Aberdeenshire COUNCIL **Education and Children's Services**

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL – 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

WINTER STORMS 2021/2022 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, RECOVERY AND NEXT STEPS

1 Executive Summary/Recommendations

1.1 This report will provide Full Council with an overview of the work undertaken by the Council following Storm Arwen in November 2021 and Storms Malik and Corrie in January 2022 and during the Winter Storm recovery phase. This report also provides an overview of the key activity and learning during the recovery phase which, in turn, has informed ongoing and planned actions. The information provided includes the output from a debrief process conducted by the Council, the results of the extensive community engagement, and the operational action plans that are currently being implemented across Council Services and Area Teams. This covering report is a mechanism to provide the suite of information that has been created, since the winter storms, for Elected Members to consider and acknowledge.

1.2 Full Council is recommended to:

1.2.1 Endorse the work undertaken by the Council and Aberdeenshire's communities and residents as set out in the Appendices;

1.2.2 Acknowledge the results of the community engagement as detailed in Appendix 2; and

1.2.3 Acknowledge the updates to the implementation of the Action Plan in Appendix 3.

2 Decision Making Route

2.1 The impact of Storm Arwen and Storms Malik and Corrie (the Winter Storms) has been a dominant feature in discussions with Elected Members at the Council's Policy and Area Committees, in a variety of reports from Services. The procedures and process relating to Emergency Response is an operational matter but the magnitude of impact of the winter storms and the resulting recovery workstream means that strategic oversight is required. Full Council can provide this oversight and input, plus there will be a further reporting process relating to the in-progress development of the Community Resilience Strategy. This will follow the required Policy Development and Review Framework and will be reported to Area Committees and the other Policy Committees for comment before approval at Business Services Committee.

3 Discussion

3.1 On 26 November 2021, the Met Office named Storm Arwen. It was eventually given a rare Red Weather Warning which meant it was a risk to life. The impact of Storm Arwen on Aberdeenshire was significant. Storms Malik and Corrie, both given Amber Weather warnings, took place on 29 and 30 January 2022.

Once again, the impact on Aberdeenshire was significant. The introduction to **Appendix 1** of this report provides further information on the impact of the winter storms.

3.2   Following Storm Arwen, the Recovery Management Team (RMT) was set up as a response to Storm Arwen. Chief Officers from across the directorates form the membership. Its first function was to oversee the twenty-one 'Hot Debriefs' that were conducted across Aberdeenshire Council. A hot debrief takes place when emotions, impressions and feelings are still 'hot' due to the proximity of the incident. The debriefing process explored thematic areas such as Incident Management Structures, Care for People, the visiting of customers without power and included community focused conversations via the six Area Offices. This Hot Debrief process resulted in the report in **Appendix 1** and the agreement of the Strategic Leadership Team to progress the twenty-four recommendations that are set out and explained in the Hot Debrief. The updates to the progress with the implementation of the operational action plan (referenced as Action Plan A) provides an insight to the breadth of activity that is being undertaken across the Council and in collaboration with our partners and the community. For ease this is set out in **Appendix 3** as part of the amalgamated action plan. The Strategic Leadership Team oversees the implementation and delivery of the actions.

3.3   The RMT has met on a regular basis to oversee the operational activity that relates to the recovery from the Winter Storms. The RMT also recommended the community engagement programme that followed the Winter Storms. This was not a 'Hot' process but one that took place when people had time to consider the immediate effects, ongoing impact, and next steps. There was a general theme to the engagement; what went well, what did not go so well and what should happen next. The report in **Appendix 2** provides the detailed explanation of the engagement programme and the feedback received. There is also a summary of the actions that have been agreed, following the analysis of the results of the community engagement. This is referenced as Action Plan B and is in the amalgamated document in **Appendix 3**.

3.4   The Risk and Resilience Team has played an essential role in the Council's response to the multiple incidents that have affected the communities of Aberdeenshire. The onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic in March 2020 reinforced the importance of having expert risk, resilience, and emergency response advisors in the Council. Since the autumn of 2021, the Risk and Resilience Team has developed into a team of four officers. The key role of the Risk and Resilience Team is to ensure that the Council meets its obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, to assess potential risks, horizon scan for emerging issues and to provide Civil Contingencies advice to Council Officers.

3.5   Since the winter storms, considerable progress has been made in enhancing our collective approach to Civil Emergencies and the following pieces of work have been developed:

        o   Aberdeenshire Council Emergency Planning & Resilience Framework

- o Aberdeenshire Council Emergency Plan

- o Emergency Planning & Resilience: Guidance for Elected Members

- o Aberdeenshire Care for People Plan

- o Aberdeenshire Support Centre Framework

- o Duty Emergency Response Coordinator (DERC) Induction Guide

- o DERC Continuing Professional Development Programme

3.6 A key area of work under development is the Aberdeenshire Community Resilience Strategy. This is a significant step forward and builds on the learning and experiences of individuals, households, families, and communities during the winter storms. The strategy will set out how we collectively build resilience in Aberdeenshire. There is extensive ongoing activity on this project. It will utilise the results of the Hot Debrief and the Community Engagement programme as well as information such as the Aberdeenshire Strategic Needs Assessment. There is also ongoing and further engagement with our communities to take place to support the development of the Strategy. An Officer working group has been set up to support the development of the Strategy and this is supported by Council Services, Area Teams, and has appropriate membership and support from external partners. The workshops are scheduled to commence from 10 October. There will be operational matters that flow from this workstream that can be implemented, and this links with the work that has been ongoing with communities since after Storm Arwen, as detailed below.

3.7 The strategic output of the work to develop the Community Resilience Strategy is the resulting Council Policy. Therefore, as set out in the Policy Development and Review Process within Part 4B of the Scheme of Governance, Area Committees will be asked for comment prior to approval. However, as this strategy affects multiple Council services, it is proposed to seek comments from Infrastructure Services Committee and Communities Committee before seeking approval from Business Services Committee.

3.8 The purpose of this report was to update on Council actions; however, it is appropriate that an overview of the work that our communities have been undertaking is reflected in the discussion. Supporting communities to build resilience and capacity has been a constant aim of the Area Teams and Services. It is built into the everyday work that we do with our communities and residents. Following the Winter Storms, across the six areas, the Area Teams and the Risk and Resilience Team have supported community groups and organisations in a variety of ways. Ward Forums, Local Community Planning Groups, Community Council meetings and Forums and other meetings with groups have been utilised for information provision and awareness raising on emergency response and community resilience.

3.9   There are communities with Resilience and Response plans in place and there are communities that have more informal arrangements. All scenarios are acceptable as it is up to a community to determine the best arrangements for them. A resilience/response plan template and toolkit were developed and made available to all community groups. The template plan can be adapted to suit each community and support is available to take the group through the process. A positive number of community groups and organisations have been willing to engage, to ask for support and lead activity in their communities to raise awareness. There is also an understanding of the need to support people to increase individual and household resilience and be aware of their neighbours and people around them. There has been an increasing number of resilience and response plans being provided to the Council, there are also projects ongoing in communities that support building resilience, mostly related to use of community owned and managed buildings and making them an improved space for an emergency situation.

3.10   The Council's Community Resilience Fund is available to support groups. This covers all types of resilience activity, including emergency response. There have been a variety of applications from across Aberdeenshire. SSEN also opened the North of Scotland Resilient Communities Fund, and a range of Aberdeenshire community groups were successful in their bids relating to increasing community resilience and installation of alternative power provision in community owned and managed buildings. This activity has also been supported through the Area Committee Budget grant fund. Ward members will have a good understanding and oversight of local activity, as this will be a topic on ward meeting agendas and also through their attendance at the meetings and forums with local community groups and organisations.

4   Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

4.1   All of the Council's strategic priorities are relevant to this report. Emergency Response and supporting organisational, community, household and individual resilience supports the delivery of the pillars, priorities, and key principles.

Pillar	Priority
Our People	Education Health & Wellbeing
Our Environment	Infrastructure Resilient Communities
Our Economy	Economy & Enterprise Estate Modernisation

Underpinning the Priorities are several key principles. They are right people, right places, right time; responsible finances; climate and sustainability; Community Planning Partnership Local Outcome Improvement Plans; human rights and public protection; tackling poverty and inequalities; digital infrastructure and economy.

4.2   The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the
      recommendation(s) is (are) agreed.

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial			**x**
Staffing			**x**
Equalities and Fairer Duty Scotland			x
Children and Young People's Rights and Wellbeing			x
Climate Change and Sustainability			x
Health and Wellbeing	x		
Town Centre First			x

4.3   The staffing / financial implications will be managed within existing staffing
      arrangements and agreed budgets.

4.4   An integrated impact assessment is not required because this report is an
      overview of ongoing activity. A workstream or project will have its own IIA, as
      required. (IIA-000838)

4.5   The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a
      Corporate Level:

      Corporate Risk Register).

      ACORP010
      Environmental challenges e.g., extreme weather events, climate change

      This report sets out mitigating activities that link to Emergency Planning and
      adaptation strategies

      This risk have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Strategic Level:

      Link to E&IS Risk Register page

      SR010 - Environment and Infrastructure Services Directorate risk -

      Ensuring that residents and business across Aberdeenshire are prepared to
      adapt to effects of climate change including the risk of flooding. The report sets
      out mitigating activities including community engagement exercises and the
      action to improve community resilience.

5   Scheme of Governance

5.1   The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have
      been consulted in the preparation of this report and their comments are
      incorporated within the report and are satisfied that the report complies with the
      Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

5.2   Full Council is able to consider this item in terms of its general remit in the <u>List of Committee Powers in Part 2A</u> of the Scheme of Governance.

LAURENCE FINDLAY
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Report prepared by Anne Marie Davies Macleod, Interim Head of Resources and Performance, Ann Overton, Garioch Area Manager and Neil Cameron, Emergency Planning Officer.

Date 16 September 2022

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Hot Debrief Report

Appendix 2 –Community Engagement Report

Appendix 3 – Amalgamated Action Plan

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL

From mountain to sea

Storm Arwen
Debrief Report

21 February 2022

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1 Introduction

On Friday 26 November 2021, there were a series of Met Office Yellow, Amber and Red Weather warnings across the United Kingdom, Scotland, and Aberdeenshire respectively for significantly high winds. The Red Warning forecast winds up to 90 mph posing a risk to life.
This event was named Storm Arwen by the Met Office.[1]

A Red Weather warning is a relatively rare occurrence. In the last decade there have been four warnings in Scotland:

- February 2018 – Snow. 'Storm Emma' - '*The Beast from the East'*
- January 2016 – Wind. 'Storm Gertrude'
- January 2012 – Wind.[2]
- December 2011 - Wind

The Met Office issued the Amber Wind warning at 0939 hours on Thursday 25 November 2021. This warning was expected to impact across the East coast of the United Kingdom and across much of the eastern part of Scotland including Aberdeenshire.

An amber warning is, whilst not uncommon, a significant event and winds of 65 to 75 mph were expected. This had the potential to lead to injuries and danger to life, damage to trees, buildings and infrastructure as well as the loss of power.

At 1030 hours on Friday 26 November 2021, the Met Office issued a Red Warning for wind impacting on a coastal strip from the Moray Firth south towards Tyneside, encapsulating Aberdeenshire Local Authority area. The Met Office forecast gusts of 80 to 90 mph winds in this area. In addition to the potential impacts of an Amber Warning there was an increased danger to life from flying debris etc.

As a result of the Storm the North East of Scotland experienced the following:

- 60,000 homes had no power in the first 48 hours
- 200 separate faults to the power network (equal to two years' worth in one night)
- 8,000 homes remained without power for a further 7 days
- Loss of power created significant impact on telephone network and complete loss of digital and mobile telephony in several rural areas
- Loss of mains supplied Scottish Water due to loss of power in several settlements
- Loss of Private Water Supplies
- 1 Fatality in a Road Traffic Collision

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[1] Met Éireann, the Met Office and KNMI (The Dutch national weather forecasting service) have a shared storm naming process in place. UK Storm Centre - Met Office
[2] These Storms took place prior to the introduction of the Storm naming conventions in 2015.

