



Special Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date **Friday 20 May 2022**
Time **1.30 pm**
Venue **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham**

Business

Part A

Items which are open to the Public and Press
Members of the public can ask questions with the Chair's agreement,
and if registered to speak.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Declarations of Interest, if any
4. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
5. Civil contingency planning and Storm Arwen review (Pages 3 - 32)
 - i) Report of Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
 - ii) Presentation of Strategic Manager Executive Support, Durham County Council
6. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
12 May 2022

To: **The Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview
and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor J Charlton (Chair)
Councillor P Heaviside (Vice-Chair)

Councillors V Andrews, P Atkinson, D Boyes, J Cairns, L Fenwick,
C Hampson, C Lines, M McGaun, D McKenna, C Martin, E Mavin, J Miller,
D Nicholls, D Oliver, J Quinn, A Simpson, D Sutton-Lloyd and M Wilson

Co-opted Members: Mr D Balls and Mr A J Cooke

Co-opted Employees/Officers: Chief Superintendent A Simpson,
Superintendent N Bickford, Chief Fire Officer S Errington and
Deputy Chief Fire Officer S Helps

Contact: Joanne McCall Tel: 03000 265 895

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

20 May 2022

**Civil contingency planning and Storm
Arwen review**



**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with background information on civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements and a review of the response to Storm Arwen.

Executive summary

- 2 The presentation attached in appendix 2 will aim to provide Members with an overview of:
 - (a) civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements in the county;
 - (b) Storm Arwen, impacts and response;
 - (c) the de-briefs and review;
 - (d) the initial conclusions from the review;
 - (e) the suggested improvement plan.

Recommendation

- 3 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within this report and presentation and are asked for their comments on the proposed improvement plan.

Background

- 4 Storm Arwen hit the north of the United Kingdom on the afternoon of Friday 26 November 2021 and that night caused extensive damage across northern England.
- 5 More than one million homes lost power as falling trees and poles brought down power lines, with over 100,000 homes experiencing several days without power. The strong winds also caused structural damage to buildings and transport was disrupted with rail services cancelled, roads blocked by fallen trees and overturned vehicles and snow accumulations across the Pennines.
- 6 In County Durham, 14,891 utility customers were affected by a loss of power. The outages affected all parts of the county and many residents were without power for several days before power was restored to all properties on Thursday 9 December.
- 7 The storm was one of the most disruptive weather events County Durham has experienced in recent times. The county, its communities and residents were impacted significantly and for many, the prolonged duration of power outages was unprecedented.
- 8 A number of de-briefs and reviews of the response to the storm have been commissioned and undertaken including a national review by the Department for Business, Energy, Innovation and Science (BEIS) and by County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (CDDLRF).
- 9 In addition, the council undertook its own review, which consisted of seeking the views and experiences of officers who responded to the incident; elected Members; local community organisations and parish councils which responded to the incident; and the general public
- 10 To include an element of external challenge and peer review, the council engaged with Durham University and Cornwall Council in the de-brief.
- 11 The review has identified a number of areas that worked well and also a number of areas which need to be improved, which provides the basis for a proposed improvement plan which is due to be considered by Cabinet.
- 12 The views of Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee are sought on the review and the proposed improvement plan

Conclusion

- 13 The presentation attached in appendix 2 provides Members with an overview of:

- (a) civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements in the county;
- (b) Storm Arwen, impacts and response;
- (c) the de-briefs and review;
- (d) the initial conclusions from the review;
- (e) the suggested improvement plan.

