



WIGAN COUNCIL

EMERGENCY PLAN

FOR

MAJOR INCIDENTS

DECEMBER 2006

'Enhancing Wigan's Resilience'

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 **FOREWORD**

A resilient community is a strong community, and a prepared Council is a strong Council.

Emergencies are rare occurrences, but should one affect any part of our borough, we must be prepared, so we are able to support our community to cope and recover.

Local Authorities are key responders, working alongside the Emergency Services and Partner Agencies, to support the response, and the people affected by the emergency.

We do this by providing our day to day services. But to provide our normal services in such exceptional circumstances requires very detailed planning.

Our Emergency Plan for Major Incidents provides the framework in which we co-ordinate the many diverse services we provide, and deliver an effective, joined up response with our partners. It provides the framework which enables us to work with the many varied organisations involved in an emergency response, from the Emergency Services, to the Utility companies, to the Voluntary sector and the community.

It is only by working together in partnership, that Wigan will be resilient.

Joyce Reesman



1.2 AIM & OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The aim of this plan is to provide a framework for Wigan MBC to respond to a Major Emergency with maximum speed and efficiency.

The objectives of the plan are:

- to enable the efficient and appropriate mobilisation of responding staff
- to enable the establishment of an Emergency Control Centre, as a focus for the council response, including the Emergency Management Team
- to provide an effective framework for both internal and external communications and information sharing
- to provide a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each council department, and link in to individual department plans
- to provide a framework for multi-agency liaison and working to facilitate an effective response
- to provide the framework for the provision for the physical, social and welfare needs of the local and wider community, including Reception Centres if necessary
- to facilitate the establishment of recovery plans for the return to normality and possible long term implications.
- to facilitate the warning and informing of the public, including a media strategy.

1.3 KEY TASKS

The common priorities of a combined and co-ordinated response are to:

- save and protect life
- relieve suffering
- prevent escalation
- provide the public with warnings, advice and information
- protect the health and safety of personnel
- safeguard the environment
- protect property
- maintain or restore critical services
- maintain normal services at an appropriate level
- promote and facilitate self help in the community
- facilitate investigation and enquiries
- facilitate the physical, social, economic and psychological recovery of the community
- evaluate the response and recovery effort to identify lessons learnt

With this in mind, the key tasks of the local authority within such a response are likely to include:

- ascertaining and carrying through the requirements of the Emergency Services or Lead Agency in mitigating the effects of the incident.
- providing for the physical, social and welfare needs of the local and wider community.

- activating and co-ordinating the use of voluntary organisations.
- re-establishing and making safe the affected area and providing immediate post incident support for the community.
- planning and leading the longer term regeneration of the physical environment and the community.
- ensuring a continued provision of local authority essential services throughout the whole Borough.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE PLAN

The definition of an emergency, as defined in Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) is:

“An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK.”

Additionally, to constitute an emergency, an event or situation must also pose a considerable test for an organisation’s ability to perform its functions.

The Bluelight Services still use the term ‘Major Incident’, for which they have set procedures and specific triggers.

The guidance says that the term “Emergency”, as defined above, refers to the same level of event or situation as the term “Major Incident”, and that the two terms are interchangeable (Emergency Response & Recovery, 1.12)

Therefore, in this Plan, the term Major Incident has been used to refer to an Emergency as defined above.

The Wigan Emergency Plan is designed for such an event. However, the declaration of a Major Incident, and the full activation of the Plan are not co-dependent

Because the declaration of a Major Incident is usually made by one or more of the Emergency Services, there are occasions, where a Major Incident is declared, without the need for the full activation of the Council Emergency Plan, Conversely, there may be times where the full Plan requires activation, without a Major Incident being declared.

The degree to which the Wigan Council Emergency Plan is activated will be proportional to the response required by the Council.

For Wigan Council, the most likely circumstances that would lead to the activation of this Plan are:

- Widespread danger to the public
- The need or potential need for evacuations
- Possible widespread damage to local infrastructure or the environment
- Serious public disorder
- The involvement of several Council departments
- Requests for assistance from other Local Authorities

Crises

Not all emergencies are distinct events. Some develop over time, and may not require a traditional blue light response. These are often termed 'crises', for example the Fuel Crisis in 2000, and the Foot & Mouth Crisis. These emergencies still require management, and so the principals within in this plan remain applicable.

1.5 CONTEXT OF THE PLAN

This is a general guide about the management and co-ordination of a Major Incident affecting Wigan.

Most of the specific response arrangements will be carried out by individual council services in the same way as their normal day to day operations. Normal services in exceptional circumstances. Some departments with specific arrangements maintain individual departmental plans. For a full list, contact the Wigan Council Civil Contingencies Unit.

On a larger scale, this plan also feeds into the Greater Manchester Mass Plan, which deals with a county wide incident requiring a joined up, cross-boundary response. For further information on this, contact the Wigan Council Civil Contingencies Unit.

There are also a number of Specific Plans, which deal with identified hazards or sites. For example the Wigan Flood Warning Response Plan. For a full list, contact the Wigan Council Civil Contingencies Unit.

As well as dealing with the emergency response, it is vital that the council maintains continuity of the services it provides. Each department has Business Continuity Plans, to enable critical functions to continue. Dependant on the scale and duration of the response, these plans may need to be activated to provide additional resources and to prioritize service delivery.

SECTION 2

MOBILISATION PROCEDURES

2.1 CENTRAL WATCH DUTY OFFICER (CWDO): **INITIAL ACTIONS**

Large scale emergencies or declared Major Incidents will be notified to Central Watch whether they occur during the working day or out of normal hours.

➔ For contact details see Appendix 1.

Upon receipt of this call, the CENTRAL WATCH DUTY OFFICER will:

1) Record time and details of the incident:

- ➔ Ensure you record all available information, using Major Incident Procedure Form 1, as shown in Appendix 2, including:
 - a) Call Details
 - b) Callers Details
 - c) Incident Details
- ➔ Read back the information to caller and confirm content.
- ➔ Validate the call by calling back the informant agency.

2) If during office hours, contact the Civil Contingencies Unit

- ➔ Contact one of the Civil Contingencies Officers listed in Appendix 1.3, to inform them of the situation and ask if they are available to handle the incident.
- ➔ If available, they will act as Officer in Charge, but will ask for a Chief Officer to be contacted for information, in case of any need to commit Wigan Council resources.
- ➔ If unavailable, proceed as below.

3) Contact a Chief Officer to act as the OFFICER IN CHARGE (OIC)

- If a Major Incident has been declared, contact the following in turn at office or home until one is located (use mobile numbers only once other numbers have been tried and failed): See Appendix 1 for telephone numbers:
 - Chief Executive
 - Deputy Chief Executive
 - Assistant Chief Executive
 - Director responsible for Civil Contingencies Service
- If a Major Incident has not been declared, or the above four Officers are unavailable, contact one of the remaining Chief Officers from Appendix 1.
- Use Major Incident Procedure Form 2, as shown in Appendix 2, to record any failures.

4) Brief Chief Officer on the situation

- Give your name to the Chief Officer and inform them that you have received an emergency call and they are the first to be contacted.
- Provide all of the available information to the Chief Officer.
- Provide the names of any officers you have attempted to contact and failed.

5) Leave the line open and await instructions unless told otherwise.

2.2 CENTRAL WATCH DUTY OFFICER (CWDO): FURTHER ACTIONS

As directed by the OIC, the CWDO will implement the following:

DESPATCH OF FORWARD INCIDENT OFFICERS

- Contact the selected FIOs (using home or office telephone before trying mobiles). Relay details of the incident and request they attend. Obtain estimated time of arrival at the scene.
- If either or both the selected FIO's cannot be contacted or cannot attend, attempt to contact others from the list until two confirmed attendances are received.
- Inform OIC (on mobile phone, or at ECC if they have arrived) which FIO's have been deployed and the time they are expected to arrive on scene.

MOBILISATION OF FORWARD CONTROL VEHICLE

There is no designated Forward Control Vehicle. However, some Council Departments may be able to supply a vehicle, eg Transport Services in Engineering Department

- If a Council vehicle is required, make enquiries to each Department (or partner organisation if necessary) about the supply of a vehicle and/or driver.