Aberdeenshire Council supported Scottish & Southern Energy Networks (SSEN) in locating welfare vans supplying hot food to affected communities and a Humanitarian Assistance Centre was established through which those in need of further support could request it. Additionally, Council Officers began liaising with community resilience groups across Aberdeenshire and put in place local provision and support for communities. Welfare checks began for our most vulnerable residents. This care for people effort delivered:

- 17 Welfare Centres (Hot Food, Water, and power available) (50 staff)
- 2 Rest Centres (for overnight accommodation)
- 13 separate Live Life Aberdeenshire facilities were opened to the public free of charge to allow access to hot showers, electricity charging facilities, communication etc.
- 9 Restaurants/Hotels providing on demand hot meals
- Circa 3000 meals prepared by the School Catering Service to communities, sheltered housing and mobilised military personnel and volunteers
- 2000 calls for assistance to the Aberdeenshire Council Humanitarian Assistance Centre
- Hotel Accommodation for the most vulnerable

On Monday 29 November 2021, it was established, following more extensive assessment of the consequences of the wind impacts that it may take to the following weekend for power to be restored to around 8,000 customers. To ensure welfare and those impacted knew where to access services:

- 1000 volunteer deployments of Council Staff, Police, Fire, HM Coastguard, British Red Cross, and other agencies visited,
- 8000 customers without power, including
    - 1800 customers considered vulnerable by SSEN
    - 1867 Aberdeenshire Housing Tenants
    - 1300 Aberdeenshire Sheltered Housing Tenants
    - 1051 Health & Social Care Partnership Service Users
- Under the terms of Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (MACA),120 Military Personnel were also deployed over a four-day period to assist

In addition, there was significant and widespread Community Resilience activity across Aberdeenshire with many groups and communities self-mobilising to provide all manner of support including but not limited to the opening of community halls and other facilities to provide hot food, water, and access to power for the charging of telephones etc.

Following the storm 21 'Hot Debriefs' were conducted across Aberdeenshire Council exploring thematic areas such as Incident Management Structures, Care for People, the visiting of customers without power and included community based debriefs via the 6 Area Manager localities.

On a partnership level Council Officers participated in the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) debrief arrangements which took place during January 2022. The debrief report has yet to be published. Similarly, the Scottish Government conducted

a review of the wider Storm Arwen issues and its findings have been considered locally by the Council and LRP.

Further, services were asked to conduct Community Impact Assessments and a total of 6 were submitted.

These processes have informed the practice, observations and recommendations in this report.

Finally, a wider Community Engagement Proposal was presented to Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) on 26 January 2022 and is underway.

Much of the immediate learning was instinctively applied to our response to Storms Malik & Corrie which took place between Saturday 29 January and Sunday 30 January 2022 and again resulted in widespread power outage across Aberdeenshire. Where learning from Arwen was applied it has been referenced in this report.

2 Executive Summary

There are a total of 24 recommendations within this report. They are drawn from the Hot Debriefing process carried out by the council immediately following the storm, professional judgement of the council response and wider Grampian LRP and Scottish Government Arwen debriefs.

They are designed to demonstrate incremental improvement in our response to any emergency and not just those of severe weather.

The recommendations contain the phrase 'consider', in order to reflect the intention that officers think about the areas that are highlighted and determine whether the existing emergency planning assumptions and arrangements are appropriate and proportionate or whether there are improvements that could be made. The outcome of these deliberations will be captured in a future Report to the Council's Strategic Leadership Team with a view to agreeing an Action Plan.

The following is a summary of recommendations.

1.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the approach of Local Authorities to severe weather plans elsewhere and whether it might be applied locally.	Risk & Resilience Team
2.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider formally adopting this three-level structure in line with national guidance and that it is embedded in our emergency plans.	Strategic Leadership Team

3.	It is recommended that the introduction of the terms Strategic, Tactical and Operational Commanders be adopted.	Strategic Leadership Team
4.	That Aberdeenshire Council undertake a review of the role, requirements and resilience of the Area Manager Teams during a major incident.	Risk & Resilience Team / Area Managers
5.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council adopt the terms emergency and major incident and build these into response plans.	Strategic Leadership Team
6.	It is also recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council, Guidance for Emergency & Incident Planning and Response document be reviewed to consider the earlier recommendations.	Risk & Resilience Team
7.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review the decision to no longer use the school estate for rest centre provision.	Education & Children's Services
8.	It is recommended that the provision of emergency generators at schools be considered alongside the above recommendation.	Education & Children's Services / Property & Facilities /
9.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its approach to Community Resilience placing individual, family, and community resilience as distinct and equal strands.	Risk & Resilience Team
10.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider a process for identifying and re-deploying council staff to other functions in an emergency.	Legal & People
11.	It is recommended that those instigating the requirement of a door knocking exercise document the reason, scope, and parameters of the exercise.	DERC & Tactical Commanders / Risk & Resilience Team
12.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council continue to support the development of an Aberdeenshire Persons at Risk Distribution Solution (PARD) solution.	Risk & Resilience Team
13.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Rest Centre policy for the use of facilities	Education & Children's Services / Live Life Aberdeenshire /

	including schools, LLA facilities and community facilities.	Risk & Resilience Team / Area Managers
14.	It is recommended that Economic Development and Protective Services develop arrangements for increasing the resilience of householders accessing private water supplies.	Economic Development and Protective Services
15.	It is recommended Legal & People maintain a list of all licensed traders prepared to deploy where additional food provision is required.	Legal & People
16.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council explore appropriate forms of remuneration for those who may be expected to deploy in an emergency.	Legal & People
17.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its general, out of hours and emergency telephone line provision to ensure that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place during a major incident.	Customer & Digital Services
18.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership review the generator provision at Care Homes and Sheltered Housing Complexes etc., directly run by these services and consider whether a) generators need to be installed or b) appropriate electrical interfaces added to allow prompt installation of generators.	Housing / H&SCP
19.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Health & Social Care Partnership ensure private, and third sector providers are aware of their basic obligations, business continuity arrangements and expectations of other agencies in such an event and encourage them to develop robust plans.	Housing / H&SCP
20.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service reviews its business continuity arrangements at its Sheltered Housing Complexes with particular focus on the loss of power and provision of and fire prevention measures.	Housing

21.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council examine a suitable platform for the management of information in an emergency response.	Risk & Resilience Team
22.	It is recommended that a static emergency website page be created that can be used in emergency scenarios to update and sign post to services.	Customer & Digital Services
23.	It is recommended that the public communications plans be updated to reflect new and emerging structures.	Customer & Digital Services
24.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council considers how it might implement a "permanent emergency workforce".	Legal & People

3 Storm Arwen – The Response

3.1 Activation

At 0939 hours on Thursday 25 November 2021, the Met Office issued the Amber Warning for wind and an Incident Management Team led by the Duty Emergency Response Co-Ordinator (DERC) met at 1330 hours. The IMT ensured shared situational awareness of the weather warning, that services were appropriately prepared and had appropriate mechanisms in place to response with a further meeting scheduled the following day. **This is considered good practice.**

Risk & Resilience Team members engaged with Emergency Planning/Resilience Officers across the LRP during the afternoon to share details of preparedness. **This is considered good practice.**

On receipt of the red warning, the DERC supported by a Civil Contingencies Advisor from the Risk & Resilience Team attended the three Grampian LRP meetings that day. The use of Civil Contingencies Advisors to support key decision makers is **also considered good practice.**

Currently there is no single Council Severe Weather plan that details the general response across services when a weather warning is received. Since Arwen four further names storms have impacted across the United Kingdom and other local authorities and agencies have Severe Weather plans that detail internal escalation arrangements.

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the approach of Local Authorities to severe weather plans elsewhere and whether it might be applied locally.**

1.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the approach of Local Authorities to severe weather plans elsewhere and whether it might be applied locally.

3.2 Command Structures

Preparing Scotland[3] is a suite of guidance developed by the Scottish Government which can be considered Scotland's Resilience Doctrine. It is made up of a 'Hub' which sets out the philosophy, principles and good practice for emergency response in Scotland, and 'Spokes' that provide detailed guidance on specific matters.

'Responding to Emergencies' is the guidance 'spoke' that sets out the principles, approach and good practice for all responders including Local Authorities. Management of emergency response in based upon a framework of three ascending levels, Operational, Tactical and Strategic. These levels are often referred to as Bronze, Silver and Gold.

How Aberdeenshire Council responds to emergencies is documented in the 'Aberdeenshire Council, Guidance for Emergency & Incident Planning and Response'[4] document. This document was published in 2018 and sets out how we will respond. It places responsibility for the management of a response on the DERC. References to Operational, Tactical and Strategic levels of management are described generically in the Council plans appendix and not directly in the context of how Aberdeenshire Council responds to an emergency.

However, during Storm Arwen, Aberdeenshire Council organically adopted a three-level framework as set out below.
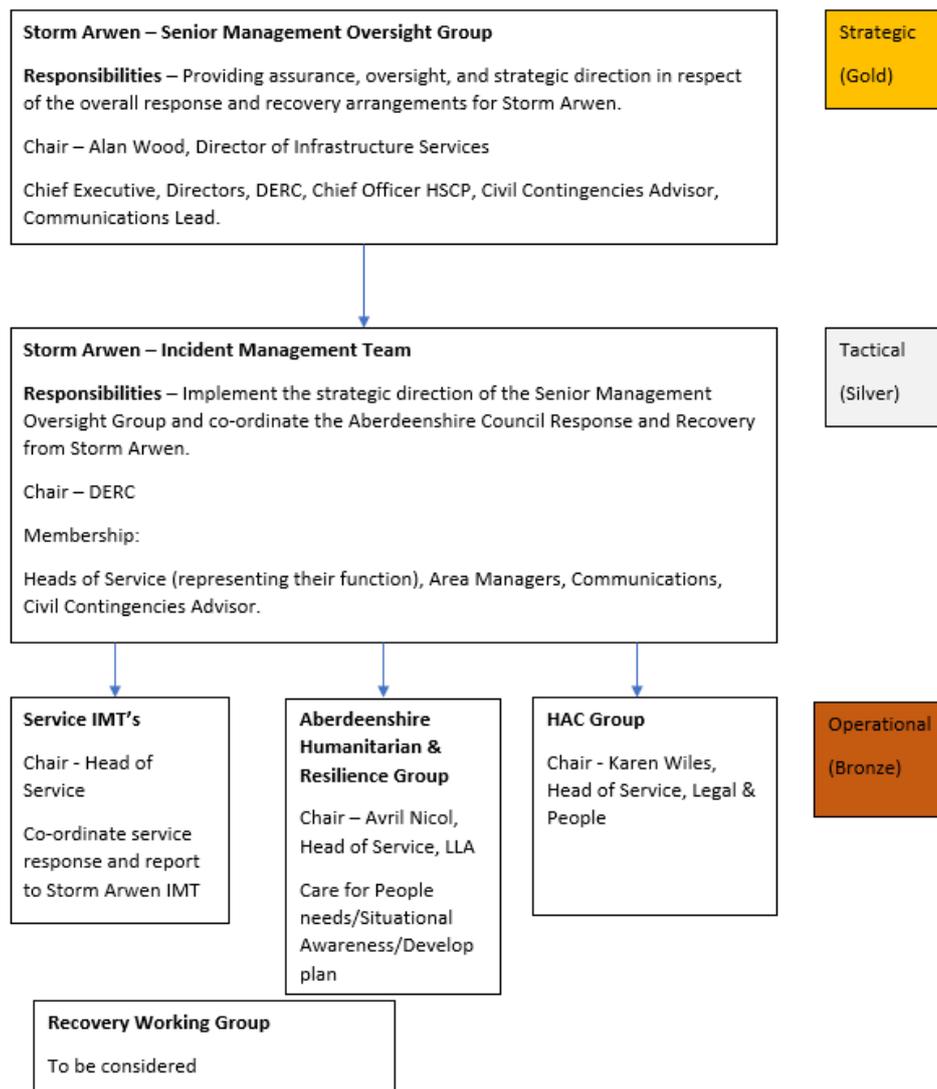
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[3] The national guidelines, Preparing Scotland (ready.scot)
[4] Microsoft Word - 20181008 Aberdeenshire Council EP Guidance V1 (sharepoint.com)

Storm Arwen – Senior Management Oversight Group	Strategic (Gold)
Responsibilities – Providing assurance, oversight, and strategic direction in respect of the overall response and recovery arrangements for Storm Arwen. Chair – Alan Wood, Director of Infrastructure Services Chief Executive, Directors, DERC, Chief Officer HSCP, Civil Contingencies Advisor, Communications Lead.	

Storm Arwen – Incident Management Team	Tactical (Silver)
Responsibilities – Implement the strategic direction of the Senior Management Oversight Group and co-ordinate the Aberdeenshire Council Response and Recovery from Storm Arwen. Chair – DERC Membership: Heads of Service (representing their function), Area Managers, Communications, Civil Contingencies Advisor.	

Service IMT's	Aberdeenshire Humanitarian & Resilience Group	HAC Group	Operational (Bronze)
Chair - Head of Service Co-ordinate service response and report to Storm Arwen IMT	Chair – Avril Nicol, Head of Service, LLA Care for People needs/Situational Awareness/Develop plan	Chair - Karen Wiles, Head of Service, Legal & People	

Recovery Working Group
To be considered

This structure can be considered **good practice,** and although documented in the appendix of the current plan was not well understood across the organisation and many key personnel were never aware of its implementation.

It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider formally adopting this three-level structure in line with national guidance and that it is embedded in our emergency plans.

