

**North Wales Resilience Forum
Exercise Watertight II
POST EXERCISE REPORT**

December 18, 2009

Mr N Culff
NWRF Co-ordinator
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Llandudno Fire Station
Conwy Road
Llandudno
Conwy
LL30 1HA

Revision History

Version	Date	Amendments	Issued to
1.0	11.11.09	Preliminary Draft	Exercise Planning Group
2.0	24.11.09	Final Draft	Exercise Planning Group
3.0	15.12.09	Final Report	Exercise Planning Group
4.0	18.12.09	Final Report with Amendments	Exercise Planning Group

Quality Control

Action	Signature	Date
Prepared	C. Wilenchik	18.12.09
Checked	R. Burton	18.12.09
Approved	R. Burton	18.12.09

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Executive Summary

RAB Consultants were commissioned by the North Wales Resilience Forum, to develop and run a recovery exercise. The exercise was required to provide an opportunity to explore interagency recovery issues and consider the welfare and economic issues that arise when dealing with the recovery to a major incident.

The exercise was called 'Watertight II' and was a follow on from Exercise Watertight I which covered the response to a flood event in North Wales. Exercise Watertight II took place on 22 October 2009, involving 74 participants and observers all from various responding agencies throughout North Wales.

The aim of the exercise was;

'To explore interagency recovery issues and consider the welfare and economic issues that would arise when dealing with the recovery to a major incident.'

The objectives of the exercise were;

- To test whether the lessons identified from Exercise Watertight I, where applicable, have been implemented;
- To test elements of the NWRP Multi Agency Plan – Flooding;
- To test and explore recovery issues in response to an emergency in North Wales;
- To explore the relationship between SCG and Recovery Coordinating Group;
- To exercise the handover procedure from response to recovery;
- To test the longer-term use of voluntary agencies and their transition from providers of short-term food and support to mid-term support;
- To identify future planning, training and exercising needs;
- To demonstrate the potential of visualisation tools to aid the response to an incident.

The exercise was well received by the participants providing a relevant opportunity for them to become familiar with the North Wales Multi Agency Recovery Guidance. The evaluation results indicate that the aim and objectives of the exercise were achieved with significant learning for the participants.

Good practice was noted throughout the exercise some examples include the early implementation of the RCG, the continued logging of actions throughout the day and the implementation of recovery plans.

All participants engaged in a structured debrief after the exercise, where they were given the opportunity to share and discuss their ideas for dealing with the recovery of flood events in north Wales.

A number of lessons were identified as a result of Exercise Watertight II. The post exercise report recommends that the following actions should be considered;

1. The lessons identified in Exercise Watertight II should be reported to the North Wales Resilience Forum and shared with the exercise participants, their organisations, across Wales and with neighbouring Local Resilience Forums.
2. A review of the North Wales Multi-Agency Recovery Guidance should be undertaken to address the following items;
 - i. Identify the required competency of individuals expected to attend the RCG and review of the membership in each group.
 - ii. Need to itemise what needs to happen to meet the handover criteria and who is leading on what during the transition from response to recovery (SCG or RCG).
 - iii. Clarity is needed as to who should lead the handover, the SCG or RCG.
 - iv. Further guidance and checklists should be produced to help assist those that are involved in the recovery phase, e.g. standard agenda's, role checklists, recovery action plan examples.
 - v. Add a note to the guidance suggesting that if a group became too big e.g. Environment and Infrastructure, participants could consider splitting the group to allow more focus on each issue.
 - vi. The role of the Communications Sub Group to coordinate recovery communications and its link with the RCG and other sub groups.
3. Further development of visualisation tools should be explored to enhance future exercises and for use in real events.
4. Clarity is needed on what the Welsh Assembly Government and the UK Government can bring in terms of support to the recovery phase in North Wales.
5. The North Wales Resilience Forum Exercise and Training group should consider an exercise aimed at exploring the longer term use of voluntary agencies and providing specific training for potential SCG and RCG loggists.
6. The North Wales Recovery Group should consider regular recovery training as part of the North Wales training and exercising programme to bring together the people involved in the recovery phase, to consider their roles, network and be updated on recovery planning initiatives in North Wales.

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1.0 Background

1.1 Exercise Initiation

Exercise Watertight II was initiated by Paul Claydon of the North Wales Resilience Forum (NWRF) and is supported by Neil Culff of the NWRF. The exercise was required to provide an opportunity to explore interagency recovery issues and consider the welfare and economic issues that arise when dealing with the recovery to a major incident.

The exercise was a 'table top' exercise. Two main groups (Strategic Coordinating Group and Recovery Coordinating Group) and five Recovery Coordinating Sub Groups were created to plan an effective multi-agency recovery strategy following a major flood incident. Two scenarios with a timescale based three days and two weeks after the incident respectively, were used throughout the exercise. Each table was given a number of strategic questions to think about during each scenario and a nominated scribe recorded their response.

The exercise took place on 22 October 2009. A total of 74 participants and observers took part in the exercise, along with 12 facilitators and two directing staff.

1.2 Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to capture the findings and the personal learning identified by participants and to draw relevant conclusions and recommendations.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

The aim and objectives of the exercise were agreed by all members of the Exercise Planning Group.

2.1 Aim

The aim of Exercise Watertight II was;

'To explore interagency recovery issues and consider the welfare and economic issues that would arise when dealing with the recovery to a major incident.'

2.2 Objectives

Participants were presented with scenarios and achieved the following objectives;

- To test whether the lessons identified from Exercise Watertight I, where applicable, have been implemented;
- To test elements of the NWRF Multi Agency Plan – Flooding;

- To test and explore recovery issues in response to an emergency in North Wales;
- To explore the relationship between SCG and Recovery Coordinating Group;
- To exercise the handover procedure from response to recovery;
- To test the longer-term use of voluntary agencies and their transition from providers of short-term food and support to mid-term support;
- To identify future planning, training and exercising needs;
- To demonstrate the potential of visualisation tools to aid the response to an incident.

3.0 Exercise Planning and Format

3.1 Exercise Planning Group

An Exercise Planning Group was established to plan and deliver the exercise, consisting of the following members;

Russell Burton	RAB Consultants
Neil Culff	North Wales Resilience Forum
Jenny Dickinson	Technium CAST
Jo Evans	Environment Agency Wales
David Hallows	British Red Cross
Eilwen Jones	Denbighshire and Flintshire County Councils
Linda Lewis	Scottish Power
Karen Padmore	Technium CAST
Andrea Pashley	North Wales Police
George Range	Scottish Power
Paul Reeves	Environment Agency Wales
Eirwyn Roberts	Welsh Ambulance Service
Stephen Shakespeare	Environment Agency Wales

Aled Thomas	North Wales Fire and Rescue
Claire Wilenchik	RAB Consultants
Jonathan Williams	Conwy County Borough Council

The Planning Group agreed exercise scenarios, format, participants and dates for the exercise.