MAKING READY THE EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE

When OIC expected at ECC, the CWDO will:

- Obtain an expected time of arrival for staff attending the ECC, and in anticipation of this:
- If during office hours, inform Parking Services of the situation, to allow access or prevent fines.
- Prepare the “ECC Grab-box” for collection by the first member of staff to arrive at the ECC. (see Appendix 3.1.2 for details)

CALL OUT OF OTHER STAFF

- Call out or put on standby other Chief Officers, as directed by Officer in Charge
- Call out any Support Staff, as directed by the Officer in Charge

CONFIRM ACTIONS

- Upon completion of these actions, contact the OIC to report on the outcomes.

2.3 OFFICER IN CHARGE (OIC): **INITIAL ACTIONS**

Upon receipt of a call from Central Watch Duty Officer, the Officer in Charge will (whilst the CWDO is on the line):

- Start a Log (see Procedure Form in Appendix 2b) with time and date, and record details of information from CWDO.
- Read back the information to CWDO and confirm content.
- Activate mobile phone and confirm number to CWDO (who should use this number for contact from now on)
- **MAKE AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT** of the situation on the basis of what is known

Using the information at hand and taking account of a worst case scenario where knowledge is lacking, the **OIC** should consider:

- S** **Size** and location of the incident, eg area, population affected
- I** **Impact** which the incident is likely to cause
- N** **Nature** of the incident, eg explosion, chemical spillage
- S** **Status** of the incident – under control, escalating
- R** **Requirements** of the Emergency Services and the community
- U** **Urgency** of the situation. Is action required immediately, within hours, or on standby
- S** **Safety** of the population affected, and of responding staff

It is likely that at first, information will be limited, confused and unconfirmed. However, the OIC will make an immediate assessment of the incident to establish:

- The best way to co-ordinate the LA response.
- The identification & mobilisation of key personnel & resources
- Ways to obtain good quality information, and liaison with the Emergency Services on site.

→ **DECIDE ON THE INITIAL RESPONSE**

Having considered the above factors above, select one of the following options:

Stand-down	Info does not warrant any action on part of LA.	Check details directly with Police, then inform CWDO situation is a stand-down.
Specific Department Response	Info indicates a single department response is all that is required.	Check details directly with Police, then request CWDO relay the details to department concerned (request positive feedback).
Stand-by	Info indicates a potential problem of a serious nature which may lead to a major incident response, but no action is required at present	Check details directly with Police. Meanwhile, request CWDO to contact Chief Officers with instruction to engage mobile phone and to stand by. CWDO to report back list of COs contacted. Reassess as necessary.
Immediate response	Info indicates there is, or is likely to be a situation requiring an immediate major incident response from the LA.	Commence Action Procedure for Major Incident – See Below

→ DECIDE ON ACTIONS TO TAKE

Consider taking the following actions as appropriate, and direct the CWDO accordingly:

- Despatch two Forward Incident Officer(s) (FIO's) to the Incident Control Point.
- Open the Emergency Control Centre (ECC)
- Contact other Chief Officers and key personnel

Please be aware that Central Watch operates with the following staffing levels:

Mon-Fri:		Sat-Sun:	
7am-3pm	2 officers	7am-7pm	2 officers
3pm-11pm	2 officers	7pm-7am	3 officers
11pm-7am	3 officers		

It is therefore important to ensure that they are not overwhelmed. They are not authorized to make the decisions required in an incident, but will act on instruction given by the OIC. Consideration to their core function needs to be given when issuing instruction and requests for assistance.

• DESPATCH OF FORWARD INCIDENT OFFICERS

The early despatch of FIOs is vital in any major incident situation unless it is known that it is not safe to do so.

The role of a Forward Incident Officer is to liaise with emergency services at the scene (the Incident Control Point) and feed information to and from the Local Authority's control. **It is best to send two FIOs, one to act as lead (the thinker), and one to assist (the doer).**

There are a number of trained FIOs who have a range of professional expertise and skill and who live at various locations within the Borough.

- ➔ The list of nominated FIOs including contact details is contained in Appendix 1.

During the initial telephone call with the CWDO, the OIC will:

- ➔ Select the **two** most appropriate FIOs from the list, based on their skills and location (if these are not available, they can be chosen at random from the list).
- ➔ Request the CWDO to contact them, relay the incident information to them and request they attend the scene (or you may wish to do this yourself).

NB If a council vehicle is required, Transport Services may be able to supply one, so ask the CWDO to make enquiries.

- **MAKING READY EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE**

In any Major Incident, operation of the ECC should be a prime consideration. It gives access to communication, information and planning resources, and is a single point control centre designed to aid an emergency response by the local authority.

The primary ECC is in Municipal Buildings, Wigan town centre. There is also a back-up in Leigh.

- ➔ There are full details of both in Appendix 3.

During the initial telephone call with the CWDO, the OIC will:

- ➔ Inform CWDO of your intention to attend the ECC & give estimated time of arrival.

- **CONTACTING OTHER CHIEF OFFICERS AND OTHER KEY PERSONNEL**

Chief Officers

The OIC will establish a core team of personnel from departments whose resources are most likely to be needed. This will most often include the Departments of Adults Services, who establish and manage rest centres, and Engineering Services who manage traffic control etc.

Ideally, the Chief Officer will be contacted, but if they are unavailable, another senior officer should be sought, followed by asking the Chief Officer of another department to act as representative.

Support Staff

In addition to Chief Officers, other additional staff may be required, for example;

Log Takers & Call Handlers

Public Relations Staff

IT and Communications staff

During the initial telephone call with the CWDO, the OIC will:

→ Consider whether they wish to contact any Chief Officers personally and if so, inform the CWDO accordingly

→ Request the CWDO to contact the required key Chief Officers.

Request that if that person is not available then to contact their deputy or a suitably senior officer from that department. Give any instructions to be relayed.

→ Request the CWDO contact the required support staff, **giving their names and designations.** Give any instructions to be relayed.

→ Request the CWDO to contact all or any other Chief Officers. (This is for information only. The OIC should stress this is to be done only after contacting the key personnel.)

➔ Contact Lists for these staff are all located in Appendix 1.

External Partners

In the case of a cross boundary incident, the Police will only inform one Local Authority. Use the Contact Lists in Appendix 6 to inform any neighbouring Local Authorities as necessary.

→ **PROCEED TO EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE**

First ensure you have completed all the necessary actions, that you are suitably prepared, inc personal health & safety issues, and that home and Central Watch have your mobile number.

2.4 FORWARD INCIDENT OFFICER (FIO):

INITIAL ACTIONS

The main tasks of FORWARD INCIDENT OFFICERS (FIOs) are:

(i) to be the liaison point between the local authority Emergency Management Team (EMT) in the ECC and the Emergency Services at the scene or Incident Control Point.

(ii) to provide regular briefings and pass information about the incident and the need for local authority action to the EMT and keep Emergency Service Incident Commander informed of local authority action or problems.

(iii) to be the contact point for all local authority staff attending the scene.

On receipt of a request to attend the scene of an incident:

→ Immediately indicate whether he/she is available to attend or not, and if not, ensure the CWDO is not delayed in protracted conversation.

ASSUMING FIO CAN ATTEND:

→ Open log with time and date, and record details of the incident. Confirm by reading them back to the CWDO.

→ Record Name and Mobile Phone No of Officer In Charge.

→ Activate Mobile Phone and confirm it's number to CWDO.

→ Inform CWDO of estimated time of arrival at the scene.

→ Collect equipment (including PPE, and necessary identification)

and proceed to the scene as quickly but safely as possible.

**On arrival at the scene:
(assuming you are the first or only FIO)**

- Immediately locate and liaise with the Police Incident Commander and obtain as much information about the incident and what local authority support is required. Log all information, including name and rank of Incident Commander, time of arrival etc.
- Phone Emergency Control Centre and provide information gained to member of the Emergency Management Team (EMT) (In the event of no answer contact the OIC directly on their mobile phone).

Continuing at the scene:

- Continue to liaise with ECC at regular intervals. This is for their information, and your safety. To prevent repeating discussions, reporting lines should be limited to the OIC, or their nominated representative.
 - It is advised that the FIOs should synchronise their watch with the clock in the ECC
 - FIOs should NOT talk to the media at the incident, unless otherwise directed by the OIC
- ➔ AT ALL TIMES, CONTINUE TO KEEP LOG WITH TIMES, ACTIONS, CONTACTS AND REQUESTS.**

Experience has indicated a need to split the functions of the two FIOs on site.

The first FIO on site should assume the lead role and retain it unless technical/professional knowledge dictates otherwise.

