

3 September 2019**FORESTRY COMMISSION'S FUTURE CONTINGENCY PLANNING APPROACH****Purpose**

1. The purpose of this paper is the following:
 - Provide recommendations to the Executive Board and request a decision on future contingency planning and incident management arrangements across Forest Services (FS), Forestry England (FE) and Forest Research (FR).

Background

2. The purpose of contingency planning is to ensure Forestry Commission has reasonable planning in place for known emergencies and capability to manage unknown incidents. Our plans should link to Defra and provide scope to coordinate the forestry sector. An increase in organisational resilience will be achieved by joint working across Forestry Commission and utilising economies of scale for training and exercise resources.
3. It is important to recognise that each part of Forestry Commission would have had different roles within any emergency and therefore any processes developed would have to reflect the distinct needs of Forest Services, Forestry England and Forest Research, building on each organisation's strengths.
4. The purpose of contingency planning is to ensure Forestry Commission has proportionate procedures in place for responding to foreseeable emergencies and capability to manage incidents if they arise. Our plans should complement the approach taken by Defra and provide scope to coordinate with the forestry sector. Any changes in the FC approach should result in improved organisational resilience and efficiency by utilising economies of scale for training and exercise resources.
5. Forest Services (FS) and Forest Research (FR) adopted OGB 17a 'Contingency Planning Framework' and OGB 17b 'Managing Incident in Forestry Commission' in 2014, following the lessons learnt from the Swinley Forest Fire and the Chalara dieback of ash incidence of 2011 and 2012 respectively. During the above incidents there was no formal contingency planning or incident management in place and response to events were based on

6. Contingency planning and incident management encompasses minor incidents, which are dealt with by individual Districts / Business Units up to major incident events which trigger a DEFRA level response.
7. It should be noted that contingency planning is separate from business continuity planning, however the two are related and will impact on each other.

Discussion

Key facts

8. Since October 2013, FS has established the National Incident Management Team (NIMT), or placed it on standby, on 22 occasions for a duration of 159 days (excluding ongoing long duration incidents of the *Ips typographus* and oak processionary moth outbreaks). This includes eight tree health incidents, ten anticipations of catastrophic windblow and six anticipations of major wildfire). Further details on incidents and exercises can be found in ANNEX A.
9. All contingency planning and incident management information was successfully transferred to FS/FE Roots intranet mid-January 2019, providing staff with access to training presentations, operation guidance booklets, templates, checklists and supporting resources. FR does not have access to this online resource but does have access to OGBs and PPGs. FR operates as a GB body and so incident response may draw on expertise from staff at both the main research stations (Alice Holt near Farnham and NRS near Edinburgh) and also from out-stationed staff elsewhere in England, Scotland and Wales.
10. These exercises, as well as feedback from incidents, have identified areas for improvement which include; a) need for continued joint training and exercises between FE and FS, with specialist input from FR, b) need for further incident management training within FE, and increased awareness within FR, c) need to define and promote 'competency' for those staff in areas of responsibility and coordination with DEFRA and the emergency services.
11. In June 2019 FS Executive Team adopted the following recommendation:
 - Not to hold a major exercise in 2020, but to undertake one 2021.
 - Continue working with FE and FR to increase organisational resilience across FC.
 - Develop contingency planning and incident management training in partnership with Roger Cope of FC Health, Safety and Tactical Training using a mixture of online and face to face training packages.
 - Engage with wider forestry sector on contingency planning and incident management to increase resilience, including the England and Wales Wildfire Forum and Defra.