14 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within this report and presentation and are asked for their comments on the suggested improvement plan.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- None

Contact: Kevin Edworthy

Tel: 03000 268045

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

None.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

Civil contingency planning and Storm Arwen review

Stronger and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee

20 May 2022



Contents

- Overview of civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements in the county
- Overview of Storm Arwen, impacts and response
- De-briefs and review
- Initial conclusions from review
- Suggested improvement plan

- *'Ask' of the Committee:*
- *Comments and observations on the proposed improvement plan*

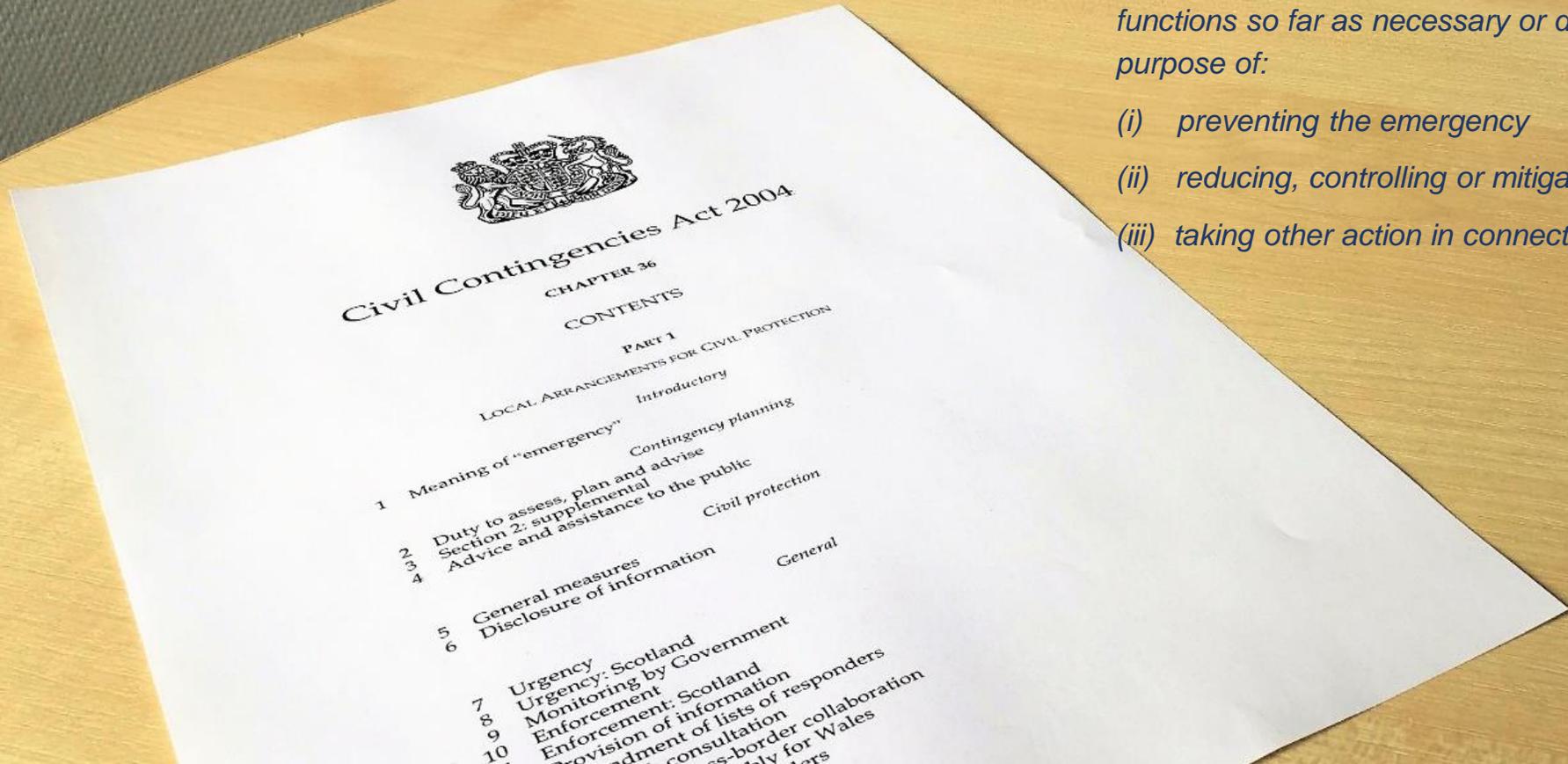


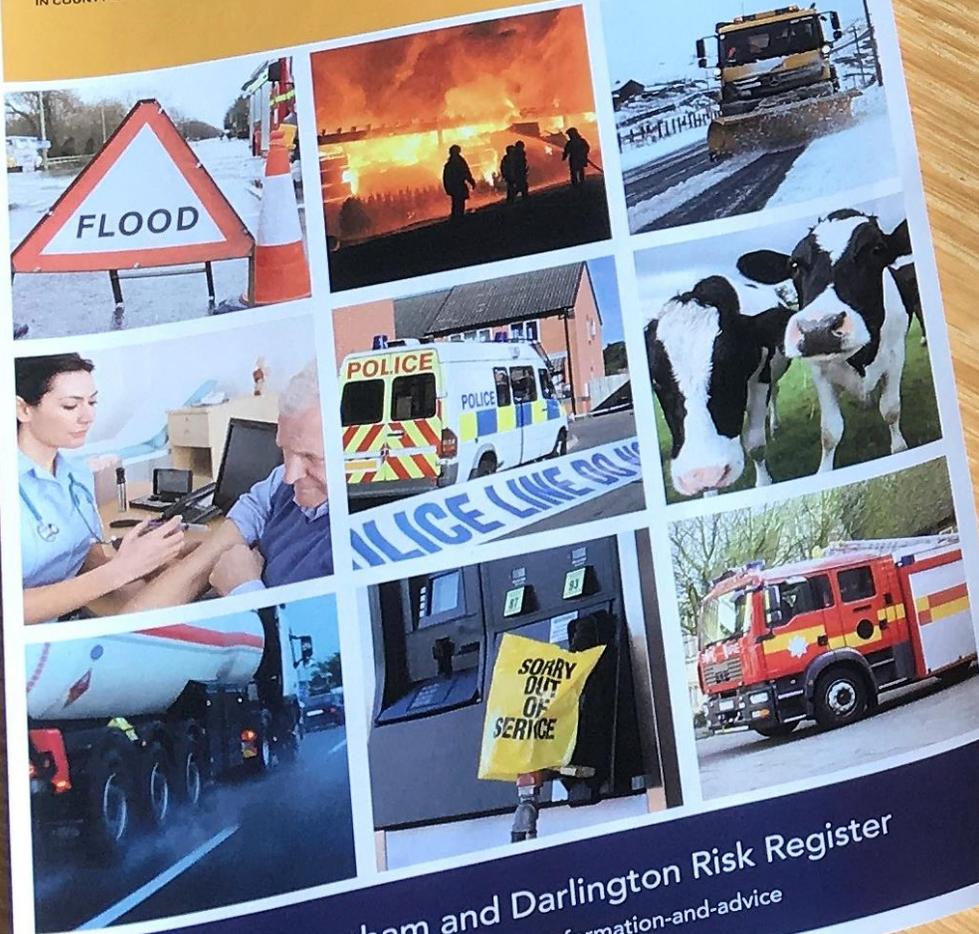
Duty to assess, plan and advise

A person or body shall

maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur the person or body is able to perform his or its functions so far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of:

- (i) preventing the emergency*
- (ii) reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects*
- (iii) taking other action in connection with it*





LRF assesses risks and develops plans, policies and procedures to prevent and mitigate identified risks.

In a major incident, LRF stands-up strategic and tactical coordinating groups and supporting sub-groups or 'cells' to manage response and recovery

Council arrangements

- Corporate Emergency Plan
- Various services on-call, on stand-by to assist 24/7.
- Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) Duty Officer acts as single point of contact into the council for emergency services to request support.
- A Head of Service is on call to work with the CCU and to advise and make decisions.
- Escalation to internal Tactical Coordinating Group and a Strategic Coordinating Group if required.
- Joins-up with LRF's corresponding multi-agency arrangements.

