



## Report to Policy Committee

**Author/Lead Officer of Report:** Kate Martin

**Tel:**

**Report of:** *Kate Martin – Executive Director, City Futures*

**Report to:** *Strategy and Resources Policy Committee*

**Date of Decision:** *21 February 2024*

**Subject:** *Multi Agency recovery following the Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough Gas Outage (December 2022), including multi agency learning and debrief*

Type of Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken	Initial <input type="checkbox"/>	Full <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insert EIA reference number and attach EIA - EIA ID 2564		
Has appropriate consultation/engagement taken place?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		
<p><i>“The Appendix 1 to this report is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”</i></p>		

### **Purpose of Report:**

The purpose of this report is to outline ongoing recovery actions following the significant gas outage and its associated impacts at Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough in December 2022 as well as introduce and share the multi-agency learning following this incident.

The following appendices are attached:

- Appendix 1 – Externally produced, multi-agency debrief report (closed item)
- Appendix 2 – Recovery Coordinating Group case study and recommendations

**Recommendations:**

1. The Recovery Coordinating Group case study and recommendations report (appendix 2) is noted and acknowledged.
2. The externally produced multi agency debrief report (appendix 1 – closed item) be noted for information, acknowledging the delivery of these recommendations is being monitored through the Local Resilience Forum.

**Background Papers:**

None

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed.	Finance: <i>Liz Gough</i>
		Legal: <i>David Hollis – General Counsel</i>
		Equalities & Consultation: Ed Sexton
		Climate:
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	<b>SLB member who approved submission:</b>	Kate Martin, Executive Director City Futures
3	<b>Committee Chair consulted:</b>	Cllr Hunt
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Committee by the SLB member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	<b>Lead Officer Name:</b> <i>Claire Hanson</i>	<b>Job Title:</b> Emergency, Resilience and Safety Manager
	<b>Date:</b> 21 January 2024	

## 1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1 In December 2022, the Council, alongside a number of local and regional partners responded to a significant gas outage and its associated impacts affecting parts of the Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough area of the City. Partners involved included South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue and South Yorkshire Police, alongside a number of utility companies and others, including Cadet Gas, Yorkshire Water, Northern PowerGrid, The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities with oversight from relevant regulators; OFGEM, OFWAT and DEFRA.
- 1.2 Approximately 3500 properties were affected in total, with significant response activity taking place between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> of December 2022.
- 1.3 The Council declared a major incident, and a full multi agency response was mobilised to support collaborative and coordinated working across all responding agencies.
- 1.4 Given the diversity of partner agencies involved, industry regulators continue to retain oversight, and have themselves described this incident as unprecedented in its size, scale and complexity of the technical response required.
- 1.5 The response, on a multi-agency footprint was managed through both strategic and tactical coordinating groups, in line with local and national guidance, each one overseeing the appropriate actions required through the changing dynamic of the incident. As the response drew to a close, this response capability amalgamated into the formal multi agency recovery structures as described in national guidance, and local policies and procedures.
- 1.6 The Council, as chair of the multi-agency Recovery Coordinating Group (the group with responsibility for strategic coordination and oversight or recovery issue and actions) took a lead role in ensuring a level of normality was restored to affected communities and residents as well as commissioning some key pieces of work. These are described below.
  - a) **A review and debrief of multi-agency learning following the response phase.** This was achieved through an externally commissioned and delivered multi agency debrief that took place in March 2023. The aim of the debrief was to identify any areas of the response that could be improved or were perceived as good practice and to seek to identify recommendations for similar future events. The outcomes and recommendations of this debrief activity are outlined in the formal, Recovery Coordinating Group approved multi agency debrief (appendix 1 – closed item) This remains embargoed from public distribution by the Local Resilience Forums, Recovery Coordinating Group,

primarily on the basis on ongoing legal proceedings taking place across multiple partners. The second is a case study and recommendations report produced by the multi-agency Recovery Coordinating Group. The aim of this report is to share findings and key learning from the debrief in a more digestible, reader friendly and jargon free way, as well as illustrating some of the key resolutions that were put in place to bring the incident to a close as quickly as practicable (attached at appendix 2).

