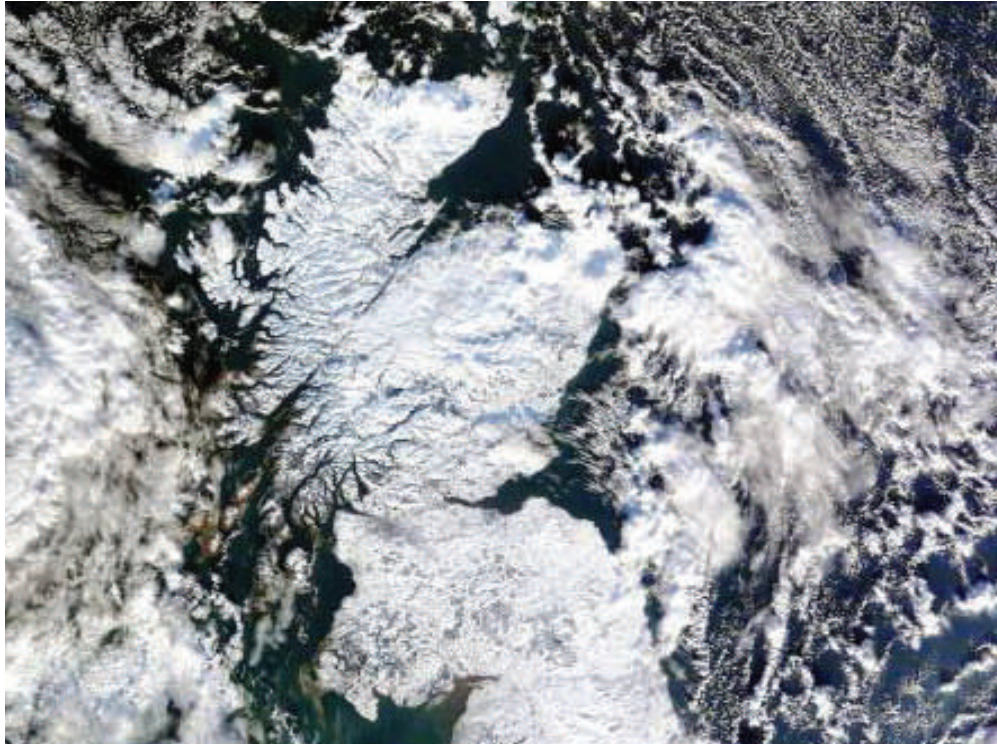


News



Frozen Scotland

While we've since had a thaw, it's hard to forget the brisk start to 2010 for Scotland's resilience community, as bitterly cold weather brought some of the worst snow and ice the country had seen for many years

Ministers activated the Scottish Government Resilience Room (SGoRR) on 22 December to help coordinate Scotland's response. Officials remained in close contact with strategic coordinating groups, via daily teleconferences, from early in the new year until the winter weather operation stood down on 18 January.

Through SGoRR, the Scottish Government drew together partners including local authorities, CoSLA, Transport Scotland, the emergency services, in fact

everybody who has a role in dealing with exceptionally difficult weather conditions.

During that time, gritting teams worked flat out to keep the roads open and Scottish Government, local government and the transport operating companies co-operated closely to ensure that salt supplies were shared and distributed to areas where they were needed.

Speaking after a Ministerial meeting in the SGoRR on 6 January, the First Minister, Alex Salmond, praised Scotland's public

services for doing "exceptional things" to keep the country moving and to help people in need.

Individuals and communities were also encouraged to consider what they could do, even on a small scale, to help their own situation locally. The Scottish Government's [Weatherwise](#) campaign, which ran on the web and in local media throughout January, provided information and practical advice to the public on getting through the cold snap and dealing with the thaw.

Welcome

Welcome to the first *Scottish Resilience News* of 2010.

Whatever new challenges the year brings, we face those in the context of ongoing work to improve the effectiveness of what we do. Recently the Scottish Government published its 'Shaping Up' review, which looked at how we can build on the steps we have already taken to focus on the Government's overarching [purpose](#) and the [national outcomes](#), and to build effective partnerships with stakeholders. The review is separate from considerations of the budget, but there is no doubt that we will all be working in a more challenging financial context, and that will have implications for the way we do business.