The three level framework was adopted successfully during Malik & Corrie.

Contributors fed back observations on the role of the DERC once the wider response was initiated. Some confusion existed in respect of the usual role of the DERC to 'act with the delegated authority of the Chief Executive' when there was a Strategic Management Oversight Group that was chaired by a Director and included the Chief Executive as a member. Many saw the DERC role as the 'Tactical Commander' responsible for co-ordinating activity at the Incident Management Team rather than acting on behalf of the Chief Executive. This may be avoided in future responses by

dispensing with the term DERC when the response requires a three-level structure and simply identifying individuals as the:

- Strategic Commander – Strategic Management Oversight Group
- Tactical Commander – Incident Management Team
- Operational Commanders - Thematic and Area Groups

This has the added benefit of aligning our terminology with that of other Category 1 responders.

It is recommended that the introduction of the terms Strategic, Tactical and Operational Commanders be adopted.

The use of these terms was adopted during Malik & Corrie which gave key managers clarity on their role.

As the incident progressed the role of the Area Managers became key to understanding the community resilience efforts across Aberdeenshire. They were linked into Community Groups and other networks and had good situational awareness of what was taking place. Criticism can be levelled that their role was not understood organisationally and again while good practice emerged it did so organically. In a Strategic/Tactical/Operational structure the Area Managers may be seen as the Operational Commanders responsible for co-ordinating service in their geographic area. Area Manager teams reported that they relied upon a small number of informal relationships during the response but that the resilience of the teams was stretched during the period of the response.

It is recommended that the Council undertake a review of the role, requirements and resilience of the Area Manager teams during a major incident.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 defines an emergency as:

- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare
- An event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment
- War, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to security

Police Scotland declared the response a Major Incident on Saturday 27 November 2021. The Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Principles (JESIP)[5] define a Major Incident as:

An event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency

Debriefs identified a lack of clarity of language and terminology aligned to national guidance. The current Aberdeenshire Council, Guidance for Emergency & Incident

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[5] JESIP - Working together, Saving Lives

Planning and Response document makes no mention of an 'emergency' or 'major incident'. Declaration of an emergency or major incident can be useful as it delivers several benefits:

- Orientates the organisation away from a business-as-usual response into one of emergency
- Demonstrates to our staff at all levels that the organisation has a role to play in responding
- Demonstrates to the wider community that the emergency is recognised and that the council is actively participating in the response

This was also an issue for some during Malik & Corrie, particularly Area Managers who were co-ordinating an emergency response in their area while still expected to manage routine council business. The use of the terms Major Incident or Emergency may help to manage expectations of others.

It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council adopt the terms emergency and major incident and build these into response plans.

It is also recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council, Guidance for Emergency & Incident Planning and Response document be reviewed to consider the earlier recommendations.

2.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider formally adopting this three-level structure and that it is embedded in our emergency plans.
3.	It is recommended that the introduction of the terms Strategic, Tactical and Operational Commanders be adopted.
4.	That Aberdeenshire Council undertake a review of the role, requirements and resilience of the Area Manager teams during a major incident.
5.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council adopt the terms emergency and major incident and build these into response plans.
6.	It is also recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council, Guidance for Emergency & Incident Planning and Response document be reviewed to consider the earlier recommendations.

3.3 Care for People

Alongside partners Aberdeenshire Council delivered a massive care for people effort. It is acknowledged that some of the support and measures could have been put in

place much sooner, but this must be judged in the context of the information being received from SSEN around reconnection times.

The Care for People response can broadly be described in four parts: Community Resilience including the supply of welfare centres and facilities into communities, the 'door knocking' exercise of the 8,000 customers without power, the provision of Welfare Centres and support to Care Homes/Sheltered Housing etc.

Community Resilience

There is a patch work of established Community Resilience Groups across Aberdeenshire, often associated with Community Councils. Many have established Community Resilience Plans which focus on the establishment of 'places of safety' and 'rest centres' during an emergency.

Traditionally, Aberdeenshire Council utilised the school estate for the provision of Rest Centres, however, during the response to COVID-19 it appears that a decision was taken not to use schools. It's not clear, why or for what purpose this was taken but the resultant position is that we have placed our responsibility for identifying suitable locations on Community Resilience Groups. During Arwen this meant that the council was relying on communities impacted by the storm, without power to establish welfare centres in venues that council officers were not familiar with.

While Community based responses and venues are welcome, they should be seen as supplemental to Council Rest Centre provision rather than a replacement for.

It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review the decision to no longer use the school estate for rest centre provision.

In a widespread power outage, there will be the need for emergency generation. None of our schools are equipped with emergency generators and it is **recommended that the provision of emergency generators at schools be considered alongside the above recommendation.**

In addition to establishing 'places of safety' and 'rest centres', many community resilience groups acted as conduits for information through to Council Officers and this was **considered good practice**. This was further enhanced during Malik & Corrie where community groups were utilised to share information with wider communities.

However, current focus on the provision of community resilience and the establishment of Community Resilience Groups detracts from individual responsibility and in many ways is an extension of local authority provision. In a large scale, sustained, power resilience event many groups may not be able to deploy as they like many Council staff will also be affected by the emergency.

It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its approach to Community Resilience placing individual, family, and community resilience as distinct and equal strands.

Door Knocking

During Arwen approximately 8,000 customers without power were visited by a multi-agency team consisting of 'volunteer' Council Staff, Police, Fire and Coastguard personnel plus volunteers from British Red Cross and other agencies. This team was later supplemented by 120 military personnel through a Military Assistance to Civil Authorities (MACA) request.

Mobilising Council Staff away from their usual place of work is challenging and terms such as volunteers, re-deployed, seconded all mean different things to different people. It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider a process for identifying and re-deploying council staff to other functions in an emergency.**

While those visited were welcomed by most in the community a common theme through all the hot debriefs was around confusion around the purpose of the exercise. The strategic intent behind the exercise was not agreed resulting in some confusion. The introduction of phrases such as 'safe and well check' and 'proof of life' led to a shift from signposting available services to communities to accounting for all in our communities.

That said, there may be future occasions when such an exercise is warranted. In which case it is **recommended that those instigating the requirement document the reason, scope, and parameters of the exercise.**

Additional confusion arose when trying to understand the role of SSEN' Priority Service Register. This is a self-registering scheme for customers who are classified by SSEN according to their reliance on electrical power during a power cut.

Since Arwen, Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership had invested time in understanding their Care First data and were better able to identify those in need of most support. This coupled with the early establishment of the Grampian LRP Care for People Group and supporting Care for People Strategy was seen as **good practice.**

ICT colleagues were also brought into the Malik & Corrie IMT structures at an early juncture which allowed for the visual mapping of SSEN data which allowed for targeted interventions to those who were most vulnerable. This was **good practice** and removed the need for mass door knocking.

This data mapping is in line with the work already commenced around developing an Aberdeenshire Persons at Risk Distribution (PARD) database to assist in the identification of vulnerable people during any emergency response. It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council continue to support the development of an Aberdeenshire Persons at Risk Distribution (PARD) solution.**

Welfare Centres

During Arwen, several Live Life Aberdeenshire sites (LLA) made their facilities available to those affected by the emergency for hot showers, phone charging etc. This was an organic development and while laudable was not initially co-ordinated. As the scale of the outage became better understood all facilities were made available.

In Malik & Corrie, LLA facilities were made instantly available. This is seen as **good practice** and should be continued.

In addition to, LLA facilities, 'welfare centres' were stood up in several community halls and other facilities, themselves without power. Generators were supplied by SSEN and Aberdeenshire Council but required trained engineers to fit them. In concert with the review of the use of the school estate **it is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Rest Centre policy for the use of facilities including schools, LLA facilities and community facilities.**

Many properties in Aberdeenshire rely on Private Water supplies which require access to power for treatment. During both sets of storms significant Council Officer time was taken dealing with requests for bottled water for homes with private water supplies. It is understood that resilience of private water supplies is a matter for the householder. It is **recommended that Economic Development and Protective Services develop arrangements for increasing the resilience of householders accessing private water supplies.**

In the areas most badly affected by the loss of power SSEN deployed commercial food trucks to provide hot meals to communities. During Storm Arwen licensed food traders were contacted but only a small number were prepared to deploy. This increased during Malik & Corrie but in anticipation of future deployments it is **recommended that Legal & People maintain a list of all licensed traders prepared to deploy where additional food provision is required.**

This food truck provision was augmented on both occasions by the School Catering Service. This was a welcome addition and during Malik & Corrie its deployment was refined with the introduction of a Food Strategy setting out how the council would provide food. This was seen as **good practice.** That said, this relied on the goodwill of staff, and it is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council explore appropriate forms of remuneration for those who may be expected to deploy in an emergency.**

In support of this Aberdeenshire Council established phone lines for the public to call in and request assistance/report issues etc.

During Arwen the Grampian Coronavirus (COVID19) Assistance Hub telephone line was utilised (0808 196 3384) and requests for assistance noted.

However, during Malik & Corrie this line as well as the Council's general enquiry line (03456 081208) was advertised.

This led to some confusion within the Incident Management Team with members not being familiar with distinction and resourcing implications of each. The Aberdeenshire Council website uses the terms 'out of hours' and 'emergency' interchangeably while on occasion utilising the Grampian COVID Assistance line as an emergency number. Adopting clearer definitions of general, out of hours and emergency lines would assist in an emergency response.

It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its general, out of hours and emergency telephone line provision to ensure that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place during a major incident.

Council Housing/Care Homes/Sheltered Housing

During Arwen many Care Homes and Sheltered Housing complexes including those directly managed or privately/third sector run were without power for several days. In the initial hours of Arwen there was a focus on supplying generators to several sites. This was achieved by the deployment of SSEN generators and later by Aberdeenshire Council's electrical contractor.

Many sites requested assistance with the provision of meals, blankets, torches, and other basic materials. It was apparent that many had little in the way of business continuity arrangements, and it was disappointing to see the same premises requesting the same basic support during Malik and Corrie.

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership review the generator provision at Care Homes and Sheltered Housing Complexes etc., directly run by these services and consider whether a) generators need to be installed or b) appropriate electrical interfaces added to allow prompt installation of generators.**

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Health & Social Care Partnership remind private and third sector providers of their basic obligations, that they require to have business continuity arrangements in place and of the expectations of other agencies in such an event and encourage them to develop robust plans.**

Council Housing colleagues reported that fire suppression systems at sheltered housing complexes would not work without electrical power resulting in the deployment of fire wardens on site. The Housing Service escalated this request for support to the LRP during Arwen and to the IMT during Malik & Corrie.

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service reviews its business continuity arrangements at its Sheltered Housing Complexes with particular focus on the loss of power and provision of and fire prevention measures.**

7.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review the decision to no longer use the school estate for rest centre provision.
8.	It is recommended that the provision of emergency generators at schools be considered alongside the above recommendation.
9.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its approach to Community Resilience placing individual, family, and community resilience as distinct and equal strands.
10.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider a process for identifying and re-deploying council staff to other functions in an emergency
11.	It is recommended that those instigating the requirement of a door knocking exercise document the reason, scope, and parameters of the exercise.
12.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council continue to support the development of an Aberdeenshire Persons at Risk Distribution (PARD) solution.
13.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Rest Centre policy for the use of facilities including schools, LLA facilities and community facilities.
14.	It is recommended that Economic Development and Protective Services develop arrangements for increasing the resilience of householders accessing private water supplies.
15.	It is recommended that Legal & People maintain a list of all licensed traders prepared to deploy where additional food provision is required.
16.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council explore appropriate forms of renumeration for those who may be expected to deploy in an emergency.
17.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its general, out of hours and emergency telephone line provision to ensure that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place during a major incident.
18.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership review the generator

	provision at Care Homes and Sheltered Housing Complexes etc., directly run by these services and consider whether a) generators need to be installed or b) appropriate electrical interfaces added to allow prompt installation of generators.
19.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Health & Social Care Partnership remind private and third sector providers of their basic obligations, that they require to have business continuity arrangements in place and of the expectations of other agencies in such an event and encourage them to develop robust plans.
20.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service reviews its business continuity arrangements at its Sheltered Housing Complexes with particular focus on the loss of power and provision of and fire prevention measures.

3.4 Situational Awareness and Administration

The Hot Debriefs highlighted that some officers were unaware of the command structure in place for Arwen. Although one had been documented it had not been circulated widely. This led to a lack of clarity for some on decision making routes. There is a need to review command structures as identified earlier in this document.

Administrative support was identified as an issue for many. Despite having a number of trained loggists the ability to access and utilise them was hampered due to a combination of some services being unable or unwilling to release them coupled with the lack of any proper remuneration scheme to maximise deployment.

