

**Voluntary Sector Civil Protection Forum Working
Party
Friday 13th December 2013, 10.30 am – 1.00 pm
35 Great Smith Street, SW1P
4DF**

Attendees:

Simon Lewis, BRC – Chair
Johanna Phillips, BRC – Secretary
Dom Kehat, BRC – Admin Support
Nick Brown, CCS
Trevor Groves, RAYNET
Peter Huckle, St John Ambulance
Ian Hout, Local Government Association
Solma Ahmed, DCLG, RED

Apologies:

Jen Williams, Association of Chief Police Officers
Caroline Birkett, Victim Support Service
Deborah Fair, WRVS
Steven Nesbit, DCLG, Resilience Emergencies Division
Jim Glennon, Cruse Bereavement Care
Muriel McClenahan, Salvation Army

1. Welcome and introduction _____

Simon Lewis welcomed all those in attendance.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 18th September 2013 _____

2.1 The notes were agreed.

Agenda item	Action	result
2	Minutes to be available on website, once they have been accepted by all in attendance	Nick confirmed this will go ahead, but it only possible after the website redesign which is to happen in the new year.
3.1.1	Steven to speak to Mountain Rescue to gain more information, and bring to next meeting.	Solma confirmed the Steven had contacted Mountain Rescue, but received no response. This is therefore to close as an agenda item.
3.1.2	Johanna to draft a criterion for membership.	To be discussed as distinct agenda item.

9	Consideration of possible VSCPF name change.	<p>Johanna relayed the discussion had by Jim, Steven and Peter that concluded that without specific need, changing the name was more problematic than beneficial.</p> <p>Ian stressed that changing the name was only worthwhile if the activity and tasks of the group were to be different. Solma confirmed.</p> <p>All agreed against name change.</p>
11	Johanna to send out the link and brief of Resilience Now.	Simon confirmed that Resilience Now had been cancelled.

2.2 Draft MOU

Johanna introduced the draft MOU, with its minor amendments which seek to reflect new membership.

Action: Johanna to remove ‘in some cases’ on page 1 and edit the spelling of Simon Lewis’s email

Simon pointed out that on page 2, conference had been replaced by a work plan. Trevor and Solma expressed their support for this.

Agreement to remove the quorum, and on occasions with less than 7 people present, decisions can be made with follow up emails to consult other working group members.

Ian pointed out that the MOU was starting to read as more a ‘terms of reference.’ Other members agreed.

Action: Johanna to change the title to ‘Terms of Reference’. The group agree that the signatures are to remain.

Action: Johanna therefore to delete all of part (4) ‘Terms of Understanding,’ and replace with the criteria for membership, enabling the document to be a complete ‘Terms of Reference’ for the VSCPF Working Group.

2.3 Draft membership criteria

Action: Johanna to replace who’s to whose, remove the word ‘regional’ and delete the final phrase of the third bullet ‘devolved administrations, statutory authorities or professional associations’

Action: Johanna to add an additional bullet – ‘Voluntary force that can deploy in the event of an

emergency'

Discussion at this point arose as to why ACPO sat on the VSCPF working group, and not all Cat 1 responders. Nick emphasised the need for the voluntary sector to remain the majority at the VSCPF working group, though it was noted that Jen Williams (ACPO) made valued contributions to the group.

Simon encouraged group members to look back to the objectives of the group, which imply the use of having Cat 1 responders present. Peter expressed concern of where exactly the line of membership is drawn, and acknowledged that whilst the group sought to get the message out about the strategic involvement of the voluntary sector, that this should be done outside of these meetings.

Action: An agenda item for the next meeting to address the involvement of Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders in the VSCPF working group.

3. Launch of the VSCPF Guide on Involving the Faith Communities in Civil Protection

Group agreed that the landing page for the document is to be the VSCPF web page.

In terms of email address, discussion was had about directing people to their LRF. Concerns were then raised about those LRFs that were less developed in their dialogue with faith communities. It was ultimately agreed best to just remove the 'Contact info' option.

Action: Dom to remove the 'Contact info' option at end of document before circulation.

Solma discussed how the EPC is interested in working to publicise this document. Ian responded that if the document goes out through Gateway, organisations that wish to do more in terms of publicity are free to do so. All members agreed.

