co-ordinating Groups in response.
22. As an example of its impact, during Covid-19, the group increased the frequency of its meetings from tri-annually to meeting 25 times during 2020 and 16 times in 2021. These meetings were vital in developing strong shared situational awareness, such as that provided by the Director General for Health and NHS Wales Chief Executive on the status of the health service; through individual agency updates to assess the pressures across organisations; and by me updating on the options, implications and decisions in the 21-day review. In addition, as I chaired the Health Protection Advisory Group (Outbreak Sub-Group) and worked closely with Welsh Ministers I could provide timely briefings about the trajectory of the pandemic, its likely impacts and our potential response. In reverse, I reported risks, pressures and issues from colleagues around

the table directly into Ministers and Cabinet discussions; and to colleagues developing policy options across the Welsh Government.

### *Welsh Government organisation*

23. As the Director responsible for civil contingencies, one of my key aims was to improve the preparedness of the Welsh Government civil service. This meant creating a more effective co-ordination function which involved all Departments. The way I presented and managed our work was therefore critical. For this reason, I led the internal structure of engagement that enabled me to build an understanding of the expertise and experience of policy colleagues and sector leads.
  
24. At the centre of our corporate presence was the Civil Contingencies Group ("CCG") which brought together colleagues from Welsh Government departments **Exhibit RK09 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000128975**. My requirement was for senior (Deputy Director level) attendance. We would consider emerging risks and determine appropriate planning action. Our agendas would flex with the external risk context so we did not always focus on civil contingencies, but would consider counter-terrorism matters, extremism or severe weather. The Chief Medical Officer, the Chief Scientific Adviser for Health, the Chief Veterinary Officer and the senior leads on security, flooding, transport and communications all sat on the Group. The Resilience Team provided secretariat.
  
25. I would set the agendas at my monthly meetings with the Resilience Team Head of Unit and Head of Branch, the Deputy Director for Community Safety Division together with the Chief Security Adviser. Naturally, this small group would meet much more frequently in whole or part on an almost daily basis to discuss emerging issues, progress with projects and to set priorities.
  
26. The Grade 6 Head of Unit chaired a supporting tactical level Resilience Steering Group ("RSG") which supported and took forward the actions from the CCG.

## *The Resilience Team*

27. Between 2017 and 2019, I was supported by a modest Resilience Team. The original Team was established following devolution in 1999 and staffing resources numbered around half a dozen officers at that time. It was initially located within the Community Safety Division under the Human Resources Group but transferred to the Local Government and Communities Group around 2011, and then later to the Education and Public Services Group in 2017, where it remained throughout the pre-pandemic period.
28. At the outset, minimal resources were allocated to the team which reflected the fact that the civil contingencies function was not devolved and therefore not a key role of the government. Furthermore, the early governments following devolution were, naturally, focused on pursuing their own ambitious social and economic agendas using their devolved powers. Nonetheless, the then First Minister, Rhodri Morgan, recognised that even though he had no formal powers in this area, the Welsh Government had a *de facto* leadership role for civil contingencies. His argument was simple - the response to almost any event would be dealt with by organisations which were devolved, such as local authorities or the NHS, therefore the Welsh Government had some responsibility for making sure those organisations were able to manage the task. The government recognised this through establishing a Team to support the First Minister and to go about co-ordinating the all-Wales civil contingencies structures.
29. By 2017 the Resilience Team had developed productive networks throughout the resilience community; and led and facilitated our response to civil emergencies. The compactness of the civil contingencies community in Wales meant there was a constant and open dialogue through strong links with emergency planners in local authorities, emergency services and utilities companies as well as other Government Departments and other devolved governments. The Team also led on policy and co-ordination of the Welsh Government's involvement in the UK Government's Counter-Terrorism strategy (CONTEST) along with input to UK Government policy on Cyber and other crime and justice matters.
30. At that time, the Resilience Team sat in the Community Safety Division and was led by a Deputy Director. That post also oversaw Fire Policy, Crime, Justice, Policing,

Prisons, Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme, Cyber Resilience, Modern Slavery and our engagement with the Armed Forces and, in particular, support for Veterans. Given the diverse range of responsibilities held by the Deputy Director, the Head of Unit (Civil Service Grade 6), largely reported directly to me on civil contingencies and counter-terrorism issues. The Deputy Director acted as line manager and provided support where needed. An organogram of the Division at that time is **Exhibited RK10 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000184310**.