- Continue close working with Defra and other government departments.
12. It is proposed that 1,550 staff across the Forestry Commission have an awareness of contingency planning and incident management arrangements, including a standard package for new starters and updates for existing staff. This will be a simple summary of key points and highlight processes. During significant incidents which are likely to disrupt 'normal business' this will ensure that staff which are not involve in the emergency have an understanding of the response and are better place to support those involved. Additionally, for major incidents the awareness training will provide the first rung of the ladder to training staff for supporting functions such as: Planning, Intelligence, Logistics and Finance as incidents escalate.
 13. Within each of the three organisations, approximately 600 members of staff will be selected to perform specific functions for incident management. This ranges from 300 'front line' staff who will be 'Duty Officers' and 'Response Officers', to 100 selected local and national staff and key managers who will form the NIMTs. Additionally, specialist functions of subject matter advisors across Forestry England, Forest Services and Forest Research will receive training to ensure they are best placed to work efficiently and effectively during incident conditions.
 14. It should be noted there is a need to confirm that involvement of FR staff in this training and any ensuing incidents is covered by Forestry Commission funding (presumably via the SLA agreements). This clarification is necessary because the business model established for FR is to breakeven by selling staff time and these activities are not covered by existing core cross-border research programmes. Equivalent arrangements would apply if FR were asked to support incidents in the Devolved Administrations.
 15. From exercise/training experience and staff feedback over the past 5 years the following conclusions have been drawn:
 - Future training should involve Forestry Commission accredited courses to assure competency of staff, especially when working with third parties such as the emergency services, Defra, other Arm's Length Body's (ALBs), Devolved Administrations (DA)s.
 - Online accredited training should be used for foundation level awareness of contingency planning and incident management within FC.
 - A combination of online training and workshops which are accredited should be used for 'front-line', supporting and senior management level training where mini-exercises using realistic scenarios to consolidated learning. Online resources can also be used to rapidly refresh staff in

preparedness or during incidents. The scope of training will be determined by operational need.

Resource implications

16. Table 1 provides an outline of recommendations requirements of Option 1 on FS and FE resources and costs over three years development and implementation. These costs are provisional and a more detailed business and project plan will be required.

Option 1	Resources	Salary Costs
a. Review of contingency planning and incident management	PB1 Head of Tree Health and Contingency Planning (FS) PB3 Advisor, Technical Guidance and Contingency Planning (FS) PB3 Planning Officer (FE) Workshop across Forestry Commission PB6a to PB3 (14 persons from across FS, FE and FR) Approximately 15 days in total.	£15,000
		Additional Costs
b. Development of online and face to face training package with accreditation in partnership with FC Health, Safety and Technical Training (For FS, FE and FR).	PB3 Advisor, Technical Guidance and Contingency Planning, PAT PB5 Technical Training Officer, HS&TT	Salary Costs
		Administration and recording of competency £2,5k via existing resumptions diaries. Development of training workshops approximately £10,5k
		Additional Costs
		Develop Online training packages approximately £30k

c. Engagement with wider forestry sector to meet FS Executive Team recommendation.	PB3 Advisor, Technical Guidance and Contingency Planning	Salary Costs
		Staff cost 6 day (1 per Area team and 1 national) x £3k plus travel, accommodation and subsistence.
		Additional Costs
e. Observing Environment Agency incident management training to up-skill senior FC staff.	Approximately 10 members of staff from PB1 to PB3 for 2 days.	Salary Costs
		Staff costs 10 x 900 = £9k plus travel and subsistence.
		Additional Costs
f. Implementation across FC Executive, Forest Services, Forestry England and Forest Research	Number of staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE: 780 • FS: 116 • FR: 115 • FC Executive: 6 Include staff on-line training, half day mini exercises, one to two day workshops in year 1 and refresher training in years 2 and 3.	Salary Costs
		Year 1: £330k
		Year 2: £140k
		Year 3: £140k
		Additional Costs
Total Salary Costs (not additional staff costs):		Year 1 = £370k Year 2 = £140k Year 3 = £140k
Total Additional Costs:		£30k

Table 1 – Recommend option with staff and additional costs.

Options

17. Two options were considered in terms of future contingency planning within Forestry Commission as defined in Table 2. Option 1 is recommended for the reasons outlined in the table.

Options	Strength / Weakness
<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Forestry Commission, including Forest Service, Forest Research and Forestry England, to adopt a single Contingency Planning approach based on, but evolved in collaboration with staff the present OGB 17a, including the FC Incident Management System as defined in OGB 17b, with single training package. 	<p>Strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full interoperability within and across Forestry Commission. Single training programme across Forestry Commission. Increased clarity for external organisations when dealing with joint incidents <p>Weakness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost of reviewing OGBs and development / implementation of training packages. Consideration of devolved nature of the different parts of the FC, including access to resources etc.
<p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change option. 	<p>Strength:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No cost option <p>Weakness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited interoperability across Forestry Commission. Training undertaken ad-hoc across Forestry Commission with un-budgeted costs.