The declaration of a Major Incident may assist in this regard. A recommendation has already been made earlier in this report **that Aberdeenshire Council explore appropriate forms of renumeration for those who may be expected to deploy in an emergency.**

Contributors also commented on the lack of a single administration to manage all of the data/information etc. produced during both storms. Multiple Microsoft Teams pages were created which cause confusion for some as to where important information is stored.

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council examine a suitable platform for the management of information in an emergency response**.

21.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council examine a suitable platform for the management of information in an emergency response.

3.5 Public Communications

Public Communications was challenging during Arwen. The widespread power outage coupled with widespread mobile telephony outage meant that reliance on traditional digital methods were perceived as ineffective. There was a public perception that alternative methods of communications such as radio broadcast were not considered. However, it should be noted that all media releases were sent to all media outlets including Radio Stations many of whom reported the storm as news rather than delivering public service messaging.

During Malik & Corrie media outlets were explicitly reminded of their need to assist with warning and informing and this is recognised as **good practice**.

In a similar vein, updates to key community groups, elected members etc. and staff came with the request to share widely, including word of mouth. This is seen as **good practice**.

The communications hot debrief **recommended that a static emergency website page be created that can be used in emergency scenarios to update and sign post to services.**

In line with earlier recommendations around Incident Management Team structures it is **recommended that the public communications plans be updated to reflect new and emerging structures**.

22.	It is recommended that a static emergency website page be created that can be used in emergency scenarios to update and sign post to services.
23.	It is recommended that the public communications plans be updated to reflect new and emerging structures.

3.6 Workforce

Many contributors commented on the difficulty of mobilising 'volunteer' staff from their day jobs, or indeed deploying those with additional skills to the emergency response.

This report has already highlighted difficulties in mobilising and redeploying at short notice staff away from their usual place of work to support an emergency response. Similar difficulties have been experienced in supporting the redeployment of staff to support the Health & Social Care Partnership alleviate winter pressures.

Recognising this Legal & People have already begun work on identifying how it might implement a "permanent emergency workforce". This emergency workforce being

roles identified where in an emergency they can be immediately deployed away from the 'day job' to one where they can support the response. Examples include:

- Rest Centre staff
- Loggists etc.
- Visible deployment of staff into communities

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council considers how it might implement a permanent emergency workforce**.

24.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council considers how it might implement a "permanent emergency workforce"

4 Summary

The recommendations contained within this report have been drawn from the Hot Debriefs carried out. They are contained in a single document:

Storm Arwen Collated Hot Debrief Reports

Suggested owners for each task are detailed and if the recommendations are adopted it is suggested that progress is reviewed by SLT in three months time.

Neil Cameron
Emergency Planning Officer
15 February 2022

Progress of Recommendations

No.	Recommendation	Suggested Owner	Recommendation Adopted	Progress
1.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the approach of Local Authorities to severe weather plans elsewhere and whether it might be applied locally.	Risk & Resilience Team		Examples of Severe Weather plans have been obtained from Police Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway Council and Falkirk Council. All provide guidance to services on *suggested* courses of action on receipt of yellow, amber and red weather warnings and help inform decision makers.
2.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider formally adopting this three-level structure in line with national guidance and that it is embedded in our emergency plans.	Strategic Leadership Team		
3.	It is recommended that the introduction of the terms Strategic, Tactical and Operational Commanders be adopted.	Strategic Leadership Team		
4.	That Aberdeenshire Council undertake a review of the role, requirements and resilience of the Area Manager Teams during a Major Incident.	Risk & Resilience Team / Area Managers		

5.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council adopt the terms emergency and major incident and build these into response plans.	Strategic Leadership Team		
6.	It is also recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council, Guidance for Emergency & Incident Planning and Response document be reviewed to consider the earlier recommendations.	Risk & Resilience Team		The Risk & Resilience Team have commenced a review of the Aberdeenshire Council Emergency Plan.
7.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review the decision to no longer use the school estate for rest centre provision.	Education & Children's Services		ECS confirmed on 28 January 2022 that school sites are available for use as Rest Centres. The Risk & Resilience Team are now engaging with Area Managers and ECS to establish further detailed planning.
8.	It is recommended that the provision of emergency generators at schools be considered alongside the above recommendation.	Education & Children's Services / Property & Facilities /		
9.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its approach to Community Resilience placing individual,	Risk & Resilience Team		Initial discussion has taken within the Arwen Recovery Group and between Area Managers and the Risk & Resilience Team.

	family, and community resilience as distinct and equal strands.			Area Managers supporting development of resilience 'tool kit'. Risk & Resilience Team also engaged with SG review of Community Resilience.
10.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider a process for identifying and re-deploying council staff to other functions in an emergency.	Legal & People		HR have already commenced a workshop process to explore this area.
11.	It is recommended that those instigating the requirement of a door knocking exercise document the reason, scope, and parameters of the exercise.	DERC & Tactical Commanders / Risk & Resilience Team		The learning from Arwen was understood in Malik & Corrie and the use of a clear Care for People Strategy helped focused responder activity.
12.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council continue to support the development of an Aberdeenshire Persons at Risk Distribution (PARD) solution.	Risk & Resilience Team		The Risk & Resilience Team chair both the Grampian LRP PARD SLWG and the Aberdeenshire Council PARD Implementation Group. Both are meeting regularly and progressing towards a Winter 22/23 implementation.
13.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Rest Centre policy for the use of facilities including schools, LLA facilities and community facilities.	Education & Children's Services / Live Life Aberdeenshire / Risk &		The Risk & Resilience Team have instigated a review of insurance liabilities etc. to help understand the issues in developing a tiered approach to Rest Centres involving Schools,

		Resilience Team / Area Managers		LLA and Community. Provision to be mapped out and where gaps exist consider how filled.
14.	It is recommended that Economic Development and Protective Services develop arrangements for increasing the resilience of householders accessing private water supplies.	Economic Development and Protective Services		
15.	It is recommended that Legal & People maintain a list of all licensed traders prepared to deploy where additional food provision is required.	Legal & People		
16.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council explore appropriate forms of remuneration for those who may be expected to deploy in an emergency.	Legal & People		
17.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its general, out of hours and emergency telephone line provision to ensure that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place during a major incident.	Customer & Digital Services		

18.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership review the generator provision at Care Homes and Sheltered Housing Complexes etc., directly run by these services and consider whether a) generators need to be installed or b) appropriate electrical interfaces added to allow prompt installation of generators.	Housing / H&SCP	
19.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service and Health & Social Care Partnership remind private and third sector providers of their basic obligations, that they require to have business continuity arrangements in place and of the expectations of other agencies in such an event and encourage them to develop robust plans.	Housing / H&SCP	
20.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service reviews its business continuity arrangements at its Sheltered Housing Complexes	Housing	

	with particular focus on the loss of power and provision of and fire prevention measures			
21.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council examine a suitable platform for the management of information in an emergency response.	Risk & Resilience Team		Risk & Resilience Team are exploring the 'Response' Function on Teams pages as well as other commercial alternatives.
22.	It is recommended that a static emergency website page be created that can be used in emergency scenarios to update and sign post to services.	Customer & Digital Services		
23.	It is recommended that the public communications plans be updated to reflect new and emerging structures.	Customer & Digital Services		
24.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council considers how it might implement a "permanent emergency workforce".	Legal & People		HR have already commenced a workshop process to explore this area.

Aberdeenshire
C O U N C I L

From mountain to sea

Winter Storms 2021/22
Community Engagement Report

5 August 2022

Contents

Visit   www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

1 Introduction

Over the winter of 2021/2022 Aberdeenshire experienced several significant Storm events:

- Storm Arwen – Friday 26 November 2021
- Storm Malik – Saturday 29 January 2022
- Storm Corrie – Sunday 30 January 2022

Detailed Metrological Information on these storms and other storms over the winter can be obtained from the Met Office Storm Centre.

As a result of these storms a significant number of residents found themselves without power for many days, some experiencing power loss for seven days. Storm Malik and Corrie, although two distinct weather events can be considered one incident from the perspective of Aberdeenshire Council and other responders given the shared consequences felt from both storms.

Following Storm Arwen, a debriefing process commenced across the council. The immediate learning was applied to the response to Storms Malik and Corrie while Council Officers engaged in a series of Hot Debriefs which resulted in the publication of the Storm Arwen Debrief Report. The recommendations from which were accepted by the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) on 23 March 2022.

Progress of those recommendations are being overseen by the Risk & Resilience Team on behalf of the SLT.

On a partnership level Council Officers participated in the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (LRP) debrief arrangements which took place during January 2022. The outcome of that process has been fed into the LRP work plan for the coming year. Similarly, the Scottish Government conducted a review of the wider Storm Arwen issues and its findings have been considered locally by the Council and LRP.

2 Community Engagement Process

On 26 January 2022, a Community Engagement Proposal was supported by SLT, to capture the experiences, observations and priorities of our service users, communities, and sectors regarding the impact of Storm Arwen, the response to it and priorities going forward. Equally it was important that we established with our stakeholders what more could be in place at an individual, household, group, community, and local authority level during any future incident.

Following Storms Malik & Corrie the community engagement process was expanded to include the experiences of those storms.

2.1 Phases of Activity

The community engagement activity took place over two phases with the third phase following.

- Phase 1: Baseline assessment – information and intelligence gathering
- Phase 2: Councillor engagement (review and reflection on baseline assessment)
- Phase 3: Community collaboration – co-production of next steps in securing and strengthening resilience at local levels (individual, household, group and community)

Phase 3 activity is now underway via Area Offices.

2.2 Stakeholder Cohorts

Engagement took place with 5 key stakeholder cohorts:

1. Community Groups and Community Councils: targeted application of 'Lessons Learned' Questionnaire

2. Ward/Area Forums – Local community groups, Churches, Local Community Planning Groups reps and/or subgroups (LCPG) and Community Councils plus Community Council Forums.

3. Targeted facilitated engagement through a semi-structured interview and tool with discrete service user groups/individuals:
   - CLD user groups (ESOL, Adult Learners, Literacy learning, youth)
   - Sheltered Housing Forum
   - Lived Experience Groups (Alcohol Drug Partnership, Tackling Poverty and Inequalities)

4. Targeted sectoral groups through bespoke engagement with discrete organisations/forums that the Council engages with supports, for example, North-East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group, Forestry Sector.

5. Councillors: facilitated session via informal Area Committee arrangements to review and reflect on baseline assessment and to further gather Councillor information and intelligence.

2.3 Questionnaire

A short but focused questionnaire was circulated using Engage HQ to communities to consider the wider community response to the storms. The survey focused on three aspects:

- What worked well
- What did not work well
- What can communities and Aberdeenshire Council do to prepare for the future

A copy of the questionnaire is included at Appendix A.

2.4 Timescale of Engagement

The initial timeline of engagement was scheduled to take place over January, February, and March. However, much of the immediate learning from Storm Arwen was applied during Storms Malik & Corrie and subsequent engagement activity was reframed to include the experiences of these storms.

Phase 1

February 2022

- Completion of engagement tools i.e. questionnaire and semi-structured interview tools.
- Surveys to be issued to Community Groups and Community Councils
- Scheduling of meetings with Ward/Area Forums, Community Council Forums, LCPG's
- Scheduling of interviews with discrete service users and groups

February – March 2022

- Surveys to be returned by Community Groups and Community Councils
- Facilitation of Ward/Area Forums, Community Council Forums, LCPS meetings
- Facilitation of interviews with discrete service users and groups
- Preliminary synthesis/analysis of baseline data.

Phase 2

February – March 2022

- Area Committee informal sessions

Phase 3

Implementing the learning from the winter storms.

3 Community Engagement Outcomes

3.1 'Lessons Learned' Questionnaire

Engagement was carried out online using Engage HQ with numerous groups and individuals given the opportunity to respond. A total of 59 responses were received. Full details of the feedback are contained at Appendix 'A'.

Respondents were asked to comment on how their community or organisation reacted to Storm Arwen, what went well and what did not go so well. They were also

asked about how the response differed in Storms Malik & Corrie and finally what should feature in any resilience plan moving forward.

There were positive comments on how established Community Resilience Groups worked alongside emerging and spontaneous groups of volunteers to meet the needs of communities delivering support where required. Groups carried out a range of functions including the sharing of information from the council, provision of hot drinks and meals and in some cases door to door checks.

Many respondents commented on the resilience of the mobile phone network. This was a key theme across all stakeholders and is explored in more detail at section 3.5 of this report.

It was acknowledged that the collective individual, community, and organisational responses to Storms Malik & Corrie was more effective, and that responders, individuals and communities better understood the nature of the emergency, resulting in early and appropriate decision making. Respondents also acknowledged that individual resilience improved during Malik (likely because of the Arwen experience).

More negatively some respondents commented that there was a lack of a community strategy in the response. The Grampian Local Resilience Partnership 'stood up' a Care for People Group to assist in the co-ordination of the response. This Care for People Group developed a clear strategy for how communities would be supported. This strategy was supported at an Aberdeenshire level by a Council Food Distribution Strategy that had been developed but these comments more likely underline that some groups were unaware of how they contributed to the overall response.

