

SOUTH YORKSHIRE LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM

12 May 2011

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GENERAL WORKING GROUP - 2010-11

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	2
Review of LRF Activities	2
LRF Administration	2
Membership of the GWG	3
GWG Meetings	3
The LRF's Multi-Agency Sub-Groups and Forums	3
LRF Sub-Group Activities	4
Other Multi-Agency Groups And Their Activities	4-5
Reservoir Inundation	5
National Capability Survey	5-6
Winter Weather	6
Multi-Agency Exercises & Training	6-7
District Activities in 2010-11	7-10
The NHS In South Yorkshire 2010-11	11
Yorkshire Ambulance Service in South Yorkshire	11-12
South Yorkshire Police	12
"Operation Obelisk" - The Liberal-Democrat Conference	13
Major Incidents 2010-11	13-14
Future Work	14
Conclusion	14-15
Annex - Attendance at the GWG in 2010-11	16

Introduction

This report covers the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011, which was the sixth year of operation for the "**South Yorkshire Emergency Planning General Working Group (GWG)**". This group has acted as the practitioners' working forum for the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF), which was established under the terms of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Following a review of the LRF's activities (see below), 2010-11 will be the last year in which the GWG has worked in this format.

As in previous years, the Group has worked on a variety of hazards and threats. Again as in previous years, **many people involved in the response to a number of major incidents have commented that the work of the LRF, and particularly the GWG and its sub-groups, has enhanced the ability of their organisations to respond to the demands made upon them during such events.** It is to be hoped that the way that the GWG has provided an opportunity for the emergency services, health organisations and local authorities to work together on contingency and resilience planning issues will be continued by the new format, following the review.

Some of the work of the GWG is necessarily subject to additional concerns regarding security and the dissemination of information. In order that this report can be circulated as widely as possible, some information on such activities has been withheld.

Review of LRF Activities

Several factors combined to bring about a recognition that a review of the LRF's structure and activities would be beneficial. These included: the issuing of new guidance from the Government; a determination to make better use of scarce resources in a time of financial stringency for local organisations; and structural changes imposed upon several regional and local responders by the new government.

A small working group therefore started work on the review in June 2010 and delved deeply into the structures, functions and membership of the various groupings that had sprung up over the previous five years since the Civil Contingencies Act came into full operation. The working group represented the eight principal partners in the LRF (the emergency services, the four local authorities and the NHS), who currently jointly pay toward the costs of the LRF's administrator, the Strategic Coordinating facility and major exercises. The full results of the review are to be discussed elsewhere on the LRF's agenda.

LRF Administration

The South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum continued to be supported throughout the year under review by **Christine Cartwright as the LRF Secretary**, with office space and equipment provided by South Yorkshire Police and costs being met under a joint arrangement between the eight principal organisations in the LRF.

As in previous years, **South Yorkshire Police provided the Chair for the GWG** and also for the Local Resilience Forum, to whom the GWG reports. Again as in previous years, the administration of sub-groups was decided by each individual group, with, in most cases, the chairing organisation providing secretarial support.

Membership of the GWG

In 2010-11, membership of the GWG continued to comprise representatives of South Yorkshire Police, South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, Barnsley MBC, Doncaster MBC, Rotherham MBC, Sheffield CC, the Health Protection Agency, NHS-Sheffield (representing the health community across South Yorkshire), the voluntary agencies, the Environment Agency, the Government Regional Office Resilience Team, the Army, the Health and Safety Executive and the Meteorological Office. During this year, representatives of British Transport Police, the Highways Agency, SY Passenger Transport Executive and Robin Hood Airport also attended meetings.

A full list of those who have attended the GWG meetings over the year is attached as an Annex to this report.

GWG Meetings

The GWG held **three meetings** during the year in question (on 3 June, 15 September and 16 December 2010). As usual these were at the SYP Sports & Social Club, Niagara. The normal fourth meeting, usually held in March each year, was held over until April 2011 as a result of considerations arising from the review process referred to above. In addition, multi-agency teleconferences were held to discuss issues caused by the bad weather in December 2010 and these are referred to later in this report.

