

<p>Title of Report:</p> <p>Emergency Planning - Future Emergency Planning Group Model</p>	<p>Officer presenting:</p> <p>Lead Assurance Officer</p> <p>Author:</p> <p>Lead Assurance Officer</p>
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Member's on the revised model for sub-regional civil contingencies in Northern Ireland and the associated transition arrangements and timescales.

2 Background

- 2.1 As Members are aware currently multi-agency sub-regional civil contingencies work is discharged via five sub-regional civil Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs). These are the Northern EPG; Belfast EPG; Eastern EPG; Southern EPG and Western EPG. Derry City and Strabane District Council currently form part of the Western Emergency Preparedness Group with Fermanagh and Omagh District Council and Mid Ulster District Council. The work of the EPGs is overseen by the governance group namely CCG (NI) Sub-Group: Sub-Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness (SCEP). SCEP in turn links into CCG (NI) - the principal strategic emergency preparedness body for NI.
- 2.2 The PSNI have recently made a recommendation through the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) to reduce the number of Emergency Planning Groups from five to three, in order to align with PSNI operational areas. This recommendation is primarily to align the structures in order to ensure a joined-up approach when responding to emergencies. Members previously endorsed the change from a five to a three model in April 2017.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The new Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs) would be known as the Northern EPG, Southern EPG and Belfast EPG. These EPGs are coterminous with the police Northern, Southern and Belfast Co-ordination areas. They do not compromise Council boundaries and Council areas covered would be as follows:
 - 3.1.1 Northern EPG - Derry and Strabane, Causeway Coast and Glens, Mid and East Antrim, and Antrim and Newtownabbey.
 - 3.1.2 Southern EPG - Fermanagh and Omagh, Mid Ulster, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon, Newry, Mourne and Down, Lisburn and Castlereagh, and Ards and North Down.
 - 3.1.3 Belfast EPG - Belfast
- 3.2 Chairing arrangements for the EPGs is to continue as per extant 5 EPG model i.e. PSNI Chief Superintendent or Superintendent and Council Chief Executive or senior director. Administrative arrangements / programme management to be delivered by the existing complement of EPCOs and Belfast Programme Manager.
- 3.3 The purpose of each EPG remains to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi-agency response to emergencies which have a significant impact on the local community. Specifically, EPG functions are:
 - 3.3.1 To agree a joint approach to emergency preparedness and response for the local area in line with the strategic direction set by the CCG (NI) Sub- Group: Sub Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness (SCEP);
 - 3.3.2 To liaise and coordinate with neighbouring EPGs, and where relevant with emergency planning arrangements and structures in the border counties in Ireland;
 - 3.3.3 To compile and agree a Local Risk Assessment to provide a robust basis for planning;
 - 3.3.4 To ensure that appropriate multi-agency plans, procedures, training and exercises necessary to address identified local and wider area risks are in place and gaps identified;
 - 3.3.5 To direct and oversee the activities of working groups and allocated tasks;
 - 3.3.6 To ensure that appropriate resources are made available to working groups to fulfil their responsibilities;

- 3.3.7 To co-ordinate the individual approaches and responsibilities of each organisation to ensure that they complement each other and dovetail with other stakeholders' arrangements;
- 3.3.8 To consider the implications of legislation, NI initiatives and decisions of the Civil Contingencies Group (NI) for the local area; and
- 3.3.9 To provide reports on gaps in planning and progress with their allocated actions to the CCG (NI) Sub-Group; Sub-Regional Civil Emergency Preparedness (SCEP).
- 3.3.10 EPGs should determine the basis for multi-agency response which best suits the risks, member needs and infrastructure /facilities locations within their areas, and designate operational delivery response areas accordingly. TEO should be advised on the outcome of this determination and any subsequent change, and it will in turn inform SCEP and CCG (NI).
- 3.4 An underlying principle of transition is that there can be no reduction in preparedness or response capability. The factors for transition are:
 - 3.4.1 Co-chairs to be nominated for the new EPGs, TEO to be advised accordingly and it will in turn inform SCEP and CCG (NI);
 - 3.4.2 Programme manager responsibilities for the new EPGs to be determined by local government;
 - 3.4.3 Existing generic Terms of Reference for EPGs to be used for the new EPGs – the new EPGs can then review in due course as they feel necessary however any revision must remain consistent with the original terms under which EPGs were established;
 - 3.4.4 Existing membership of EPGs to be amalgamated to create new EPGs – the new EPGs can review and rationalise in due course as they feel necessary;
 - 3.4.5 Existing body of sub-groups to remain under the new EPGs initially, new sub-group Chairs to be nominated and initially membership to be amalgamated from existing sub-groups - new EPGs can review and adapt based on their assessment of needs within their areas;
 - 3.4.6 Existing EPG plans, protocols and products will NOT fall but will be re-badged for use in the new EPGs with area specific information amalgamated to cover the new EPG area – this is important in the interests of maintaining the level of preparedness; and

3.4.7 Existing EPGs to hand over existing actions to the new EPGs so no workstreams are lost - this is important in the interest of continuity.

3.5 The timetable to facilitate the move to three EPGs is detailed below:

3.5.1 September 2017 – the existing five EPGs to consider transition arrangements during their planned September meetings and in particular to identify multi-agency issues and how these could be resolved for their respective EPGs.

3.5.2 October 2017 – SCEP to meet as planned to oversee transition arrangements.

3.5.3 November 2017 – CCG (NI) to meet as planned – to be updated on progress with transition.

3.5.4 November 2017 – the five EPGs final meeting – to complete resolution of any transition issues and facilitate handover to the new EPGs (the new Co-Chairs to take receipt of the actions / workstreams from the outgoing EPGs).

3.5.5 January 2018 – The three new EPGs to meet to implement the new arrangements.

3.5.6 February 2018 - SCEP to meet (in accordance with existing battle rhythm) to oversee progress with implementation.

3.5.7 March 2018 - CCG (NI) to meet (in accordance with existing battle rhythm) to fulfil the governance function for the policy workstream.

4 Financial and Other Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Members to note the content of the report.

Background Papers