There was also commentary that in some area there was no identified community hub. Again, this is a complex area as Welfare Centres were established in all parts of Aberdeenshire, but it recognised that different stakeholders may consider communities differently. Aberdeenshire Council has already begun work to map out its strategic network of Welfare Centres which will principally be focused on the Council's own estate. Further work is required to explore the need for appropriate levels and reach of communities' hubs which could be an existing Council site repurposed for an emergency such as the Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) or school estate or a village/community hall. This is an area that needs careful consideration given the size of Aberdeenshire. Additional provision by Community Groups should be seen as complementary to this strategic approach.

3.2 Ward/Area Forums and associated groups

The Area Managers led on this area of engagement consulting 123 people over the six areas. Representation was from a wide variety of groups including Community Councils, Resilience Groups. Churches and others. A full list is at Appendix 'B'.

Community Groups acknowledged the scale of the emergency and the impact of the storm on everyone being able to respond effectively. Some groups commented on the lack of communication between Council/Police/Fire and community groups with the later not being clear how decisions are made and communicated. Similar themes

emerged from Councillors which underscore the need to develop a Community Resilience Strategy. If we expect Community Groups to play a part in responding to emergencies, then we need to raise their awareness of response structures in an emergency. It is **recommended that the Risk and Resilience Team prepare a briefing on response structures for communities and Elected Members.**

The use of the Priority Services Register (PSR) by SSEN was not well understood by individuals and groups. The PSR is a requirement of the Electricity Regulator Ofgem and is designed to provide additional support for certain groups during both pre-planned and unplanned power outages. The PSR is a self-registering scheme open to all. Similar PSR registers exist for Scottish Water and Scottish Gas Networks. Each of which can be accessed via a single website.

The Priority Services Register in Scotland Homepage - The Priority Services Register in Scotland (psrscotland.com)

It is **recommended that industry partners consider how they can promote the Priority Service Register scheme in our communities.**

Community Groups expressed a desire to have access to 'vulnerable people' data to enable them to deliver support to those in the community. Providing groups with Health & Social Care Data is a complex area and unlikely to be possible. However, the development of the Persons at Risk Distribution (PARD) application will give Incident Commanders better oversight of vulnerabilities during an incident and allow the more effective targeting of resources. That said, local groups may wish to consider vulnerability factors when considering their own Community Resilience Plans and how during planning they will consider how they can provide additional help to those who need a little more help. Guidance is needed to help them manage this process. It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider what position it should take in the management of vulnerable people data by local community resilience groups.**

A wide range of views emerged in respect of how engaged in a response Community Resilience Groups should be. However, it is acknowledged that they need to know where they fit in the response to any emergency and what their role is. The development of a clear Community Resilience Strategy will assist in this.

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Community Resilience Strategy that sets out the need for individual, household, family, and community resilience, what can be expected of the Council and Communities.**

There was some negative comment on the lack of a clear strategy on where food vans where located. In the most part the provision of Food Trucks was a matter for SSEN, and they often located those in the areas with the most customers affected. It is recognised that it can be difficult to accommodate all areas, and therefore Aberdeenshire Council School Catering service was also in place at school kitchens at venues across Aberdeenshire. The use of school catering to supplement the SSEN provision was seen as **good practice,** but it is recognised there are limitations on this not least the availability of staff who are also impacted by the emergency.

Additionally, comment was received about the perceived duplication of food provision during the storms in some communities. It is accepted that on occasion this was the case but must be seen in the context of responders operating with poor mobile phone coverage etc. and not having the certainty that contracted services would arrive in a community due to the weather conditions. On some occasions the Council Incident Management Team took the positive decision to deploy additional food services into some communities rather than risk them going without provision. This was pre-emptive planning to ensure that food was available rather than a lack of co-ordination.

Not unexpectedly there was significant feedback on the expectation that generators could be supplied and fitted. This is a complex area both in terms of the electrical engineering required at locations, the installation costs, and the ability to maintain and manage these over a longer time period. Aberdeenshire Council has already, as part of our wider National Power Outage planning commissioned a review of the practicalities of installing generators at all our Academies to act as hubs during a widespread power outage.

There are significant costs to this and before embarking on wider role out of generators in communities there should be a wider cost benefit analysis and consideration of whether alternative power solutions (large scale battery packs etc., use of Rota Disconnection) may be viable.

The SSEN Resilient Communities Fund was established in 2015 and operates across the North of Scotland. Its core aim is to help communities become more resilient in the face of storms, severe weather, and prolonged power interruptions. Applications to the fund were invited from communities in the spring and it is expected that a high number of Aberdeenshire Community Groups will have made an application for financial support with their projects. Many groups have bid for funds to install generators in local facilities while the awarding panel is due to meet in August 2022, further support and engagement will be required with community groups on the practicalities of taking their plans forward.

3.3 Targeted facilitated engagement - service user groups/individuals

CLD staff sought to gain an understanding of the experience felt by individuals and communities. They focused on quality conversation, conducted a mixture of 1:1 and focus groups. All methods were facilitated by CLD staff and were based around the same questions to ascertain experience and learning focusing on perceived challenges, support and preparedness at an individual, household, and community level. Engagements took place between February and March 2022 following storm Arwen and the subsequent Storms Malik & Corrie.

The full CLD report is attached at Appendix 'C', however the main themes drawn from this engagement piece was:

- Information was a key theme and practical suggestions for leaflets or booklets with emergency contacts and procedures including where to get up to date

- information locally during digital and tele communications outage. Discussions suggest if this kind of resource was shared closely following emergency events it may be more valued and therefore likely to be embedded by individuals and households.
- Organising information networks during an emergency event where digital and telecommunications are affected is both a key challenge and an area were improving or developing procedures could have a real impact. Across all groups a physical known point for information updates in local communities was suggested such as a local notice board, business or community facility.
- The importance of local support was most reported including informal family or neighbourly networks but concerns about vulnerable people being missed were raised with suggestions to support the development of peer, neighbourhood support networks such as buddy systems in communities where this doesn't take place.
- Some individuals reported concerns with access to crucial support services and the lack of communication during an emergency. For example, the recovery communities raised concerns of community pharmacies closing and no access to treatment/prescriptions with no communication highlighting an issue that is likely to have impacted other people.
- In terms of household resilience, the financial cost of basic resources was identified as a barrier to resilience leaving households with lower incomes more likely to experience emergencies more severely. Resilience packs was suggested as a potential measure for households to access.
- People reported that they are more willing to consider their own and wider community resilience following an emergency event. There is an opportunity to work with communities and individuals to address the barriers and to build their resilience and preparedness.

There was a strong desire for detailed information on emergency procedures to be available to individuals. This mirrors the approaches found in Scandinavia, Canada and New Zealand where local authorities publish detailed emergency preparedness guides.

Stakeholders all commented on the benefit of having access to basic resources to enhance their individual resilience, however, there were barriers to some households in this area. It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider how the access to basic household emergency equipment can be done in an equitable way.**

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the development of similar emergency preparedness guides to those available to the public in Scandinavia, Canada and New Zealand.**

Access to services from vulnerable service users is considered a risk, particularly around community pharmacy access. It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council advise NHS Grampian of this issue to allow them to consider it as part of their response plans.**

3.4 Targeted sectoral groups

Council Officers engaged with several sectoral groups through existing business as usual structures or specifically with sectoral groups who had unique experiences of the storms. A range of groups were consulted including:

- South Grampian Wildfire Group (Forestry expertise)
- North East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group
- National Farmers Union Scotland
- Scottish Land and Estates

These groups reported similar themes of promoting individual, household, family and community resilience to the other stakeholder groups across Aberdeenshire. The South Grampian Wildfire Group is composed of forestry expertise from across Aberdeenshire and was initially established in partnership with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service to harness resource in tackling wildfire. It brought expertise to the tree clearing operation and it is **recommended that the Grampian LRP can improve the relationships between it and the South Grampian Wildfire Group.**

The North-East Scotland Agriculture Advisory Group commented favourably on the pragmatic position taken by the Council's Planning Department to relax planning regulations to allow 'like for like' replacement of barns and other key farm infrastructure where it was damaged by storms. This is seen as **good practice** and should be commended.

Positive engagement also took place with Scottish Forestry who gave prompt advice on the types of tree felling that could take place without licence etc.

3.5 Elected Members Feedback

Aberdeenshire Council hosted online informal meetings with all Councillors across Aberdeenshire, who were asked to give feedback on how the winter storms had impacted them both at a personal level and within their local communities.

These sessions were facilitated by the Area Managers and officers from the Area Teams. The full Councillor feedback is attached at Appendix 'D'.

Councillors across Aberdeenshire recognised the scale of the task and the response faced by all responders including Council staff was hugely enhanced by the work of community groups. Many reported the need for Community groups to know how they fit into any response and the part they play in any response. The lack of an existing Aberdeenshire Council Resilience Strategy is seen as hampering this.

It is **recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Community Resilience Strategy that sets out the need for individual, household, family, and community resilience, what can be expected of the Council and Communities.**

There was commentary from Councillors in respect of their roles and remit during emergencies not being well understood. It was acknowledged that there was a need to look at the training for councillors to equip them for emergencies.

It is **recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council Risk & Resilience team refresh the existing Emergency Response Guidance for Elected Members and consider suitable training opportunities for them.**

The lack of accurate electricity restoration times during Storm Arwen was commented on. This was an issue for both residents and responders. This was addressed more effectively during Storms Malik & Corrie.

Electricity is a reserved matter for the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). On 9 June 2022. BEIS published their review of the Electricity Companies response to the winter storms.

Storm Arwen electricity distribution disruption review - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Similarly, Ofgem (the Electricity Industry Regulator) published its review into the winter storms.

Storm Arwen Report | Ofgem

Both sets of reports make several recommendations to Electricity Companies including the need for accurate restoration times.

Not unexpectedly, many Councillors also commented on the lack of resilience in telecoms infrastructure. The roll out of Digital Telephony by BT raised concerns with some sections of our community who rely on more traditional means. Digital roll out is scheduled to be complete by 2025.

It is, however, worth noting that BT have paused the roll out while power resilient technical solutions for individual vulnerable customers are found. However, the overall timeline of a full move to digital by 2025 remains.

Telephony, both mobile and landline is reserved to the UK Government. The Electronic Communications Resilience & Response Group published its review of telephony impacts of Storm Arwen in May 2022. It addresses many of the concerns raised.

[FINAL] ECRRG Post Incident Report - 2021/2022 Severe Storms.pptx (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Aberdeenshire Council continue to make representation to these national bodies both directly and through participation on local, regional, and national resilience groups. That said, the Council continues to seek local communications solutions.

Councillors also commented on the need to consider the purchase of other technical communications solutions such as Satellite phones etc. Aberdeenshire Council has been exploring this and wider technical communications solutions alongside partners in the Local Resilience Partnership and Scottish Government. The initial assessment is that this is a complex area where some national co-ordination is required and we continue to engage, lead and influence in this area.

Aberdeenshire Council deployed generator provision either directly or through SSEN to several sites. The pre-positioning of generators/providing buildings with simple generator 'hook up' points was raised. This is already a recommendation from the Aberdeenshire Council Storm Arwen Debrief Report and work is underway to scope and cost the establishment of this at sites across the area.

This is however a complex issue that will require further detailed engineering and financial consideration and is unlikely to be resolved in the short term.

Councillors acknowledged the learning that took place during and following Storm Arwen which was evident in the response to Storms Malik and Corrie. It was clear that communities and responders better understood the nature of the emergency, the likely duration and therefor made more effective decisions.

Neil Cameron

Emergency Planning Officer

5 August 2022

4 Summary of Recommendations

Action Plan

No.	Recommendation	Suggested Owner	Recommendation Adopted	Progress
1.	It is recommended that the Risk and Resilience Team prepare a briefing on response structures for communities and elected members.	Risk & Resilience Team		
2.	It is recommended that industry partners consider how they can promote the Priority Service Register scheme in our communities.	SSEN/SGN/Scottish Water		
3.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider what position it should take in the management of vulnerable people data by local community resilience groups.	Strategic Leadership Team		
4.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Community Resilience Strategy that sets out the need for individual, household, family, and community resilience, what can be expected of the Council and Communities.	Risk & Resilience Team		

14 |Winter Storms 2021/22

5.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider how the access to basic household emergency equipment can be done in an equitable way.	Risk & Resilience Team	
6.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the development of similar emergency preparedness guides to those available to the public in Scandinavia, Canada and New Zealand.	Risk & Resilience Team	
7.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council advise NHS Grampian of this issue to allow them to consider it as part of their response plans.	NHS Grampian	
8.	It is recommended that the Grampian LRP can improve the relationships between it and the South Grampian Wildfire Group.	Grampian LRP	
9.	It is recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council Risk & Resilience team refresh the existing Emergency Response Guidance for Elected Members and consider suitable training opportunities for them.	Risk & Resilience Team	

5 Appendix A – Lessons Learned Questionnaire

Storms Arwen, Malik & Corrie Feedback

Common Themes

How did your community react to Storm Arwen? Tell us what was put in place?