Within Scottish Resilience, we have begun a new business planning process, which will involve looking at our core functions and asking which are essential and must be done by us, and which could, in the future, be done elsewhere. We will be developing this thinking alongside stakeholders as we move into 2010/2011.

This year also brings a UK General Election, and whatever the outcome there may well be new ideas emerging that impact on Scotland.

I look forward to working with you throughout 2010 to ensure we continue to meet the challenge of making Scotland safer and stronger.

Lorna Gibbs
Head of Resilience Strategy

CPD for strategic managers

Continuous professional development (CPD) events for strategic coordinating groups across Scotland are currently taking place. Strategic managers are being asked to manage the consequences of a terrorist incident. The use of facilitated discussion and learning sessions blend to provide a full and challenging day.

To date, the Scottish Resilience Development Service (ScoRDS) has run 15 of the planned 19 sessions and the feedback has been very positive. One delegate commented that the seminar had given him more confidence to manage an SCG incident effectively.

The Strategic CPD programme continues later this year with the development of a seminar based on recovery. More information in the ScoRDS Update or from Audrey.Philp@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Fire Safety Guidance: consultation

The deadline for responding to the [Scottish Government's Consultation on Practical Fire Safety Guidance](#) for small bed and breakfast and self-catering premises is fast approaching.

The Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing, suspended the previous guidance document for small premises in response to concerns over the potential cost of compliance.

The consultation on the new draft guidance is available on the Scottish Government website until 18 February.

RABS update

Created in 2008, the Resilience Advisory Board Scotland (RABS) provides a forum to focus civil contingencies planning and provide strategic direction

RABS (Core) acts as a strategic policy forum for resilience issues, providing advice to Ministers and the wider civil contingencies community in Scotland. Chaired by the Scottish Government's new Director General for Justice and Communities, Stella Manzie, RABS contributes to the Scottish Government's strategic objective of delivering a safer and stronger Scotland.

Members provide objective advice based on their own personal expertise and knowledge of their sector.

RABS includes chief-executive level representatives of the core responder organisations and other subject matter experts. RABS can convene additional sub-groups as required, usually on a 'task and finish' basis. A diagram showing the current RABS sub-groups is attached as an annex to this newsletter.

RABS Audit Scotland

Following the publication of the Audit Scotland report into civil contingencies planning in Scotland in August 2009, RABS Core agreed the creation of a time-limited RABS sub-group, to provide guidance and direction on the work to follow up the strategic recommendations contained in the report.

Chaired by Kenneth Hogg, Director of Police and Community Safety, the group has met once already and will meet twice more before presenting a report to RABS (Core) and then the Cabinet Sub-Committee for resilience in the summer.

The group includes

strategic thinkers from responders, public, private and third sectors. Discussion at the first meeting focused on governance and accountability, the role of SCG chairs and the move towards increased community resilience. More information from: Kirsty.Baker@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

RABS Voluntary Sector

The newly established RABS (Voluntary Sector) brings together voluntary organisations and key stakeholders at a national level to maximise the sector's contribution to Scottish emergency response arrangements.

In the first half of 2010, RABS (VS) will conduct a scoping exercise of what the Scottish voluntary sector can offer and how it can support overall emergency response arrangements;

consider opportunities for representation on other emergency planning and response forums; and how best to contribute to community resilience. Key to this will be a Scottish **Voluntary Sector Seminar** due to be held in June 2010 (further details in the next issue).

For further information contact: John.Craig@scotland.gsi.gov.uk or WMillar@redcross.org.uk.

RABS Telecoms

RABS Telecoms will advise on the strategic direction, delivery and implementation of key resilient telecommunication programmes and initiatives in Scotland. The first meeting is due to take place later this spring. More information from: Andrew.Fleming@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

SCG chairs meeting

The chairs of each of Scotland's eight strategic co-ordinating groups (SCGs) met with the Scottish Government on 1 February. The Director General for Justice and Communities, Stella Manzie, chaired the meeting, which included a stock-take and review of Scotland's emergency response in the last year.

