

LGA Group Civil Emergencies Strategy

Summary

This report sets out the outcomes of the consultation on the draft LGA Group civil emergencies strategy and asks members to agree the final strategy and the activity to deliver the strategy.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- note consultation outcomes (paragraph 5)
- agree the final strategy for publication (attached as **Appendix A**)

Action

As directed by members.

Contact Officer: Trish O'Flynn
Phone No: 020 7664 3129
Email: trish.oflynn@lga.gov.uk

LGA Group Civil Emergencies Strategy

Background

1. In January 2010, at the LGA annual Emergency Planning conference, we launched a consultation on the draft civil emergencies strategy (further details are available via www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=7910354). It was recognised that the events of 2009 – salt shortages, swine flu, Cumbria floods – had presented new and significant challenges for councils which had led to a renewed focus on emergency planning preparations and recovery from the local to the national levels. The LGA has played a key role in this activity over the past year and had a presence in strategic and operational COBR meetings where this was helpful to the sector. It was therefore timely to review this and consider a more coherent approach across the LGA Group in order to better perform our national role and support member authorities.
2. We know that councils and Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) have been central to emergency planning activity for some time and there is already a body of established good practice and networks in place, evidencing this expertise and professionalism. Most councils are now taking this to the next level through mainstreaming contingency planning and business continuity management.

LGA Group business plan 2010-2011

3. The LGA Group's 2010-2011 business plan, covering the six organisations that make up the Group, gives an unprecedented profile to our emergency planning and fire service work. The plan is available via www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pagelid=1836091. The Group business plan identifies activity in supporting improvement in emergency planning and the fire service, and making sure funding is available to do the job. The civil emergencies strategy develops the business plan further in this work area. Although it is designed as a framework for the next three years, officers will refresh the content annually, in line with the broader LGA Business Plan.

Consultation responses

4. The consultation ran until mid-March and 31 written responses were received. Apart from councils and fire authorities, responses were received from the Environment Agency, Audit Commission, Emergency Planning Society and Unison. Meetings were held with the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat, CLG Emergency Management and Fire and Resilience Divisions and the LGA emergency planning advisers (which includes representation from the Chief Fire Officers Association).
5. The responses found that the overall analysis and context were mainly sound. The main themes that emerged where further activity was suggested were:
 - Funding, including reform of the Bellwin scheme and the cost of joining the National Resilience Extranet;
 - Building more resilient and 'self help' communities;

23 4

- Clarity around the role and responsibilities of the LGA Group in national emergency response and recovery, including the minimisation of burden or duplication of existing mechanisms, a national approach to mutual aid and the need for the National Co-ordinating Framework for fire services to integrate with our political response
 - The status and funding of Local Resilience Fora to be confirmed
 - Stronger relationship with other key partners such as the police, locally and nationally;
 - Sharing of lessons learned and good practice;
 - Refocussing of the Regional Resilience Teams.
6. Other issues that arose included: greater recognition of difficulties in two tier areas; setting up shared and multi agency units to save money and professional development. These responses therefore further informed the strategy's development.

The LGA Group civil emergencies strategy

7. The strategy is attached at **Appendix A**. It sets out our vision, three strategy themes of response, resilience and reputation as well as a plan to deliver the strategy that brings together work across the Group involving LGA, LACORS and IDeA. Key pieces of work include publishing guides to the LGA Group's role in national emergencies and members' role in community resilience, developing a single mutual aid agreement for all councils, lobbying for a review of funding for planning response and recovery, and developing a range of improvement products for councils.
8. Officers will also consult and work closely with Cllr Graham Brown, the Board's emergency planning champion, to ensure ongoing member oversight of the strategy. Members are asked to agree the strategy for publication. We hope to publish the strategy at this year's LGA Annual Conference in July.
9. Progress on the strategy will be reported to the Board in the third quarter of the 2010-2011 cycle. Feedback will also be sought from member authorities and partners so that consideration can be given as to what further activity is necessary after 2011.

Financial Implications

10. None identified as work will be carried out within existing budgets.

Implications for Wales

11. Although the main focus for Welsh authorities in an emergency is the Welsh Assembly Government, our agreement with the Welsh LGA means that the LGA Group represents Welsh council interests at the national level in emergencies and 'peace time'.

Contact Officer: Trish O'Flynn

Phone No: 020 7664 3129

Email: trish.oflynn@lga.gov.uk