3.2 Exercise Format

The exercise was a 'table top' exercise and followed the agenda set out in Appendix A. Two main groups (Strategic Coordinating Group and Recovery Coordinating Group) and five Recovery Coordinating Sub Groups were created to plan an effective multi-agency recovery strategy following a major flood incident.

Two scenarios with a timescale based three days and two weeks after the incident respectively, were used throughout the exercise. Information included in the scenarios was also presented in a visualisation (Appendix F). Each table was given a number of strategic questions to think about during each scenario and a nominated scribe recorded their response.

At the end of the exercise, participants took part in a debrief that followed the structured debriefing technique developed by the Centre for Structured Debriefing.

All participants were asked to reflect on their experiences during the exercise and to identify key personal learning and ideas for the future development of the NWRP recovery arrangements. The exercise was aimed to explore interagency recovery issues and consider the welfare and economic issues that would arise when dealing with the recovery to a major incident, and therefore the debrief was tailored to get responses regarding these issues.

Exercise evaluation forms were issued to each participant after the structured debrief (see Appendix B). These provided the participants with the opportunity to comment on how the exercise was managed and whether it had achieved its aims and objectives.

4.0 Exercise Evaluation

The following is a summary of the exercise evaluation responses.

4.1 Exercise Evaluation Results

The results have been summarised from each of the seven tables that took part in the exercise and are graphically shown in Figure 4.1 and in Appendix C.

In summary, the exercise was well received by the participants providing a relevant opportunity for them to become familiar with the North Wales Multi Agency Recovery Guidance. Some participants questioned whether all the exercise objectives had been met and a minority felt that the scenarios could have been more realistic. The evaluation results indicate however that the aim and objectives of the exercise were achieved with significant learning for the participants as a result.

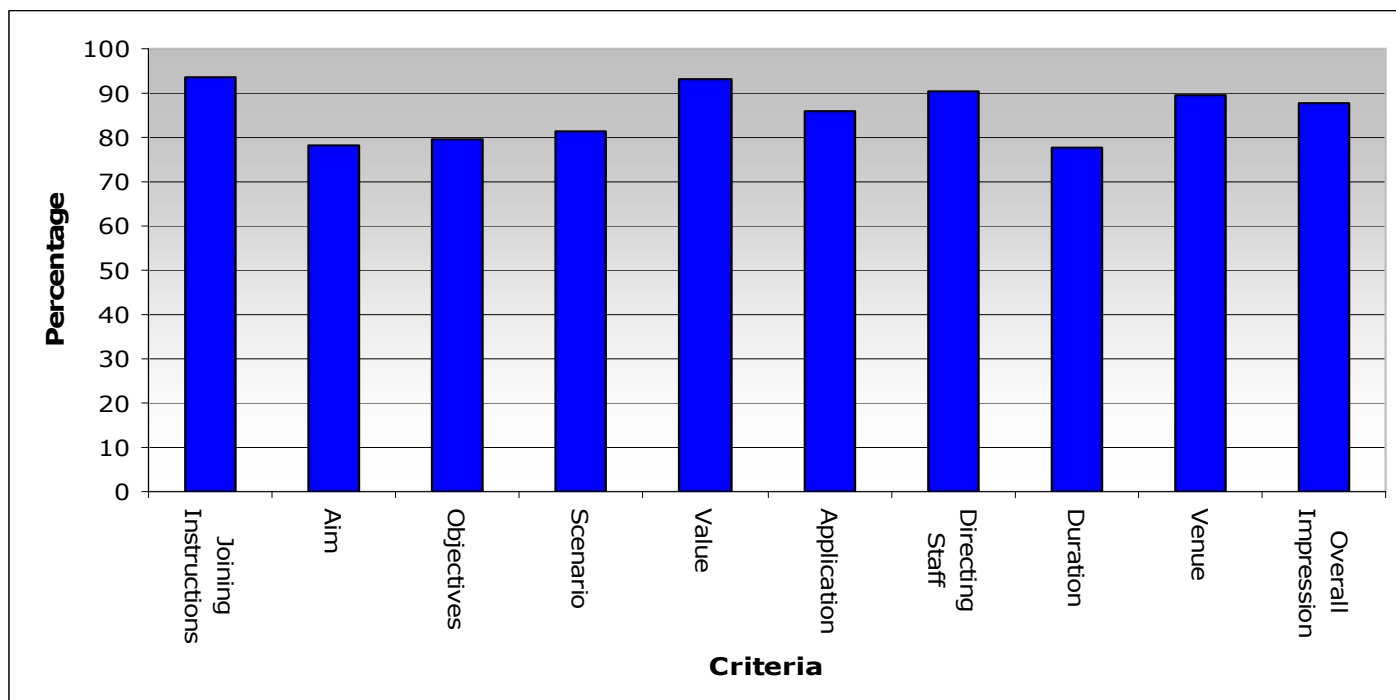


Figure 4.1: A graph to show the percentage scores awarded for each criteria

4.2 Review of Exercise Planning

Overall, it was felt that the exercise was a success and participants have identified some valuable lessons. However, the following lessons were identified with respect to exercise planning.

The exercise planning group felt that the voluntary agencies objective was not met during the exercise. It was suggested that an exercise geared towards the longer term use of voluntary agencies should be established in the future.

One of the objectives of Exercise Watertight II is to 'test whether the lessons identified from Exercise Watertight I, where applicable, have been

implemented'. The lessons identified in Watertight I and the outcome of Watertight II regarding these lessons have been summarised in Table 1 below.

It was also felt that the RCG Chair should not have been predetermined, allowing the discussion/debate as to who should lead to occur during the opening stages of the exercise.

Table 1: A summary of the Lessons Identified in Watertight I and whether they were achieved in Watertight II

Lessons Identified in Exercise Watertight I	Tested in Watertight II	Comments
Need for further multi agency exercises, specifically testing Gold and looking to recovery issues, utilisation of a 'live play' type event.	✓	This was tested during Exercise Watertight II.
Development of a more structured feedback method following each stage of the exercise	✓	Feedback was given at the end of each session by each group and was summarised during a structured debrief at the end of the exercise.
Availability of documentation (specifically MARP) pre exercise to enable opportunity to study and digest	✓	Documentation was available before and during the exercise.
Development of infrastructure plans	✓	The Environment and Infrastructure group developed effective infrastructure recovery action plans during Watertight II.
Development of personal understanding	✓	This was identified during the debrief of Watertight II.
Future more detailed exercises/training to include potential live play and to also include the recovery phase	✓	The recovery phase was included in Watertight II.
MARP issues – ID of key infrastructure pre event, more utilities information, availability of MARP prior & during exercise	✓	Utilities were involved in the planning and during the exercise and the MARP was available prior and during the exercise.