What the council can do to assist in an emergency

In the immediate aftermath of a major incident, the council will assist emergency responders and ensure that resources are made available including:

- Road closures and diversions
- Plant and equipment
- Emergency lighting
- Maps and building plans
- Environmental Health services
- Clearance of debris and restoration of highways
- Mobilisation of voluntary sector support
- Provision of temporary mortuary facilities
- Rest centres
- Emergency accommodation
- Psychological support
- Interpretation services
- Helplines
- Appeal fund arrangements
- Situation reports and updates for affected services and Members during incidents
- Information to the public
- Media liaison services

At the earliest opportunity, command and control of the incident will be transferred to the council so that we can lead recovery and restoration.

Examples

Fires

- Road closures and diversions
- Rest centres and emergency accommodation
- Vulnerable people
- Securing dangerous sites and structures
- Pollution and contamination advice
- Public health advice
- Site clearance

Sink holes

- Secure the area
- Road closures
- Emergency accommodation
- Structural inspections
- Coordination of reinstatement works
- Community liaison

Covid-19

- Planning and exercising
- Multi-agency working through data analysis, mapping and reporting and leading particular work
- Business continuity
- Supporting vulnerable people
- Community and voluntary support
- Testing sites, coordination and support
- Vaccination sites and support
- Public information

Various services on-call, on stand-by to assist 24/7.

CCU Duty Officer acts as single point of contact into the council for emergency services to request support.

Works with an on-call Head of Service to advise, make decisions and represent the council in LRF coordination groups.

Storm Arwen

- Severe winds across the UK overnight 26 to 27 November 2021.
- Most powerful and damaging winter storms of the last decade.
- Thousands of trees were felled across the north of the UK, major disruption, three people killed.
- More than one million homes lost power with over 100,000 homes experiencing several days without power.
- County Durham and Darlington LRF area - 15,000 utility customers lost power.
- Structural damage to buildings.
- Transport disrupted with rail services cancelled, roads blocked by fallen trees and overturned vehicles and snow accumulations across the Pennines.

Red warning
Wind

15:00 Today UTC 02:00 Tomorrow

High winds associated with Storm Arwen will bring damage and travel disruption.

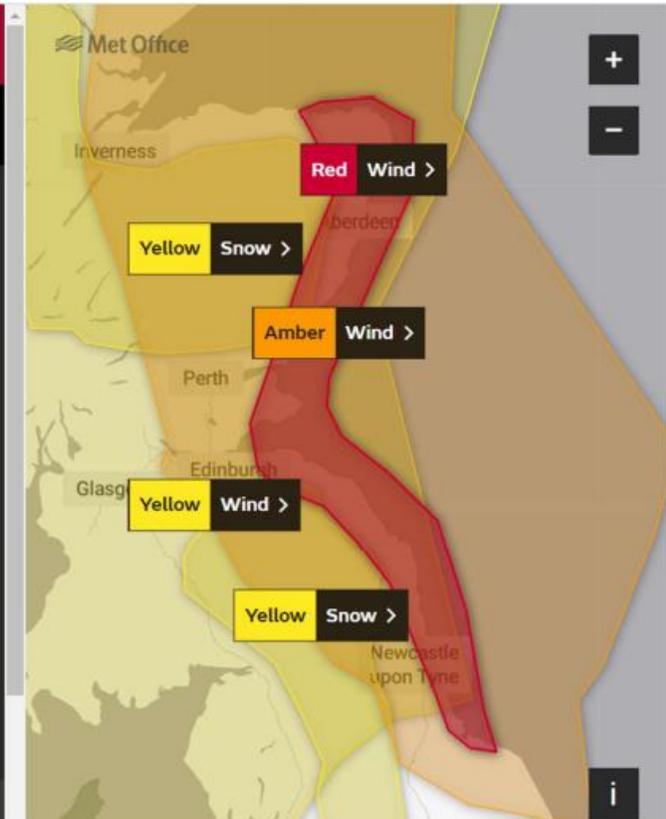
What to expect

- Flying debris resulting in danger to life
- Damage to buildings and homes, with roofs blown off and power lines brought down
- Roads, bridges and railway lines closed, with delays and cancellations to bus, train, ferry services and flights
- Power cuts affecting other services, such as mobile phone coverage
- Large waves and beach material being thrown onto coastal roads, sea fronts and homes

What should I do?