31. We managed a significant programme of work over the period of this request. In comparison to the other governments, our staffing was modest. In advice to the First Minister in 2017 about the implications of a transfer of new functions from the UK Government to the Welsh Government, we set out a comparison with other UK nations **Exhibit RK11 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187533**. The Scottish Government had 59 staff covering the same functions as us, whilst in England, there were 30 members of staff at Executive Band level alone working within the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, with 34 people working for the Resilience and Emergencies Division at the Department for Communities and Local Government. Clearly, this created some challenges for me as to how to prioritise limited resources within our policy and implementation agenda, aside from the demands of periodic mobilisations to respond to particular events; and planning for significant events such as the UEFA Cup Final in Cardiff.
32. Given that emergency preparedness had been recognised as an important role of government, I was acutely aware of my responsibility as Director and duty to highlight the risk inherent in our establishment. Expanding the Team was therefore a priority. Ministers continued to argue a case to the UK Government for additional funding to accompany the devolution of powers and if successful that would have provided for a significant expansion of the Team. However, the UK Government refused those requests. I therefore asked our Internal Audit Services to prepare a report after the functions were transferred, assessing capacity of the Team to carry out the new devolved responsibilities **Exhibit RK12 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000128972**.
33. I used the Internal Audit report to identify the risks to the government as a result of our limited capacity through the Departmental Audit and Risk Committee and then to the Welsh Government Audit and Risk Committee **Exhibit RK13 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000128973**. Following that meeting, the Permanent Secretary identified resources

to expand the Team by 6 posts. Those additional resources proved to be a turning point, creating greater capacity and a foundation for our work on Brexit preparedness; which in turn provided the basis for our subsequent response to Covid-19.

#### *Major policies and events between 2017 and 2020*

34. I explain above how our approach to civil contingencies was not guided by statute or legal responsibility but by the views of the First Ministers and their understanding they had a leadership role for Wales at times of crisis. Consequently, much of the formal policy making for civil contingencies undertaken before 2018 originated in the Cabinet Office. However, we had our own programme of work set and overseen by the WRF, which was advanced during the period alongside some joint programmes with the UK Government. However, I set out below the initiatives and policies undertaken either solely by Welsh Government, or in collaboration with partners, which I believe were important in shaping our pandemic preparedness.

#### *Transfer of Functions Order 2018*

35. The major policy change during this period was the Welsh Ministers (Transfer of Functions) Order 2018/ 644 – Section 41 (Civil Contingencies Act 2004) (“TFO”) and the transfer of executive functions to Welsh Ministers. The First Minister’s Written Statement on the TFO **Exhibit RK14 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187556**. The TFO enables Welsh Ministers to have greater control of policy making in this field and exercise a range of different functions under Part 1 of the Act. This includes issuing guidance, monitoring performance, and bringing enforcement proceedings without consultation with the UK Government. Additionally, after consultation with a Minister of the Crown, Welsh Ministers are able to make regulations in relation to Category 1 devolved responders, make an Order requiring Category 1 devolved responders in Wales (with the exception of the Police and Coastguard) to perform a function for the purpose of preventing the occurrence of an emergency, and amend the list of responder organisations in circumstances where the relevant organisations fall within devolved competence.

36. The TFO was the most significant development in civil contingencies policy in Wales since devolution. Undoubtedly, it enables a greater role for the Welsh Government and

Ministers to determine the structures, standards and approach of responding organisations in Wales. I believe that the freedom and flexibility we have as a consequence of the TFO means, among other things, we can create a civil contingency and emergency planning function for Wales that will better understand the threats and risk to our communities and how we can best prepare for them; the right structures to support that; help to understand local, national and UK risks and how we can manage or mitigate them; and support Ministers' responsibility and leadership for the nation.

37. The considerable work within the Welsh Government to identify and escalate the risks around the TFO and, ultimately to secure additional resources, was only the first step. Unfortunately, external circumstances did not allow us to move forward and realise the opportunities as I had hoped. The whole Team, including the extra resources we had been allocated was prioritised almost immediately towards the very practical need to develop and mobilise the Welsh Government Brexit preparedness effort and then, subsequently, to fully focus on our Covid-19 response.

#### *Operation Yellowhammer*

38. From the early months of 2018, the intensity of preparatory work for a UK departure from the EU (Brexit) without a deal grew significantly. There was substantial engagement at ministerial level between the UK Government and the Welsh Government, which was managed by the newly created Welsh Government European Transition Team headed up by a Director. At the same time the Resilience Team started to work closely with the UK Government Civil Contingencies Secretariat ("CCS") on Operation Yellowhammer.

39. Operation Yellowhammer was the CCS programme for cross-government civil contingency planning for a no-deal Brexit and the consequent potential for economic and social disruption, including finance and business, the movement of people, trade, agriculture, customs, and food supply. Operation Yellowhammer aimed to understand the risks and prepare to mitigate those risks. Welsh Ministers had some very significant concerns for the people and communities of Wales, for example, regarding the supply of food and medicines, and considered the civil contingency structures to be vital in understanding those risks and, critically, developing plans to mitigate them.