The Lead FIO will:

- Be responsible for contacting the ECC, and all communications should go through this single channel.
- Remain with the Police Incident Commander and be responsible for liaison between the Emergency Services and the ECC.
- Co-ordinate FIO activities on site and keep Support FIO briefed.
- Keep the incident log (but may seek assistance from Support FIO).

The Support FIO will:

- Gather information on site and relay it to Lead FIO.
- Accredite other local authority officers to the Police thus enabling passage through outer cordon.
- Establish local authority liaison point.
- Brief local authority officers attending site.
- Assist Lead FIO as required.

2.5 OTHER CHIEF OFFICERS

Chief Officers (CO) or their deputies contacted in connection with a Major Incident are key personnel through whom the resources of their department can be deployed.

Initially, their function is to consider what resources are or may be required of their department and to take immediate steps to mobilise those resources. Where available, individual Departmental Emergency Plans will be activated to assist in this mobilisation, eg the Adult Services Plan to establish a rest centre.

At least 3 Chief Officers are required to make up the Emergency Management Team, who direct the strategic management of the response.

When contacted by the Officer In Charge or Central Watch and informed of a Major Incident, the Chief Officer (CO) will:

- Immediately indicate whether he/she is available to undertake the CHIEF OFFICER role, and if necessary, attend the Emergency Control Centre. If not, ensure the CWDO is not delayed in protracted conversation.

ASSUMING CHIEF OFFICER CAN UNDERTAKE ROLE:

- Open log with time and date, and record details of the incident, together with any specific requirements. Confirm information by reading it back to the OIC or CWDO.
- Record Name and Mobile Tel No of the Officer in Charge.
- Activate Mobile Phone and confirm its number with the OIC or CWDO.
- Consider which Key Personnel within their department they will need to contact prior to leaving for the ECC and give estimated time of arrival at the ECC to CWDO.
(In particular the CO should consider whether they will need an assistant within the ECC to undertake department contact etc.)

- Contact Key Personnel. Ensure all staff contacted are provided with your mobile telephone number and your estimated time of arrival at the ECC. If available, take any other immediate action indicated by the Departmental Emergency Plan.
- Ensure they are suitably prepared to attend the ECC, eg warm clothes, directions, personal health & safety issues.
- Proceed to ECC ensuring home and/or office have mobile telephone number.

➔ AT ALL TIMES, CONTINUE TO KEEP LOG WITH TIMES, ACTIONS, CONTACTS AND REQUESTS.

2.6 OTHER KEY PERSONNEL

Other Key Personnel may be required, particularly if the Emergency Control Centre is opened. This may include staff from all departments involved in the incident response, but the most common roles will be:

- Public Relations
- Civil Contingencies Unit staff (to advise EMT or manage the ECC)
- Call / Message Handlers

The procedures for such personnel are essentially the same as for the Chief Officers (see section 2.5 above).

SECTION 3

INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

If the Officer in Charge deems that the scale of the incident requires a large or multi-departmental response, then they will gather an Emergency Management Team (EMT) of all the key personnel.

This will be done at the Emergency Control Centre (ECC), which can provide all the necessary facilities, and for Wigan, is located in the Municipal Buildings.

3.1 ROLE OF THE EMERGENCY CONTROL CENTRE (ECC)

The Emergency Control Centre (ECC) is intended to provide a facility from which to manage the local authority response to a major incident within the Borough.

Although the management of a number of separate disciplines from a single room is not normal local authority practice, it has been recognised from the experience of past major incidents that it is advantageous to have a central location from which to co-ordinate action across a number of departments.

It is intended that the ECC will provide the following: -

- A location for the establishment of the **Emergency Management Team** (see below), necessary support staff, and advisory representatives.
- A central point of contact for the Authority's Forward Incident Officers, partner agencies responding to the incident, the media etc.

It is the decision of the Officer in Charge whether to establish the ECC.

3.2 START-UP OF THE ECC

During the initial establishment of the ECC, the **Officer in Charge** will:

- Notify Central Watch of arrival at the ECC
- Ensure all key and support staff needed have been contacted/deployed (FIO's, CO's, PRO etc.)
- Establish an Incident Log of all actions/decisions/contacts made
- Establish a Financial Log
- Brief staff as they arrive at the ECC
- Brief switchboard staff re. Establishment of ECC, policy for directing calls, details of the incident etc.
- Establish working arrangements within the ECC (eg Task Groups, Intelligence Unit)
- Consider if any other equipment, maps IT, information, refreshments etc. are needed
- Consider if Liaison Officers from emergency services/ other agencies are required in ECC
- Synchronise all clocks and watches with ECC clocks

3.3 DETAILS OF WIGAN ECC

The Primary ECC is located in the Municipal Buildings and is situated close to the Central Watch Station beneath the street level of Millgate.

➔ Full details of this ECC can be found in Appendix 3.

3.3.1 ACTIVATION

If the decision is made to activate the ECC, the Officer in Charge will:

- Inform the Central Watch Duty Officer (CWDO) that activation is required and give their estimated time of arrival
- Instruct the CWDO to make the ECC ready, as detailed in mobilisation procedures, including making arrangements for access and parking
- Ensure that all Officers called out are asked to report to the ECC
- Make arrangements to call out staff for support functions within the ECC, as required.

3.3.2 FACILITIES

Facilities available in the ECC include:

- Communications: Telephones, Fax, local authority radio
- I.T. – Networked PCs with Fast- map & e-mail
- Television and radio
- Maps, white boards and cork boards
- Emergency Planning information, plans, directories etc.
- Welfare facilities – toilets, small kitchen with fridge, tea & coffee etc
- Back-up power (4 hours on UPS battery & indefinite generator power)

3.3.3 LAYOUT

The proposed layout of the ECC for use during a major incident is shown in Appendix 3. It follows the working structure described below in section 3.4.

3.3.4 BACK-UP ECC

If the ECC in Municipal Buildings becomes unsuitable or unusable, the OIC will relocate to the secondary Emergency Control Centre at Kennedy House, Brunswick St, Leigh.

A location map is given at Appendix 3.

During business hours, the premises are used by Environmental Services staff. If its use is required, then the Director of the Environmental Services (Appendix 4) needs to be informed, as staff will have to be informed and relocated.

➔ Full details of this ECC can be found in Appendix 3.

NB *If the primary ECC has been compromised by the incident it is likely that the Central Watch Station will not be functioning as normal. The OIC should take this into account, as the CW services may not be available, particularly in so far as being available to carry out the call-out of other key staff. The OIC may have to undertake this call-out themselves, or delegate it to one or more other officers.*

3.3.5 RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS

If for some reason, it is not possible to locate the Emergency Control Centre within the Borough, the Council has a reciprocal arrangement with Bolton MBC to use their ECC.

➔ See Appendix 3 for full details.

3.4 WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The OIC must decide the best working arrangements for the use of the ECC, dependent upon the circumstances that exists. However, the following basic cells within the ECC are suggested:

Emergency Management Team

- Officer in Charge (lead),
- At least two other Chief Officers (as 3 officers are needed for effective decision making). These should be from the departments most likely to be involved in the response.
- Public Relations Officer
- Emergency Planning Advisor (Civil Contingencies Officer)
- Recorder

OIC may consider further sub-groups to concentrate on other issues eg Media & Communications, Recovery etc.

Work Groups

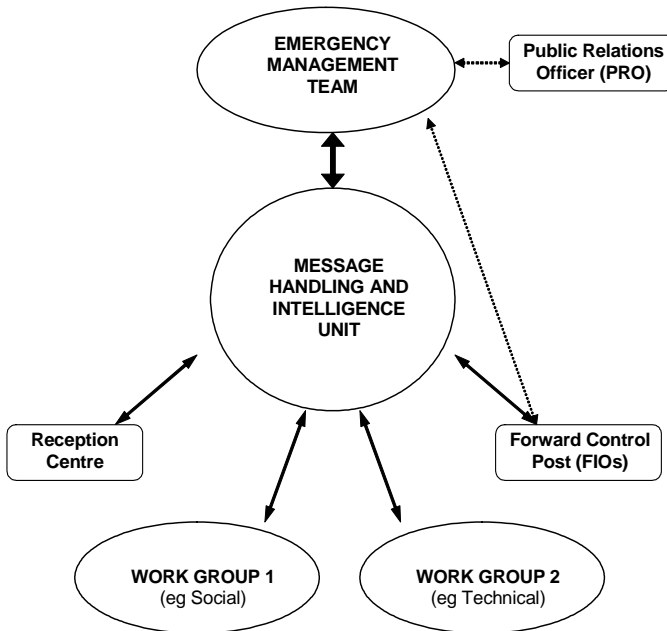
The Work Groups will deal with the operational matters of the incident response. Two likely examples are:

Technical Work Group	Social Work Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative for Engineering Services (lead), - Representative for Community Protection - Representative for Planning & Regeneration - Recorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Representative for Adult Services (lead) - Representative for Wigan and Leigh Housing Company - Representative for Children & Young People's Services - Representative for Wigan Leisure Trust) - Recorder

Nb Staff must be senior enough to be able to commit sufficient resources on behalf of the department or organisation they are representing.