The LRF's Multi-Agency Sub-Groups and Forums

The LRF structure prior to the review referred to above included a number of sub-groups who reported directly to the GWG. These included the:

- the SY Business Continuity Planning Group
 - the SY Business Continuity Promotion Group
 - the SY Emergency Services Liaison Group
 - the SY Health Emergency Planning Forum
 - the SY Local Authority Resilience Group
 - the SY Public Information Forum
 - the SY Risk Assessment Working Group
 - the SY Strategic Co-ordinating Centre Planning Group
 - the SY Telecommunications Sub Group
 - the SY Training and Exercise Planning Group
 - the SY Transport Emergency Planning Forum
 - the SY Utilities Emergency Planning Forum
 - the SY Voluntary Sector & Welfare Forum
- } during the year these groups combined
to reduce the number of meetings*

The GWG had also previously appointed a number of sub-groups to deal with specific issues arising in response to Government Guidance. Those that continued to meet and work during 2010-11 were:

- the Flood Planning Group
- the Pandemic Influenza Working Group
- the Reservoir Inundation Planning Group

LRF Sub-Group Activities

The **Voluntary Sector and Welfare Forum** and the LRF's **Transport Emergency Planning Forum**, both co-ordinated by SYFR officers, each met for a final time prior to the LRF Review in May 2010, as did the **Utilities Emergency Planning Forum** led by Barnsley MBC. Over the years, all three groups have facilitated much useful dialogue between emergency responders and the specific sectors.

The **LRF's Risk Assessment Working Group**, with representation from SYFR, SYP, YAS, NHS Sheffield/Barnsley, all four district councils, HSE, HPA, the Environment Agency and the Meteorological Office, again reviewed the **South Yorkshire Community Risk Register (CRR)** and the associated Individual Risk Assessments (IRAs) for each of the identified 68 hazard categories and also the threat assessment of terrorist activity. **The sixth edition of the CRR was published on the LRF website in November 2010.**

The **Training & Exercise Planning Group** continued to meet on a quarterly basis under the leadership of SYP. It continued to monitor the implementation of recommendations from exercises and incident reports and review the costs of mounting exercises. A key function of the group is **to schedule future multi-agency exercises** up to 12 months in advance to ease scheduling and budget pressures, as well as to allow for the exercises to be fully developed and scripted.

South Yorkshire's work on both risk assessment and exercise planning is well-regarded by regional and national government officials and officers from South Yorkshire continue to contribute to the development of regional and national policy.

The **Public Information Forum** also continued to review arrangements for co-ordinating responses to media enquiries following a major incident and to develop useful links with major media organisations in the county. A key aspect that has developed recently is the co-ordination of feeds to social media, such as "Twitter" and "Facebook".

The development of facilities at the SYFR Training and Development Centre (TDC) Handsworth, Sheffield for use by a Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) continued to be co-ordinated by the multi-agency **SCG Planning Group**. The Group has already progressed a number of significant enhancements to the command and control ICT systems, including the **"Vector Command" operating system**. During the year, much work was done on developing a multi-agency protocol for the operation of this facility.

During the year, **the Telecommunications Sub-Group** shifted its focus from technical matters to developing practices to **promote interoperability, especially regarding the use of "Airwave"**. This work will be of critical importance in the coming year as the Olympics and attendant events move to centre stage.

Other Multi-Agency Groups And Activities

The **district-focused Emergency Planning Forums or Partnerships established by all four district authorities** continued to bring together local representatives of the organisations who would play a key role in the event of a major incident.

