



# BEAST FROM THE EAST LESSONS REPORT



## Background

Whilst we are all basking in this Summer Heat Wave this edition is exclusively related to the 'Beast from the East' severe weather we encountered in February / March 2018.



Following on from this, Various Resilience Partnerships, Scottish Government, First Responders and key stakeholders have held Debriefing Sessions to reflect on :

- What went well
- What did not go well
- Recommendations to improve policies and procedures in order to be more prepared for future winter issues and perhaps more importantly how 'we' can all expand on working even more collaboratively in these emergency situations

A variety of Debrief Reports have now been received and common findings and recommendations are incorporated in this edition along with 'What's happening as a result of the Debriefs'

Please remember to upload your debrief reports (as per the National Debrief and Lessons Protocol) to your individual **Resilience Partnership's Resilience Direct pages** – please contact the site and/or report owners for access permissions.

*If anyone has any **questions or feedback** on the content on this report please contact any of the following:*

- ❖ Lissa Stewart (ScoRDS National Lessons Coordinator)  
01738 602187 [liisa.stewart@gov.scot](mailto:liisa.stewart@gov.scot)
- ❖ Carol McKay (Resilience Learning Facilitator)  
01738 602092 [carol.mckay@gov.scot](mailto:carol.mckay@gov.scot)
- ❖ Fiona Murray (L&D Coordinator for North RRP)  
07919 301 431 [fiona.murray2@gov.scot](mailto:fiona.murray2@gov.scot)
- ❖ Alan Simpson (L&D Coordinator for West RRP)  
07785 454 717 [alan.simpson3@gov.scot](mailto:alan.simpson3@gov.scot)
- ❖ Gary Gordon (L&D Coordinator for East RRP)  
07867 390 298 [gary.gordon@gov.scot](mailto:gary.gordon@gov.scot)

# What did not go well

**Business Continuity Planning** was not as mature as expected – consequently, individuals and organisations were unclear of their roles and responsibilities and what was expected of them in such circumstances.

Given the widespread geographic impacts, there was also a lack of consideration of the interdependencies within Business Continuity Plans and an over-reliance on voluntary resources.

**Communication and Messaging** (within organisations and to the public) were criticised for being misleading and contradictory. Individuals and organisations interpreted the word “essential” in a variety of different ways – this resulted in a lack of prioritisation of services and confused expectations of the public over when and why they attempt to travel.

Issues on roads were exacerbated by individuals and organisations not complying with public warning and informing advice and venturing out ill prepared.

**Resources** for most organisations were severely stretched given the period of time and geographic spread of the weather. Many inexperienced staff were drafted in to maintain services and manage the response.

**Transport Issues** occurred sporadically across other areas – lack of specific plans in place for known transport hot spots and lack of awareness of existing arrangements that could be triggered e.g. Community Asset Registers were not utilised.

As well as severe challenges faced by drifting snow, there was a lack of co-ordination between transport operating companies and local partners to ensure key routes remained clear and that surrounding priority roads remained accessible to keep traffic moving.

**Shared Situational Awareness** was difficult between partners during the incident on the M80 as information was often inaccurate or not shared in a timely manner. Partners were ready to activate Care for People Plans but were not triggered in many areas.

Poor co-ordination of welfare arrangements led to many passengers abandoning their vehicles which led to further challenges in getting traffic moving again once the road had been cleared.

## What did not go well (2)

**Multi-Agency Co-ordination Centre (MACC)** was not established in a suitable location or in advance of the weather arriving and there was confusion amongst partners in relation to the role of the MACC and how information flows and resources were co-ordinated and prioritised amongst the various multi-agency structures that were in operation across the affected parts of the country i.e. Resilience Partnerships, National Logistics Co-ordination Cell (NLCC) , MACC, SGoRR.

A lack of consistency in when and how Resilience Partnerships activate during severe weather also impacted on the understanding and interaction with nationally based structures – this further impacts on the availability of ‘national’ organisations to contribute to the various meetings and discussions.

**Military Aide to Civil Authorities (MACA)** processes were not effectively co-ordinated and deployed.

There was a lack of understanding of how and when the process should be activated and poor situational awareness resulted in alternative sources of support via voluntary sector and through the NLCC not being fully utilised.



<https://www.readyscotland.org/are-you-ready/severe-weather>

Good collaboration between partners and multi agencies

## What went well

Communications went well, in particular use of Social Media

Partner cooperation excellent, emergency planning enacted and in many areas successful

Voluntary sector and Community Groups very helpful and influential

Emergency Planning successful

Met Office warnings accurate and timely

Partnership Working – pre-existing relationships and experiences along with willingness of people to share knowledge was invaluable

Good communication – advance notice to prepare for potential disruption was appreciated by partner agencies

Review of Multi-Agency disruptive weather protocols required

## Recommendations

Formalise / coordinate use of 4x4 vehicles

Business Continuity Plans to be reviewed and be made more robust (taking into account wider impacts and consequences) – specifically around Care for People and essential staff required to maintain key elements of the business

More formal protocol required for removing stranded vehicles on roads and motorways

RRPs to up skill members on how the Military Aide to the Civil Authorities (MACA) process operates

Greater understanding of response structures in a national event and the need to ensure an information flow from MACC to RP

Review public warning messages being undertaken by Transport Scotland, Police and Met Office

Identify lessons, share the learning and continue with training and exercise opportunities

Utilise courses available from ScoRDS and Regional Resilience Partnerships and sources of reference

# Next Steps and Actions Ongoing

- There is a multi-agency RRP workshop scheduled for the 17th October at Tulliallan. Purpose is to review the Beast from the East debrief findings and review progress against actions. This will result in a review of the current readiness and plan assurances.
- There is a table top exercise in the North to review the A9 Community Plan incorporating learning from winter weather and a number of significant recent incidents.
- A coastal exercise is scheduled in the North for 13th September covering Aberdeenshire and Angus. The scenario will incorporate lessons identified from winter, particularly looking at asset coordination.
- Ayrshire are hosting Exercise ZEUS on 26th September which will incorporate learning from across the country during Beast from the East. There is also work underway in conjunction with transport operators, to develop the Ayrshire Trunk Road Plan as an appendix to the Disruptive Weather Arrangements.
- North Lanarkshire will be running Exercise Winter Breach on 25<sup>th</sup> October which will also review current winter preparedness and plans
- ScoRDS have incorporated lessons from Beast from the East into the table top scenario in their Crisis Management: Founding Principles workshop to generate discussions around the key themes.
- Transport Scotland have written to Operating Companies to request that they engage with operational partners to carry out Winter Service “snow desk” exercises and to focus on developing plans for known hotspots (including M8(J4A-J5); M74(J11-J14); M77(J3-J7) and M80).
- Met Office have already revised the format and content of weather warnings to focus on ‘what to expect’ and what should I do’.
- Preparing Scotland Warning and Informing Guidance has been reviewed and published on the Ready Scotland website which you can access [here](#).

If you would like anymore information on these activities please contact the RRP L&D Coordinators.