Table 2: Assessment of options

Next Steps

18. If the Forestry Commission Executive Board agree the recommendation the following next steps will be undertaken:

- Using a small task and finish group review OGB 17a and OGB 17b in the context of Forestry Commission wide guidance, utilising advice provided

by Defra, Cabinet Office, Environment Agency and the Emergency Services.

- Provide a business case and project plan to Forest Services, Forestry England and Forest Research defining the development and implementation of contingency planning and incident management training and awareness programme.
- Update Roots intranet page with updated training and alternative arrangements for Forest Research.

Risk Assessment

19. With reference to the Forestry Commission corporate risk register, the following existing risk, and associated residual risk has been highlighted in Table 3. It should be noted that at present no risk has been adopted for non-tree natural hazards, which are increasing in frequency and impact, and threaten the forestry sector such as; catastrophic windblow, animal health (especially deer and wild boar – and potential disease transmission to domestic stock) and wildfire.

Reference and Risk	Mitigation	Residual risk	Notes
FC10 Pest and Diseases	03 - Continue to rehearse and deploy well-established incident management protocols within Defra Group. (HoTH&C - Ongoing). 09 - Respond well to current incidents: Ips typographus and Oak Processionary Moth (HoTH&C - Ongoing)	OGB 17a Contingency planning and OGB 17b Incident Management not referenced as a control measure.	

Table 3 – Forestry Commission Risk Register.

Equality Impact Assessment

20. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken at an appropriate stage as the project progresses. This will take into consideration guidance on how information and training that is inclusive and accessible to all.

<https://roots.govintra.net/task/ogb-44-equality-and-diversity/>

Communications

21. Outcome of the Executive Boards decision will be communicated via Roots, senior managers in FS, FE and FR and Forest Research's communication system.
22. Key staff will be contacted via email to join the task and finish workshop.
23. Final outputs will be communicated via Roots and also hosted on the Roots intranet site and Forest Research's communication channels.

Recommendations

24. The Committee are invited to support the following recommendation:
 - Option 1 - For Forestry Commission, including Forest Service, Forest Research and Forestry England, to adopt a single Contingency Planning approach as defined in the present OGB 17a including the FC Incident Management System as defined in OGB 17b, with single training package.

Rob Gazzard, Advisor Technical Guidance, Contingency Planning and Wildfire
August 2019

ANNEX A – Forestry Commission incidents and exercises

- A. During 2018, NIMT's were established on eight occasions; five times on 'stand by' for Major Wildfire (50 days in total), two times on standby for catastrophic windblow and over 8 months for the ongoing *lps* outbreak.
- B. So far during 2019, NIMT's have been on 'Stand by' 3 times in anticipation of major wildfires, and two tree health incidents being managed in parallel (*lps typographus* and oak processionary moth).
- C. Over the past six years these experiences have highlighted that incidents rarely only affect one part of the Forestry Commission (FC). In recent years NIMT's have included staff from across all parts of the FC, as well as other organisations (e.g. Animal and Plant Health Agency and Defra), and the Devolved Administrations. Given the interdependencies, it is important that FS, FE, FR continue to have a joint approach to contingency planning and incident management to ensure consistent and effective engagement and delivery.
- D. There have been five annual major exercises for FS, FE and FR since 2015. These exercises have included partnership working with Defra Tree Health, Communications and CBRN & Flooding Emergency Team, Animal and Plant Health Agency, Environment Agency, Natural England, National Parks, Public Health England, Police, Scottish Government and Welsh Assembly Government.
- E. Staff feedback via questionnaires from Exercise Birch, Chestnut, Elm and Noble Fir have confirmed that experience and knowledge of incident management has improved, and lessons learnt have been embedded thus improving our contingency planning.
- F. These exercises, as well as feedback from incidents, have identified areas for improvement which include; a) need for continued joint training and exercises between FE and FS, with specialist input from FR, b) need for further incident management training within FE, and increased awareness within FR, c) need to define and promote 'competency' for those staff in areas of responsibility and coordination with DEFRA and the emergency services.
- G. As part of exploring interoperability within FC, East England Forest District has drafted a template for an improved Emergency Plan format across FE, based on the incident management system in FS OGB 17b Managing Incident in Forestry Commission.