The SY Health Emergency Preparedness Forum continues to bring together the eleven South Yorkshire health organisations (four PCTs, five Acute Foundation Trusts and two Mental Health Foundation Trusts) and locality representation from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS). The Forum is the main group discussing health within the South Yorkshire LRF and also has linkages to the Regional Resilience Forum via the

Regional Health Emergency Planning Forum. As in previous years multi-agency partners were invited to the Forum when pertinent to the agenda.

In addition to the groups set up directly by the LRF, there is also a long-standing South Yorkshire Temporary Mortuary Working Group which was convened several years ago at the instigation of the two HM Coroners for South Yorkshire. **Although technically not part of the LRF framework, its work dovetails very closely with that of the LRF**, helped in large measure by the considerable overlap in membership between the group and the GWG.

During the year, multi-agency activity led by the emergency services continued on **contingency plans for sports facilities** and some other major venues. All organisations also continued to plan jointly for **a future fuel supply emergency** in line with national plans.

Planning for the response to a **CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) incident** continues to be a major part of multi-agency activity. Much work follows a national template provided by the Home Office and is carried out by a local "Site-Specific" planning group. In addition, an SYFR officer continued to Chair the **Regional CBRN Working Group** and attend a national working group co-ordinating planning for these issues. Because of the nature of work, much of the detail is classified as "Confidential".

A number of officers from South Yorkshire have also continued to be deeply involved with the **Regional Mass Fatalities Working Group**. South Yorkshire Officers also attended various **regional meetings**, including those dealing with **multi-agency resilience, flood planning, pandemic flu and warning and informing**, as well as the **Yorkshire and Humber Local Authority Emergency Planners Forum**, the **Yorkshire and Humber Emergency Planning Trainers Group** and the **Regional Health Emergency Planning Forum**. However, the future of many of these groups is now in question following the Government's decisions to close Regional Offices and re-organise Resilience activities nationally.

The **SYFR Civil Protection Group (CPG)** have continued their statute-led work on plans under COMAH, REPIR and Pipelines legislation. (To date, no sites in South Yorkshire have been notified under the similar regulations passed in 2009 relating to hazardous waste from mining and extractive industries.) **Although led by SYFR, this work is truly multi-agency and planning and exercise work includes most of the LRF partners**. Again, the networks established by the LRF and GWG assist greatly in this work although much of it is specifically excluded from the scope of the Civil Contingencies Act.

Reservoir Inundation

Following the Pitt Review of events in 2007, a **new national framework for planning for reservoir failures and consequent inundations** has been put in place through the Floods and Water Management Act which received the Royal Assent in April 2010. **Sheffield City Council is now leading SY LRF work** on the challenging task of preparing multi-agency response plans and communicating the appropriate level of risk-information to the public without causing alarm. A generic off site plan for reservoir emergencies in South Yorkshire has been produced and is to be presented for sign-off to the LRF.

National Capability Survey

During the summer of 2010, the third National Capability Survey of local resilience took place. This survey, administered by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat and Regional Resilience Teams again assessed the readiness and capability of those organisations listed as Category 1 responders in the Civil Contingencies Act, to deal with a wide range of disruptive events. As in the previous two surveys, South Yorkshire organisations came out

well and the work that had been done by the LRF and its sub-groups stood South Yorkshire in good stead.

Winter Weather

Once again, extreme winter weather caused problems for South Yorkshire. **In late November 2010, snow and ice returned to cause severe strains on local services particularly ambulance and health services due to large numbers of people having to be taken to hospital as a result of slips and falls.** The snow and ice lasted through most of December. As in the previous winter, this created huge pressure on road-gritting resources and regional and national government offices were quickly mobilised to help co-ordinate supplies of rock salt. The first week of December was later assessed as being the second coldest since 1772 and the winter overall was one of the coldest in the last 100 years. At several times during the winter, transport services were badly affected, and on a number of occasions, ice created extremely hazardous conditions for both pedestrians and drivers, exacerbated by restrictions on gritting. **As might be expected, the emergency services attended many serious road traffic incidents.**