- Stay safe in a storm >
- Travelling in storms, rain and strong wind >

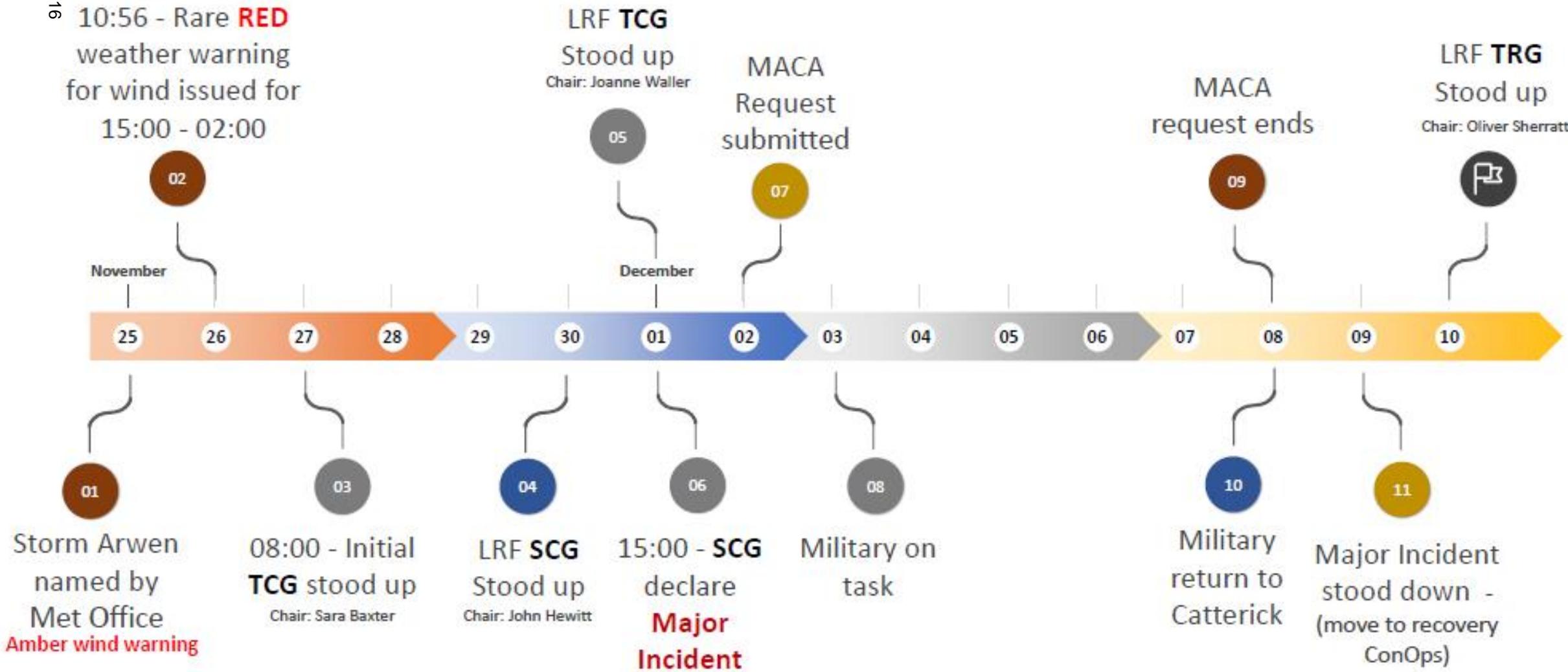
Further details >





CDDLRF Storm Arwen response timeline...