Message Handling / Intelligence Unit (For further info see below – section 3.5)

- Assistant Chief Executive (lead)
- Selection of one to five staff (see Appendix 1)
- Civil Contingencies Officer if not required for other duties.



Diagrams showing the suggested layout of this structure within the Primary ECC, can be found in Appendix 3.

3.5 COMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Effective communications and information gathering are vital in dealing with an incident.

The ECC provides a single point where all information regarding the incident is received and analysed. All decisions made and any actions taken, by the EMT will be logged and records retained. Status boards will be maintained to display the current situation and response. All information regarding the Authority's response will also be disseminated via the ECC.

The ECC incorporates a Message Handling & Intelligence Unit to receive and log all incoming calls regarding the incident, from the emergency services etc. The process for this is detailed below. Trained support staff will carry out this task, and a list of these can be found in Appendix 1.

The ECC will also be the contact point for the Authority's Forward Incident Officers (FIOs) reporting from the incident site. A dedicated telephone extension will be used to give the FIOs immediate contact to the EMT.

3.5.1 MESSAGE HANDLING PROCEDURE

The following procedure details how to capture and manage the flow of information and provides an audit trail so that the status of messages can be easily traced

- Self-carbonating Incident Message Forms have been printed and are kept in the ECC's at Wigan and Leigh. Each message pad consists of an original front sheet and three individually coloured self-carbonated copies. Depending on the scale of the incident, several Message Handlers may be needed and **all** calls should be routed through them.
- An Office Manager is required and will have the

overall responsibility for managing the process.

- On receipt or sending of each message, the message handler will complete a separate message form. They should ensure that all the following sections are completed: From; Date; Time; Received by; Call Number (this should be made up from the Call Handler's Initials, and a unique number); Message (this is the detail of the message itself). *As shown in red on the example in Appendix 3.*
- The completed message form will be collected by a 'message co-ordinator' on behalf of the Office Manager who will decide on the distribution of the message. They will complete the mid-section of the form. *As shown in blue on the example in Appendix 3.*
- The distribution of all messages will follow the same format. The original copy will go to the Emergency Management Team. The second copy will be placed in the Incident Master File. The third copy will be given to the relevant cell for actioning. If a second cell requires a copy of the message for other action then the fourth copy will be utilised. If this is not required then the fourth copy will be placed directly in the Incident Master File.
- Should additional copies of a message be required then the original will be endorsed with the number of copies made.
- On completion of actions by the various cells the relevant copies will be placed in an 'out' tray for collection by the message co-ordinator.
- The originals of all messages will remain with the Emergency Management Team until the incident is closed. They will then be collected by the message co-ordinator and filed with the other copies of the message to provide a complete record of the councils actions.

3.5.2 MESSAGE HANDLING STAFF

A number of staff have volunteered to perform the role of Message Handlers in the case of a major incident. (See Appendix 1 for list)

As volunteers they are not on call and therefore should be contacted in the same way as Forward Incident Officers. All those volunteers have been trained in the role and will receive regular refresher training.

It is anticipated that initially 2 or 3 staff should be able to cope with the early demands of a real incident with the remainder providing a 'rota' system to ensure continuity of their role.

3.5.3 TELEPHONE CONFERENCING

Holding a Telephone Conference is a very useful way of sharing information with a number of people remotely. It can be done from any telephone, as long as you have the correct Passcode.

➔ For details on how to set up a call, see Appendix 1.8

3.6 MULTI-AGENCY LIAISON

Emergencies can involve a large number of agencies that need to co-operate, share information and support each other. Multi-agency working is key to a successful response.

The Civil Contingencies Act divides responders into two groups, with differing duties for planning and preparedness.

Category 1 include the 'Bluelight' Services, the Local Authority, the frontline health bodies (PCT, Acute Trust, HPA) and the Environment Agency.

Category 2 responders, include the Utilities companies (electricity, gas, water, telephone), Transport providers, the Strategic Health Authority and the HSE.

Consideration must also be given to the Voluntary Services who, though they have no legal duties will play a vital role in any emergency.

During an emergency, some or all of these responders will be involved to varying extents. It is important that the Roles and Responsibilities of each organisation are understood, and that there is a framework for communication and cooperation.

- ➔ For Roles & Responsibilities, plus Contact Details, see Appendix 5: Partner Agencies.
- ➔ The management framework is detailed below.

3.7 COMMAND AND CONTROL FRAMEWORK

There is a generic national framework for managing emergency response and recovery that is applicable irrespective of the size nature or cause of an emergency, but remains flexible enough to be adapted to the needs of particular circumstances.

Within this framework, the management of the emergency response and recovery effort is undertaken at one or more of

three ascending levels which are defined by their differing functions rather than by specific rank, grade or status of the person:

Gold – strategic level

Silver – tactical level

Bronze – operational level

3.7.1 GOLD – THE STRATEGIC LEVEL

The Gold level of management is responsible for formulating the strategy for the incident.

Each Gold is in direct command of the resources of their own service but delegates tactical decisions to their respective Silver officers.

If the gold level of management is required by Wigan council, it is likely that the Officer in Charge would gather a group of key officers, and operate from the Chief Executive's Office or a Committee Room. This would leave the remaining Chief Officers, (or deputy & assistant directors) at the Emergency Control Centre to continue acting as Silver Command.

At Gold level, multi-agency co-ordination is done by the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG), and would probably operate from Major Incident Briefing Room at Chester House (Greater Manchester Police HQ) in Trafford.

(nb even when the gold level is not required for the Local Authority itself, if a Strategic Co-ordinating Group is established, the LA should send a senior liaison officer as representative at this level)

The SCG will:

- determine a clear strategic aim and objectives, and review them regularly
- establish a policy framework for the overall management of the incident

- prioritise and allocate personnel and resources to meet the demands of silver
- formulate and implement media-handling and public communications plans
- direct planning and operations beyond the immediate response in order to facilitate the recovery process

This may require the establishment of work groups for specific issues, eg a Recovery Working Group (see section 5)

It is important , when agencies send a representative to the SCG, that the person has sufficient authority to guarantee that the facilities they offer on behalf of their organisation will be delivered.

3.7.2 SILVER – THE TACTICAL LEVEL

The purpose of the silver level is to ensure that the actions taken by bronze are co-ordinated, coherent and integrated in order to achieve maximum effectiveness and efficiency. Silver will formulate a tactical plan to carry out the strategy of Gold.

Silver commanders will:

- determine priorities for allocating available resources
- plan and co-ordinate how and when tasks will be undertaken
- obtain additional resources if required
- assess significant risks and use this to inform tasking of bronze commanders
- ensure the health and safety of the public and personnel

For the Local Authority, this equates to the Emergency Management Team, operating from the Emergency Control Centre.

At Silver level, multi-agency co-ordination will probably be done at Leigh Area Police Operations Room.

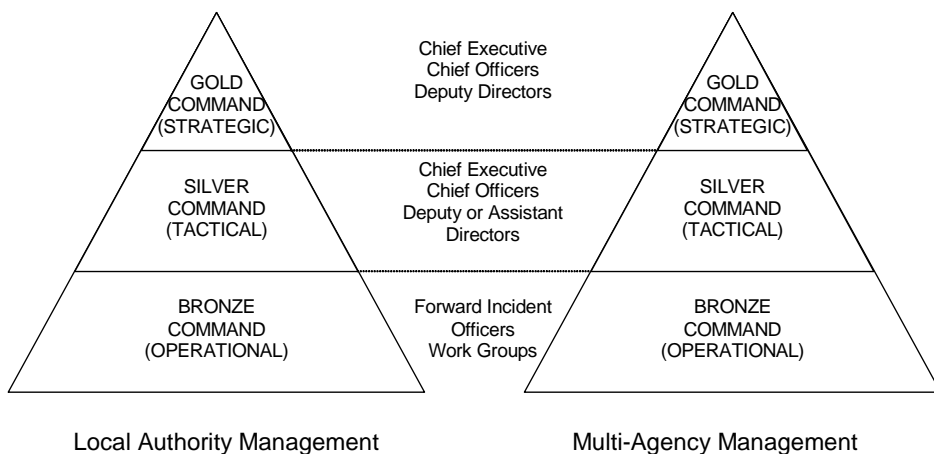
3.7.3 BRONZE – THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL

Bronze is the level at which the management of the immediate “hands-on” work is undertaken at the site(s) of the emergency or other affected areas. Bronze will control and deploy the resources of their respective service within a geographical sector or specific role to implement the tactics of silver command.