The initial heavy falls of snow around 1 December caused particular problems. Firstly, in that the A57 east of the M1 junction was completely closed and many lorries stranded; and secondly in that patient transport to and from some hospitals was made extremely difficult. **Later in the winter, the threat to water supplies from un-monitored burst pipes caused further problems as temperatures gradually rose.** The LRF held a number of teleconferences on local issues and also participated in regional teleconferences, particularly over the New Year. **Many lessons were learned about the usefulness and conduct of such teleconferences and these have been taken on board by LRF partners.**

Multi-Agency Exercises & Training

Training in all services continues to provide opportunities for **multi-agency training and exercising.** Courses run for the Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance services receive valuable support and input from each of the other services and also from local authority Emergency Planning and Forward Liaison Officers. Emergency service officers also continue to give presentations to local authority staff and volunteers and the Health Emergency Planning community.

As usual, a number of major multi-agency exercises took place during the year. These included **two major live CBRN decontamination exercises: "Exercise Godiva"** held at Barnsley Hospital Foundation Trust; and **"Exercise Sheffield Steel"** held in Sheffield City Centre. These, and **"Exercise Purple Victory"** (see below) produced many important learning points which were also reflected in experience elsewhere across the country.

South Yorkshire LRF again held its annual tabletop CBRN exercise, in October 2010 at SYFR's Training & Development Centre. **"Exercise Purple Victory"** was the latest in the long-running "Purple" series of multi-agency Gold/Silver exercises. Over 100 people attended and significant learning and networking opportunities given. **An innovation this year was a slightly different format,** including some well-received presentations from each of the major responders and a different structure for the **Tactical Co-ordinating Group** (TCG - formerly known as "multi-agency Silver"), which raised some very useful points about how these groups should be run.

Similar issues about the conduct of a TCG also arose in the **four COMAH** tabletop exercises which were held during the year, for Cert Octavian, DHL Doncaster, DHL Tickhill and Victrex Manufacturing. **Development of a TCG Protocol on a similar but simpler basis to the**

multi-agency SCG Protocol has been suggested and work continues to ensure that all partners have a good understanding of processes and procedures.

In January 2011, a **specialist tabletop exercise of the response to a CBRN incident in Sheffield was held under the auspices of the national "Argon" programme run by the Home Office and Police National CBRN Centre.** Although, as always, some matters for further development work were identified, the team who ran the exercise did comment that the Sheffield planning arrangements were very useful and *"particularly strong around the tactical options and supporting information"*.

Earlier in the year, **SYLRF had offered to participate in the national "Exercise Watermark"** which took place in March 2011. This exercise used multiple flooding scenarios across the country to assess improvements in flood response since the events of 2007. For a variety of reasons, including the demands of "Operation Obelisk" (see below), South Yorkshire involvement at a strategic level was very much reduced. **Both Barnsley and Doncaster councils did however run very successful local events in connection with the national exercise.**

District Activities in 2010-11

The year 2010-2011 saw a **full review of the Corporate Resilience Plan for Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council** and its corresponding response packs for the Gold, Silver and Bronze response groups. A major part of this update was a comprehensive review of the risk assessments relevant to the Barnsley borough. These are now linked to the National and Community Risk Registers.

All schools (both primary and secondary) were issued with a generic emergency plan: "Emergency Planning for Barnsley Schools". This plan contains action cards for staff, incident specific actions and considerations and contact details. There is then a floor plan of the individual school, which the school can populate with relevant information, such as fire exits and routes, utility shut-off valves, key displays and work storage.

In response to the prolonged adverse weather experienced throughout the winter months, a **Winter Resilience Plan was developed in conjunction with the newly formed Adverse Weather Team.** This document provides details on how the responding Directorates and Services interact with each other during adverse weather as well as an activation and response flowchart.

All other remaining response plans were subject to full review and were updated as necessary in line with restructures, staff changes and any updated national guidance where it has been issued. Representatives of Barnsley MBC have also played a substantial role in the LRF Review Group in developing structures, job profiles and a performance management framework.