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 <p>14,891 Properties lost power</p>	 <p>51 Generators supplying power to 28 postcodes</p>	 <p>over 330 Care packs issued</p>
 <p>120 DCC buildings damaged</p>	 <p>over 5,000 Visits by Military, Wardens and CDDFRS</p>	 <p>over 2,000 Additional tonnes sidewaste collected</p>
 <p>400 Fallen/At risk highway trees</p>	 <p>385 Fallen/At risk non-highway trees</p>	 <p>22 Street lights non operational</p>
 <p>45 Customer contacts for Welfare received</p>	 <p>100 Gullies/drains require attention</p>	 <p>41 Mobile Catering units deployed</p>
 <p>14 Households offered temporary accommodation</p>		

De-briefs and reviews

- National review by BEIS – interim published; final imminent
- CDDLRF structured de-brief
- Northern Powergrid stakeholder review
- DCC de-brief and review:
 - Officer de-briefs
 - Members' debrief survey
 - Local community groups' telephone survey
 - Residents' survey

National review

- *‘The **level and format of information required from Network Operators** by Local Resilience Forums and Partnerships to aid the coordination of the welfare response proved challenging for some to provide in a timely manner, reducing the effectiveness of the local response. **Agreements between each Local Resilience Forum and Partnership and relevant Network Operator on the information needed**, and timescales in which these can be provided should be sought in advance and factored into system planning.’*
- *‘Early evidence suggests that there was a **lack of shared understanding in some areas between Network Operators and local partners of roles and responsibilities during severe weather events** involving major electricity disruption. Regular engagement during BAU times mitigated this to some extent, but a **broader discussion is required to promote a clear and common understanding of response and welfare support resources and responsibilities during major disruptive events.**’*

Key findings from LRF de-brief

1. Review and refining of the multi agency incident procedures (MAIP) and severe weather protocol.
2. Ensuring awareness of plans and protocols extends beyond immediate LRF representatives and includes those who may have to utilise or activate them out of normal hours.
3. Consideration given to means of effectively obtaining and maintaining multi-agency shared situational awareness, ensuring that this is confirmed by ground truth from multiple sources rather than proxy indicators/assumption.
4. Ensuring that the learning and development of effective data sharing between Category 2 and Category 1 agencies continues and is shared beyond the LRF area.
5. The effectiveness of the LRF multi-agency response once the severity of the incident was realised including strategic and tactical coordination, tactical cells and rapid procurement/supply of equipment, support packs and food.
6. Ensuring that Northern Powergrid continues to be effectively engaged to improve shared situational awareness, understanding of risk and shared solutions/responses.

Key findings from LRF de-brief

7. Recognition of the work of Northern Powergrid engineers.
8. Recognition of the role played by local community and voluntary organisations in opening up welfare centres and supporting vulnerable people.
9. Incorporation of Area Action Partnerships into the multi-agency response.
10. Clearly understood channels, appropriate resources and clear responsibilities for briefing politicians/media and providing a buffer from operations.
11. Review of likely resource needs (e.g. those provided to communities, cooked food, blankets, torches etc) of a reasonable worst case scenario versus the actual material readily available. Where the needs cannot be met locally ensure that the means are in place to increase resource (e.g. pre-identified suppliers/partners national stockpiles).
12. Following publication of the national review, consideration and clarification of the respective roles and responsibilities between utilities companies (Category 2) and local Category 1 responders in relation to the provision of welfare support and emergency equipment and supplies

De-briefs and reviews

- National review by BEIS – interim published; final imminent
- CDDLRF structured de-brief
- Northern Powergrid stakeholder review
- DCC de-brief and review:
 - Officer de-briefs
 - Members' debrief survey
 - Local community groups' telephone survey
 - Residents' survey