Solma relayed that the EPC had expressed interest in running a training course based on the documents content. The group agreed that if this is the case, the EPC should approach Simon.

Action: Dom to send the final document to Nick Brown first week of January for it to go out on the first bulletin of 2014 soon after.

Action: Simon to write a covering letter, to accompany the document before it goes on Gateway.

It was concluded by all members, that printing costs should be covered by those organisations who wish to have the document in paper format.

4. VSCPF Work Plan 2014

4.1 LRF Chairs Launch

Simon will be presenting at the LRF Chairs launch.

It was agreed useful for VSCPF to be present at the LRF conference happening in Birmingham, 18th March 2014.

Action: Simon to speak to Paul Neverton on this.

4.2 VSCPF Capacity/Capabilities/Competencies brochure

Simon explained how he was often asked what the capabilities of the voluntary sector was, and therefore saw worth in some manner of brochure that would explain this.

Ian expressed apprehension, highlighting the variation in capacity according to geographical area. Trevor agreed.

Simon showed the British Red Cross leaflet and discussed briefly the use of iconographics. He discussed how the aim of the publication would be to offer ball park figures and capacity – particularly useful for those incidents that straddle geographical area. The group agreed on the worth of a document which would paint a picture of voluntary sector capacity at a high level.

Concerns were raised about those groups who come to the annual forum but are not in the working group – and whether by omitting them from the leaflet, they will be disenfranchised. This was thought to be, at least in part, overcome by the inclusion of a wider directory.

Action: All members will be asked to contact a member of their external comms team, and have them briefed in preparation for taking this forward.

Action: Dom to convene a meeting, to be held at British Red Cross UKO, and chaired by Frances Ginn (BRC Marketing Manager). St Johns and Salvation Army communications representatives to attend.

4.3 VSCPF Simulation Exercise

Johanna relayed back to the group the success of the meeting held by Johanna, Jim, Steven and Peter. At this meeting it was decided the simulation should be a table top only exercise, with each scenario offering the voluntary sector an opportunity to show how they can assist.

Johanna talked of how the simulation exercise can work to replace the formal annual forum. Following the simulation there will be voluntary sector networking event, with light touch presentations and some form of 'Question Time.' The group agreed on this shift in emphasis.

Simon explaining how whilst he had been unable to meet Jen Williams in person to discuss this, they had spoken over the phone. It seemed that the simulation exercise fitted closely with ACPO's objectives, and therefore it seemed likely that at least £5,000 would be made available to VSCPF from ACPO.

5. CCS Public Emergency Alerting Project

Charlotte offered a debrief on the recent mobile alerting pilots, held in:

North Yorkshire = EE mobile

Glasgow = O2

Suffolk = Vodaphone

Over the three trials, over 35,000 messages were sent. Local communication campaigns were run prior to the trials, to ensure people were aware what was happening, and understood its purpose.

In terms of cons, one major learning point was that messaging displays differently on each phone. It also became clear there was education needed to assure public this was not about the government having everyone's mobile numbers. Further research is needed to conclude the risk of hacking.

Action: Trevor and Simon to represent the voluntary sector at a meeting to discuss these developments, to take place on 9th January 2014. Simon to contact Charlotte prior and relay any additional information back to Trevor.

6. Recent developments and activities

British Red Cross

- The Emergency Planning and Response team has been busy responding to St Judes storm and East Coast flooding.

DCLG

- A lot of activity in responding to St Judes storm, East Coast flooding and preparing for upcoming fire strikes.

CCS

- National group response to LRF with intention to share good practice. Further information on how to get involved is due out soon, and Nick will keep the group informed.

LGA

- Discussed the implications of spending cuts, and the impact this had on voluntary service providers involvement
- The move to contract out ER capabilities looks likely to change the nature of LRF emergency response.

RAYNET

- The current NRE contact ends on the 28th March 2014

Action: Trevor to circulate document clarifying license renewal.

St John Ambulance

- Activities in response to St Judes Storm and East Coast Flood
- Wished to thank Julie for all her hard work on the Faith document

7. Any other business

No other business to discuss

8. Date of next meeting

Action: Dom to circulate dates of next meeting with the minutes.

