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This circular is	<b>For information</b>	No response required	
This circular is	<b>Relevant to Fire and Rescue Operations</b>		
Status	<b>This circular draws your attention to the review being undertaken by GLG into the FRS response to the summer floods</b>		

# Communities and Local Government Flooding Review

## Issued by:

**Max Hood**

**Fire and Resilience Directorate**

## Addressed to:

**The Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Chief Executive of the County Council  
The Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Clerk to the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority  
The Commissioner of the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority  
The Chief Fire Officer**

## Please forward to:

**Heads of Operations/Service Delivery**

## Summary

This Circular draws your attention to a review being undertaken by Communities and Local Government into operational aspects of the FRS response to the two major flooding events in the summer of 2007.

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### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 CLG is to undertake a review of the Fire and Rescue Service response to the two major flooding events this year. This review will be conducted by the recently appointed Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, Sir Ken Knight, and will concentrate on operational lessons learnt during the recent flooding incidents. The review will commence in September 2007 and will link into the overarching Defra review conducted by Sir Michael Pitt. A report will be submitted to CLG Ministers by the end of December 2007.
- 1.2 The review will be undertaken in collaboration with the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA) with whom we have already had a dialogue. In order to supplement the resources in the Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser's Unit, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority have agreed to support us in the review.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 to this circular contains the draft scope for our review of, Appendix 2 sets out the Terms of Reference for the review to be undertaken by Sir Michael Pitt and Appendix 3 the issues covered by CCS Cabinet Office information request.

### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 During the summer of 2007 two nationally significant flooding events occurred. Flooding following heavy rain in South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Humberside took place in the second half of June 2007. Flooding in Hereford and Worcester, Gloucestershire, the West Midlands, Berkshire and Oxfordshire took place in the second half of July 2007. These events covered wide geographic areas, affected many thousands of people, both in their homes and workplaces, as well as having a significant impact on local and national infrastructure.
- 2.2 Both events required operational Fire and Rescue Service responses on a national basis and included normal fire and rescue resources as well as the use of specialist equipment. The specialist equipment used included the Government funded High Volume Pumps, and the use of FRS boats. National coordination was employed to ensure that all assets were used wisely and that other risks could also be dealt with if necessary. In CLG the Emergency Information Support Group (EISG) was staffed on both occasions on a 24/7 basis, responding flexibly to FRS requests to provide a level of national oversight. In addition, the National Flood Support team set up by CFOA in Worcester provided coordination of boats. Overall the FRS dealt well with the incidents, and national arrangements helped ensure local responders were well supported.
- 2.3 There has been some discussion in the past concerning the FRS role in water rescue, particularly in the event of flooding incidents. CLG had for some weeks prior to the events been engaged with Defra concerning the role of the FRS and whether there is a case to standardise and enhance the level of provision of boats that are available within the FRS for flood rescue. This dialogue continues and a CLG led review of the operational performance of the FRS will help inform this.

- 2.4** An independent review commissioned by Defra and led by Sir Michael Pitt has been announced which will look at all aspects of the summer floods. The review will look at flood prediction and prevention, as well as the response to the floods.
- 2.5** However, the FRS was a key first responder to the two events and early lessons can be learnt from carrying out a review focusing on operational considerations, which in turn will inform the Defra review. CLG is just starting a previously planned research project on the cost/benefits of New Dimension equipment, including high volume pumps. This work will also feed into the review.

### **3.0 Conclusions**

- 3.1** Both flooding events presented the fire and rescue service with significant challenges. In the main all of these were dealt with effectively and efficiently but undoubtedly there are lessons to be learned. Once again the HVPs provided to the service as part of the Resilience Programme proved to be extremely useful and were widely praised.
- 3.2** In light of the scale of the incidents and their impact nationally, the CLG review will be undertaken under the auspices of the new Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, Sir Ken Knight. The draft review scope is attached as Appendix 1. Whilst Sir Ken does not start with CLG until 1st October, early work on the review can start now, to ensure the most is made of the currency of FRS experience. The review will link into the multi-agency de-briefs and reviews undertaken locally, and regionally, to which the FRS are also contributing, as well as using questionnaires and specifically organised de-brief meetings nationally.