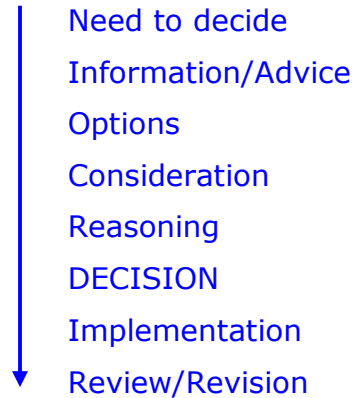
5.0 Lessons Identified

5.1 Findings from Mark Scoggins, Solicitor Advocate

Mark Scoggins of Fisher Scoggins Waters LLP is a Solicitor Advocate and has represented organisations in public enquiries and judicial proceedings relating

to major incidents. Mark Scoggins was invited to Exercise Watertight II to observe the exercise and present his findings from a legal perspective. The following is a summary of his findings.

The logging of all decisions is really important during an incident. Everything you write could be read by a judge and jury. It is also important to have a loggist who is familiar with the terminology and incident management, as there is an opportunity for miscommunication and misrecording. It is also essential that you show your working, an example of the thought process that might be considered during an incident is provided below;



Once decisions have been made and actioned they should be reviewed/followed up regularly during an incident.

It was identified that coordination and information is a key focus during the exercise. Participants identified the following during the debriefs;

- Clarity of role and responsibilities
- Difficulties of responders on the front line
- Over readiness to accept that the reported information is accurate and that there was no challenge of this accuracy
- Communication with the public and own staff is essential

5.2 Structured Debrief

The structured debrief provided participants with an opportunity to share and discuss both the positive and negative issues surrounding their role within Exercise Watertight II. The structured debrief gave the participants a chance to discuss their thoughts and opinions with other participants in a comfortable and open atmosphere.

Structured debriefing provides facilitators with specific feedback on the key issues of the exercise, identifying areas that went well and not so well for each individual, giving participants an opportunity to identify areas that they personally felt needed to be improved; for examples procedures, or training opportunities.

The structured debrief also provides closure for the participants, all having the chance to speak about the issues that were important to them and to discuss and debate these with others. Debriefing also gives an opportunity for individuals to say what they would do differently and to identify areas that they felt could be improved, offering ideas and suggestions for improving these things in the future.

The debrief aims for Exercise Watertight II were;

- To get each participant to reflect on their/their organisations role and responsibility when dealing with the recovery to a flood incident.
- To identify personal experiences.
- These views to be shared and discussed to establish ideas for the management of the recovery phase and the 'smooth' handover from the SCG to the RCG.

A visual was shown to the participants (Appendix D); this visual made reference to all the different aspects that the participants faced throughout the exercise. The visual is used to trigger ideas and responses. The participants were then asked to respond to the following questions;

- For me, the two least effective aspects when dealing with the recovery of a flood event in North Wales are.....
- For me, the two most effective aspects when dealing with the recovery of a flood event in North Wales are.....

The participants shared and discussed their response to these questions with the debrief group.

Once all of the participants had given their responses to the questions, the sharing and discussing ends, and the structured debrief moved into its closing stage. The following prompts were presented to the group, again to trigger ideas and responses;

1a) The most significant thing I have learnt about my role when dealing with the recovery to a flood event is.....

1b) and I can use that positively in the future by.....

2a) The one/two thing(s) I would do to improve my/my organisations role in the Recovery Coordinating Group is.....

2b) If I was advising the North Wales Local Resilience Forum on our arrangements for the management of the recovery, I would.....

The answers to these questions were read out by each participant without further discussion being made.

5.3 Summary of the Structured Debrief Responses

The responses for the initial prompt questions are summarised below and in more detail in Appendix E.

5.4 Difficult Aspects

There are a number of difficult aspects that have been highlighted by those that took part in the structured debrief. It was felt that the representation of members from each organisation, sat on each group were lacking the technical/expert knowledge needed and the authority to make decisions e.g. on the Business and Economic Recovery Group there was no legal representative and on the Environment and Infrastructure Group there was no representatives from highways and building controls. It was noted that the membership on the RCG was too diverse.

Participants also highlighted the need for better communication between the sub groups and the RCG/SCG. There was a duplication of effort between the RCG and the RCG Sub Groups; with better communication this could have been avoided. More communication/interaction between the sub groups was thought to be beneficial; however this did not occur during the exercise. Some individuals also noted that there was a lack of communication from their organisation during the SCG meetings. The use of acronyms during meetings of the SCG/RCG/RCG Sub Groups was also highlighted as not all participants were familiar with them and found them difficult to understand.

It was observed that during the handover the RCG Chair should have taken the lead, it was felt that this would give more opportunity to ensure that the handover was appropriate. Participants also found that they were unsure as to when the handover should occur.

A number of participants commented on the RCG, they believe that the RCG gave some unrealistic timescales for the recovery during the exercise. It was also felt that the RCG needed to be more accountable and that action plans should have been drawn up during the meetings.

5.5 Satisfying Aspects

A number of satisfying aspects have been drawn out of the debrief. The exercise has given participants the opportunity for participants to network and build a stronger relationship with individuals/organisations. Good communication between individuals has increased the awareness of the roles of other organisations and the issues that they face during an incident. Participants also noted that there was good communication and information sharing between individuals and groups during the exercise. Feedback for the SCG/RCG meetings was informative and illustrated that there were experienced individuals on the groups.

Interactions between the SCG and the RCG have been noted as good. Individuals agreed that it was good to see the establishment and operation of the RCG well before the handover. Watching the SCG and RCG in operation was beneficial to participants. Participants noted that it was good that the SCG did not handover to the RCG until they were completely satisfied that the emergency phase was over. The RCG has an established and effective management structure and it was felt that they managed the sub groups effectively.

Most participants agree that there is a good multi-agency working relationship in North Wales which was demonstrated throughout the exercise. Participants noted that being split into sub groups helped to focus the work by breaking down the issues and therefore focusing on the immediate priorities. It was observed that all groups were well managed and coordinated by the chairs and facilitators. A wide range of experience relating to flooding issues was present in the groups and this helped to advise the response/recovery. Getting to understand the situation from other agencies perspectives allowed participants to share information and tap into resources of others quickly, when needed.

A better understanding of the recovery procedures and the overall process has been noted by participants. Some individuals felt that they have robust company emergency plans alongside the Multi Agency Recovery Plan. Some participants found that they were not sat on their usual group during the exercise; however they found this really useful and informative. The exercise has provided some participants with the opportunity to make suggestions for future improvements.

5.6 Debrief Summary

There is a large range of satisfying responses from the participants. Teamwork, communication and roles and responsibilities seem to be the aspects that most people felt went well for them during Exercise Watertight II.

The main difficulties that were experienced by the participants surrounded appropriate membership, roles and responsibilities, communication between Recovery Coordinating Sub Group and the recovery handover procedure.