12 initial conclusions from Council's review

1. A **mixed view** from the members of the public who responded to the survey with many expressing dissatisfaction with the speed of response, communication and identifying that they tended to rely on help from friends, family and neighbours and local community support as opposed to responder agencies. Others commented favourably on the efforts of frontline staff, councillors and MPs and the support provided by responder agencies.
2. A recognition that the multi-agency responses to subsequent incidents - Storms Malik/Corrie and Dudley/Eunice - had **improved with immediate lessons learnt**.
3. While the national review of the response to Storm Arwen has identified the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of utility companies and local responders, **many members of the public, local communities and elected representatives expected that the council should provide** support and that this should happen quickly and sooner than it did.
4. Expectations on timescales and speed of response - for a storm like Arwen, network operators have up to 48 hours to reconnect customers before customers are entitled to compensation. This tends to set the timeframe for when utility companies ramp-up community welfare response, whereas some members of the community **expect more immediate support and action**.

12 initial conclusions from Council's review

5. Concern about **how long it took the council and partner agencies to identify the severity of the situation** and declare a major incident and escalate the response.
6. Concern about the **effectiveness of command and control during the first few days of incident response**. It was not clear whether NPg was leading the efforts or another agency. NPg established a control centre in St John's Chapel, which became the focal point of its response, whereas large parts of the wider county had also been affected by the storm and required support.
7. Once established, the **LRF response structure proved to be effective, with the council playing a significant role** in coordinating and supporting the multi-agency response with partner agencies. Many officers across the council stepped in at short notice and worked out of hours to manage the response and provide support to local residents.
8. The **scale of the response was significant**. Over 5,000 visits to check on vulnerable residents. 330 emergency support packs containing heaters, stoves, torches, batteries and other emergency items were issued. 41 visits by mobile catering units to 11 different localities across the county. 14 households helped into emergency alternative accommodation.

12 initial conclusions from Council's review

9. The **significant and valuable role played by community, voluntary and faith groups** in providing rapid and spontaneous support and the need to support the expansion of this by supporting communities to develop their own local community resilience plans and capacity. Related to this, the need to continue to provide advice to households on how they can prepare for incidents.
10. Following the outcome of the national review, the **need to clarify the respective roles and responsibilities between utility companies and local responders** in relation to welfare support and response and when this should happen (how long the power is off before support kicks in).
11. The need for **NPg to engage more effectively in multi-agency response**, to ensure that data and information is shared to improve joint understanding of impacts and that the company contributes to shared multi-agency solutions and responses.
12. The need to improve **awareness and understanding of emergency planning and response** and procedures amongst elected Members and the much larger cohort of officers and staff who may be required to respond to major and long-duration incidents.

Improvement

1. Review and expand the community resilience offering across the county.
2. Improve incident planning and preparedness through emergency planning, training and exercising processes.
3. Review emergency response resources and establish qualifying criteria for future incidents,
4. Review of communication and information sharing during incident response following the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).
5. Develop a protocol for the activation and use of council staff during an incident.
6. Review strategic, tactical and operational decision making and governance.

Suggested improvement plan

No.	Theme	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed
1	Review and expand the community resilience offering across County Durham	(a) Promote the development of new and review existing community resilience plans, as necessary, through town and parish councils and community groups.	CCU, N&CC	31/03/2024
		(b) Provide training and exercising opportunities for town and parish councils and community groups to improve knowledge and skills for emergency response, including information on the LRF, emergency planning and Category 1 and 2 responders.	CCU, N&CC	31/03/2024
		(c) Work with local communities to identify through energy efficiency audits, where community resilience hubs could benefit from being sustainably-powered in order to provide emergency support to residents impacted by future incidents.	Partnerships, N&CC	31/03/2025
		(d) Consider the creation of a council community resilience and response support fund to operate alongside other partner/external sources of funding, to support community preparedness and to support those assisting community responses to future incidents.	CCU, N&CC	30/09/2022
		(e) Review public advice and guidance on ways to improve personal and property resilience.	CCU, N&CC	30/09/2022