Barnsley MBC has carried out a substantial review of the overarching corporate business continuity arrangements and issued two sets of new plans. The first of these plans - "Business Continuity Strategic Framework" - is issued to each Executive Director and is specific to their Directorate. The main focus of this document details their Directorate function in priority order. The second plan - "Business and Property Recovery Plan" - deals with disruptions affecting an individual building. This plan details the services delivered from specific buildings and the operational recovery aspects of the disruption.

In conjunction with the Barnsley Flood Fair, BMBC Emergency Resilience developed a raft of business continuity templates for businesses within Barnsley. These were

available on a CD with guidance notes accompanying each section and packaged in a booklet.

The BMBC Senior Management Team (Gold) received training in the Police Critical Management Model. This now allows them to understand and appreciate the decision-making process that the Silver Team will utilise during an incident. BMBC officers attended the Emergency Planning College course on "Validating Emergency Plans". This will allow better preparation and a more structured approach when planning exercises of all scales. The Barnsley Resilience Team also attended the HPA-delivered "Loggist Training Course" and were successful in achieving the BTEC qualification accredited by Edexcel.

Doncaster Council's Emergency Planning Team has throughout the year focused on building skills and resilience with Council staff, partners and communities. Efforts have been made to **refresh and align contingency plans** to ensure that a comprehensive response and support framework exists between communities at risk and response partners.

Training has been delivered to 254 staff members for a wide range of operational and tactical roles described in Doncaster's Corporate Emergency Plan. This training was then validated with **four live and challenging Corporate Exercises.**

Emergency Planning have placed a **large emphasis on building Community Resilience** throughout the year with five active Flood Wardens groups being established and supported in Communities most at risk. School Communities have also received support to develop School emergency plans and Emergency Planning are working with an Academy School to provide training and exercising which forms part of the students' public sector NVQ qualification.

"Exercise Watermark" provided the Emergency Planning team with the opportunity to rehearse flood response arrangements and demonstrate the actions and learning points that have been put in place after the floods of 2007. In order to achieve this, Doncaster Emergency Planning Team **led six bolt-on additions to "Exercise Watermark"** involving strategic, tactical, political, school and community partners. This enabled 82 participants to rehearse a wide range of plans and actions.

In addition, Doncaster's Emergency Planning team participated in **11 multi-agency response exercises** and provided support to the development of exercises for Robin Hood Airport and three COMAH sites.

Doncaster's Business Continuity Officer has revised the Corporate policy, strategy and guidance documents' in May 2010. During the year, all plans have been reviewed to reflect the Corporate Framework. **Work is currently ongoing to move plans to the new Corporate Structure,** following which all plans will be subject to "desktop" challenge sessions, which is the preferred method of evaluation. During the year, Emergency Planning also facilitated, along with SY Police, **three "Project Argus" events** for the retail sector, evening economy and architects. These events were attended by a total of 175 delegates.

Emergency Planning have also been **updating and refreshing warning and informing information on web pages** and in staff magazines. In addition a range of press releases have been prepared for community events and exercises.

Doncaster Council Emergency Planning have supported the planning arrangements for over 40 events in Doncaster, including the St Leger Race Meeting, Armed Services Parades and Music Festivals. This work included rehearsing emergency arrangements with the venues.

Doncaster MBC was delighted to **host delegates from the Beijing Academy** of Emergency Management and share learning and many common points of interest in UK and Chinese Emergency Planning arrangements. Emergency Planning continue to develop effective partnerships and improvements in emergency planning arrangements through a variety of multi-agency meetings and Forums which include town centre business, flood management organisations and emergency response partners.

During the severe weather of November and December 2010, **Emergency Planning supported the response to vulnerable residents impacted by the snow and ice.** A total of 107 vulnerable residents were supported by a team of volunteer drivers and 18,500 calls for advice were made to the specially established Emergency Public Information Helpline.