5.7 Personal Learning and Ideas for the Future

The final prompt questions asked the participants the most significant thing they have learned about their role, one/two things that improve their/their organisations role in the Recovery Coordinating Group and finally what advice they would give to the North Wales Local Resilience Forum on their arrangements for the management of the recovery. The answers have been summarised below and in more detail in Appendix E;

Personal Learning

Participants felt that it is vital to revisit the issues highlighted in the exercise, on a regular basis for the preparation of such events. There is a need for further exercises and attendance at future meetings to allow participants to be better prepared to assist in an emergency. Some agencies should also check that their policies are relevant e.g. recovery business policy. It was suggested that future exercises could pull these plans/policies into action.

Individuals identified the need for a deputy to be involved and that better briefings should be given to those that attend as a deputy. Some participants that had been sent as deputies felt that they did not have the authority to make

the decisions involved and that it should be ensured that appropriate invitations are sent out in future.

Teamwork and good communication was highlighted as important when working in a multi-agency environment. Some individuals felt that their actions were less effective when done in isolation and that they should be more flexible. They noted that it is vital to allow group members the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise as there are a large number of different organisations involved during the recovery. It was also noted that being proactive and creating joint working scenarios with councils in the future, outside of an event, time permitting, would be useful.

Within the Communication Group it was felt that they should receive regular updates from the SCG/RCG concerning the 'bigger picture', the messages that need highlighting and the expected timescales. They also suggested that working with Recovery Coordinating Sub Groups to identify specific messages would be beneficial.

Some participants felt that they have learnt that they can perform in several roles and be useful in areas other than the obvious. They suggest that participants should be more open to membership on any sub group. Many participants believe that it is important to share these lessons learnt with their colleagues back at their organisations.

Organisations Role in the Recovery Coordinating Group

Many participants have identified the need to have the right people attending exercises. Some felt it important to have senior management and experts on their groups. They also suggested that it would be beneficial to have regular internal exercises/training events alongside multi-agency exercises.

Some participants felt that they should be fully prepared and know the recovery procedures inside out. It was also noted that there is a need to familiarise organisations with Local Resilience Forum plans. The Local Health Boards have identified the importance of having documents from previous events that they have been involved in available when needed.

It was suggested that each organisation is clear on individual roles and responsibilities. It was felt that organisations should not only consider participants to be involved in the obvious role, they should consider thinking 'outside the box' e.g. Participants in the Business and Economic Recovery Group do not usually sit on this group, however they found this beneficial.

Better planning and distribution of information between the SCG and the RCG has been noted as an essential requirement.

It has been suggested that a better understanding about what is required from volunteers and voluntary agencies is needed. It was also noted that there is a need to maintain the commitment of volunteers.

Participants felt that a clear structure and clear roles and responsibilities must be identified for a major 'incident' lead. It was noted that it is important that the chair of the RCG is from the Local Authority.

It has been suggested that the Welsh Assembly Government should look into creating a set of Welsh Assembly Government North Wales plans and procedures for emergencies in North Wales. Other participants felt that they needed to gain a better understanding about the decision making powers of the Welsh Assembly Government senior civil servants.

Some participants felt it important to ensure that communication officers are aware of how long into the recovery process a service would be offered.

It was felt that some organisations are not fully aware of the roles and responsibilities of Environment Agency Wales during an incident and that they are there to help.

Better clarity with regard to the secretariat support to assist the RCG operation is needed.

Arrangements for the Management of the Recovery

Many participants have highlighted the need to ensure that there is the correct representation within the SCG, RCG and RCG Sub Group. It is felt that all organisations should insist on having Strategic Managers sat on these groups or representatives who have the authority to make strategic decisions.

Some participants noted that clear strategic direction and decisions are required from the top down. Several participants highlighted the importance of being direct, giving clear instructions and making decisions during RCG meetings. Structure is also essential around the flow of information up and down, to and from the strategic groups.

It has been emphasised that education should be encouraged not just for the responding agencies but for the public as well. By working well together the public confidence and trust will grow.

It has been suggested that the Environment and Infrastructure Group should be split into two groups. Participants noted that little time was spent discussing the environmental impacts.

A learning point from the Gloucestershire and Carlisle floods highlighted the importance of having more guidance and checklist. It is felt that this would be beneficial to North Wales as well.

Some participants believe that the Local Resilience Forum should support more training events and workshops, this will help to emphasise a co-ordinated response. It will also encourage organisations to familiarise themselves with the Local Resilience Forum plans.

It has been suggested that the Local Resilience Forum should have a contact list of key personnel from key organisations for non Emergency Control Centre Wales incidents.

The importance of keeping the local businesses informed in North Wales has been noted, the businesses should be made aware of what services would be involved in longer term recovery.

Some participants believe that there is a need to test the gaps in their Business Continuity Plan's before feeding into the RCG. It has been suggested that the RCG should seek to balance the short term and long term solutions.

5.8 Strategic Coordinating Group Debrief

A debrief form was given to those members of the SCG that were not involved in the RCG. The participants were asked the following questions;

- The two things I have learnt about the Strategic Coordinating Group are.
...
- The most significant thing I have learnt about the handover to the Recovery Coordinating Group are...
- And if I was advising on the North Wales Recovery Plan and process I would suggest...

Debrief Summary

Participants noted that the SCG was well run and that they were experienced and informed. In comparison they felt that the RCG, whilst directed competently by the chair, seemed to lack confidence and experience. Participants also highlighted the importance of having a broad membership on the SCG. It was noted that the voluntary sector were almost forgotten during the exercise.

Communication within the SCG was good from the start the use of acronyms by individual organisations was stopped by the chair so that all could understand what was being discussed.

Participants felt that there was an uncertainty as to when the handover should take place. It was thought that maybe this would always be the case due to the designed overlap of the two groups. Agreeing the criteria for handover is important when ensuring a seamless transition between the SCG and the RCG.

Participants believe that more exercises are needed in the future and that they should develop the skills and understanding of the RCG members. It was also suggested that liaising with the Welsh Assembly Government in the future would be beneficial in order to inform the RCG on finance and infrastructure issues.

5.9 Observer Debrief

During the exercise observers were asked to make and record observations of the activities, decision making and communication processes of the exercise participants whilst the scenarios unfolded. The observers were asked to make observations on the following;

- Observations of decision making process by responding agencies
- Observations of Strategic Coordinating Group meeting
- Observations of the handover process from the Strategic Coordinating Group and the Recovery Coordinating Group
- Observations of communication processes between the Recovery Coordinating Group and sub groups
- Observations on the multi-agency recovery phase to a flood event
- Observations on the roles and responsibilities of other responding agencies
- Other points not covered by headings above

The answers have been summarised below;

There were mixed opinions as to whether the exercise objectives were met from the observers. It was noted that the exercise not only tested the functions of the groups but also the linkage between the groups. The dialogue between the SCG and the RCG seemed to be very open and in depth discussions took place regarding the recovery handover.