### **4.0 Relationship to the Defra Review and Cabinet Office work**

- 4.1** The report will focus very much on FRS operational matters and national FRS coordination arrangements put in place for New Dimension events through CLG. The timetable for the Defra review is not established yet and we will maintain liaison to ensure we are able to contribute in a timely fashion and provide the most valuable contribution to the broader review. The Cabinet Office are also looking at the flooding incidents, this is more focused on the joint working, though CLG have already discussed with the Cabinet Office how our review will complement their work. The terms of reference of the Defra review is attached as Appendix 2, and the Cabinet Office request at Appendix 3.

**Max Hood - Fire and Resilience Directorate**

## **Appendix 1**

### **CLG/CFOA review of wide scale Flooding Incidents – Summer 2007 – draft scope**

#### **Scope**

The scope of the review will cover all operational FRS response aspects of the two major flooding incidents in South Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Humberside during the second half of June 2007 and Hereford and Worcester, Gloucestershire, the West Midlands, Berkshire and Oxfordshire in the second half of July 2007. Whilst the focus will particularly be on a small number of FRAs who were affected massively, all FRAs who had a significant operational demand during either of these periods will be asked to contribute. The review will seek the views of a selected number of FRAs who just provided resources remotely. In addition to this, the roles, relationships and effectiveness of the three central functions of FRSNCC, EISG and the Flood Support Centre will be examined. The review will look at:

- Use of data/intelligence – risk analysis and IRMPs
- Operational Preparedness
- Mobilising arrangements, including the role of fire controls & communications, both locally and nationally
- Operational effectiveness – functionality and overall resource deployment
- Mutual aid and broader resilience arrangements
- Role of Retained staff
- National coordination/support including the effectiveness of FRS coordination of water rescue assets (FRS and non FRS)

#### **Method**

The review will consist of:

1. An initial light touch “early lessons” report (target date end of September):

- producing a reasonably detailed chronology of events for both periods
- reviewing individual initial reports/analyses from FRAs produced locally
- examining outcomes of locally undertaken de-briefs for the three central functions

2. A more detailed, full report covering all aspects of the scope (target date end of December) which will:

- review any CFOA analysis on incidents and CFOA role in national coordination
- review outcomes from any reviews undertaken through Regional Resilience Fora
- draw together a full structured national de-brief based on the above to draw out consensus on lessons learnt
- carry out some evaluative research by issuing questionnaires

- *review outcomes of full FRA debrief/review reports*
- *consider the outcomes of any Governmental reviews*

### **Output**

*The review will produce two detailed written reports, the first summarising the whole sequence of events for the two incidents and a review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall operational response, with particular emphasis on the roles played by the three central functions. The second report will draw out key lessons learnt and make recommendations to improve overall operational effectiveness, particularly in relation to central support/coordination, broader issues such as relationships with RRFs, Gold and COBR. A key part of this will be to ensure that lessons learnt are fed into relevant FRD work, particularly the Fire and Resilience Programme projects.*

## **Appendix 2**

### **Terms of Reference Sir Michael Pitt Review**

#### Learning from the Flooding in England during June and July 2007 to Improve Flood Risk Management and the Response to Future Emergencies

##### **Scope**

The Review should be wide-ranging and consider all available evidence on the flooding that occurred in England during June and July 2007, its impacts and what this means for the future. It should hear from those involved at the local, regional and national level, including the public, their elected representatives, public organisations, businesses, the farming community and professional associations. The Review should focus specifically on issues around:

- a) Flood risk management, including the risk posed by surface water flooding and the way in which the public and private sectors might adapt to future risks.
- b) The vulnerability of critical infrastructure, including:
  - i) The ability of critical infrastructure to withstand flooding, and what improvements might be made.
  - ii) The resilience of dams and associated structures, and what improvements might be made.
- c) The emergency response to the flooding, including social and welfare issues.
- d) Issues for wider emergency planning arising from the actual or potential loss of essential infrastructure.
- e) Issues arising during the transition period from the response to recovery phases.