40. Initially, we believed the operation would run for three to six months. In practice, it ran for around 20 months and required three full mobilisations of the Resilience Team supported by the wider Welsh Government civil service and the civil contingency structures in anticipation of leaving the EU in March 2019, October 2019 and January 2020.
41. I led the development and implementation of arrangements within the Welsh Government to dock into Operation Yellowhammer. We began formal engagement with external partners through the LRFs in July 2018 to start their local planning and preparedness, which continued through regular meetings as further information and scenarios became available from CCS. As mentioned above, prioritisation of resources against task was a recurring theme during the period, so I wrote to the LRF Chairs on a number of occasions, explaining the full capacity of the Resilience Team was aimed at Brexit **Exhibit RK15 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000128984 and Exhibit RK16 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000128985**. It followed that some other work was deferred or reprioritised.
42. Similarly, there was a range of regular meetings, mostly weekly, but often more frequently, with CCS as part of the UK assurance and governance framework for Operation Yellowhammer. I would meet at least weekly with the CCS Director and the other devolved governments and was part of other cross Whitehall groups as well. In my experience, working with Whitehall departments is not always straightforward. During Brexit, the leadership in CCS appeared to understand and respect the nature of devolved government which made our work together much easier. Communications were generally open, albeit with some restrictions, and the devolved governments were involved where possible in UK government civil contingency planning. Clearly, the Resilience Team was fully occupied by Operation Yellowhammer, supporting the Welsh Government arrangements at official and Ministerial level.
43. Our planning for Operation Yellowhammer, and then mobilising our coordination arrangements for Wales on three separate occasions meant we had developed and put robust arrangements in place to create situational awareness, combined with the means to collect, collate and analyse information quickly to support rapid, expert decision-making.

44. We built our Brexit planning around four key areas: resourcing; risk and planning activities; training and exercising; and Command, Control and Co-ordination (C3). It would have been impossible to mobilise a Brexit response through the Emergency Co-ordination Centre (Wales) ("ECC(W)") which relied solely on the Resilience Team for any significant period of time. Working with our colleagues in Human Resources and overseen by the Permanent Secretary-chaired Brexit Executive Committee ("BREXCO") considerable work was undertaken to recruit and train Welsh Government staff to fulfil our co-ordination role. We also participated in a series of training and testing exercises with CCS and Whitehall departments which provided us with an opportunity to test the processes with the LRFs in Wales **Exhibit RK17 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187557**.

45. Although Operation Yellowhammer absorbed considerable time and effort, the corporate preparation across the Welsh Government Civil Service and our work in partnership with stakeholders was not wasted. Rather, it made us better prepared to respond to a whole-system emergency. Establishing and maintaining a state of practical preparedness for 18 months was a useful means of:

- establishing our Pan-Wales Response structures;
- clarifying roles and responsibilities of the groups within those structures;
- operating a cadence of meetings with the ability to adjust that according to the level or risk of proximity of events; and critically,
- establishing the personal and professional relationships within the structures themselves.

46. Therefore, when the scale of the pandemic became clear in February 2020, and we mobilised ECC(W) and our response structures, there was a strong foundation on which to do so.

### *Pandemic Flu Preparedness*

47. Exercise Cygnus, the second part of which, held only in Wales in 2014 but UK-wide in 2016, and our involvement in the Pandemic Flu Readiness Board ("PFRB") established by the UK Government after the UK-wide Exercise Cygnus, created a platform for similar work on pandemic flu planning. Much of this work eventually proved relevant to the Covid-19 response, with programmes focused on legislation, managing the

consequences of excess deaths, and developing surge plans all being key issues that were material factors in our response. **Exhibit RK18 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ 000187539.**

48. To assist colleagues in the HSSG, which led the work to implement the recommendations made by the UK Review, we established a Wales Pandemic Flu Preparedness Group. As well as providing leadership, the group acted as a conduit with the initiatives being taken forward at the UK level and the adaptation and implementation of this work in Wales. Welsh Government was represented by officials from HSSG and the Resilience Team in the UK sub-groups, all of whom reported back to our CCG and the supporting RSG.
49. Although most elements of this work, and the overall lead, fell to HSSG, the Resilience Team led on certain workstreams. For example, the Resilience Team worked closely with LRFs, coroners and the funeral industry as part of our planning within the CCS workstream on planning for the consequences of excess deaths. Local plans were reviewed and revised so they were consistent, fit for purpose and aligned to national guidance. We undertook this work in advance of the new UK Government guidance and identified several important issues about mortuary capacity, the role of the funeral industry in body storage and the management of crematoria operations. We learned about capacity constraints in the system and the potential need for additional storage.
50. Local plans were revised to increase crematoria capacity and consider other means of temporary body storage. As with us, servicing Operation Yellowhammer required CCS to prioritise activity and there was a delay in their guidance being published. When it was released, we published our own guidance, adapted specifically to the circumstances in Wales and informed by local partners.
51. The division of work under the PFRB between the Resilience Team and HSSG reflected an established understanding. Our focus was, naturally, on the broader civil contingencies planning that would be required to support a response to a flu pandemic. We did not consider the range of issues and risks that were being led by the HSSG, including development of the UK Pandemic Influenza Strategy 2011, the stockpiling of health countermeasures, or the medical advice supporting the decision-making. Our responsibility was for the response structures and processes that would be put into

place should we need to support the HSSG response, and the wider capability building around such areas as excess deaths and sector resilience.