For the Local Authority, this means the Forward Incident Officers, and other staff on site, who will operate from the **LA Forward Incident Control Post**.

It also means the Work Groups within the ECC, who are doing operational work like finding resources (the doers rather than the thinkers).

At Bronze level, multi-agency co-ordination is carried out at the **Forward Control Point**. This will be a location of safety near to the emergency in which each of the services Forward Incident Control Post can be positioned.



3.8 STAFF WELFARE

Responding to an Emergency often requires efforts beyond the call of normal operations. Exceptional circumstances make people give exceptional responses, in often long and stressful situations.

It is especially important therefore, to remember the health and safety of **all** staff.

Health & Safety issues include:

- Correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Environmental conditions (time of day, weather)
- Personal Safety / Security
- Facilities (access to WC, refreshments)
- Working Time
- Stress

N.b. Staff should work a maximum of 8 hours during an incident, or 4 hours if the situation is extremely stressful.

The Officer in Charge will ensure any issues arising are addressed. However, it is the responsibility of every individual to assess any risks affecting them, to monitor their colleague's welfare, and to report any issues to the Officer in Charge.

3.8.1 Outer Cordon Procedures

Local Authority staff attending the incident site must adhere to the procedures in place to rendezvous at the scene, as they both ensure the safety of the LA staff and maintain the integrity of the cordon.

<p>Action By Local Authority Staff at ECC: When it is necessary for LA staff to attend at the scene of an incident, the LA control should give the following information to the Police control room: The name of the officer(s) who will be attending the incident.</p>	<p>Action By Police Control Room: When making arrangements for LA staff to attend the Police control room must: Advise where LA staff should approach the cordon - with due regard to traffic closures etc. Supply LA staff with the</p>
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<p>(nb. the Staff must have appropriate ID) The registration number and description of vehicles. Estimated time of arrival.</p>	<p>name of the Police Officer to whom they should report. Notify the appropriate Silver or Bronze Commander at the scene of the name(s) and estimated time of arrival of LA staff.</p>
<p>Action By Local Authority Staff Approaching Cordon: LA staff should state their business to the Police Officer at the cordon, present appropriate ID and give the name of the Police Officer to whom they have been requested to report.</p>	<p>Action By Police Officer At Cordon: The Police Officer, after confirmation of the details given should direct the LA staff to the Rendezvous Point.</p>

N.b. ID cards must be current and include a photograph.

3.8.2 Dynamic Risk Assessment

To be developed

3.8.3 Psychological Welfare

Management should consider the need for:

- proper briefing to ensure people know what is happening and what their contribution will be (see also below)
- honest information about what to expect where unpleasant or stressful tasks are involved
- quiet space to prepare, unwind or think
- someone to discuss experiences with, both at the time and afterwards
- providing access to information on sources of help or support
- information on what constitutes a normal reaction

- similar support and information should be available for family or partners

It will be enough for many to talk through issues with their colleagues or peers, perhaps guided by a suitably trained or experienced person. Some, however, will require skilled professional help and access to such assistance should ensure confidentiality and overcome any cultural resistance.

3.9 BRIEFING & DEBRIEFING

In order to facilitate operational de-briefing and to provide evidence for inquiries (whether judicial, public, technical, inquest etc) it is essential to keep records. Single agency or inter-agency debriefing processes should aim to capture information while memories are fresh.

A comprehensive record should be kept of all events, decisions, the reasoning behind key decisions and actions taken. Good record keeping also allows lessons to be identified and made more widely available for the benefit of those who might be involved in future emergencies.

The chief executive will also wish to ensure that there is appropriate follow-up to any lessons that emerge from the de-briefing process and that these are recognised in any revision of plans, procedures and training as a matter of urgency.

If a multi-agency debrief is required, this will be done through the Wigan Resilience Forum, or Greater Manchester Local Resilience Forum, depending on the scale of the incident. A debrief template exists to ensure consistency.

3.10 STAND DOWN PROCEDURES

The response should provide for the long-term involvement of the Council. However, as the problems raised by the incident are overcome, there will be a phased reduction in the deployment of the Council's services and resources.

The first phase of Stand Down will occur when the ECC can be closed, and the level of response falls below the activation criteria of the Emergency Plan. The Officer in Charge and/or EMT will decide when this should happen, based on information about the condition of the incident and the response required.

The communication of the Stand Down will be cascade down from the Officer in Charge, so that every party involved in the response is informed. The Incident Log will be used to ensure people are not forgotten.

The Officer in Charge will inform:

- The Office Manager - who will inform;
 - all staff in the ECC
 - all staff on site
 - all staff on standby or rest periods
- Forward Incident Officers
- Chief Officers – who will inform
 - all staff within their respective departments involved in the response
- Partner Agencies
 - particularly those whose support was requested by the LA eg voluntary agencies
- Members
- Any other people or organisations who were involved through the LA.

A full stand down will be declared when the long-term measures to alleviate hardship and repair damage, can be dealt with by normal day to day operations.

SECTION 4

RESPONSE ISSUES

The role of the Local Authority is primarily to support the emergency response by providing for the needs of the Emergency Services and ensuring the welfare of the affected public.

- ➔ Full details of the role of each council department, along with relevant contact details, are listed in Appendix 4.

4. RESPONSE ISSUES

The Emergency Management Team should continually assess the situation and consider the need for the following:

4.1 ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS

- **Receipt of updated information from:**
 - Forward Incident Officers
 - Emergency Services
 - Other Agencies
- **Establishing direct contact between the ECC and the following:**
 - Police Force(s), Fire Service & Ambulance Service
 - Other Departments of the Authority
 - Health Authorities (PCT, NHS Acute Trust, HPA etc)
 - Any other relevant agency
- **Informing and updating the following:**
 - Leader/Deputy Leader of the Council
 - Appropriate Ward/Committee Members
 - CO's not involved in the incident or the response
 - All members of staff
 - People affected by the incident (see Warning & Informing below)
 - Business Community (if appropriate)
 - Media/Press

4.2 ASSISTANCE AT SITE

- Requirements of Emergency Services are priority
- Specialist staff as required (Engineers, EHO's, and Building Control)
- Mobilisation of Voluntary Services, as required – see 5b.7 – Staffing Reception Centres
- Extra resources – see Appendix 5b.6 Reception Centre Resources
- Temporary Mortuaries – under development as part of Greater Manchester Mass Planning arrangements

4.3 EVACUATIONS

The decision to evacuate is not taken lightly. Evacuation is ideally a last resort, as people are generally better off staying in their own homes if possible to do so. If evacuation is deemed necessary, the local authority will be heavily involved.

There are 4 common stages to Evacuation:
Warning & Informing, Transport Away, Temporary Accommodation and Re-occupation

During these stages, issues which will need to be addressed by the EMT include:

- Provision of Transport (Council/Outside Operators)
- Provision of Premises for Temporary Accommodation (short term/long term)
- Staffing of temporary accommodation (Council/Voluntary Agencies)
- Feeding and resourcing evacuees
- Keeping evacuees informed about the ongoing situation
- What to do with pets

Further information about these issues is given in Appendix 5a & 5b.

4.4 WARNING, INFORMING AND ADVISING THE PUBLIC

A well-informed public is better able to respond to an emergency and to minimise the impact of the emergency on the community.

All Category 1 Responders have a duty to maintain arrangements to warn the public if an emergency has or is likely to occur, and also to provide advice and information.

Actions Required:

- Identification of a Lead Responder
- Liaison with all responders & co-ordination of messages
- Identification of groups who require warnings, information & advice.
- Identify methods of communication / delivery
- Media Liaison – see 4.4.3

The public need to hear single consistent messages, so it is essential that this is done in a joined up way, involving all agencies. The Category 1 responders need to liaise with each other and agree who will take the lead on this function for the situation. This lead may change over time, such as when entering the recovery phase.