Observers note that there is a structure to facilitate decision making in a multi agency environment. However, it was felt that key senior strategic level managers were missing from the exercise. It was also noted that the RCG were not making enough decisions, assigning owners and identifying who is responsible.

During the SCG meeting it was observed that there was not enough discussion about how the impact assessment would be carried out, by when and how many people it would involve. A better understanding and awareness of who is sat around the table is also needed. Observers felt that there was good leadership and the participants seemed fully engaged in the tasks. It was also suggested that the SCG could capture offers of mutual aid ready to handover to the RCG.

Observers noted that during the handover process they would expect the police to handover an impact assessment detailing what has been done, cost and what remains to be done. It was felt that the handover took place smoothly once it was agreed that the handover criteria had been met. Observations

were made that the handover should have taken place during the RCG meeting and not during the SCG meeting.

The communication processes between the RCG and the RCG Sub Groups was good during the meetings. The RCG gave each group the opportunity to highlight their progress. Some observers noted that there is a need for a set battle rhythm to open the communication flow during the recovery phase. It was felt that the RCG need to provide clear strategic objectives to the sub groups and direct them to undertake detailed actions/tasks.

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) noted that there were a number of issues in which WAG support or involvement was assumed. Clarity is needed on what WAG and the UK Government can bring in terms of support to the recovery phase.

It was noted that RCG members are unlikely to know each other from the outset of the recovery phase, unlike the SCG. It has been suggested that organisations could identify and train individuals that would be involved during the recovery phase. Regular recovery training courses could be held in North Wales for these identified individuals to network with each other.

It was suggested that along with the overall visualisation of the scenario each sub group could have separate visualisations indicating all specific resources in the affected area and details as to their status at the time of the event. This type of detail could be used to identify where current resources are deployed and what resources may be available.

6.0 Conclusions

The exercise evaluation and exercise planning group review confirm that the exercise achieved its aim and was an effective test of the North Wales Multi Agency Recovery Guidance.

Many of the individuals who may be called upon to manage the recovery from a major incident have become more familiar with their role and the procedures contained within the recovery guidance as a result of the exercise.

Participants noted that the North Wales Strategic Coordinating Group was effective and the members were experienced and well informed. The exercise provided the first opportunity for the Recovery Coordinating Group to practice its role as set out in the North Wales Multi Agency Recovery Guidance.

Good practice was noted throughout the exercise some examples include the early implementation of the RCG, the continued logging of actions throughout the day and the implementation of recovery plans.

The arrangements set out in the guidance were generally found to be effective but with some scope for improvement of the processes and structures for example:

- The need to avoid duplication of effort between the SCG and RCG during the transition from response to recovery.
- Greater clarity is needed about who decides when the RCG takes over responsibility. Does the RCG or the SCG lead the handover process?
- The RCG need to lead the development of recovery action plans by setting strategic objectives and realistic timescales for the various recovery sub groups.
- It was difficult for a separate communications sub group to coordinate a single consistent message from the four recovery sub groups and the RCG.
- Several participants identified the need for members of each group to have sufficient authority and technical knowledge to make appropriate decisions.

The exercise demonstrated a good multi agency working relationship in North Wales. Participants noted that it is vital to allow group members the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise in similar future training events as there are a large number of different organisations involved during the recovery.

7.0 Recommendations

The exercise planning group reviewed the results of the structured debrief and exercise evaluation forms and recommended the following actions:

1. The lessons identified in Exercise Watertight II should be reported to the North Wales Resilience Forum and shared with the exercise participants, their organisations, across Wales and with neighbouring Local Resilience Forum.
2. A review of the North Wales Multi-Agency Recovery Guidance should be undertaken to address the following items;
 - i. Identify the required competency of individuals expected to attend the RCG and review of the membership in each group.
 - ii. Need to itemise what needs to happen to meet the handover criteria and who is leading on what during the transition from response to recovery (SCG or RCG).
 - iii. Clarity is needed as to who should lead the handover, the SCG or RCG.
 - iv. Further guidance and checklists should be produced to help assist those that are involved in the recovery phase, e.g.

standard agenda's, role checklists, recovery action plan examples.

- v. Add a note to the guidance suggesting that if a group became too big e.g. Environment and Infrastructure, participants could consider splitting the group to allow more focus on each issue.
 - vi. The role of the Communications Sub Group to coordinate recovery communications and its link with the RCG and other sub groups.
3. Further development of visualisation tools should be explored to enhance future exercises and for use in real events.
 4. Clarity is needed on what the Welsh Assembly Government and the UK Government can bring in terms of support to the recovery phase in North Wales.
 5. The North Wales Resilience Forum Exercise and Training group should consider an exercise aimed at exploring the longer term use of voluntary agencies and providing specific training for potential SCG and RCG loggists.
 6. The North Wales Recovery Group should consider regular recovery training as part of the North Wales training and exercising programme to bring together the people involved in the recovery phase, to consider their roles, network and be updated on recovery planning initiatives in North Wales.

Appendix A – Detailed Agenda

Time	Event	Lead	Outcome
08:30	Registration with Tea and Coffee		
	Tea and Coffee provided throughout the day		
09:00	Welcome and Introduction (Conference Room 3)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductions and arrangements for the day
09:10	Presentation	P.J	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
09:20	Mark Scoggins	M.S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to his role in the Exercise
09:30	Recovery Planning	J.W	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background and Overview
09:40	Exercise Watertight II	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercise rules, importance of audit logging, limitations and objectives Aftermath scenario Visualisation
10:00	Session 1 (1 hour) (Conference Room 3 & Sub Group Rooms)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCG agree criteria and process for handover to RCG (direct SCG away from response) RCG Sub Groups to discuss initial recovery priorities and issues in response to Scenario 1
11:00	Feedback (Conference Room 3)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SCG and RCG members informed of respective strategies
11:15	Session 2 (1hr) (Conference Room 3)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG to agree terms of reference and structure and follow suggested planned agenda Agree recovery strategy Sub groups to observe
12:15	Feedback (Conference Room 3)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG members feedback on the process (2/3 questions) What was difficult? What went well? How could the process be improved?
12:30	Working Lunch		
	Session 3 (45 mins) (Sub Group Rooms)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop recovery action plan for each sub group (in light of RCG strategy)
13:15	Feedback	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG subgroups feedback the key action points
13:30	Session 4 (1 hour) (Conference Room 3)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present handover scenario/visualisation SCG Chair and RCG formally agree the handover criteria is met and the handover takes place RCG review strategy and action plans Sub groups to observe
14:30	Feedback	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG members feedback on the process (2/3 questions)

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was difficult? ▪ What went well? ▪ How could the process be improved?
14:45	Session 5 (45mins) (Sub Group Rooms)	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RCG sub groups agree stand down criteria and timescales
15:30	Feedback	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ RCG Sub Group Chairs summarise responses
15:45	Debrief	R.B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Debrief participants in their roles and responsibilities during the recovery process ▪ Debriefers provide a summary of their debriefs to the whole group
16:45	Closing Remarks	L.G	
17:00	End		