The arrangements put in place in Doncaster and described above enabled Emergency Planning to **respond effectively to 60 incidents over the last year.** These included 20 fires, 3 major fires at tyre storage sites, a chemical factory fire, a major gas explosion (which led to the demolition of a sheltered housing block) and a bomb threat.

As has been reported previously to the LRF, **a Shared Emergency Planning Service between Rotherham MBC and Sheffield City Council has been explored** and on 22 September 2010, a report was presented and subsequently approved by the Cabinet Groups of both Rotherham MBC and Sheffield CC. This recommended the establishment of a Shared Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service between the two councils to be managed by the current Rotherham MBC Emergency and Safety Manager. **This Shared Service is to be established for a minimum five year period and is currently likely to commence from 1 June 2011.**

Emergency Planning in Rotherham during the year has included a number of important projects which are outlined below.

The Rotherham Town Centre Evacuation Plan has been reviewed this year and significant changes have been made to the activation procedures and warning and informing residents and businesses within the town centre. This project has involved working with other partner agencies, businesses and residents.

Community Booklets have been produced for all of the high flood risk areas in the borough which will shortly be distributed to residents in the areas. The work has been carried out in conjunction with Flood Action Groups in the borough and should help to improve community resilience.

The Corporate Exercise took place this year based on a flooding scenario to test the Rotherham Multi Agency Flood Plan. A large number of trained council staff took part in the exercise which was also supported by partner agencies. The second day of the exercise focused on a "live" Emergency Reception Centre, which was attended by members of the public acting as evacuees and which was supported by NHS Rotherham and members of the voluntary sector including WRVS and Church volunteers.

Work has continued on **raising awareness of emergency planning to the local community through emergency planning workshops** to such as Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators and Parish Councils and taking the Emergency Response Vehicle and Trailer, staffed by the council's Forward Liaison Officers and Assistant Forward Liaison Officers to Country Parks, schools and public venues and events as a point of contact where people can find out more about emergency planning.

Business Continuity this year has focused on reviewing **Rotherham's Response Framework to a Disruption to the Fuel Supply** to bring it in line with new Government

Guidance and reviewing software packages available to support the council's internal business continuity plans. Work has also commenced on producing a software package in house which can be tailored specifically to the council's needs.

A number of fires in the borough or in close proximity occurred during the year which resulted in either the short term evacuation of residents to council premises to be cared for by council staff or the need to provide public information to local residents about staying inside. There were also a number of short term losses of utilities during the year. However, in each case, the situation was resolved before any action had to be taken by the council.

The heavy snow and freezing temperatures required the council's business continuity plans were activated during the winter and **Rotherham MBC was also involved in the response to the A57 incident**, referred to earlier in this report, which occurred in the south east of the borough. Lessons learned from the multi-agency debrief of the incident will be integrated into future plans.

The last year saw 24 incidents notified to **Sheffield City Council's Emergency Planning Team** - one more than the 23 incidents reported in 2009-10. These included, instances of unexploded ordnance, suspect packages, chemical spills and a number of incidents involving acetylene cylinders.

The council also **set up and ran its Emergency Operations Room over the weekend of the Liberal Democrat Spring Conference as part of "Operation Obelisk"** (see below). The event provided a good opportunity to test the new Emergency Operations Room equipment and for staff to familiarise themselves with their new roles.

Members of the Council's Executive Management Team have received training in their new role as "Duty Chief Officers". This included legal training and training on the Conflict Management Model, which originated with South Yorkshire Police and is now used by several agencies. **Forward Liaison Officers have also attended a number of training events** throughout the year. To ensure that all plans remain fit for purpose, Sheffield CC has held and participated in a number of internal and external exercises during the year

The **multi-agency Sheffield Emergency Planning Forum, focussing on the issues of the city has continued to meet**. A sub-group of this Forum also met to update the City Centre Alert Scheme. As referred to earlier, Sheffield City Council has chaired a multi-agency group working on the production of plans and associated warning and informing arrangements for the numerous reservoirs within the City.