4.4.1 Warnings

The Warning element is required at the time of an event or when one is likely, by alerting by all appropriate means the members of the community whose immediate safety is at risk.

This is most commonly possible for severe weather events, such as heatwaves, snow or flooding.

Wigan currently does not operate any specialist Warning systems

4.4.2 Helplines

Helplines are useful if there is a large amount of public interest. Co-ordination will be required with the Police, so

that it does not overlap with the role of the Casualty Bureau.

If a helpline is required, Committee Room B in the Town Hall can be used - see Appendix 3 for details.

4.4.3 Working with the Media

The Media are a key partner in any emergency. Their involvement can be both a major asset, and significant challenge. A full Media Strategy can be found in Section 6.

4.4.4 Recovery Stage

It is possible that either a Humanitarian Assistance Centre or Drop-In Centre will be set up following a major incident. These provide a one-stop-shop for all the needs of those affected by an emergency. They can be used to provide advice and sources of support, to inform the public of what happened, and what will be happening now, and to provide an outlet for comments. They need to have full multi-agency co-operation to avoid duplication. See Section 5b.4 for more information.

4.5 MAINTAINING BUSINESS CONTINUITY OF COUNCIL SERVICES

As well as responding directly to a major incident, we must also maintain our vital day to day services.

During a major incident, these may be stretched by both the direct impacts of the emergency (such as loss of buildings or staff), and the extra workload involved in the response.

We maintain a Business Continuity Program through which each of our services have developed service specific Business Continuity Plans to manage these issues. These will be activated individually or in conjunction, as necessary.

The Emergency Management Team must consider the effects of both the emergency **and** the emergency response on Council premises, staff and resources and the implications for maintaining critical services. High priority must be given to maintaining 'business as usual' and response arrangements should aim to avoid conflicting demands on key resources (including assets and staff time)

4.6 MISCELLANEOUS

Financial Assistance to those in need

The Department of Finance & IT will coordinate arrangements for the financial assistance of those in need.

Setting up Disaster/Appeal Fund

The manual for the British Red Cross Disaster Appeal Scheme, which is held both in the ECC, and the Civil Contingencies Unit Office explains how their scheme works, and offers advice for Local Authorities wanting to set up their own.

The Department of Finance and IT would heavily involved in the co-ordination of this.

For further advice from the British Red Cross, see Appendix 6 – Partner Agencies.

Organising VIP Visits/Memorial Services

These will be co-ordinated by the Chief Executives Department. Arrangements will depend on the scale of interest and the nature of the incident.

SECTION 5

RECOVERY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The recovery phase of an incident may take hours, days, months or even years. Although it may not seem like a priority during the initial hours of an incident, it is important to start considering issues of recovery as early as possible. It is recognised that early consideration of these issues can lead to faster and more complete recoveries.

Some incidents, by their nature, will have few recovery issues, and can be dealt with as part of the response arrangements. But when the effects of an incident may be complicated or long-term, a Recovery Working Group (RWG) should be set up.

A multi-agency RWG will be set up alongside the Gold response group, and will eventually take over from it, as the response phase ends.

The Aim of the RWG is to co-ordinate the multi-agency approach to the recovery phase of a major incident in order to ensure an efficient and effective return to normality. It will consider the social, environmental, health and economic impacts.

The Local Authority takes over as the lead co-ordinator during the recovery phase. The Chair of the RWG is therefore likely to be a Local Authority Chief Officer who is not involved in the initial response.

Depending on the scale of the incident, it may be appropriate to have one or more separate groups to deal with the tactical issues, leaving the main working group to focus on strategic issues (in this case, the term RWG should be pre-fixed with either Strategic or Tactical)

The Wigan Council Officer in Charge will consider whether it is necessary to set up a single agency Tactical RWG to deal with separate Local Authority issues. This may follow the standing down of the Emergency Management Team or run concurrently with it.

Membership of the RWG will involve a wide range of agencies, either as full members, or to be invited for specialist advice and guidance as appropriate.

As well as the Category 1 responders, and a more comprehensive inclusion of Category 2 responders, the group may also include representation of commercial and community interests (eg local business forums, community groups, parish councils etc).

The frequency of meetings will vary over the course of the recovery, and should be decided by the group, as appropriate.

During the initial meeting, agenda items should include:

- Membership
- Aim and Terms of Reference for the group
- Formulation of a Recovery Action Plan & delegation of tasks

As with any group, all meetings, decisions & actions should be recorded for audit.

5.2 AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

Below is a suggested list of issues which may need to be considered by the RWG.

(This list has been taken from the Rochdale MBC Community Recovery Plan, as it is considered a good model.)

Also see:

Section 4.4.4 – Warning, Informing & Advising the Public

Section 6 – Media & Public Relations Strategy

Appendix 5b.4 – Humanitarian Assistance Centres

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
A	Preliminary Considerations
A1	Overall assessment of the situation should be undertaken with reports from Services and partner agencies

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
A2	Assessment of the work already carried out by Emergency Control Centre during the response stage
A3	Where possible, an immediate prioritization of urgent tasks should be undertaken
A4	Based on the prioritization, tasks should be allocated to Services, groups or organizations
A5	Determination of the Tactical Recovery Groups which will be needed, membership thereof and who will chair the groups
A6	The legal issues as set out in M1 to M3 should be considered as a priority
B	Infrastructure
B1	Consideration of road traffic management issues (diversions etc)
B2	Buildings – safety / demolition / repair.
B3	Consultations with any affected utility companies and service providers– gas, electricity, water, communications
B4	Transport provision – road, rail. Consultation with Network Rail, bus companies, taxi proprietors etc
B5	Site clearance, transport and disposal of rubble
B6	Decontamination of the infrastructure and liaison with organizations which can offer advice or assistance
B7	Consideration of the effect of the incident on public (vulnerable) buildings – schools, hospitals, social care providers etc
C	Health
C1	Implications of the ongoing operation of a temporary mortuary, including the effect on friends and relatives and any ongoing Social Services input.
C2	Arrangements for mass fatalities (cremations and burials), funerals etc
C3	Follow up arrangements for persons who might have been decontaminated, in consultation with health agencies
C4	Food hygiene considerations including contaminated food supplies, advice for retailers, wholesalers and the public. This will also include any implications for the water supply

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
C5	Arrangements for mass vaccinations, which might be required by health agencies.
D	Environmental
D1	Decontamination of the environment
D2	Future safety and use of contaminated (or decontaminated) land
D3	Issues around the disposal of contaminated waste materials
D4	Disposal of affected or contaminated animals and plant life
D5	Arrangements for environmental monitoring and sampling
E	Normal Services
E1	Investigation of areas where normal services can be resumed quickly with minimal resources, which will not unduly affect the overall recovery. This might include services which otherwise might not be a high priority
E2	Establishment of a prioritised programme for the restoration of all services to normal levels of provision
E3	Consideration of the reallocation of senior staff responsibilities to concentrate resources on areas of most need.
F	Economic and Business Issues
F1	Initial assessment of the impact of the incident relating to economic and business issues to advise future actions
F2	Consideration of the support which can be given to businesses directly or through business organisations to speed their recovery processes, including temporary accommodation, financial support (see K1 to K9 below)
F3	Enlist the support of trade and business associations to advise
F4	Consideration of ways in which public confidence in businesses can be maintained or enhanced
F5	Consideration of the assistance which Government Departments can offer (through the Government Office)
G	Reconstruction
G1	Ensure that, wherever possible, local amenities are restored quickly to at least the level pre incident. Enhancement of

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
	amenities may be possible.
G2	Identify any measures, which could be taken during the reconstruction stage to reduce or mitigate the effects of a similar incident in the future.
G3	Consultation with the community, either directly or through community groups, on any rebuilding programmes.
G4	Identification of external sponsorship and funding, including Government finances through the Bellwin Scheme
H	Resources (including human resources)
H1	The overall availability of and requirement for resources, both physical and human, must be determined as early as possible
H2	Put into place longer term arrangements to cover for staff "diverted" to the recovery process
H3	Consideration to be given to the morale of staff not directly involved in the recovery process who might be asked to cover for "diverted" staff
H4	Health and safety issues for staff involved in the recovery process, including working times, allocated duties within competencies etc
H5	Consider implementing the Greater Manchester Local Authorities Mutual Aid Agreement and the " <i>informal understanding</i> " with other authorities in the region.
H6	Consider a procurement strategy to obtain resources which might be required on a joint basis between organizations
H7	Identify resources available internally which will not unduly affect normal service provision and make use of these in the first instance.
H8	Voluntary organisations are a valuable resource and can be used to supplement the human resources available to the various responding agencies
I	Accommodation
I1	Consideration of the longer term housing / accommodation issues