Appendix B – Exercise Evaluation Form

Exercise Evaluation	
<p>This questionnaire is intended to give all exercise participants an opportunity to provide feedback on the running of the exercise and its structure, rather than the lessons learnt (the lessons learnt are explored in the debrief sessions). The aims and objectives have been provided overleaf for reference. Space has also been provided overleaf for further comments.</p>	
Exercise Name: Watertight II	Date: 22 October 2009
Name (optional):	Groups:
<p>Please score the following phases using this point system: 1 = I strongly disagree; 3 = neutral; 5 = I strongly agree</p>	
<p>Joining Instructions The joining instructions were clear and accurate</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Aim (See over the page) The aim of the exercise was met</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Objectives (See over the page) The objectives of the exercise were met</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Scenario The scenarios were realistic/relevant</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Value The exercise was worth attending</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Application Useful lessons were learnt</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Directing Staff The Exercise was well run</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Duration The duration of the exercise was about right</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Venue Venue was appropriate for exercise</p>	<u>Comments:</u>
<p>Overall Impression of Exercise The exercise was a success</p>	<u>Comments:</u>

Exercise Evaluation

Further Comments:

Exercise Aims and Objectives

Aim

'To explore interagency recovery issues and consider the welfare and economic issues that would arise when dealing with the recovery to a major incident'.

Objectives

- To test whether the lessons identified from Exercise Watertight I, where applicable, have been implemented;
- To test elements of the NWRP Multi Agency Plan – Flooding;
- To test and explore recovery issues in response to an emergency in North Wales;
- To explore the relationship between SCG and Recovery Coordinating Group;
- To exercise the handover procedure from response to recovery;
- To test the longer-term use of voluntary agencies and their transition from providers of short-term food and support to mid-term support;
- To identify future planning, training and exercising needs;
- To demonstrate the potential of visualisation tools to aid the response to an incident.

Appendix C – Exercise Evaluation Summary

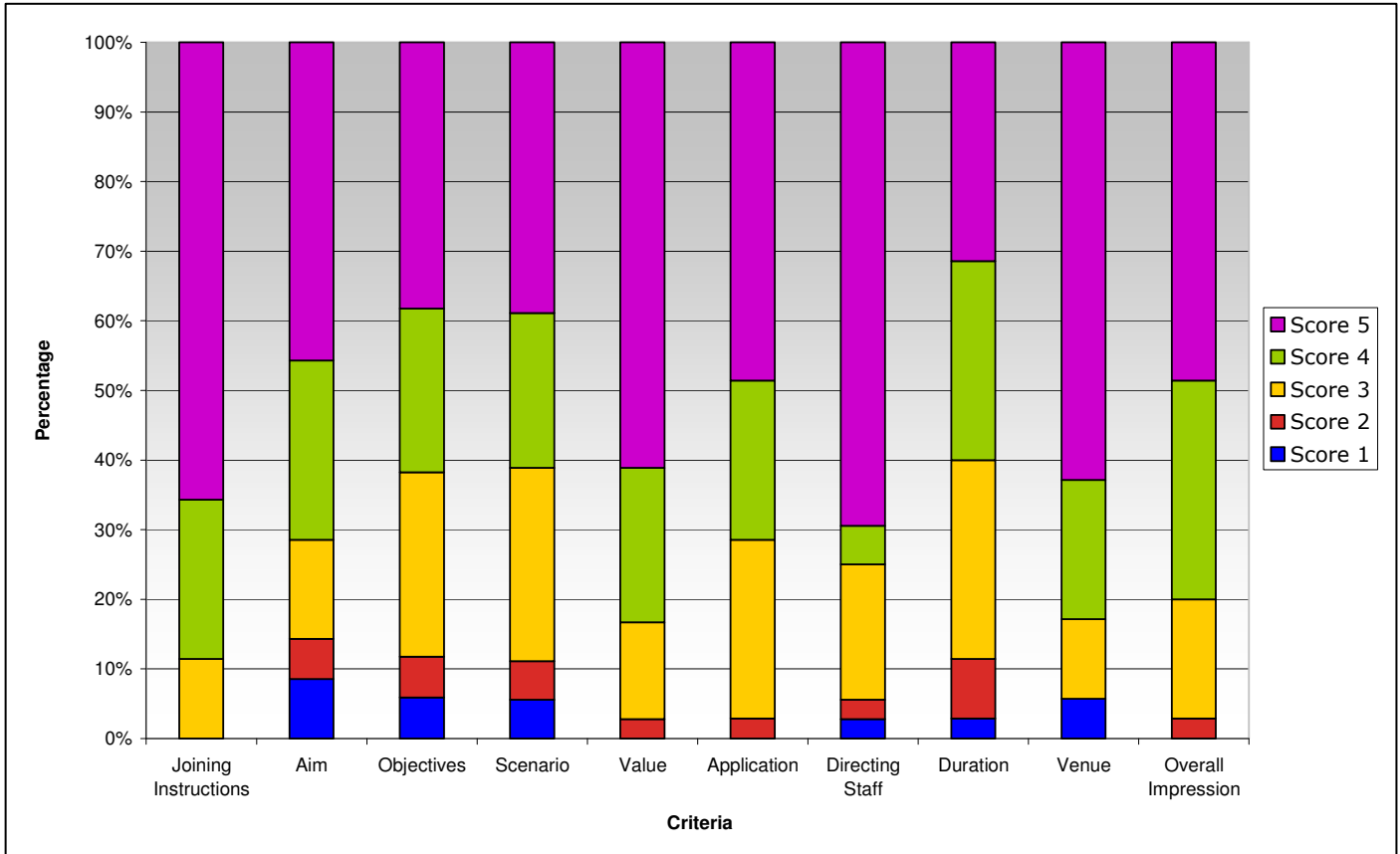


Figure 8.1: A graph illustrating the scores given for each of the criteria. Score 1 = Strongly Disagree and Score 5 = Strongly Agree

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Appendix D – Debrief Visual



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Appendix E – Summary of Structured Debrief Responses

Difficult Aspects

Business and Economic Recovery Group

- Some participants found that they did not have the availability of appropriate databases.
- Participants found that there was a lack of appropriate membership/technical experts available on the Business and Economic Recovery Group, therefore limiting the contribution/knowledge available to make decisions.
- Some individuals felt that more time was needed to interact with the other RCG Sub Groups.

Communication

- Some individuals observed that there should be better communication between the RCG Sub Groups and the operational staff on ground
- Some participants felt that there was little interaction/communication between the sub-groups/partner organisations.
- Participants found the use of acronyms confusing and difficult to understand.

Communications Group

- Participants felt that some organisations were not represented on the Communications Group and that more communication representatives should be available to respond to an emergency.
- Some participants felt that the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service would not be so deeply involved at this stage in the recovery.
- It was felt that the Communications Group appeared to be left to their own devices.