- Initial response too slow from services
- Effective use of social media
- Neighbour to neighbour support vital in early days
- Some use of community facilities where access was available

How did your organisation respond to the needs of the community during Storm Arwen?

- Organisations took on role of sharing information through established channels when power outage problems allowed
- Groups provided support where possible – hot drinks, hot meals, passing on of information
- Door to door checks
- Liaison with Council and residents to share need/information

What worked well in your community in the response to Storm Arwen? And why did it work well?

- Neighbours checking on neighbours
- Highlighting those vulnerable in communities
- Power/spirit of the community
- Social media sharing information to those with access/power

What did not work well in your community in the response to Storm Arwen? What would you do differently?

- Mobile phone network
- Communication – not accurate, not accessible to all
- Consider partnership working to improve response, ensuring no duplication of effort.
- Better coordinated response from communities and service providers
- Too much reliance on technology for communication. Not suitable for all, especially those vulnerable.
- Response too slow.

How did your community react to Storms Malik and Corrie? Tell us what was put in place?

- Quicker, more coordinated response
- Know who to contact – Council, SSEN (Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks), in communities
- Better circulation of warnings and information prior to storm happening and during storm
- Self help
- Hot food/drinks available in communities
- Catering vans welcomed
- Less reliance on community response, more in place from Council and SSEN

Did your community react differently to the various storms and if so, can you tell us how?

- Communities felt they reacted in the same way during all storms, but better coordinated, quicker response following Arwen
- Residents' personal resilience better following Arwen
- Lessons learned following Arwen in communities and by service providers

Aberdeenshire Council listened to initial feedback from Storm Arwen and tried to respond to the feedback when reacting to Storms Malik and Corrie. Can you tell us what worked well with regards to Storms Malik and Corrie? And why did it work well?

- Better communication of information
- Better welfare provision – food vans, opening response centres more quickly
- Use of WhatsApp to communicate
- What 3 Words app allowed accurate reporting of problems
- Area office contact was good

What did not work well with regards to Storms Malik and Corrie? What would you do differently?

- Lack of community strategy to respond in a coordinated way
- How best to communicate – one size does not fit all
- Reaching the wider rural dispersed community, need plan in place to address this
- Shortage of essential equipment in communities
- Those vulnerable in communities not always identified/helped
- No identified community hub

Thinking ahead, if this happened again, what are the keys things to have in place?

- Important contacts who can be reached and will respond
- Localised response plan known to all in communities

- Community hub with appropriate facilities for providing hot drinks, food, phone charging
- List of vulnerable residents
- Centralised point of information in our community – notice board
- Toolkit for individual households of what is needed if no power
- Better, more accurate response from SSEN

How can the Council support in the preparation of a resilience plan?

- Resilience plan template
- What useful information, contact numbers this should contain
- Support to communities to establish then share plan to all community

Any other comments?

- Duty of care to older and vulnerable in communities should be highest priority
- How to identify those vulnerable in our communities is a challenge
- Underground cables should be way forward to preserve power in storms in future
- Support communities to become more self-reliant
- Frustration with info from SSEN

6 Appendix B – Ward/Area Forums and associated groups

Community resilience is defined by the Scottish Government as:

"*Communities and individuals harnessing resources and expertise to help themselves prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, in a way that complements the work of the emergency responders.*"

Introduction:

Following on from the recent storm impact community engagement which took place in March 2022 with online community forums in each of the six areas and a survey which was accessed through Engagement HQ.

In addition to this, Aberdeenshire Council hosted online informal meetings with all Councillors across Aberdeenshire, who were asked to give their feedback on how the recent storms have impacted them both at a personal level and within their local communities. This feedback is detailed below, information from these meetings will form part of the feedback collated in the Aberdeenshire Storm Impact Assessment.

The session was facilitated by the Area Managers and officers from the Area Teams.

Banff and Buchan

> **Communities were initiative-taking in helping each other and they have indicated a willingness to continue with this. As a Council we need to:**
> - Encourage the local communities and help facilitate and support what they need without putting barriers in the way.
> - Ask the communities to be prepared to identify people who need assistance during an emergency and come to us for that assistance.
> - Assist resilience groups to put resilience plans in place and understand their role.
> - Ask formal resilience groups to register with the Council and other relevant outside bodies e.g., Police, Fire, SSE.
> - Make resilience groups aware of their contact within the Council. This person will be the conduit between the group and all emergency services.
> - Encourage everyone to keep emergency contacts information in a non-digital format.

> **As a Council we must:**
> - Look at what we did well and build on that.
> - Address how we can communicate better – e.g., use of satellite phones by Chief officers.
> - Improve continuity plans.
> - Have a gold, silver, and bronze command structure during emergencies –
>   - o Gold - Chief Officer to set strategic objectives and operation centre

o Silver – tactical plan to achieve strategic objectives
o Bronze – Department Officers e.g., Roads, Estates, Area Managers
- Put Area Teams in charge of their area for local communication and responses
- Ensure officers have sufficient and continued ongoing training.
- Make Councillors aware of their role and remit during an emergency by including emergency response in Councillor inductions.

Identify community hubs in rural areas and ensure these are fit for purpose with appropriate equipment

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Summary –

- Follow up on the feedback provided.
- Ask groups who offered their help during the storms and were not contacted, to whom they offered their help.
- Establish which communities can offer resilience and which already have formal Resilience Groups.
- Identify which Council owned and community owned buildings are suitable for use as hubs.
- Ensure staff and communities are clear on the gold, silver, bronze structure and how this operates.
- Continue emergency training with tabletop exercises along with scenario building
- Key documents will be refreshed, including emergency plan.
- Area Managers will send a round-up report of all feedback from the Community, Councillors, and questionnaire to be collated into a wider Aberdeenshire format.
- Report will go to Full Council.

Buchan

Feedback from Elected members was included in the community feedback report.

Formartine

What worked well?
- Community rallying round to share resources/ communication where possible
- Use made (where possible) of established community buildings (including non-Council) as hubs
- Community and personal resilience in some communities/ communities of interest
- Area Office support and communication - where possible
- Implementation of community resilience plans – where already in place
- Food trees where actioned
- Can do attitude across communities and agencies

What did not work well?

- Extensive reliance on social media/ digital communications – ack issues
- SSE communications not updating
- We did not appreciate different parts of village/ postcodes were affected differently.
- SSE location of food vans – not consistent – and not where communities themselves might have requested (ack central point of location for efficiencies)
- Advance community awareness of where refuges might be established
- Digital phones – analogue is essential to be maintained for resilience
- Structured official response (SSE and Council) not as responsive as community volunteers
- Short term coping / resources ran out due to length of storms
- Lack of coordinated official response to private water issues (people and livestock) – regardless of statutory obligation to provide or otherwise
- Contacting the vulnerable – too little too late, or misdirected – lack of list?
- Communications - consider loud hailers for public sector/partner vehicles?

What can our communities and Aberdeenshire Council do to be better prepared?

- Develop/ support the development of community resilience plans.
- Encourage personal preparedness- what do households need to have
- Collective messages centrally about safety issues- roads and trees down – during and after events.
- Consider civic buildings / community spaces for potential coupling to generator – including appropriate distribution boards.
- Need for more than household level generators – kept battle ready – advice on generators to the communities too.
- SSE need to communication on intermittent outages: communities initially uncertain if 30 mins off or 8 days.
- Pre-identify and determine how buildings can open as soon as possible at as local a decision-making level as possible.
- Commend widening of Council Resilience funding scheme.

Garioch

Feedback and Summary -

The lists worked well for door knocking. There needs to be personal responsibility for individuals and communities.
Communication caused problems; information was available at hubs which can be relayed to emergency services.
The key is community, we need to keep resilience plans broad so they can cover all aspects of emergency.
Huge learning between first and most recent storm that led to better support and adapted plans to provide better support.
Single point of communication from the council is needed, learn that using multiple of lists to identify vulnerable residents and areas did not work.
Look at how we can reimburse communities for costs of opening village halls.
Communication is key, we need to ensure that vulnerable residents are contacted.
Ensure we have generators in situ that are maintained and assessed regularly.

Develop a vulnerable people's database that can be shared with partners and volunteers involved in an emergency.
Clarity needs around what the role and responsibility of volunteers are at a local level who participate in local resilience planning.
There should be personal responsibility to being better prepared.
We need to be measured in the decisions we make and how we plan for what has been a once in a lifetime climate event.

Kincardine & Mearns

Feedback and Summary –

- Suggested the need for ongoing Community support with regards to resilience.
- Appreciated the improved resilience response with regards to communication, prioritising and early decision making.
- Suggested we look at alternative gritting and maintenance routes when primary routes are closed due to storms, including considering of the condition of those routes being used as diverts

Marr

- Communities did very well to rally round to help and volunteer
- People looked after their neighbours
- Strong community response

- Lack of communications with electricity, phone lines and mobile networks down
- Mixed or inaccurate information from SSEN
- Lack of information flow from the Council
- Councillors felt they were left in the dark and as elected members are viewed as a contact for information which they did not have
- Would have been better to have one point of contact with trusted source of information and a Council representative available
- Wrong or inaccurate messages about where food vans were and how long they were staying for
- A location in each ward to act as a 'Hub' for information with UpToDate reliable information
- Working with Community Councils to agree contact names with analogue phones
- Identifying council staff who have analogue phone lines

Summary:

- We need to find a solution to communications
- Identify vulnerable groups
- Each ward needs to identify a "hub" providing accurate and trusted information that can be shared with the wider area but still the communities to have their own small hub that can feed into the larger hub
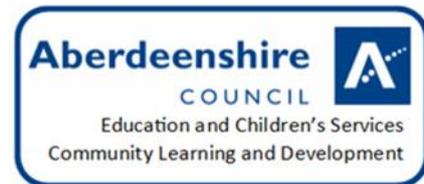
- Community resilience plans and support with information to be included on them

7 Appendix C – Targeted facilitated engagement – service user groups/individuals

Aberdeenshire CLD Learner Voices Community Resilience Storm Arwen Experience

Report - 28.03.2022.

Background

Storm Arwen and other recent storms demonstrated the preparedness and resilience of individuals and communities to cope with the impacts they experienced when there is disruption to key services. To fully understand how Aberdeenshire Council and other key partners can more efficiently and effective respond to the needs of Aberdeenshire residents and communities at these times, it was agreed to implement a consultation to gather the views and experiences of those impacted by the storms.

As part of the wider engagement exercise, Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff spoke to targeted communities and individuals to capture their voices and experiences in order to better understand their preparedness and resilience. It was recognised many of these learners and communities are known to be more vulnerable and face barriers and less likely to engage in broad consultation methods such as online surveys.

Aims

1.   To understand the experience, impact, and learning of living through storm Arwen of Aberdeenshire residents
2.   To understand how some more vulnerable communities have been affected by Storm Arwen, the services and assets that
        have supported communities during the emergency/outages
3.   To help determine future actions to support increased levels of preparedness and resilience.

Limitations

Although, through engaging with individuals and communities that CLD currently work with, we can evidence that we engaged with communities known to be vulnerable and or with understood barriers to broad engagement it's important to highlight that we neither sought to nor claim to have engaged with representatives of all communities known to be vulnerable for this engagement.

What did we do?

To gain a rich understanding of individuals and communities experience we focused on quality conversation, conducted a mixture of 1:1 and focus groups to ensure that we both enriched narratives and quality of discussion with shared experience whilst allowing for sensitive, anonymised input. All methods were facilitated by CLD staff and were based around the same questions to ascertain experience and learning focusing on perceived challenges, support and preparedness at an individual, household and community level. Engagements took place between February and March 2022 following storm Arwen and two subsequent severe storm events.

Who did we engage with?

CLD staff engaged with communities and individuals supported by CLD from identified population groups thought to be less likely to complete broad digital consultation but also those who may experience barriers to preparedness and resilience. In total we engaged with 97 individuals over 15 Group sessions and three 1:1 sessions from the following communities.

- Alcohol and Drugs Recovery Community
- ESOL and New Scots Community
- People with Adult Literacies needs
- Young People
- Vulnerable Geographic Communities - High deprivation/low income and Rural Areas

We engaged with individuals from settlements and surrounding areas across Aberdeenshire including but not limited to Portlethen, Westhill, Insch, Inverurie, Peterhead, Banff, Macduff, Fraserburgh, Huntly, Aboyne, Birse, Banchory, Ballater and Braemar

Aberdeenshire Communities and Learners Voices

1

Impact of the Storms on households ranged from low impact to multiple days with loss of services, issues accessing essential services, and damage to property

- The impact and associated challenges of the Storm Arwen and following events ranged from low, briefly affected to several days of power loss, communication outages, water outage and property damage.
- Essential services- The recovery community reported incidences where pharmacies closed without communication leaving individuals without essential prescriptions such as methadone. Highlighting other vulnerable groups could have been impacted by closure of pharmacies.