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
I2	Arrangements for the closure of any rest centres which might still be in operation
J	Community and Welfare
J1	Ensure that the helpline continues to operate for as long as it is proving to be of benefit to the community. The ECC might have already established the helpline during the response stage.
J2	Ensure that the community is made aware, at the earliest opportunity, of assistance which is available both from the responding agencies and other organisations such as the Department of Work and Pensions (social fund)
J3	Ensure close consultation with the community and special interest groups on the rehabilitation of the community including diversity and religious issues.
J4	Consider the wishes of the community or the friends and relatives of those affected regarding the provision of one or more permanent memorials
J5	The establishment of "drop in" centres can assist those affected to discuss issues which are important to them in a confidential manner.
J6	Consider enlisting the longer term support of the voluntary organizations, having regard to health and safety implications and insurance issues
J7	Maintain links with the Police who might have Family Liaison Officers with affected families
K	Finance
K1	Ensure that arrangements are in place to record expenditure on the incident (see Finance Plan) using the emergency expenditure codes.
K2	Draft a case and maintain records for making a claim under the Bellwin Scheme, if appropriate
K3	Maintain close links with the insurance companies (or ABI) and insurance officers within responding agencies)
K4	Ensure that any projects undertaken are viable and funded from a specific source

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
K5	Investigation should be made with Government Departments (through GONW) concerning Government funding
K6	Investigations should be made into the possibility of reclaiming costs from any individual or organization which has caused or contributed to the incident
K7	Those affected by the incident should be urged to make all appropriate claims that are covered by their insurance.
K8	All organizations will need to consider the effect the response might have on their future budgets appropriate.
K9	The costs of mutual aid and external assistance, even from voluntary organizations, can be significant and needs to be addressed
L	Appeals and Material Donations / Offers of Help
L1	An appeal fund might already have been established under the response stage. The Strategic / Tactical Recovery Groups will need to take on the responsibility for the general management of the appeal, having regard to the wishes and requirements of the trustees to the fund when appointed.
L2	The exact purpose of the appeal will need to be determined at the outset i.e. who the recipients are likely to be, the nature of the assistance available.
L3	The appointment of trustees and all related matters will need to be determined
L4	Special arrangements will need to be implemented for the handling of potentially large amounts of money.
L5	Offers of assistance will be made. Procedures will need to be implemented to document the offers and to advise the most appropriate organizations.
L6	Donations of clothing, household materials, furniture etc will be made. Arrangements will need to be put into place to document goods received, to store and sort the goods and a mechanism introduced to distribute to recipients.
M	Legal issues
M1	The Strategic and Tactical Recovery Groups should implement immediately a system of recording decisions and the reasons for

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
	those decisions
M2	Public inquiries, inquests and internal investigations invariably follow major incidents and consideration will need to be given to the effect these will have and any initial and longer term preparations which might need to be made
M3	Issues around potential litigation will need to be addressed
N	Memorials and Anniversaries
N1	The wider community will wish to record their condolences. The establishment of a book(s) of condolences in easily accessible places throughout the area should be considered. A website where the public can express their condolences should also be considered
N2	The community will undoubtedly expect some form of memorial to be provided and detailed public consultation on its location and design should be undertaken
N3	In the longer term, anniversaries of major incidents will have an impact on the community and some form of recognition of such anniversaries should be considered.
O	Media and Public Information
O1	Assistance from Government News Network should be sought
O2	The responding agencies will already have put in place joint arrangements for a public information strategy and contact with the media. Such arrangements will need to continue into the recovery phase.
O3	The Greater Manchester Media Protocol applies equally to recovery as it does to response and the terms of the protocol should be adhered to, with particular regard to consistent messages, exchange of information and authoritative briefings.
O4	Use of the Internet should be promoted to ensure that speedy and up-to-date information is available to the press and public.
O5	Informing staff involved in the recovery stage is important and could be addressed through the Intranet / Internet or regular newsletters
O6	"Positive stories" should be made available to the press at every opportunity

Ref.	Areas for Consideration
O7	Monitoring of the letters page of local (and national) newspapers gives a good indication of the community's views, which might not be expressed directly to the responding agencies.
P	VIP Visits
P1	VIP visits can be extremely resource intensive but can be of great comfort to those affected, their friends and relatives.
P2	There will be significant security implications for VIP visits, not only for the Police but for other organizations
P3	Positive press coverage can emanate from VIP visits, which will assure the community that everything possible is being done on their behalf.
P4	Civic dignitaries should be encouraged to be involved with VIP visits
Q	Elected Members
Q1	Elected Members of the Council and MPs should be kept fully involved with recovery process, especially those Councilors / MPs in whose wards / constituencies the incident has taken place. Politicians tend to be central to the local community focus and will therefore need to be fully briefed at all times
Q2	Cabinet will determine the policy to be followed by the Council. Other organizations will have their own internal policy mechanisms.
R	Performance and Review
R1	Mechanism will need to be put into place to ensure that performance of the Recovery Groups meets the needs and expectations of the community
R2	Regular reviews of existing arrangements are recommended

SECTION 6

MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

6.1.1 Aim and Objectives

This strategy aims to provide a framework for managing the local authority media response in the event of a major incident.

Its objectives are:-

- ◆ To provide a checklist of initial actions for the professional Public Relations Officers of the Authority.
- ◆ To give guidance to members of staff who may be called upon to assist the Public Relations Team in a supporting role.
- ◆ To set out a procedure and provide information for officers whom may be called upon to manage the media response in the absence of the professional Public Relations Team.
- ◆ To establish a framework for managing the media which will be flexible and responsive enough to deal with the requirements of all types of incident.
- ◆ To provide a local media strategy to inter-link with the *Greater Manchester Major Incident Media Strategy* (see Appendix 7.1)

6.1.2 Basis for the Strategy

Any major incident will generate immense media interest both during and after the event. From the outset there will be an insatiable demand for information, coupled with a massive media presence at the site of the incident and associated locations. This will create additional pressures at a time when the Authority's resources will be directed towards mitigating the effects of the incident and caring for the affected community.

Nevertheless, the importance of effectively managing public relations and the media cannot be over-stressed. This single area is often the most crucial in determining the way in which the Local Authority (and the Emergency Services) is perceived to have dealt with the incident, regardless of how well it may have carried out all of its other vital functions.

6.1.3 Summary of the Media and PR Response

An effective Media and PR response should seek to: -

- ◆ Manage the process by which information is provided to the public via the media.
- ◆ Ensure effective co-ordination between all agencies (LA, Emergency Services, and other involved organisations) from an early stage.
- ◆ Ensure that the information conveyed is as accurate, timely and as sensitively portrayed as possible.
- ◆ Prevent undue pressure on, and interference with, LA and Emergency Services staff engaged in handling the incident.
- ◆ Limit media intrusion on persons subject to stress and trauma as a result of the incident.

Whilst dealing with the media may be one of the biggest problems facing all agencies it should be remembered that, if handled sensitively, the media can be an asset to the emergency response team.

The negative and positive aspects of the media can be summarised as follows:-

Negative	Positive
Incessant demand for information, interviews and updates	Provide a means of communicating information, e.g. phone numbers, appeals for help quickly and to large audiences
Intrusiveness, both on the operations of the LA and Emergency Services and on the grief of relatives and friends	Ability to portray the positive contribution of the emergency services and boost morale of workers.
Deviousness in getting where they shouldn't be (or where the emergency services don't want them to be)	Channel for emotions of relatives, victim's etc.
Tendency to ask awkward questions	Opportunity for LA to explain its actions/decisions

6.2 ACTIVATION

To activate and effect the Media and PR Strategy the following steps will be taken by the persons identified below: -

Officer in Charge (OIC)

- Direct Central Watch to contact a member of the LA PR Team, who will assume the role of Public Relations Co-ordinator (PRC), for the LA.
- If a member of the PR Team is unavailable, the OIC should appoint another person to the role of Public Relations Officer from the list at Appendix 7.5. (*The Officer in Charge should however instruct the Central Watch Station to keep trying to make contact*).
- The OIC should ensure that the person appointed is not required for the immediate incident response or that a deputy is available to carry out their departmental role. :- (*Ideally there should be TWO officers to co-ordinate the PR response*).