### *Sector Resilience Plans*

52. The Resilience Team also led on the Sector Resilience workstream of the PFRB which assessed the risk to each sector that a pandemic would create. This led to a series of Sector Security and Resilience Plans (“SSRP”) being developed.
53. This process was a means of understanding risks and providing Ministers with assurance that mitigations were being considered and planned for and which could be consolidated into a single high-level report. We considered the resilience of devolved sectors to a flu pandemic, including factors such as the impact on staffing resources and the delivery of services that would inevitably be affected by the pandemic. Information was gathered on the business continuity arrangements for the NHS, Ambulance Service, Fire and Rescue Services, Transport and Water sectors and what the arrangements were for review of these plans against the national planning assumptions.
54. This was the first occasion this work had been commissioned and the process was expected to evolve and improve in time to compliment other methods of assurance to be introduced in monitoring compliance by devolved services. The exercise demonstrated the benefits of understanding sector risks and set the model approach which in time informed the establishment of our Preparedness and Risk Group (“PRG”).
55. Working with the UK Government, HSSG coordinated the Welsh Government aspects of a draft Pandemic Influenza (Emergency) Bill which contained measures to amend existing legislative provisions or introduce new statutory powers designed to address the particular circumstances of a pandemic. These included provisions that would streamline systems, increase capacity in the health care system, and mitigate infection. The work on this legislation established the foundation for the swift introduction of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

56. Preparing for a no deal Brexit was an extensive programme of work that impacted on virtually every aspect of the Welsh Government. It created significant pressure on the Resilience Team as well as most other Groups, Directorates and Divisions. While our work in respect of pandemic planning was impacted by servicing Operation Yellowhammer, we nonetheless continued to support pandemic planning through various workstreams and initiatives under the PFRB programme.

#### *Provision of Scientific and Technical Advice in Wales*

57. Timely and accurate information is critical to any civil contingency response. Sound decisions - strategic as well as operational - require good situational awareness and, in many circumstances, access to quality scientific and technical advice supported by authoritative expert professional interpretation. Plans had been developed in relation to identifying and mobilising this advice which were set out initially in the Scientific and Technical Advice Cell (STAC) Arrangements in Wales 2010 **Exhibit RK19 M1KILPATRICK01 -INQ000107154** and later updated, as part of the WRPT work programme, as the Provision of Scientific and Technical Advice in Wales in 2019 **Exhibit RK20 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000107125** . Both documents were produced by colleagues from Public Health Wales and the Resilience Team. Whilst they are focused primarily on providing advice to one or more of the four Strategic Co-ordinating Groups (“SCG”) responding to a local event, they also set out wider support for a Wales level response and how they might link into the SAGE arrangements at the UK level.

58. As a model response, this approach had a good deal of merit, and we had confidence in its effectiveness. However, in retrospect, it overly focused on responding to single event local issues, such as the tyre fire at the Mettoys site in Fforestfach Swansea in 2011 **Exhibit RK21 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000187478**. Also, the approach assumed the availability of sufficient experts and access to broader expertise which, to support a limited scale, narrowly focused incident and inform the decisions of one SCG was a reasonable assumption.

59. In the very early stages of Covid-19, where there were a small number of outbreaks in defined premises, the model functioned as planned. Representatives from Public Health Wales (“PHW”) and others such as the Welsh Government Chief Scientific Adviser for Health and his team (later to become the Technical Advisory Cell (“TAC”)) were able to attend the relevant meetings and briefings. As the virus spread to other

sites and then into the community, and the four SCGs were stood up each dealing with a number of outbreaks, it became impossible for the limited number of expert colleagues to service the rapidly growing demand for expert advice. Also, my understanding is that the links to SAGE, which we had used in previous events as a source of expert input, did not operate as expected and we did not have access to data relating to Wales. As the STAC model was not designed for an event of the scale of Covid-19 and we could not replicate SAGE, the Chief Scientific Adviser for Health created TAC.

60. The creation of TAC also supported other arrangements that enabled direct advice to the SCGs through their meetings, to local government officers and politicians through arrangements established by the Local Government Directorate and briefing material published by the TAC.

#### *Pan-Wales Response Plan*

61. In taking on the Director for the civil contingencies function, I assumed responsibility for our key response arrangement - the Pan-Wales Response Plan **Exhibit RK22 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000107119**. The Plan had been approved by the WRF in September 2005 and was our model for response to emergency situations. It was informed by, and is consistent with, the Cabinet Office guidance "Preparation and planning for emergencies: responsibilities of responder agencies and others". **Exhibit RK23 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000187558**.

62. The Plan provides a framework for the management of an emergency affecting several or all areas of Wales. It is scalable, by which I mean that it can be implemented in response to a major incident in one LRF area or to include two or more LRF areas where a wider response is required. The framework provides the ability to analyse the impact on Wales of any emergency or incident, whilst also establishing a channel for advice and guidance, where necessary, to be cascaded from Welsh Government, or in some cases, the UK Government. Central to this is the operation of the ECC(W).

63. When implemented, the plan defines a structure through which information from across Wales is assessed and analysed by the ECC(W). It is important to stress that the structure is activated only where it adds value to the response. The model provides a pan-Wales common operational picture of the impact of the emergency which, in turn, is used to support the strategic management of a given situation. In some cases, the

structure links to UK arrangements (such as Operation Yellowhammer) and reports on a Wales basis.