- b) **Learning Resources** – Collectively the multi-agency partnership formed a specific recovery cell to produce some initial learning products to share across other agencies. At present a draft case study of the incident, its impacts and resolutions put in place is available for sharing across responders from other regions that could be faced with a similar scenario. This sits alongside a draft exercise scenario and exercise facilitator pack with injects that other agencies, in other parts of the country can use to rehearse their response plans against a similar incident of this size, scale and technical complexities. Both products have been agreed in principle by representatives across the partnership and it is anticipated that these can now be passed to the Local Resilience Forum’s Joint Organisational Learning officer for appropriate branding and distribution. A representative from the City Council is also due to attend another Local Resilience Forum learning day to share experiences and learning in April 2024.
- c) **A review of local utility infrastructure.** Across the Recovery Coordinating Group, this is recognised as a long term, multi-faceted and complex strategic objective, requiring input from potentially many existing national and local workstreams. The ambition of the Recovery Coordinating Group was to highlight and ensure any existing work across agencies continues to understand the utility infrastructure, its vulnerabilities and challenges and ultimately tries to rebuild community confidence and trust in the sustainability of this infrastructure given the significant impacts that were felt by many residents for a prolonged period of time in December 2022.

Some of the work to understand the complex challenges of the local utility infrastructure (particularly water infrastructure) is underway and an initial exercise had begun to map these across the partnership. Through the Recovery Coordinating Group, local and national resilience figureheads are currently being approached with a view to commissioning external support to support this mapping exercise, review the current position, and potentially make recommendations for any future activities to further deliver on this ambitious strategic objective. The focus of the Recovery Coordinating Group will be to devolve this objective into “business as usual” processes as soon as practicable and deliver through existing active workstreams.

## **2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE ?**

- 2.1 It is standard and recognised practice to conduct a debrief following a significant or major incident. This enables agencies to continually improve their readiness for future events and share learning across other agencies to enable them to do the same. Ultimately with a view to strengthening resilience. The multi agency debrief aims to do just this, and the recommendations set out in the attachments are made with a view to improving collaborative and partnership working across the region in readiness for a similar incident should it happen in the future.

## **3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?**

- 3.1 The multi-agency debrief into the response to the Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough gas outage, has been subject to consultation across all responder partner agencies through the multi agency recovery coordinating group, in line with standard practice. The formal debrief was agreed and ratified by the multi agency recovery coordinating group on 9 November 2023, and the case study and recommendations report on presented on the 5 February 2024.
- 3.2 The debrief report has not been subject to public consultation as this would not be appropriate, given the aim of the debrief is to reflect on partner response capabilities in line with plans and processes in place with a view to improve resilience moving forward.
- 3.3 Local Area Committees, have however held meetings between key utility providers and communities to offer an opportunity to raise, discuss and provide resolution to any ongoing or residual issues raised. This is acknowledged as part of business-as-usual processes within local area committee processes.
- 3.4 The learning products as described above have been subject to partner consultation through their development and are subject to approval by the multi-agency Strategic Recovery Coordinating Group.

## **4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

### **4.1 Equality Implications**

- 4.1.1 EIA reference ID 2564 has been produced to understand any impacts on the three key recovery workstreams, namely multi agency learning and debrief, production of learning resources to share across the resilience community for enhanced learning opportunities and understanding the local utility infrastructure - a project in its infancy in terms of scoping the work further.

## 4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. There may need to be funding identified for further phases of work, but that will be picked up via normal financial planning processes.

## 4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 Under The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 the Council is a Category 1 responders to emergencies. This means we have a legal duty, together with other Category 1 responders to:

- assess, plan and advise
- manage business continuity
- carry out emergency planning
- respond in the case of an emergency
- warn and advise the public during times of emergency.

4.3.2 Co-operation is a key legal requirement and the LRFs bring together Category 1 and 2 responders within a local police area for the purpose of cooperation in fulfilling their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.

4.3.3 The Cabinet Office has issued guidance entitled Expectations and Indicators of Good Practice Set for Category 1 and 2 Responders.

4.3.4 There are no direct legal implications from this report, but the actions described all contribute to the Council meeting its legal duties, following guidance and showing best practice.

## 4.4 Climate Implications

4.4.1 There are no climate implications resulting from this debrief and recommendations.

## 5. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 It is best practice, following a major or significant incident to firstly identify learning to enable responder agencies to update and amend any plans or processes. It is nationally promoted this is achieved through a multi-agency debrief as was carried out in following the significant gas outage at Stannington, Malin Bridge and Hillsborough. It is common practice for this learning to be shared across different organisations nationally that this experiential learning can be applied in different regions. The Recovery Coordinating Group have developed products and tools to further support this and offer a more immersive, realistic “on the shelf” exercise.

## **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 Debrief and learning lessons post incident is standard national and local practice and in line with the national resilience standards of expectation, the learning shared as part of the attachments fulfils this requirement.

6.2 Sharing these lessons identifies across other agencies nationally is standard practice, in line with the processes put in place via the Cabinet Office, this will be achieved through sharing the learning resources outlined at section 1.6 (b).

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