LA Public Relations Co-ordinator (PRC)

- Contact, form and deploy PR Team as suggested below.
- Contact Police Press Officer (details in Appendix 7.5.8) and agree lead role and liaison format. (If unable to contact, act to best advantage in single agency role).

6.3 PUBLIC RELATIONS TEAM – ESTABLISHMENT AND DEPLOYMENT

6.3.1 Formation and Responsibilities

It is recommended that the PR Team should be comprised as follows:

Public Relations Co-ordinator

- Provide PR advice and support to the OIC and Emergency Management Team in the Emergency Control Centre (ECC)
- Determine, in consultation with the Officer In Charge, the Public Relations Strategy for the Authority during the incident response
- Take the appropriate steps to implement and manage the media strategy.

Assistant Public Relations Co-ordinator

- Liaise with and manage the exchange of information with the Emergency Services and other agencies.
- Provide support to the PRC, either in the ECC or in the Press Office.
- If appropriate, manage the Press Room and support in the Town Hall.

Administrative PR Support

- It is likely that in an emergency, additional staff will be needed to cope with the avalanche of media enquiries and to perform tasks such as message handling information dissemination etc.
- Depending on the way in which the PRC decides to manage the response, support staff may be deployed in the ECC and/or in the Press Office in the Town Hall.
- A communications assistant should be appointed to assist the PRC in the ECC

If it is thought that administrative assistance will be required the PRC should consider contacting and briefing the staff listed at Appendix 7.5.4

6.3.2 Location of the Public Relations Team

6.3.2.1 Emergency Control Centre (ECC)/Town Hall Press Office

The PRC will be based in the ECC with the Emergency management Team. The APRC will, depending on the requirements of the incident, either provide assistance to the PRC in the ECC or manage the press office in the Town Hall. If the latter location is being used, out of office hours, the PRC should ensure that the Town Hall Press Office is open and ready for use.

- The PRC should consider opening the Town Hall press office, if there are sufficient staff resources, as this would act as a filter to press calls coming directly into the ECC.

There is a dedicated extension number, which should be used to communicate between the ECC and the New Town Hall Press Office (see Appendix 7.5.5)

6.3.2.2 At the Incident Site

The nature of the incident may dictate that a PR representative of the local authority attends the incident site to conduct press briefings (either on behalf of the local authority or in concert with the other emergency services).

- The PRC will decide if this is appropriate and who is to perform this role.
- The PRC must ensure that the Police Press Office are notified that an officer from Wigan MBC will be attending the incident site.
- The PR Officer should be equipped with the press office mobile phone, which is ACCOLC registered, and have

identification that will allow him/her access to the Police Press Liaison point.

- The PR Officer should wear a high visibility jacket so that they are readily identifiable as the Local Authority Press Officer.

6.3.3 Communications

If the press office is being relocated to the ECC, the PRC must ensure that phone and fax lines are diverted (this can be done remotely (instructions in the ECC or may be facilitated from the phones in the press office). If this action is not taken, telephone numbers in the ECC should be disseminated to the appropriate agencies.

The dedicated telephone/fax lines for the Public Relations function in the ECC are listed in **Appendix 7.5.5**.

6.3.4 External Assistance

Depending on the nature of the response the PRC should consider requesting professional assistance from other local authorities and organisations as follows: -

The Government News Network (Formally Central Office of Information)

GNN. are the Government's press agencies and can be a source of help for local authorities during major incidents to assist them in managing the media response.

GNN's network assistance would be offered free of charge for the first 24 hours.

- The PRC will make arrangements to contact the GNN if required. (See full entry for the GNN in Appendix 6 - Partner Agencies)

Other Local Authorities

There is a reciprocal agreement amongst the 10 districts of Greater Manchester that PROs will assist colleagues from other authorities if requested. In Wigan's case support will initially be sought from Bolton, Salford and Manchester.

- The PRC will make the decision to contact press officers from other authorities if required. (For telephone numbers see **Appendix 7.5.7**)

Media Monitoring

A full record of all media coverage – TV, radio and press is vital, to assess the success or otherwise, of the Authority's response and also to monitor and refute any incorrect allegations/information that might be given out in the media.

- There are limited facilities within the council for this service to be carried out (This would require 24 hour multi-media coverage) and it is recommended that the PRC should consider making arrangements with commercial monitoring organisations to carry out this function on the Authority's behalf.

As there is a financial implication to the use of these services the cost should be agreed prior to engagement and only used if considered essential.

6.4 INITIAL ACTIONS FOR THE PR TEAM

! AT ALL TIMES, CONTINUE TO KEEP LOG WITH TIMES, ACTIONS, CONTACTS AND REQUESTS !

The PRC should co-ordinate the following actions:

6.4.1 Issuing of an Initial Holding Statement

An initial holding statement, should be issued ideally within 10-30 minutes of activating the response (suggested format given at Appendix 7.2).

This should be a simple factual summary of the incident outlining the involvement and actions of the local authority and should be faxed to the organisations listed in **Appendix 7.5.6** and also a copy to the Media Co-ordination Manager in the Police Press Office as per the Greater Manchester Major Incident Media Strategy.

The press statement should be printed on the official WMBC Press Release stationery, supplies of which are kept in the Press Office in the Town Hall and the ECC.

6.4.2 Briefing the Council Switchboard

The council switchboard should be given a short briefing note, as soon as possible, as it is anticipated that they will already be receiving calls about the incident. This may be based on the initial holding statement and should give the switchboard staff enough information to handle **general** inquiries about the incident.

As the situation changes the switchboard should be given regular updates of the council's position regarding the incident response.

If a casualty bureau number (See Appendix 7.3.7) has been issued by the Police (via the Police Press Office), the switchboard should be informed so that they can refer the appropriate enquiries.

6.4.3 Establishing Inter-agency media liaison

Inter-agency media liaison should be established at an early stage.

Contact should be made with the Media Co-ordination Manager (normally Police Press Officer) and other organisations as outlined in the *Greater Manchester Major Incident Media Strategy*.

Wherever possible written statements should be cleared with the Media Co-ordination Manager. He/she should be informed of any verbal statements and sent copies of all press releases.

- ➔ Full guidelines for inter-agency press liaison are given in the *Greater Manchester Major Incident Strategy* (see Appendix 7.1).

6.4.4 Briefing a Council Spokesperson

The PRC should, in conjunction with the OIC, identify at an early stage who is to be the Council's Spokesperson for both press conferences and media interviews.

Ideally one senior individual should become the 'face and voice' of the Council for the duration of the incident, although if the incident is protracted this may not be practical. This person should be practised in giving interviews for radio and TV.

The spokesperson (chosen from those officers listed in **Appendix 7.5.2 and 7.5.3**) will need to be briefed by the OIC/PRC and possibly the Authority's legal adviser. The officers and Elected Members named are only suggestions and consideration should be given to using officers with appropriate technical knowledge or Elected Members from a particular area or committee pertinent to the incident.

6.4.5 Arrangement of a Press Conference

Initially it is likely that press conferences will be co-ordinated by the Police. However the Council will need to be represented by an appropriate spokesperson (see above).

In the longer term, depending on the nature of the incident and the response, the Council may need to consider holding regular follow-up press conferences but only with reference to the Council's involvement.

A decision on the most appropriate location will be taken by the PRC in consultation with the OIC.

6.4.6 Facilities for the Press

The use of the Committee Rooms and Charter Suite should be considered as a venue for either providing press facilities

or for holding press conferences. Care should be taken that access to the rest of the building from this area is restricted.

6.4.7 Issuing Help-line numbers to the press

The Council may decide to set up a help-line to assist people who might be affected by the incident or who may require information. It is unlikely that this will be established in the early stages of the response but if this action is taken, it will be the responsibility of the PRC to issue the appropriate numbers to the media.

6.5 ONGOING PUBLIC RELATIONS ISSUES

As the incident progresses updates of information should be supplied regularly to the media.

If the incident response looks like being protracted, in order to deal with the on-going situation, it may be prudent to establish a Media Co-ordinating Group to formulate proactive and longer-term media strategies.

In the longer-term, the role of co-ordinating the inter-agency media response may shift from the Police to the Local Authority as the emphasis changes.