Environment and Infrastructure Group

- Participants felt that there wasn't a full complement of technical players within the RCG Sub Groups e.g. no highways/building control/transport reps.
- It was felt that local feelings should have been taken into account regarding the recovery, did not want to appear to be starting too early.
- Some participants identified that it would be harder to move resources around the area because of the large geographic spread of the incident.

Finance and Legal Group

- Some individuals felt that there was an uncertainty about costs, they also identified that delays in funding decisions risks impeding some responses to situations, which might be more costly in the long run
- Some participants felt that the need for financial information so soon into the event was distracting
- Participants identified that there were no legal representatives on the RCG Sub Group and that decision makers and experts were lacking within the group.

Handover

- Some participants felt that the Recovery Chair should lead the hand over as it will give more opportunity to ensure the handover is appropriate.
- Participants found that they were unsure of when the handover from the SCG to the RCG should have occurred.

Health and Welfare Group

- Some participants found that they did not have much chance to input and offer ideas to the group due to its participant size.
- Individuals felt that wrong players were sat in their group.

RCG

- It was observed that the RCG gave some unrealistic timescales for the recovery.
- It was felt that the RCG needs more accountability.
- Some felt that the membership on the RCG was too diverse.
- Some participants felt that as Communication Group, they were wholly reliant on the interaction from other RCG Sub Groups and the response to the Communications Group was very little during the RCG meetings.
- Some participants felt that the RCG should lead and direct the recovery and that there was a lack of direction from the SCG/RCG.
- Information coming out of the RCG was sometimes felt to be inconsistent and a duplication of actions was observed across the areas.
- It was noted that the RCG reflected the work of the RCG Sub Groups and did not steer the work strategically, this might not be the case in a real event.
- There was a lack of an action plan/risk management process by the RCG.
- A few participants felt that the RCG should have drawn up and released timescales and plans within media protocol.

Recovery

- A number of participants felt that there was a duplication of effort between the RCG and the RCG Sub Groups.
- It was felt that the recovery was not very realistic because there was no emotion involved.

Response

- Some participants felt that there was a possible cross over of responsibility leading to confusion over leadership during the response.
- It was felt that there was a lack of vision during the response and that there is a need to know what is trying to be achieved.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Some participants felt that involvement in Watertight I would have been beneficial.
- It was felt that participants could have been better prepared.
- It was observed that not all eventualities were anticipated, so there was no prepared response; risking ad hoc responses.
- Some individuals felt there was a need for better background, planning and knowledge from their own organisation.
- Participants found that representatives from organisations were not at appropriate level for group discussion/actions, they weren't the best 'qualified' people to be involved on the groups.

SCG

- Participants felt that there was a lack of lessons learnt from the SCG before handover took place.
- Some individuals believe that there should be more emphasis on intelligence gathering.
- Some participants felt that there was a lack of communication from the SCG.
- It was noted that the SCG focused more on the short term goals rather than long term goals.

Venue

- Some participants found it difficult to hear the discussions during the SCG and RCG meetings due to issues with sound.

Other

- Individuals found that there was a lack of communication from company representative on the SCG.
- Some participants felt that the SCG/RCG sessions were too long.

- Many participants felt that there was too much time spent listening to the SCG/RCG meetings and that this time could have been better spent by the RCG Sub Groups reconvening.
- Individuals thought that the exercise needed much more detail as to what was happening out on the ground.
- Some participants felt that there was not enough technical information passed from the response phase and therefore the scenarios were not realistic enough.

Satisfying Aspects

Communication

- An awareness of the roles of other organisations and the issues that they have to face has been highlighted.
- A better use of communications was noted by participants as they believe that one consistent message from all partners was achieved.
- Participants felt that the feedback from the SCG/RCG was very informative illustrating that there were experienced individuals on the groups.
- A good working relationship between communications representatives and representatives from each agency having access to detailed information from their senior officers has been noted.
- Structured actions and priorities – clear focus and aims
- It was felt that the exercise gave an opportunity to participants to network and build a stronger working relationship between individuals and organisations.
- It was noted that the debriefing session consisted of really good discussions and more learning took place.
- Some participants felt that the knowledge, information sharing and communications between individuals/groups were good.

Communications Group

- It was observed that the Communications Group worked effectively and agreed a strategy without any major issues
- Participants within the Communications Group worked well with communication representatives from all agencies and agreed their priorities immediately

Community

- Participants felt it was necessary to ensure that services are maintained either side of an event

Environment and Infrastructure Group

- The correct representation in the group was highlighted during the exercise

Handover

- Participants noted that it was good that the SCG did not hand over to the RCG until they were completely satisfied that the emergency phase was over
- Some participants felt that the transition from SCG to RCG was good

Health and Welfare Group

- It was felt that the sharing of information within the group was good

Long Term

- Some participants found that there was positive consideration of the long-term recovery not just the short-term solutions

RCG

- It was felt that the RCG had an established and effective management structure and that they effectively managed the sub groups
- It was noted that it was beneficial to have a financial perspective on the RCG

Recovery

- Participants found that there was a good overview of all groups

Recovery Plans

- Some individuals felt that they have robust company emergency plans alongside the MARP

Response

- Some individuals observed that it was good to see the pulling together and operation of the RCG well before the handover

Roles and Responsibilities

- Some participants found themselves not sat on their usual group, however they found it really useful and informative to be on a different group
- Some individuals found that they now have a better understanding of the recovery procedures and will take this back to their agencies.
- It was felt that the exercise highlighted gaps which will be taken back to their agency and resolved
- Participants felt that the exercise has provided them with the opportunity to make suggestions for future improvements
- A better understanding of what is needed to be done to help in the event of a flood has been noted by some participants
- Getting to meet other people and see their responses to the flood was interesting to some participants
- It was noted that some participants now have a better understanding of other agencies needs

SCG

- It was felt that watching the SCG and the RCG in operation and the handover of control between the two groups was beneficial to participants

Team Work

- It was observed that all groups were well managed and co-ordinated by the chairs and facilitators. Some of the scribes were also beneficial as they helped to move the groups along
- Some participants noted that being split into sub groups helped to focus their work by breaking down the issues and therefore focusing on the immediate priorities
- Participants agreed that there was a good number of different organisations present in the exercise
- Most participants agreed that there are good multi-agency working relationships in North Wales which contribute to effective planning and the sharing of resources
- Having the sub groups dedicated to certain aspects of the recovery helped to focus participants on the wide range of practical and other issues specific to their area

- Getting to understand the situation from other agencies perspectives allowed participants to share information and quickly communicate and tap into the resources of others
- Participants believe that there are good established links with the Local Resilience Forum and other local flood groups
- Participants noted that there was a wide range of experience relating to flooding issues in their groups and this helped to better advise the response/recovery
- Some participants felt that they now have a better understanding of the overall process