64. Similarly, the plan allows the cascading of information from central Government to agencies on the ground via Information Cells which are established by each SCG. Welsh Ministers are likely to have an urgent and close interest in any emergency situation which is being overseen by a SCG. Ministers may also be keen to provide help, or otherwise support a rapid and effective response. Welsh Government Liaison Officers – normally senior staff at Deputy Director level – are appointed to attend each SCG meeting and act as a link between the SCG and ECC(W). In essence, the plan sets out co-ordination arrangements rather than a pan-Wales command structure.
65. Operation Yellowhammer demonstrated that this was a simple but effective approach. There were some challenges around consistency of message through the four SCG channels, often the result of changing advice as circumstances developed. To address this, for the Covid-19 response, I chaired a further group which consisted of the four SCG chairs (and later the chairs of the Recovery Coordinating Groups (“RCG”)) that provided a regular cadence of engagement where I could share the latest advice and the Welsh Government position. I would also receive requests for practical help, clarification of our policy position or requests for colleagues in other departments. This group proved an extremely useful means of engagement and was well attended throughout the period of the pandemic.
66. The Plan has been tested in every major exercise since 2005 and has been reviewed regularly in the light of learning to ensure it remains fit for purpose. It was last updated in 2019. The structure and processes set out in the plan were used with adaptation to recognise the extraordinary circumstances posed by Covid-19, shaping the Wales response by providing leadership to the sector as well as enabling issues to be raised and resolved by government to support the local response.

#### *Exercising and testing our plans*

67. The regular testing of the Pan-Wales Response Plan in emergency exercises helped us build close operational working with partner agencies. Exercise Cygnus and Exercise Red Kite (simulating a counter-terrorism event) in 2016, and the live operation for the UEFA Champions League Final in 2017, tested all aspects of our integrated

response. The partnership working between Government and public services reinforced the lesson that effective joint working was necessary to respond effectively to emergencies of all kinds. The prolonged preparation and three mobilisations for Operation Yellowhammer further tested, assured and practised these arrangements.

68. Supporting, commissioning, and participating in training and exercising activities was a key part of the work of the Resilience Team. New exercises and testing scenarios were designed and prepared by the Wales Learning and Development Group (“WLDG”), and with the UK Government on major exercises focusing on particular scenarios. Very often the lessons we learned from one exercise would be relevant to others, for example in the way communications were managed between Welsh Government and partners, or how requests for assistance might be made quickly and effectively. Between 2016 and 2020, we led and participated in around a dozen exercises, ranging from live marauding terrorist firearms exercises to large-scale power outages, as well as responding to real events such as storms, severe winter weather and flooding.

### *Training*

69. Good preparedness requires more than a sound, well tested plan. It needs well trained and experienced people to turn that plan into action. The Welsh Government has consistently sought to develop a cadre of colleagues with the right skills and experience to support our response plans. The investment we have made in civil contingencies training in Wales has created a cohort of senior officers trained in their respective response roles and critically able to work within a multi-agency environment.

70. Exercise Wales Gold provides cost-free training for senior representatives from responder agencies who will represent their organisations at a multi-agency SCG during a response. The two-day course recognises devolved and non-devolved aspects of response and provides collective learning for delegates about the kind of scenarios they might face, and experience of the critical decisions they would be expected to make, when working in an SCG. It builds upon individual learning within organisations and complements existing programmes within Local Resilience Forum areas. In 2019 alone, 122 delegates attended the course with delegates drawn from 44 agencies.

71. The continued agreement (and recurrent £50,000 funding) from the Welsh Government and JESG to fund a central national programme for training and exercising under the Wales Learning and Development Group (“WLDG”) has epitomised our ongoing commitment to training **Exhibit RK24 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187554**. The fund helps deliver a Wales Gold course and a Wales Silver course, training for SCG Chairs, and the annual Wales Civil Contingencies Conference. To supplement the work on civil contingencies, a separate Prepare Delivery Group, working alongside the WLDG, is delivering a programme of work on counter-terrorism training which engages the civil contingencies community on consequence management activities.

### *Learning Lessons*

72. Civil contingencies and emergency preparedness is a dynamic process, based on planning, exercising, and identifying and lessons, before improving and refining the plans and then repeating the process. Learning will often start as soon as a plan is activated or when a response is mobilised. That was certainly the case for Covid-19, where we created a response model using the Pan-Wales Response Plan, tested that in rapidly changing operational circumstances, and refined it. For example, in the early weeks of Covid-19 it became clear that our model did not align with the PHW Communicable Disease Outbreak Plan **Exhibit RK25 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000116529** so changes were identified and implemented immediately.

73. In addition to the normal day to day learning and live evaluation of our response, we undertook several exercises to identify lessons as we moved through the pandemic. We have since conducted a fundamental review of our approach to make sure it is fit for the future. That review is discussed further below. We have already made some fundamental changes that will improve our preparedness.