2

Willingness to engage in discussion about both experience and preparedness was based on levels of impact from recent lived experience

- The impact and associated challenges of the Storm Arwen and following events ranged from low, briefly affected to several days of power loss, communication outages, water outage and property damage. The more impacted the more willingness people were to share their experience.
- Where we engaged in main settlements that had low impact there was less willingness to spend time thinking about resilience and crucially preparedness. Those who were more severely impacted or who lived in communities with a range of impact were more willing to talk about both their experience but also preparations for future emergency events.

3

Individual or household preparedness tended to increase following first event

Preparedness ranged from very prepared to not prepared at all but with higher levels of preparedness for second or third storm events.

> *'One change is that I will take weather warning more seriously in future'*

4

Things that helped in terms of household/individual preparedness were around having household resources along with personal networks and knowledge about wider support

Resources such as candles, torches, batteries, charged devices, stoves, wind up radios, blankets.

Knowledge such as where there was likely to be food vans, charging points, access to drinking water, washing facilities and numbers to call, including reporting outages.

5

Changes people have made, or hope to make, for being more prepared were mostly around household resources

Resources were most mentioned from candles and food to stoves and generators. People will also, or did also, take weather warnings more seriously.

6

Barriers to individual or household preparedness included cost of resources

Cost was a factor that came up particularly in family group and recovery community. From big outlays such as stoves & generators to keeping spare batteries, candles, food stores. Also, some don't have storage facilities.

> *'Don't want to buy stuff as only living in one room and nowhere to store for occasional emergencies.'*

> *'Even things like batteries aren't cheap. Lots of folk just can't go off and buy gas heaters'*

7

People mostly talked of helping or getting help from informal networks such as friends or neighbours but where people did talk about more formal support including third sector it was appreciated.

When asked about help in the community - people did talk about private, public and third sector services. However, most people talked not of the organised third sector and other services but of informal networks such as neighbours, family and friends. This included answers from both what help people had received or how the community could help.

'Things seemed to improve in terms of community response. More awareness to look in on each other'   'We went round to neighbours'

'Using the services by Aberdeenshire also going for meals at school canteens, local business, community Hub' YP (What helped)

Both forms of help improved in second events in terms of accessing support. Improvements were because of better knowledge or, where offering support, because they understood the impact better.

8

Recognition of the value of developing more organised community support systems for check ins and to help address challenges

Different groups suggested the value of an organised community buddy system '*neighbourhood watch/buddy system'*. Participants recognised that local community-based systems can be more immediate, but people felt concerned that vulnerable people could be missed in impromptu informal neighbourly check ins which were more the reported norm.

I'd worry as part of recovery community about reputation/stigma of some from having been a drug user that may put up barriers to willingness to check in by neighbours if checks are more informal

'You don't always know who your neighbours are, there might be older people or other vulnerable people that could be missed but you don't know what's already going on, in place'

People also highlighted scams with one individual who was approached by somebody offering to carry out repairs following the storm, and who managed to scam a number of individuals. Individuals could be wary taking help from unknown neighbours on one hand and vulnerable to criminal activity on the other.

Also, one participant suggested community support could be developed for basic repairs from storms. They saw minor damage, such as guttering or fences, to a number of properties including their own but felt some people would be better resourced to address damage than others. Both information and advice about accessing services and potential for a community handy person scheme were suggested.

'Help for repairs could be useful. Can be costly and quite stressful even basic things like fences'

9

Knowledge about services and emergency event updates are key to help individuals and households to feel more prepared

Useful numbers- Many didn't know and/or there was a telling lack of mention of useful numbers including reporting faults and the Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HAC).

Better communications about the event - Likely length of outage was particularly commented on as frustrating. Better knowledge/updates from SSEN would really help particularly regards possible length of outage.

Mixed level of knowledge about help available such as food vans, access to drinking water, washing facilities, charging points or accommodation. This was often mentioned as useful knowledge in a second event.

Information that doesn't rely on internet or telecommunications methods such as leaflets, posters and radio/newspapers as people didn't have access to internet/phones.

A known point of access for local information in an emergency such as a local notice board.

10

Resilient Services for Vulnerable Groups

People weren't confident that local services have fit for purpose emergency event procedures, highlighting procedures both need to both to be in place and communicated to clients to ensure needs are addressed where local facilities are impacted by outages. An experience included pharmacy services closing because of power outages when people were reliant on daily prescriptions.

A challenge faced specifically faced by recovery community included not being able to pick up methadone as pharmacies closed without warning or information

11

The key help people felt was needed to be prepared, from the community or otherwise, was around physical resources for household resilience, information about help available, services having and communicating emergency event procedures and formal local buddy systems to check on potentially vulnerable households.

Resources-resilience packs/survival kit for those that can't afford.

Information about help available prior to event – where to get updates/water/food/numbers to call. Storm Ready resilience booklets suggested along with named local information point.

Organised community buddy system - neighbourhood watch/buddy system in rural areas and possible settlements. Systems that can be immediate. People felt concerned about vulnerable people that could be missed in impromptu neighbourly check ins.

A Summary and Conclusion

Although individuals and communities were diverse there was similarly expressed the key messages

- Information was a key theme and practical suggestions for leaflets or booklets with emergency contacts and procedures including where to get up to date information locally during digital and tele communications outage. Discussions suggest if this kind of resource was shared closely following emergency events it may be more valued and therefore likely to be embedded by individuals and households.

- Organising information networks during an emergency event where digital and telecommunications are affected is both a key challenge and an area were improving or developing procedures could have a real impact. Across all groups a physical known point for information updates in local communities was suggested such as a local notice board, business or community facility.

- The importance of local support was most reported including informal family or neighbourly networks but concerns about vulnerable people being missed were raised with suggestions to support the development of peer, neighbourhood support networks such as buddy systems in communities where this doesn't take place.

- Some individuals reported concerns with access to crucial support services and the lack of communication during an emergency. For example, the recovery communities raised concerns of community pharmacies closing and no access to treatment/prescriptions with no communication highlighting an issue that is likely to have impacted other people.

- In terms of household resilience, the financial cost of basic resources was identified as a barrier to resilience leaving households with lower incomes more likely to experience emergencies more severely. Resilience packs was suggested as a potential measure for households to access.

- People reported that they are more willing to consider their own and wider community resilience following an emergency event. There is an opportunity to work with communities and individuals to address the barriers and to build their resilience and preparedness.

On a final note, we feel we established a willingness to share experiences and perspectives, including challenges and ideas. We gathered some valuable insight to a range of experiences and perspectives with some very specific individual examples highlighting some very important challenges that will affect others and that we can learn from. We are however conscious that this is only a part of the wider Aberdeenshire Council engagement strategy and that, at this stage, we did not seek to ensure we were engaging with all potentially vulnerable groups. Following feedback from wider engagements, if there are identified gaps, we would offer to work with partners and or conduct outreach engagement to help ensure the fullest understanding of the challenges faced by our communities along with the opportunities to support future resilience.

8 Appendix D – Elected Members Feedback

Community resilience is defined by the Scottish Government as:

"*Communities and individuals harnessing resources and expertise to help themselves prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, in a way that complements the work of the emergency responders.*"

Introduction:

Following on from the recent storm impact community engagement which took place in March 2022 with online community forums in each of the six areas and a survey which was accessed through Engagement HQ.

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The session was facilitated by the Area Managers and officers from the Area Teams.

Banff and Buchan

Communities were initiative-taking in helping each other and they have indicated a willingness to continue with this. As a Council we need to: • Encourage the local communities and help facilitate and support what they need without putting barriers in the way.   • Ask the communities to be prepared to identify people who need assistance during an emergency and come to us for that assistance.   • Assist resilience groups to put resilience plans in place and understand their role.   • Ask formal resilience groups to register with the Council and other relevant outside bodies e.g., Police, Fire, SSE.   • Make resilience groups aware of their contact within the Council. This person will be the conduit between the group and all emergency services.   • Encourage everyone to keep emergency contacts information in a non-digital format.
As a Council we must: • Look at what we did well and build on that.   • Address how we can communicate better – e.g., use of satellite phones by Chief officers.   • Improve continuity plans.   • Have a gold, silver, and bronze command structure during emergencies –

> - o Gold - Chief Officer to set strategic objectives and operation centre
> - o Silver – tactical plan to achieve strategic objectives
> - o Bronze – Department Officers e.g., Roads, Estates, Area Managers
> - Put Area Teams in charge of their area for local communication and responses
> - Ensure officers have sufficient and continued ongoing training.
> - Make Councillors aware of their role and remit during an emergency by including emergency response in Councillor inductions.
>
> Identify community hubs in rural areas and ensure these are fit for purpose with appropriate equipment

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Summary –

- Follow up on the feedback provided.
- Ask groups who offered their help during the storms and were not contacted, to whom they offered their help.
- Establish which communities can offer resilience and which already have formal Resilience Groups.
- Identify which Council owned and community owned buildings are suitable for use as hubs.
- Ensure staff and communities are clear on the gold, silver, bronze structure and how this operates.
- Continue emergency training with tabletop exercises along with scenario building
- Key documents will be refreshed, including emergency plan.
- Area Managers will send a round-up report of all feedback from the Community, Councillors, and questionnaire to be collated into a wider Aberdeenshire format.
- Report will go to Full Council.

Buchan

Feedback from Elected members was included in the community feedback report.

Formartine

What worked well?
- Community rallying round to share resources/ communication where possible
- Use made (where possible) of established community buildings (including non-Council) as hubs
- Community and personal resilience in some communities/ communities of interest
- Area Office support and communication - where possible
- Implementation of community resilience plans – where already in place
- Food trees where actioned
- Can do attitude across communities and agencies

What did not work well?

- Extensive reliance on social media/ digital communications – ack issues
- SSE communications not updating
- We did not appreciate different parts of village/ postcodes were affected differently.
- SSE location of food vans – not consistent – and not where communities themselves might have requested (ack central point of location for efficiencies)
- Advance community awareness of where refuges might be established
- Digital phones – analogue is essential to be maintained for resilience
- Structured official response (SSE and Council) not as responsive as community volunteers
- Short term coping / resources ran out due to length of storms
- Lack of coordinated official response to private water issues (people and livestock) – regardless of statutory obligation to provide or otherwise
- Contacting the vulnerable – too little too late, or misdirected – lack of list?
- Communications - consider loud hailers for public sector/partner vehicles?

What can our communities and Aberdeenshire Council do to be better prepared?

- Develop/ support the development of community resilience plans.
- Encourage personal preparedness- what do households need to have
- Collective messages centrally about safety issues- roads and trees down – during and after events.
- Consider civic buildings / community spaces for potential coupling to generator – including appropriate distribution boards.
- Need for more than household level generators – kept battle ready – advice on generators to the communities too.
- SSE need to communication on intermittent outages: communities initially uncertain if 30 mins off or 8 days.
- Pre-identify and determine how buildings can open as soon as possible at as local a decision-making level as possible.
- Commend widening of Council Resilience funding scheme.

Garioch

Feedback and Summary -

The lists worked well for door knocking. There needs to be personal responsibility for individuals and communities.
Communication caused problems; information was available at hubs which can be relayed to emergency services.
The key is community, we need to keep resilience plans broad so they can cover all aspects of emergency.
Huge learning between first and most recent storm that led to better support and adapted plans to provide better support.
Single point of communication from the council is needed, learn that using multiple of lists to identify vulnerable residents and areas did not work.
Look at how we can reimburse communities for costs of opening village halls.
Communication is key, we need to ensure that vulnerable residents are contacted.

Ensure we have generators in situ that are maintained and assessed regularly.
Develop a vulnerable people's database that can be shared with partners and volunteers involved in an emergency.
Clarity needs around what the role and responsibility of volunteers are at a local level who participate in local resilience planning.
There should be personal responsibility to being better prepared.
We need to be measured in the decisions we make and how we plan for what has been a once in a lifetime climate event.

