

Civil Contingencies Group Meeting

18th February 2020 – 10:30am

Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions	Reg Kilpatrick
2. Latest position - Coronavirus	Neil Surman / All
3. Preparedness and planning	Neil Surman / All
4. Questions	All
5. Next steps	Reg Kilpatrick
6. Storm weather updates	TBC
7. AOB / Future meetings	Reg Kilpatrick

Minutes:Agenda Items: Coronavirus latest position, preparedness & planning:

Neil Surman gave the current position with Covid-19:

- Roughly 72.5k cases in China
- 1868 China fatalities
- Weekly increases in Covid-19 lower than in previous weeks.
- Roughly 80% of cases are deemed ‘mild’, 5% ‘critical’, and mortality 2.3%,
- Concerns that more may have it than figures show
- In the UK, 4.5k people tested with 9 confirmed cases.

Neil explained that we could see a new spike in cases as people return from their Chinese New Year holidays and return to China, return to University and work etc. Neil reiterated there is no reason to relax despite the figures, and Health are meeting each morning at 8:30.

Reg supported this view and stated Covid-19 is not going away, and as a Government we must continue engaging to increase preparedness.

Neil Surman explained Health are working to a number of different planning strands. One of which is the response to rapid legislative proposals in Whitehall, which include a raft of new regulations including quarantine and the new Coronavirus Bill. With regards operation planning, Health are utilising the usual mechanisms in place. PHW have implemented community testing in health boards. Arrangements for contact tracing are in place if and when a case is confirmed in Wales. Health are preparing a position statement with regards stockpiling and triggers. There is an Ex-Co Vid-19 subcommittee meeting soon, chaired by the Permanent Secretary with Director Generals. There’s also a COBR meeting this afternoon, with the First Minister and Chief Medical Officer attending. Health are in regular discussion with comm’s colleagues, and acknowledge there is concern about external comm’s in conjunction with other sectors not being robust enough and so they are looking into it.

Reg added that Neil and Health colleagues are being pressed by Cabinet Office regarding the Bill, which is to be introduced to Parliament in March. Reg asked for quick and effective support when requested by Neil’s team. Reg iterated that it is important to get this right, otherwise we may be bound into legislation we don’t agree with. Neil explained the timescales they are working to are very pressing, with plans for the Bill to receive Royal Assent on 31st March.

Reg confirmed that all departments who should be engaged with CCG are not present today, and that we need to check list of invitees and ensure everyone who should be included are being so.

NR stated that with regards Police powers of detainment, without the statutory instrument the Police do not have the power to detain due to Covid-19, and Police accept this is a matter for Govt.

When questioned about Welsh Minister's rejecting the introduction of similar emergency powers recently introduced in England, Neil Surman explained that the emergency powers cited were specifically put in place for the threat of people within supported isolation in England leaving isolation. Neil added that we do not have supported isolation facilities in Wales currently, and there are wider implications of these emergency powers including allowing the Secretary of State in England to infringe on people's freedoms. Neil concluded that there are already provisions in Wales if needed, which are mediated through the magistrates system, and so we do not need additional powers.

Reg added that unless we created a separate means of repatriation and make our own Welsh arrangements, then Ministers would review decision, but WG haven't got plans for repatriation and are leaving this to the FCO. Reg concluded that at present people being repatriated land in England and so they have the appropriate powers to deal with returnees in England.

Gary Haggaty explained that at present, ECCW is not formally stood up but are considering the need to formally stand up in the near future. Gary confirmed that ECC(W) are supporting Health colleagues who are leading the response, and confirmed in ECC(W) that there is still a huge amount of activity at present with staff working long hours dealing with concurrent issues with regards Covid-19 and the storm/weather impacts. Gary added this is stretching ECC(W) to an extent, but ECC(W) are coping quite well.

Reg explained that if the virus becomes a pandemic, there will be wider issues for us as WG. As such, Reg reiterated the importance of WG engaging with partners and there may be impacts we have yet though about.

Huw Morris added that there are potential impacts within education that can lead to institutional damage. Reg added that this is just one example of impacts we may experience beyond health, and Gary tourism as another.

NR explained that within Business and Management, they're checking their business continuity plans are up to date and ready to cater for all eventualities. Business-critical staff have been identified and measures taken to ensure replacement if needed. Paul said their plans are being tested, and he is assured that at the moment their plans are ok.

Transport area confirmed they are reviewing their business continuity plans.

Natalie Pearson explained that within internal comm's they have had an SCS brief, updated that one member of WG staff tested and were negative, and she is not sure what future comm's are needed with staff at present.