74. We began looking into learning lessons and improving our structures and processes specifically to our Covid-19 response as early as July 2020. Following the principle of continuous learning and reflection we commissioned an interim independent review of the operational response to Covid-19 the terms of reference **Exhibit RK26 M1KILPATRICK01 -INQ000128998**. The report presented evidence and analysis from

150 participants from 67 organisations, and made priority recommendations. It also included recommendations which were longer-term in nature, some of which were of such scale, complexity and depth that they needed an extensive programme of work to resolve. The interim report and lessons identified are **Exhibits RK27 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187517 and RK28 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187578.**

75. I subsequently chaired a Covid-19 Lessons Management Project Board to oversee the management of the lessons identified arising from the report and also from the various interim debriefs undertaken by LRFs and others. The Board created a Lessons Management Register to provide a robust summary and audit trail of how multi-agency pan-Wales lessons identified through debriefing were being managed during the pandemic and how those lessons were being shared. The register provided a means for the Board to oversee the monitoring, implementation, and progress of the recommendations, including providing a conduit to share those lessons and the progress being made to address them as widely as possible.
76. The interim review and the evaluation, and the monitoring process established to take forward recommendations, demonstrates the willingness of the civil contingencies community in Wales to engage early in identifying lessons from Covid-19 and to apply this learning to improving their individual and collective response. The lessons learned will feed into the general review of civil contingencies which I describe below.
77. Of course, there is always scope for improvement in the way we learn lessons from exercises and real events and to make sure the recommendations are fully implemented. A report commissioned by the CCS in 2013 suggested that often the same lessons were identified from reviews or inquiries into emergencies of other, later, major incidents **Exhibit RK29 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187553.** Whilst this has been addressed, to a certain extent, by Joint Organisational Learning (JOL) there is scope to go further. We need to ensure that a robust system is in place to assure ourselves that actions have been implemented and we will be considering this in implementing our review recommendations. We are already well aware of the importance of securing assurance about the delivery of lessons and, for example, are working with JESG to do this on the recommendations arising from the independent public inquiry investigating the deaths of the victims of the 2017 Manchester Arena terror attack.

## *Review of Civil Contingencies*

78. At the October 2018 WRF meeting, the then Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services, agreed to support a review of our emergency planning governance and structures to ensure they remain fit for purpose. The First Minister subsequently agreed that a comprehensive review should be undertaken which would develop a platform to support the new Regulations which Welsh Ministers were able to make following the TFO. The review would establish a more enduring governance structure for resilience in Wales around which regulations and guidance could be developed. With greater responsibility and accountability falling to Welsh Ministers, the structure would provide assurance that Ministers' duties were being carried out effectively.

79. That review has only recently been completed. Whilst it is extremely disappointing that we have not made sufficient progress to follow through that Ministerial decision, it was neither possible nor appropriate to undertake a fundamental review during our Brexit mobilisation, or the Covid-19 operation. Our most important priority was on maximising our response, firstly to the potential impacts of a no deal Brexit and then to the pandemic. However, at the first opportunity during 2022 we engaged Local Partnerships to conduct that review.

80. The specific objectives were three-fold:

- (a) To review all areas of civil contingencies and emergency planning across Wales. That included areas where the policy is reserved, but where the response to incidents in areas in or affecting Wales is still the responsibility of the Welsh Government and Welsh responders. The review would include, but not be limited to, consideration of the governance structures, working groups, terms of reference, membership, interoperability, risk identification, mitigation, and planning.
- (b) To engage with the key stakeholders in the civil contingencies arena. This would include any responders that are named under Part 1 of the Act, those that are linked to the LRFs, relevant third sector agencies and any other relevant stakeholders that can contribute to incidents.

(c) To consider all current legislation and relevant guidance, specifically the Act, its accompanying regulations, the statutory guidance (Emergency Preparedness) and non-statutory guidance (Emergency Response and Recovery) and its implementation in Wales (Pan-Wales Response Plan). This would also include the UK Government led review of the Act and the National Resilience Strategy, which was due to be published in Spring 2022. The UK Government Resilience Framework was published outside of the review period and was, therefore, not consulted as part of this review.

81. I was pleased with the findings that our governance arrangements are generally fit for purpose and welcomed the suggestions that while some revision and additions are needed, they are modifications rather than fundamental changes. The report recommends that the Welsh Government assumes the role of a 'guiding hand' over the LRFs, with clearer performance management provided by the adoption of a national assurance framework. It suggests more effective partnerships, particularly between Category 1 and 2 responders and the voluntary sector, and a more effective communication protocol between Welsh Government and LRFs. Finally, a fundamental review of training is recommended to ensure that those involved in civil contingencies both locally and nationally have the skills necessary to address future risks and their likely common occurrences rather than past lessons identified.

82. The full report including the 15 recommendations can be found in the document **Exhibit RK30 M1KILPATRICK01 – INQ000187580**.

83. As part of the review, we are looking to pilot a Central Delivery Unit, drawing upon expertise from inside and outside Welsh Government, to centralise training and exercising and to create a single body to monitor the implementation of lessons learned from exercises and real events.