Kincardine & Mearns

Feedback and Summary –

- Suggested the need for ongoing Community support with regards to resilience.
- Appreciated the improved resilience response with regards to communication, prioritising and early decision making.
- Suggested we look at alternative gritting and maintenance routes when primary routes are closed due to storms, including considering of the condition of those routes being used as diverts

Marr

- Communities did very well to rally round to help and volunteer
- People looked after their neighbours
- Strong community response

- Lack of communications with electricity, phone lines and mobile networks down
- Mixed or inaccurate information from SSEN
- Lack of information flow from the Council
- Councillors felt they were left in the dark and as elected members are viewed as a contact for information which they did not have
- Would have been better to have one point of contact with trusted source of information and a Council representative available
- Wrong or inaccurate messages about where food vans were and how long they were staying for
- A location in each ward to act as a 'Hub' for information with UpToDate reliable information
- Working with Community Councils to agree contact names with analogue phones
- Identifying council staff who have analogue phone lines

Summary:

- We need to find a solution to communications
- Identify vulnerable groups

- Each ward needs to identify a "hub" providing accurate and trusted information that can be shared with the wider area but still the communities to have their own small hub that can feed into the larger hub
- Community resilience plans and support with information to be included on them

Appendix 3

Action Plan A Storm Arwen Debrief

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Progress	Timescale for Completion
1.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the approach of Local Authorities to severe weather plans elsewhere and whether it might be applied locally.	Risk & Resilience Team	Examples of Severe Weather plans have been obtained from Police Scotland, Dumfries & Galloway Council and Falkirk Council. All provide guidance to services on *suggested* courses of action on receipt of yellow, amber and red weather warnings and help inform decision makers. Copies have been shared with a small number of DERC's for feedback. Work scheduled to commence on developing options.	Spring 2023
2.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider formally adopting this three-level structure in line with national guidance and that it is embedded in our emergency plans.	Strategic Leadership Team	This has been adopted and added to the draft Emergency Planning & Resilience Framework. **Complete.**	June 2022
3.	It is recommended that the introduction of the terms Strategic, Tactical and Operational Commanders be adopted.	Strategic Leadership Team	This has been adopted and added to the draft Emergency Planning & Resilience Framework. **Complete.**	June 2022

4.	That Aberdeenshire Council undertake a review of the role, requirements and resilience of the Area Manager Teams during a Major Incident.	Risk & Resilience Team / Area Managers	Area Managers are developing a proposal to determine the nature of the review and share with SLT. Report is scheduled for 27 September 2022.	October 2022
5.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council adopt the terms emergency and major incident and build these into response plans.	Strategic Leadership Team	This has been adopted and added to the draft Emergency Planning & Resilience Framework. **Complete.**	June 2022
6.	It is also recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council, Guidance for Emergency & Incident Planning and Response document be reviewed to consider the earlier recommendations.	Risk & Resilience Team	The Risk & Resilience Team have commenced a review of the Aberdeenshire Council Emergency Plan and a new version is ready for consultation. Plans are scheduled to be presented at committee. **Complete.**	June 2022
7.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review the decision to no longer use the school estate for rest centre provision.	Education & Children's Services	ECS confirmed on 28 January 2022 that school sites are available for use as Rest Centres. The Risk & Resilience Team are now engaging with Area Managers and ECS to establish further detailed planning around the practicality of certain sites. **Complete.**	September 2022
8.	It is recommended that the provision of emergency generators at schools be considered alongside the above recommendation.	Education & Children's Services / Property & Facilities /	This has been remitted to the Power Resilience Preparedness Group and an action sits with Property. Progress will be monitored by the PRPG. Active discussion and exploration of suitable solutions is ongoing. **Complete.**	September 2022

9.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its approach to Community Resilience placing individual, family, and community resilience as distinct and equal strands.	Risk & Resilience Team	Initial discussion has taken within the Arwen Recovery Group and between Area Managers and the Risk & Resilience Team. Similar themes emerging from the Community Engagement work. A series of Community Resilience Strategy development workshops are being held in October and a working group to deliver this has been formed.	Spring 2023
10.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider a process for identifying and re-deploying council staff to other functions in an emergency.	Legal & People	HR have already commenced a workshop process to explore this area. A working group to explore the establishment of a Permanent Emergency Workforce has begun.	Spring 2023
11.	It is recommended that those instigating the requirement of a door knocking exercise document the reason, scope, and parameters of the exercise.	DERC & Tactical Commanders / Risk & Resilience Team	The learning from Arwen was understood in Malik & Corrie and the use of a clear Care for People Strategy helped focused responder activity. **Complete**	June 2022
12.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council continue to support the development of an Aberdeenshire Persons at Risk Distribution (PARD) solution.	Risk & Resilience Team	The Risk & Resilience Team chair both the Grampian LRP PARD SLWG and the Aberdeenshire Council PARD Implementation Group. Both are meeting regularly and progressing towards a Winter 22/23 implementation. **Complete**	September 2022
13.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Rest Centre policy for the use of	Education & Children's Services / Live	The Risk & Resilience Team have instigated a review of insurance liabilities etc. to help understand the issues in developing a tiered	November 2022

	facilities including schools, LLA facilities and community facilities.	Life Aberdeenshire / Risk & Resilience Team / Area Managers	approach to Rest Centres involving Schools, LLA and Community. Provision to be mapped out and where gaps exist consider how filled. Draft guidance has been produced and is awaiting consultation.	
14.	It is recommended that Economic Development and Protective Services develop arrangements for increasing the resilience of householders accessing private water supplies.	Economic Development and Protective Services	We continue to engage with supply users and encourage them to develop water safety plans to assist them in times of difficulties. Further consideration will be given to wider promotion of the improvement grant scheme that is available for eligible supplies to upgrade vulnerable supplies.	June 2022
15.	It is recommended that Legal & People maintain a list of all licensed traders prepared to deploy where additional food provision is required.	Legal & People	The current list of street traders have been contacted and there will be a resulting list that will be created and updated appropriately. **Complete**	October 2022
16.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council explore appropriate forms of remuneration for those who may be expected to deploy in an emergency.	Legal & People	This is being considered as part of the Permanent Emergency Workforce activity. **Complete**	September 2022
17.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council review its general, out of hours and emergency telephone line provision	Customer & Digital Services	Customer Services are working with HR to establish a permanent emergency workforce to support the appropriate staffing of the Council's emergency telephone line. Detailed staffing	September 2022

	to ensure that the Council has appropriate arrangements in place during a major incident.		and training requirements are in the process of being finalised.	
18a.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service review the generator provision at Care Homes and Sheltered Housing Complexes etc., directly run by these services and consider whether a) generators need to be installed or b) appropriate electrical interfaces added to allow prompt installation of generators.	Housing	The Housing Service does not manage any Care Homes, but has generators installed in 21 sheltered housing schemes. The generators are installed at the schemes considered to be at most risk due to their location, a review of all was undertaken following the storms to ensure that they are fully operational at all times. In addition to this two further generators are to be installed at schemes that, following the recent storm, are deemed to be at greater risk, these are Hamewith Court, Alford and Littlewood Court, Kemnay. Design proposals have been developed and a contractor is in the process of being appointed to undertake their installation.

This may be challenging due to availability of generators worldwide. The target is to have the works operational by the end of the year. This may be that the switching mechanism is in place which will mean that a temporary generator can be installed. | September 2022 |
| 18b. | It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership review the generator provision at Care Homes and Sheltered Housing Complexes etc., directly run by these services and | H&SCP | In line with our community hospitals, HSCP recommend the provision of generator capacity and electrical interfaces at each of the services we operate in Aberdeenshire Council Care Homes and Very Sheltered Housing units. This is dependent on the condition and capacity at | September 2022 |

	consider whether a) generators need to be installed or b) appropriate electrical interfaces added to allow prompt installation of generators.		each home which is currently being reviewed at by our Asset Team in conjunction with Estates/FES.	
19a.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service remind private and third sector providers of their basic obligations, that they require to have business continuity arrangements in place and of the expectations of other agencies in such an event and encourage them to develop robust plans.	Housing	A Housing Service led BC workshop with providers took place on 31 May 2022 supported by Risk & Resilience Team. Topics included how third sector providers managed their response to extended power outages. **Complete**	June 2022
19b.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership remind private and third sector providers of their basic obligations, that they require to have business continuity arrangements in place and of the expectations of other agencies in such an event and encourage them to develop robust plans.	H&SCP	All providers are required to have Business Continuity Plans in place as part of their contract. A survey of private and third sector care homes with generators was undertaken earlier in the year and a follow up survey will be undertaken shortly. **complete**	June 2022
20.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council Housing Service reviews its business continuity arrangements at its Sheltered Housing Complexes with particular focus on the loss of power	Housing	A Sheltered Housing Emergency Master Plan was prepared following the 2021/22 Storm Events, which is under review ahead of winter 2022/23 to ensure appropriate guidance and support is in place.	June 2022

	and provision of and fire prevention measures		The Sheltered Housing Manager is currently preparing an impact assessment covering, response actions and resources required Audits of generator capacity and equipment is underway. Staff resilience is considered and discussions are being held with the Sheltered Housing Tenant Forum to seek volunteers within schemes who can assist with fire patrols in the event of a power outage. The provision of emergency equipment held centrally within schemes is also under review ahead of the winter period, but information will be supplied to tenants regarding preparedness in an independent living environment. Further information will regarding resilience will be circulated to tenants as soon as available corporately. **Complete**.	
21.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council examine a suitable platform for the management of information in an emergency response.	Risk & Resilience Team	Risk & Resilience Team are exploring the 'Response' Function on Teams pages as well as other commercial alternatives.	September 2022
22.	It is recommended that a static emergency website page be created that can be used in emergency scenarios to update and sign post to services.	Customer & Digital Services	Corporate Communications have built into plans the establishment of an emergency page which can be raised during an emergency. Content will depend on the nature of the emergency and the council role in the response. **Complete.**	June 2022

23.	It is recommended that the public communications plans be updated to reflect new and emerging structures.	Customer & Digital Services	Corporate Communications are now standing members of the Incident Management Team and plans have been reflected to address this. They take direction from the IMT and use the Public Communications Group to distribute wider messaging. **Complete.**	June 2022
24.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council considers how it might implement a "permanent emergency workforce".	Legal & People	HR have already commenced a workshop process to explore this area. Links to recommendation 10 where progress is documented. **Complete.**	

Action Plan B
Winter Storms Community Engagement

No.	Recommendation	Owner	Progress	Timescale for Completion
1.	It is recommended that the Risk and Resilience Team prepare a briefing on response structures for communities and elected members.	Risk & Resilience Team	Initial drafting of a presentation has begun. Suitable opportunities for delivery (via Community Forums) to be arranged.	December 2022
2.	It is recommended that industry partners consider how they can promote the Priority Service Register scheme in our communities.	SSEN/SGN/Scottish Water	Risk & Resilience Team engaging with Industry Partners. Promotion of the [Priority Service Register Scotland website](#) has taken place, and this will be one strand of the preparedness guides produced during the Community Resilience Strategy Development. **Complete**	December 2022
3.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider what position it should take in the management of vulnerable people data by local community resilience groups.	Strategic Leadership Team	The Persons at Risk Distribution project is under development by Aberdeenshire Council & Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership. This will allow officers to identify vulnerable people during both localised intensive emergencies and extensive emergencies where for example there is a loss of utilities.

By the nature of the information contained within the PARD access to it is strictly governed and it would not be appropriate to allow access to Community Groups. However, there is nothing to stop Community Groups from managing their | December 2022 |

			own self registering assistance lists. Groups will need to adopt the principles of GDPR etc. and manage data appropriately. Further discussion is required on establishing how Aberdeenshire Council may assist groups to establish and manage such a list.	
4.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council develop a Community Resilience Strategy that sets out the need for individual, household, family, and community resilience, what can be expected of the Council and Communities.	Risk & Resilience Team	Initial discussion has taken within the Arwen Recovery Group and between Area Managers and the Risk & Resilience Team. Similar themes emerging from the Community Engagement work. A series of Community Resilience Strategy development workshops are being held in October and a working group to deliver this has been formed.	March 2023
5.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider how the access to basic household emergency equipment can be done in an equitable way.	Risk & Resilience Team	This is one of the outcomes that need to be explored as part of the Community Resilience Strategy.	March 2023
6.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council consider the development of similar emergency preparedness guides to those available to the public in Scandinavia, Canada and New Zealand.	Risk & Resilience Team	This is one of the outcomes that need to be explored as part of the Community Resilience Strategy.	March 2023

7.	It is recommended that Aberdeenshire Council advise NHS Grampian of this issue to allow them to consider it as part of their response plans.	NHS Grampian	NHS Civil Contingencies have been advised of the issues. **Complete**	December 2022
8.	It is recommended that the Grampian LRP can improve the relationships between it and the South Grampian Wildfire Group.	Grampian LRP	The Grampian LRP have identified Community Resilience development as an issue under consideration by them in their 2021/22 work plan. **Complete.**	December 2022
9.	It is recommended that the Aberdeenshire Council Risk & Resilience team refresh the existing Emergency Response Guidance for Elected Members and consider suitable training opportunities for them.	Risk & Resilience Team	Guidance has been refreshed and issued. Face to face briefings and training underway or scheduled across all six areas. **Complete.**	March 2022