The Review should build on previous reviews of the response to serious flooding events, other relevant reports and policy developments including making best use of resources and maximising value for money.

The Review should not cover longer-term recovery issues which will be the subject of a separate, later, review.

##### **Objectives**

Specific objectives for the Review are:

- i. To understand why the flooding was so extensive.
- ii. To learn lessons on how in future we can best predict, prevent or mitigate the scale and impact of flooding incidents in a potentially changing environment.
- iii. To look at how best to co-ordinate the response to flooding in future, including the significant social implications for communities.

- iv. To establish what access to support, equipment, facilities and information is needed by those involved in the response at local, regional and national levels.
- v. To ensure the public has as much access as possible to information on the risk of flooding to allow them to take appropriate precautions, be adequately informed on developments as an emergency unfolds, and be looked after properly in the immediate aftermath.
- vi. To establish how the transition from response to recovery is best managed.
- vii. To identify those aspects of the response that worked well and should be promoted and reinforced.
- viii. To make recommendations in each of these areas to improve the UK's preparedness for flooding events in the future.
- ix. To make recommendations, drawing on the experience of the flooding incidents, to improve the UK's broader ability to manage the loss of essential services in any future emergencies.

### **Composition**

The Review will be overseen by an independent chairperson, Sir Michael Pitt.

The Review team will be led by the Cabinet Office with support from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Communities and Local Government, drawing on experts from other bodies as necessary.

### **Governance**

The independent chairperson, Sir Michael Pitt, will report to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government; and the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

### Appendix 3

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#### **Issues covered by CCS Cabinet Office information request**

Relevant GOs have been asked to commission LRF chairs to carry out formal multi-agency de-briefs covering emergency response phase of the flooding incidents in June and/or July. This will also be done at Regional Resilience Forum level. These will feed into a RRF meeting in October which will consider the outcomes. The scope of these de-briefs has been extended to cover more aspects of the Defra review, including things such as loss of electrical power. The headings against which evidence/information will be collected are:

##### Flood Risk Management

- To understand why the flooding was so extensive;
- To establish whether the scale and impact of the flooding could have been predicted, prevented or mitigated and, if so, how; and
- To establish whether the public had access to information on the risk of flooding to allow them to take appropriate precautions.

##### Critical Infrastructure

- The vulnerability of critical infrastructure together with our readiness to respond effectively to the loss of key infrastructure such as water treatment works/pumping stations and electricity substations.

##### *Specific areas to include*

- Dam and reservoir safety;
- Run off and drainage related flooding (including the proportion of flood damage caused and the adequacy of drain design and clearance); and
- Fluvial and other water course flooding (including the proportion of flood damage caused and the effectiveness of prevention measures).

##### Emergency Response

- To establish whether the immediate response to the flooding was as effective and as co-ordinated as it should have been and, if not, why not;
- To establish whether those involved in the response at local, regional and national levels had access to the support, equipment and information they needed;
- To establish whether the public were adequately informed on developments as the emergency unfolded, and were looked after properly in the immediate aftermath; and
- To identify those aspects of the response that worked well and should be promoted and reinforced.

##### *Specific areas to include*

- Local Multi-agency Command and Control;
- Coordination of FRS assets;
- Effectiveness of the discharge of its responsibilities by the Environment Agency.
- Effectiveness of the discharge of its responsibilities by the lead government department; and

##### Transition to Recovery

- To establish whether the transition from response to recovery was managed well and how could it have been improved.

##### *Specific areas to include*

- Effectiveness of the transition from GOLD/SILVER in each area affected by flooding.