The meeting also discussed the Memoranda of Understanding currently being developed by SCGs and Scottish Resilience. Due to be completed by 1 April, these documents will describe what each SCG and Scottish Government are seeking to achieve in their day-to-day resilience working in the coming financial year.

Lorna Gibbs, Head of Resilience Strategy, updated the meeting on the Measuring Preparedness process, and Director of Police and Community Safety, Kenneth Hogg, outlined RABS' follow-up to Audit Scotland's review of civil contingencies planning.

Routine SCG chairs meetings normally take place every six months. There has been some delay since the last one, mainly as a result of pandemic flu, but meetings have taken place in the meantime with SCG chairs to discuss pandemic flu preparedness.

More info from: John.Craig@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Winter 2010

By Lothian and Borders SCG Training and Exercise Programme Manager, Sandy Baptie

Like all SCG areas in Scotland, Lothian and Borders suffered greatly through the cold spell. The freezing conditions remained for many days, resulting in the responding agencies having to make many dynamic decisions in pressurised circumstances.

Management of the severe weather was split into two categories: the problems associated with salt stocks and the consequence issues that followed. As the Scottish Government took control of salt issues through the 'salt cell' it allowed the L&B SCG coordinator to manage and act as a single point of contact for the consequence management issues.

I produced a 'daily report' for SGoRR throughout the period. This was circulated to all the SCG members, which meant they were kept abreast of the current position and could offer help to other agencies if they were in a position to do so.

A full meeting on 17 January agreed the SCG's overall strategy: "to share where we can, supply where we can and continue to review the strategy as the weather situation changes".

The Borders and East Lothian areas suffered the worse. The Borders in particular had consequence management issues to do with the care of vulnerable people and public sector staffing. NHS Borders continued to provide a service, partly due to the initiative displayed by its staff, some of whom skied or sledged to work. Helicopters were used to transport patients, although one broke down outside Borders General Hospital, remained there



Help arrives at last: the broken-down helicopter outside Borders General Hospital became a major news story.

for a few days and became almost more of a news story than the weather itself.

Many agencies were praised by the SCG for their contribution, not least the Met Office, voluntary agencies such as the Red Cross and the Mountain Rescue Teams for supplying 4x4 vehicles, the public sector workers for doing what they could to attend work and ensure public services continued, local media services such as Radio Borders, and the emergency planning officers for coordinating responses in their own areas.

The threat of flooding meant that SCG members could not relax once temperatures began to rise. In the end no serious flooding took place, although surface water posed problems.

Not everyone was unhappy during the severe weather. Children enjoyed the snow, especially where the schools were closed, and the fire and rescue service and police confirmed that calls were down and social disorder reduced dramatically. There is always a 'silver lining'!

A structured debrief for the L&B SCG will take place on 12 February, when 'lessons learned' will be featured.

More information from: sandy.baptie@lbp.pnn.police.uk.

Communications training

Training specific to communications professionals is being offered to SCGs in 2010 in support of the Scottish Government National Exercise Programme.

Lessons from previous exercises and events show that success or failure can hinge on the effectiveness of responders' communications. Professional communications staff, their systems and equipment need to be as well prepared as those responsible for emergency operations.

Following Exercise Green Gate in September, which focused on a hypothetical chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) event, the Scottish Resilience Development Service (ScoRDS) believes it makes sense to ensure that communications teams around the country are adequately prepared to deal with that kind of scenario.

Head of SCoRDS, Gregor Lindsay, said: "Complex emergencies place unique challenges on all involved, no matter how experienced they are. We'd like to provide communications professionals with the opportunity to practise how they would communicate with a wide range of audiences, directly as well as through the media."

One of the aims of the National Exercise Programme this year is to address consequence management and community reassurance.

A detailed programme is currently being developed and SCGs are invited to contact SCoRDS with proposed dates.

Gregor.Lindsay@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Preparing Scotland Update

Scottish Exercise Guidance

Many of you are aware that the Scottish Exercise Guidance—written by practitioners for practitioners—is available from the ScoRDS website at www.scords.gov.uk, together with a newsletter produced by the Exercise Guidance Working Group (EGWG). But did you know the group continues to meet?