Other

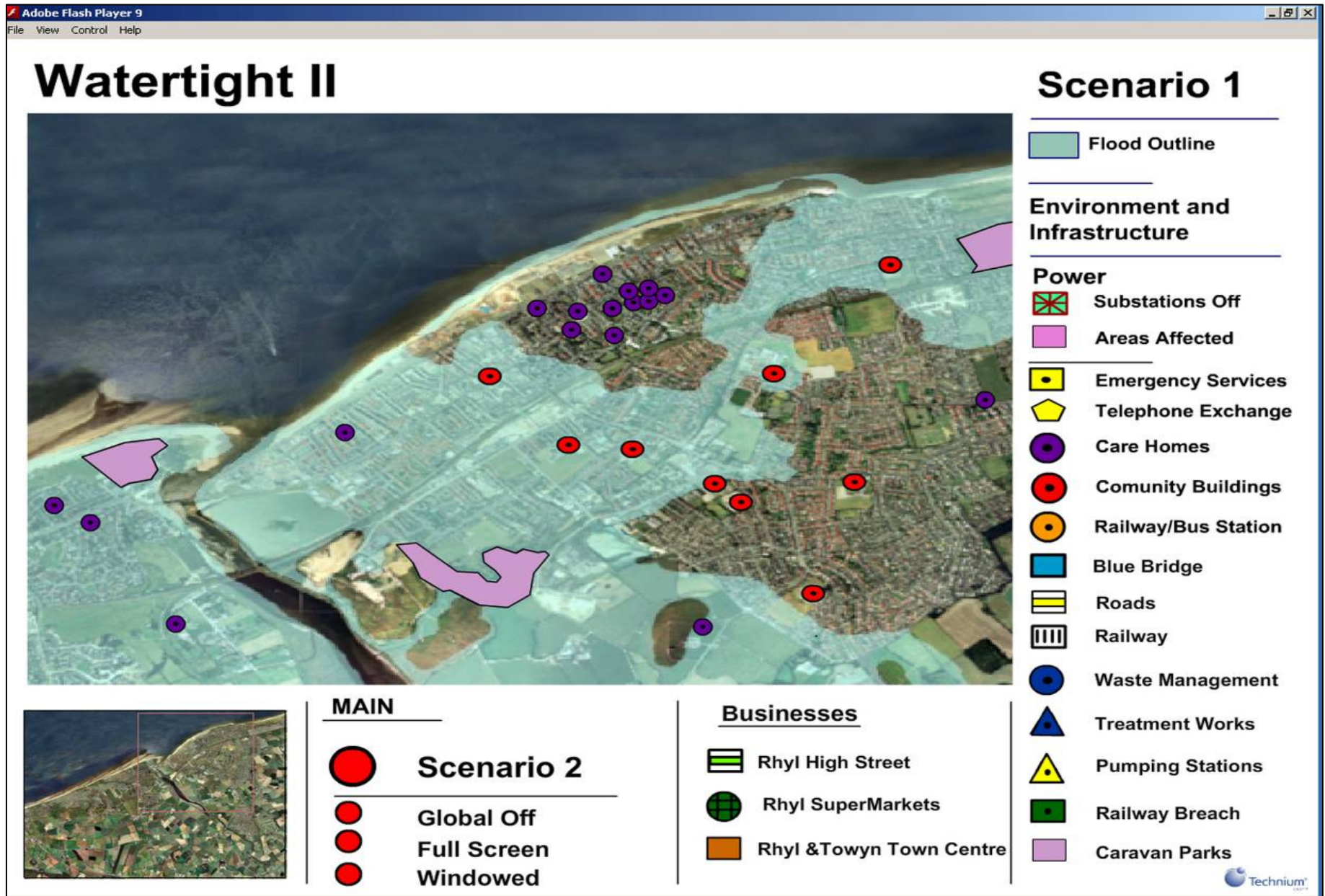
- It was noted that the reading materials and presentations, especially Mark Scoggins, were good
- Some participants felt that there was a coordinated response to the event
- It was felt that participants had a great deal of local knowledge that will prove invaluable during an event
- The visual aids (mapping system) were useful during the exercise and it has been suggested that it would be beneficial to see the effects of the flood outline on the local businesses

Personal Learning


- Participants felt that it is vital to revisit the issues on a regular basis for the preparation of such events.
- Some participants felt that that they have learnt that they can perform in several roles and be useful in areas other than the obvious. They feel that participants should be more open to membership on any sub group.
- Many participants highlighted the need to have good communication between groups and organisations. They noted that it is vital to give group members the opportunity to share their knowledge and expertise as there are a large number of different organisations involved during the recovery.
- Within the communications group it was felt that they should receive regular updates from the SCG/RCG concerning the 'bigger picture', the messages that need highlighting and the expected timescales. They also suggested visiting individual groups to identify specific messages.

- Some individuals thought it necessary to have a deputy involved. They suggested that better briefings should be given to those who are acting as a deputy.
- Some participants felt that they did not have the authority to make decisions and that liaising and ensuring that the appropriate invitations are sent out in the future.
- Team work was highlighted as important when working in a multi-agency environment. Some individuals felt that their actions were less effective done in isolation and that they should be more flexible. It was also noted that being proactive and creating joint working scenarios with councils, outside of an event, time permitting would be useful.
- Some participants are now more aware of the different aspects of recovery and the number of different agencies involved. It was noted that the presence of the Environment and Infrastructure Group on the RCG was more than originally expected.
- It has been suggested that finance need to be involved on the RCG as an advisor rather than to direct operations.
- The RCG chair noted that he needed to improve his knowledge to assist future chairing of the RCG.
- Environment Agency Wales have noted that they should be pro-active and make the public more aware of flood line and to help boost the up take of the service in the area.
- It was noted that some agencies should check that their policies are relevant e.g. recovery business policy. It was suggested that more exercises could be held in the future to pull these plans/policies into action.
- Many participants felt that it was a good idea to share lessons learnt from the exercise with their colleagues back at their agencies. They also noted that it may be possible to raise any issues coming out of the exercise with their management.
- Some participants commented on the capacity and capabilities of voluntary agencies
- Many participants identified the need to attend future meetings (LRF, sub groups, task groups) and exercises. This would allow them to be better prepared to assist in an emergency.

Appendix F – Example of visualisation used during the exercise





Watertight II







Scenario 2

Environment and Infrastructure




Power














-  Substations Off
-  Areas Affected


MAIN

-  **Scenario 1**
-  Global Off
-  Full Screen
-  Windowed

Businesses

-  Rhyl High Street
-  Rhyl SuperMarkets
-  Rhyl & Towyn Town Centre

-  Emergency Services
-  Telephone Exchange
-  Care Homes
-  Community Buildings
-  Railway/Bus Station
-  Blue Bridge
-  Roads
-  Railway
-  Waste Management
-  Treatment Works
-  Pumping Stations
-  Railway Breach
-  Caravan Parks



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