Suggested improvement plan

No.	Theme	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed
2	Improve incident planning and preparedness through the emergency planning, training and exercising processes	(a) Review existing emergency plans and arrangements including on-call rotas ensuring they are updated as necessary, with lessons learned from Storm Arwen.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022
		(b) Develop procedures and contingency plans for internal use and in partnership with the LRF for the response to similar incidents scenarios (e.g. power outages, communication failures etc.).	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022
		(c) Develop a surge resourcing plan and identify, recruit and train pools of staff who can be deployed to various support roles in emergency incidents.	CCU, N&CC with Public Health, AHS and HR, RES	31/10/2022
		(d) Develop an annual training and exercising schedule for senior council managers linked to PDRs, to ensure regular exposure and awareness in relation to emergency response.	CCU, N&CC with HR, RES	31/03/2023
		(e) Develop a training programme on the use of Resilience Direct.	CCU, N&CC	31/03/2023
		(f) CCU to work with LRF partners to exercise the response to major incidents and scenarios, with a focus on supporting the public during a prolonged incident.	CCU, N&CC with LRF	31/10/2022
		(g) Provide emergency planning awareness training to elected Members to improve their understanding and familiarity with emergency response process.	CCU, N&CC with HR, RES	31/10/2022
		(h) Review guidance for elected Members on Incident Response and distribute.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022

Suggested improvement plan

No.	Theme	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed
3	Review emergency response resources and establish qualifying criteria for future incidents	(a) Review the community welfare pack stocks and develop criteria for their activation, deployment and distribution, including a review of available options for storage and distribution, to ensure packs are readily available and can be distributed rapidly to those in need.	CCU, N&CC with Adults, AHS and Procurement, RES	30/09/2022
		(b) Consider a centralised, county-wide vulnerable persons database/register so that vulnerable persons can be identified quickly, contacted and provided with support as necessary.	CCU, N&CC with Research & Intelligence, RES	31/12/2022
		(c) Review the availability of resources that will be required to support an Emergency Assistance Centre for a prolonged period, including managing staff, support staff, communications etc.	CCU, N&CC and HR, RES	30/10/2023
		(d) Work with utility companies and LRF to review the provision of assistance to vulnerable people, welfare support (food vans etc.), emergency equipment including support packs and generators, including the criteria for support and respective organisational responsibilities for provision (note that this needs to be informed by the outcome of the national review).	CCU, N&CC	TBC depending on national review

Suggested improvement plan

No.	Theme	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed
4	Review of communication and information sharing during incident response following the JESIP principles.	(a) Review communications strategies to ensure that effective communications can be maintained internally within the council and externally with partner organisations and residents.	CCU, N&CC with Communications and Marketing, REG	31/03/2023
		(b) Review the SITREP process for those responding to an incident.	CCU, N&CC	31/08/2022
		(c) Consider the future data requirements of an incident and what resources are required from the council.	CCU, N&CC with Research & Intelligence, RES	31/10/2022
		(d) Review LRF and organisational telecommunications resilience, including the LRF Telecommunications Plan.	Digital Services, RES with LRF	31/03/2023
		(e) Review documentation and training to ensure that the Joint Emergency Services Inter-operability Principles (JESIP) are considered and included in incident actions.	CCU, N&CC	30/09/2022

Suggested improvement plan

No.	Theme	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed
5	Develop a protocol for the activation and use of Council staff in during an incident	(a) Develop a surge out of hours activation protocol.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022
		(b) Consider staff roles in an incident and ensure that suitable training and PPE is available (example door knocking and reception centres).	CCU, N&CC with HR, RES	31/10/2022

No.	Theme	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed
6	Review Strategic, Tactical and Operational decision making and governance	(a) Review the process for declaring a major incident and update accordingly for widespread incidents and high impact incident.	CCU, N&CC with LRF	31/08/2022
		(b) Consider a Strategic and Tactical Officers rota for charring incident response groups.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022
		(c) Consider the establishment, the criteria and staffing requirement for a multi-agency command centre.	CCU, N&CC with LRF	TBC

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