Chair of the group, Falkirk Council's Civil Contingencies Coordinator, Malcolm Wilson, explains: "We are continuing to meet in order to keep the guidance current. That's why practitioners need to continue to share their experience of using the guidance with us. We've already taken onboard feedback on its use, and work is almost complete on incorporating the *Preparing Scotland* style, and making the full suite of templates available individually, and easily accessible for use."

Stop press

With the 14 February deadline approaching, there's just a few days left to nominate an individual or team for the Brave@Heart First Minister's Reception at Edinburgh Castle on 9 June.

Brave@Heart will be an opportunity for the First Minister, on behalf of the people of Scotland, to show his appreciation for the courage shown by blue-light service personnel and members of the public.

Nominations have been invited from police, ambulance and fire services, HM Coast-guard, the RNLI, the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, St Andrews Ambulance Association and the British Red Cross. If you know of a specific act of bravery by an individual or team that you think should be nominated, please contact the regional chief constable, chief fire officer, or chief executive of any of these organisations.

Donna.Bryce@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Scottish Resilience News

Scottish Resilience News is published every two months by the Scottish Government.

The newsletter aims to keep those working in fire and civil contingencies up-to-date with what's happening at Scottish Government level and across Scotland. If you have any comments, or information you'd like to share with the wider resilience community across Scotland, please contact the editor at Joanna.Swanson@Scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Scottish Resilience

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State of independence

Brian Fraser, Head of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Advisory Unit (SFRAU), reflects on his first 18 months in the role

Established in 2008, SFRAU provides professional support to chief fire officers and fire boards, develops technical guidance and good practice, and advises Scottish Ministers on professional and technical matters in the fire and rescue service.

The unit operates independently of Scottish Resilience, with Brian holding a second title – HM Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Authorities – which enables him to carry out statutory functions independently of Scottish Government. "That allows me to do things without fear or favour," he explains.

The opportunity to focus on long-term development and ambitions for the fire services was one of the things that attracted Brian – a former chief fire officer in South Wales and Ministerial adviser to the Welsh Assembly – to the role of Head of SFRAU.

But his thirty-five years' experience in the service means he is well aware of the day-to-day difficulties senior management teams face, steering a course through thousands of pieces of legislation and guidance in a way that's relevant to their own service, and that brings direct benefits to the public.

The SFRAU team includes former employees and secondees from the fire and rescue services, with scores of years' experience between them, who are also able to advise and help, "and sometimes just translate between the language of the fire

services and the language of the civil service".

Having worked in five fire and rescue services in England and Wales, Brian's first opportunity to meet firefighters working at both management and delivery levels across Scotland came when he accompanied the Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing, on a tour of all eight Scottish fire and rescue services last year.

"I saw a lot of very good practice in Scotland, but there are also areas people are struggling to work through, that have been dealt with elsewhere in the UK," he says. "One of the things we are looking at is how we work with others to develop a robust mechanism that helps to find out what works and what doesn't, so people don't repeat the same mistakes."

In its first year, SFRAU has been working with all partners to develop a performance management system that will support the services in their drive for continuous improvement. Next year's work programme is being finalised over the next few weeks and it will need to be flexible enough to adapt to the unpredictable nature of emergency response, and the many challenges that the service will face.

"The immediate challenges offer catalysts for change, which could help the services in their efforts to continuously improve," continues Brian. "One of these could be dealing with the current level of public funding."



"Part of SFRAU's role is to help services work through the tension between having a citizen-centred, locally delivered service responding to local risks, and the need to achieve economies of scale and the ability to scale up quickly to respond to very large events. Some of the debate over the next few years will have to focus on where on that spectrum we want to be."

One thing that seems certain is that the role of the fire and rescue service will continue to expand where it's useful and suitable for it to do so.

"We'll continue to see strategic coordinating groups giving specific tasks to the fire and rescue services at a local level," he says. "Particularly as we start to deliver integrated emergency management and planning, we'll see responder organisations coming together more and more to collectively develop plans to deal with incidents. It sounds straightforward but it's incredibly difficult to achieve, and the fact we are starting to see those things happen in Scotland is a credit to everyone involved in resilience."

"SFRAU's mission could be summed up as working with all partners to achieve our joint goal of a safer, stronger Scotland."

More info: SFRAU@scotland.gsi.gov.uk