### *Welsh Government Structures*

84. Within the Welsh Government, the pandemic highlighted that our coordination across departments was not as strong as it could be, hence the creation by the Permanent Secretary of the temporary Director General coordination post. There are lessons to be learned about how we transitioned from a HSSG-led response to an emerging threat, to the full mobilisation of our corporate arrangements, Wales plans and making the links with the LRFs and engaging the SCGs. We realised there needed to be

greater senior focus on all aspects of civil contingences, including risk, preparedness and response, so we have created a new Risk, Resilience and Community Safety Directorate (“RRCS”). This new Directorate oversees the Community Safety Division with an expanded Civil Contingencies and National Security Division (“CCNS”) which has responsibility for national security, cyber security, civil contingencies and incident response and cyber resilience **Exhibit RK31 M1KILPATRICK01 - INQ000128974**.

85. For the first time, the Welsh Government civil contingencies function will be led at Director level, establishing equivalence with the UK Government and other devolved governments. Moreover, the role will provide renewed leadership for the function across Welsh Government policy areas and within the corporate centre to embed resilience planning more widely as well as to develop an effective, flexible and responsive set of arrangements that will support future responses. The new RRCS Director post and the creation of CCNS division will allow us to better develop and support the recommendations of our review.

86. While we strengthen our capacity within the Welsh Government to enhance our preparedness, and reinforce our partnership working, we will continue to maintain our strong working relationships with the UK Government and the other devolved governments to work jointly on building resilience on a UK-wide basis.

#### *Responding as a civil service*

87. Operating a civil contingencies response can be extremely labour intensive. For example, supporting a two-week Brexit mobilisation required around 50 colleagues to staff the ECC(W) and attend the daily rhythm of meetings with policy colleagues and Whitehall. The Centre operated in a three-shift system for 24 hours, seven days a week. Fully servicing the sustained workload created by the Covid-19 response required substantial additional staffing resources. It would not be reasonable to expect a relatively small Resilience Team to service such a complex and long term response without some external support and assistance. Therefore, it was necessary to call on colleagues from across the Welsh Government to step into roles within the ECC(W): first for Brexit and then for Covid-19. These roles included the Operational Director of ECC(W), the SCG Liaison Officers and numerous coordination, administrative and support roles. Of course, those who stepped forward were provided with full training.

Many had experience of previous mobilisations and brought welcome and essential capability.

88. However, maintaining capacity was a constant issue during mobilisation. It is right that the core team has responsibility for establishing a new mobilisation and making sure that is working effectively. It is also right that we offer colleagues the opportunity to volunteer to be part of a demanding and interesting part of government activity. Nonetheless, relying on volunteers is not a sustainable operating model for a critical government function. It is not possible to plan effectively on this basis, or to manage an orderly turnover of staff in the medium to long term, both to refresh the response team and to release colleagues back to other important Welsh Government business. Also, the disproportionate time and effort required to manage the staffing arrangements to support response while it is underway, is frustrating and, moreover, distracting from the critical business at hand.

89. In future, learning from Brexit and particularly Covid-19, it is necessary that a clear and deliverable corporate approach to these resourcing challenges is put in place that will identify colleagues, train them, and ensure that when required they will be made available to the response effort. That work is urgent and while some progress has been made on a 'reservist model' there is still some way to go before the approach is fully developed and embedded across the organisation.

### *Risk Management*

90. The UK Government has traditionally led on the process of understanding and analysing risk and we use the National Security Risk Register ("the Register") produced by Cabinet Office to inform our work. The Register has been used to develop our priorities in planning and building capability, and this will remain the case following the publication of the most recent version based on an updated methodology.

91. However, these assessments provide information at a UK level of analysis rather than one which would serve the Welsh Government. Covid-19 reinforced that understanding threat and risk at a more disaggregated level is essential to effective preparedness. For that reason, I have engaged a specialist in civil contingencies risk management to develop a Wales Risk Register which will help us understand the risks specifically facing

Wales, for example, coal tip safety and aspects of climate change. This work will align with our contribution to the National Security Risk Register but provide granularity and detail not hitherto available to better inform our own planning and mitigation.

### *Concluding remarks*

92. In concluding, there are a number of points I wish to make.

93. Before 2017, Exercise Cygnus and the work of the PFRB placed a clear focus on further developing our pandemic flu planning and this prompted a significant programme of work in Wales led by HSSG. I and the Resilience Team led a number of workstreams to support the Board.

94. The external context in which we were working was challenging and created other pressures and priorities to which we had no choice but to respond. During summer 2017 the UK Government, under advice from the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, raised the UK Threat Level from SEVERE to CRITICAL. This reflected the manifestation of the risk of Islamic terrorism in several incidents across Europe and four terrorist attacks in the UK, killing 41 people.

95. Given the increase in alert level, the attacks themselves and the links between some of the attackers and Wales, I re-focused the priorities of the Resilience Team to work with others across the civil contingencies structures to understand the threat better and make sure Wales was ready to respond should similar atrocities happen here.

96. At the same time, we were involved in refreshing the UK Government's CONTEST strategy to the terrorist threat, coordinating the Wales response to make sure that Welsh Ministers' views were properly reflected, and the operational needs of devolved agencies were recognised. This coincided with our own fundamental multi-agency review of the Wales CONTEST Strategy. Practical work was continuing with the Prepare Delivery Group to deliver a programme of training and exercising in Wales to prepare for the terrorist threat.

