RAPID RESPONSE CORE WORKING GROUP FOR GB
FIFTH MEETING

MINUTES

27 FEBRUARY 2009, CSL, YORK, 11:00

1. Attendance/apologies

Present:
Huw Thomas (Defra - Chair)
Niall Moore (NNSS - Secretary)
Olaf Booy (NNSS)
Marina Curran-Coultard (COSLA)
Mark Fletcher (CSL)
Scott Mathieson (SEPA)
Ben McCarthy (NE)
Tracy McCollin (FRS)
Robin Payne (SNH)
Trevor Renals (EA – via telelink)
Angela Robinson (Scottish Government)
David Slawson (PHSI)
William Somerfield (WAG – via telelink temporarily)
Gabe Wyn (CCW)

Apologies received from:
Stephen Atkins (NW&NWSFC)
Sallie Bailey (FC)
Gordon Copp (CEFAS)
Jo Long (SEPA)

HT welcomed all to the meeting and apologised for the delay in re-convening the group. All the participants then introduced themselves.
2. Update presentation
Due to the five-month hiatus since the last meeting, HT summarised (using a powerpoint presentation) the progress to date with the first four meetings of the group.

3. Minutes, Actions/Matters arising
Paper RR Feb09-02

The group agreed that the minutes of the September meeting were an accurate account of the meeting. All actions had been discharged or were carried forward. RP questioned the remit of the group w.r.t. horizon scanning. NM replied that the Central Data Repository and NNRAP already had functions in this area. BM suggested that links to country working groups need to be strengthened and TR suggested that links to regional groups were important too, especially for monitoring post-action.

ACTION 1 [Action 3] – NM to draft letter requesting relevant resource information from the organisations not present on the group.
ACTION 2 [Action 5] – RW to provide contact details at the MoD.
ACTION 3 [Action 12] – NM to establish an area on the website that details progress with rapid responses.

4. Draft Report
Paper RR Feb09-04

HT introduced the latest version of the report and the group began to discuss it page by page. There was discussion on Annex 3 and it was decided to retain the ‘agriculture’ box. Other alterations on the draft report that were agreed are detailed below.
Remove all mentions of ‘IAS’ and replace with ‘INNS’.

Number all recommendations sequentially and separate them from the text.

Page 7
The group agreed to move the ‘Roles of Organisations’ section to the Annexes. TR raised the issue of the proposed remit of the group w.r.t ‘sign-off’ after a rapid response is completed or becomes long-term control. After some discussion the group agreed to the inclusion of an extra bullet point to cover the hand-over to long-term control.

Bullet 1 – revisit the phrase ‘not yet established’.

MCC and DS suggested the use of plainer English and the group concurred. TR stressed that the links to PAPs and ISAPs need to be more explicit.

Page 8
TR suggested that it needs ‘Engage with land-owner’ after the verification process.

The highlighted question at the bottom of the page was discussed and it was decided that this step may be helpful but that it was not necessary for all cases to come before the group.

Page 10
Press statement/media plan. The group agreed that a set of standard frequently asked questions (FAQs) should be produced.

The group discussed the need for a sign-off i.e. to say by whom, when and how an ‘all clear’ would be given and it was agreed to include a bullet on the degree of certainty of removal, dependencies etc. There was also agreement on the need for including an evaluation phase with the Secretariat maintaining an audit trail of decisions.
Pages 11/12
The group agreed to strengthen the recommendations and to remove the examples/gaps on recommendation 2 on page 12 (dealing with the development of greater response capacity). TR suggested that there needs to be more stress placed on the use of operational delivery personnel at agencies rather than just specialist teams. Timings of availability of resources were also needed (where feasible).

Text of MoU – the group agreed that drafting a generic format for an MoU was a good idea.

Dummy-runs were also agreed to as a good way to iron out any issues.

Page 13
Include important land-owners, Network Rail, Highways Agency, Port Authorities etc.

Page 15
The group agreed that the ‘Regional, Catchment and Local responses’ section should be moved above the ‘Interaction with Overseas response capacity’ section.

The group discussed the issue of logistical support and decided that it should be included, that it was also a good idea to set up call-off contracts but that we should have two tiers of contractors – one for central government and another for individual co-ordinating bodies to negotiate. GW mentioned the importance of overseas regions to the marine environment and the group agreed that she should draft text to cover this aspect.

**ACTION 4 – ALL to comment of the recommendations to HT/NM.**

**ACTION 5 – TR to draft text to cover the potential input from operational staff.**
**ACTION 6** – GW to draft text for regional issues namely the Irish Sea, North Sea etc.

**ACTION 7** – GW and TR to draft text to mention the importance of Schedule 9 (Wildlife and Countryside Act) and sales bans to the rapid response process.

5. AOB

There was no AOB.