It was raised that comm's we saw with Operation Yellowhammer were variable in terms of what each department was able to release, and that we in WG do not have

the corresponding Cabinet Office Comm's Role that they do in England. Comm's and this was agreed to be discussed later today in a different meeting.

Business Area confirmed they are starting to pick up reports from companies of impacts on supply chains with China, including Chinese factory workers not returning to work in all areas for example – though they are not aware of any specific impacts on Welsh businesses at present. It was raised that the automotive industry may be potentially affected, and that some Welsh companies are involved in the supply chain for Apple. Reg highlighted the potential impact of public behaviour and fear with regards panic-buying.

Bon Westcott confirmed that Civil Contingencies are having weekly meetings with English LRFS and separate meetings with Welsh LRF Chairs. Bon added there is sectoral guidance that Health have been working on, including for education, care settings, prisons etc, which constitutes bespoke guidance that we will put colleagues in touch with. Bon stressed the importance that if we are in a sector with CNI that we should be having the discussion with relevant partners with regards dusting off preparedness plans.

Reg added that with all the potential implications of Covid-19, we need to keep liaising and talking to each other as departments.

Storm updates agenda item:

Reg confirmed that the weather we have faced has been unprecedented, citing the high number of floodings. Reg advised that the FM delivered a written statement yesterday, and there is an emergency summit meeting tomorrow with local government, NRW, JESG, Small Business and TUC to discuss the support Government can provide to Local Government with the flooding response. Reg added that finances will be discussed, and how Government can and will provide support as appropriate. We are confident LAs can support their areas, but the question over finances is to be discussed.

Toby Mason added there are a series of Ministerial meetings and as such comm's coordination is to be done. Reg added that the FM is keen to get Housing involved, as there structurally damaged homes.

Reg explained there are likely to be impacts on local economies and areas. Bon added that there is a DEFRA call at 12pm today but we are already aware of the expectation there will be further storms this weekend - which may not be as bad as Storm Dennis & Ciara, but in addition to the impact already endured by those the new weather fronts are still likely to cause further flooding.

Natalie added that Comm's are working with colleagues impacted by the bad weather – they want to get ICT on desks and advice regarding offices affected and available to work in. Natalie added arrangements being put in place, SCS page being updated, and they are aware of unsafe buildings/equipment affected by water and potentially contaminated material. Natalie said Comm's are asking people not to put out comm's as individual groups, and that they are working on a unified comm's for clarity (alongside Security colleagues). It was highlighted that some offices in

Bedwas and Trefforest will be affected and potentially out of use for up to 6 weeks. It was agreed that Corporate Services and ICT have responded quickly and effectively thus far.

Meeting Register

Chaired by Reg Kilpatrick, Local Government Director

Confirmed as Attending:

Gary Haggaty, Deputy Director, Community Safety Division

John Howells, Director of Housing & Regeneration

Toby Mason, Head of Strategic Communications

Gwenllian Roberts, Chief Regional Officer, North Wales

, Head of Digital Services

Head of Communications for LGC

Neil Surman, Deputy Director Public Health

Natalie Pearson, Head of Organisational Development and Engagement

Head of Emergencies, Local Government

Operations and Maintenance Manager, Economic Infrastructure

OFMCO Business & Management

Dialling-In:

Christianne Glossop, Chief Veterinary Officer

Chief Regional Officer, South Wales (also on behalf of Sioned Evans)

T/ACC on behalf of PLU

Tentative:

Huw Morris, Group Director SHELL

Tim Render, Director, Land, Nature & Food

Apologies:

Albert Heaney, Director Social Services & Integration

Steve Davies, Deputy Chief Executive NHS Wales

Chief Security Officer

Keith Smyton, Head of Food Division

Sioned Evans – Director Business & regions dialling-in on behalf of)

Peter Kennedy, HR Director (Natalie Pearson attending on behalf of)

Gian Marco Currado, Director, Environment & Marine

Chris Jones, Deputy Director Healthcare Quality Division

Samia Saeed-Edmonds, Planning Programme Director

Police Liaison (T/ACC: dialling-in on behalf of)

No Response:

Rhodri Asby, Deputy Director Circular Economy & Resource Efficiency

Caren Fullerton, Chief Digital Officer,

Dewi Rowlands, Deputy Director, Transport policy

Richard Sewell, Deputy Director ICT Infrastructure

Head of Decarbonisation & Energy

Alan Woods, Deputy Director, FE & Apprenticeships

Frank Atherton, CMO

Andy Fraser, Deputy Director, Water & Flood Division

Head of Strategic Communications

Head of Brexit Readiness

NR Head of Science Resilience

NR Head of Science

NR Head of Welsh Government Office for Science

NR Head of Contract Delivery, Economic Infrastructure