97. Cardiff was the host for the 2017 UEFA Champions League final in the Principality Stadium which required significant civil contingencies planning and mobilisation of the ECC(W). The terrorist threat was high - indeed, the Borough Market attack took place

on the night of the final with thousands of fans travelling from Cardiff towards the incident in London.

98. Later, in June, we took the lead for the Welsh Government in response to the Grenfell Tower fire. Community Safety Division established the official level structures through the CCG membership to provide Welsh Ministers with the necessary advice and briefing and to identify the risk and threat of similar incidents in Wales. In due course, responsibility for the ongoing recovery focused work was handed to the Housing Division.
99. We remained aware that pandemic flu remained the highest risk on the National Risk Register, but we also had to focus on these immediate risks which were actually happening. The agendas for the WRF over this period also show the extent of issues we were dealing with, including grass fires, winter preparedness, flooding, Storm Emma, the Llangammach Wells fire, Urban Search and Rescue, power outage preparedness, air quality monitoring, community resilience, Critical National Infrastructure, the cyber threat, and the Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme in addition to Operation Yellowhammer, counter-terrorism, and the UEFA Champions League. We also had to maintain the management of the resilience structure and its various all-Wales planning groups. We continued to progress our work on pandemic flu planning to the best of our ability, and to work with HSSG on the ongoing PFRB commitments.
100. In the wider context, the main requirement of emergency planning is to maintain plans to prevent an emergency occurring or to reduce, control or mitigate its effects. Responding quickly and effectively to a civil contingency event or emergency situation relies on sound structures, good planning, regular exercising and an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each part of the system. Establishing such an approach was a key objective for me and maintaining the Pan-Wales Response Plan was the starting point for doing that.
101. Indeed, the range of extraordinary and mostly unforeseen events created a set of significant challenges for the Resilience Team, which had to balance the development of policy and strategic planning with operational delivery and prioritising rapidly emerging work with pre-existing tasks. However, this period of challenge also had a positive impact on our preparedness for the pandemic. Responding to these challenges

undoubtedly put us and our colleagues across Wales into a much stronger position to move quickly into response in the early months of 2020.

102. There are three elements of the Welsh Government approach to civil contingencies and emergency preparedness which, I believe, established firm foundations for our response to the pandemic:

- (a) Preparedness – training and exercising;
- (b) Partnership – working with other organisations; and
- (c) People – leadership and relationships.

103. I have always prioritised testing and exercising and where we have been invited to do so, we have participated in all major UK exercises and used every opportunity to test our plans and capabilities with a view to learning and improving. Taking forward every recommendation has been challenging against other more immediate priorities, but we have endeavoured to turn learning into best practice where we can and change structures and processes, where required, for the better.

104. Working closely with other organisations on preparedness also helped us develop strong partnerships. As described above, the approach of the Welsh Government to delivering public services is based on strong partnership working within sectors as well as between sectors. Naturally, that happens within the four LRFs, however, our planning structures enable – and encourage – that to happen at regional and certainly national level, given the strategic direction provided by the WRF.

105. Our approach to partnership is demonstrated by our collective approach to challenges and working at a local and national level to support and build capability. The JESG, which I have described earlier, is a good example of how organisations show a desire to support better partnership working. In the same way, many of the working groups embody a willingness for organisations to work in partnership to deliver essential training.

106. In responding to this request, I have aimed to describe the range of activity that I led between 2017 and 2020. The period was one of significant and rapid change for the civil contingencies function in the Welsh Government. For many years it had been, fortunately, an area not called upon often. Apart from a small number of mobilisations,

we spent our time developing models for response rather than mobilising. The terrorist incidents during 2017 and the risks to some fundamental aspects of Wales's social and economic functioning associated with Brexit brought us to the forefront of Welsh Ministers' and colleagues' minds. The risks we had been preparing for were now crystallising and our challenge was to pivot from planning into sustained delivery.

107. As for what I consider has been done correctly, I would highlight the quality of our collective planning, testing and exercising which established the foundation for our response to Covid-19. That supported a rapid mobilisation in which colleagues across the responding community (including the First Minister and his Cabinet colleagues) knew their roles and responsibilities and how the networks we had established over many years should work. A common purpose established through the WRF with clear leadership from organisational chiefs and Ministers set a collaborative tone which helped to bring all partners together.
108. There are clearly lessons to be learned. We began to look for and learn those lessons early in the pandemic and continued to do so throughout. Our fundamental review of civil contingencies has brought together much of that learning and set a challenging change agenda for Welsh Government and our partners. In addition, we need to expand and embed our understanding of the nature of threats, risks and response across Welsh Government departments, building on the PRG's achievements to date. That will help us to plan and mitigate those risks better than we have in the past. Within the Welsh Government we also must design and implement a rapid and sustainable means of supporting an emergency response. This must mobilise colleagues quickly in order to maximise our short-term impact on a situation and ensure medium to long term success of our operation.
109. Finally, the strength of our response is people working together with common purpose. We have a relatively small community of people working in civil contingencies and preparedness and, as Welsh Government, we should recognise their contribution as well as continue to provide leadership, support and guidance.

**Statement of Truth**

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

**Personal Data**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated:** 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023