The Business Emergency Resilience Group (BERG) facilitated by the Sheffield Emergency Planning Team, but chaired by the private sector and with a Steering Group formed from members of the private, public and voluntary sector, staged two events during the year, with speakers on terrorism, flooding and planning for major events. As with other organisations, **Sheffield City Council was required to activate its Business Continuity plans during the heavy snow in November and December 2010**.

Sheffield remains part of the Emergency Planning Group of the Core Cities. Membership of this group continued to provide an excellent opportunity to influence the resilience work of Central Government. Fellow members of the core cities group also provided helpful evaluation of **the EU-funded project at Sheffield University, with which the City Council has been heavily involved**. This three year project, now in its final year, is researching the use of mass communications during major emergencies and is about to produce prototype equipment ready for evaluation in May 2011.

The NHS in South Yorkshire in 2010-11

As part of the **restructuring of the NHS** following the launch of the White Paper "*Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS*", significant organisational changes have taken place during the past year. **Commissioning and Provider arms of PCTs have been separated as part of the Transforming Community Services process.** PCT Provider Services are now the responsibility of their new organisations which include Acute Trusts and Mental Health Trusts. This has presented the Lead PCT and health partners with the challenge of ensuring that emergency preparedness systems continue to run smoothly and remain resilient during this, and future periods of change.

All four South Yorkshire PCTs operate joint Health and Social Care Emergency Planning Groups to ensure that planning and response for incidents is managed in an integrated manner across health and social care. **In particular, NHS Sheffield has relaunched the Sheffield Group, ensuring membership from private sector health providers in the city.**

LRF and health partners from across the Yorkshire and the Humber Region participated in the health-led "**Exercise Tom Thumb**" in Harrogate on 24 March, which was organised by the HPA. The overall aim of the exercise was to explore health service and multi-agency partners' responses to a hypothetical "white powder" (CBRN) incident. **The objective was to exercise the command, control and communication structures, systems and processes for NHS staff, NHS staff working with partner agencies, the Lead PCT function and cross-border working with other Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Government Departments.** NHS Sheffield hosted a South Yorkshire based add-on to the regional exercise; the scenario for this was a situation where coaches full of children were returning home possibly having been contaminated during a visit to the National Railway Museum in York (where the fictional white powder incident had taken place). The challenge for the multi-agency South Yorkshire team was to formulate a plan to manage the emerging scenario. The local exercise was well evaluated. A report is in production for the LRF's Training and Exercise Group and the lessons learned will add to the body of knowledge for South Yorkshire CBRN planning.

Joint health and social care arrangements in Barnsley have maintained an ongoing programme of exercising and training to ensure plans remain fit for purpose. This work included "Exercise Godiva" (mentioned earlier) in July. This was a live multi-agency exercise centred on the Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust's response to a terrorist attack involving a radiation source causing multiple casualties. The live elements addressed local health command and control arrangements and the multi-agency decontamination of self-presenters at the hospital site. The scenario from the live exercise was continued into a multi-agency desktop exercise to consider the consequences that would continue one day, a week and a month after the initial incident.

Yorkshire and the Humber SHA released an updated version of the regional Mass Casualty framework in early 2011 and as a result, NHS organisations have undertaken robust reviews of their Major Incident Plans and where appropriate NHS system wide Mass Casualty plans. Further work will continue into the next year and will feed into the production of an **SYLRF multi-agency mass casualty plan.**

Yorkshire Ambulance Service in South Yorkshire

During 2010-11, Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) supported its South Yorkshire partners, in addition to its partners in other LRFs, with representation at the LRF Review Group, the Training and Exercise Planning Group and at GWG and LRF meetings; and **by providing the Chair of the Telecommunications Sub-Group.**

YAS was involved in the planning phases of "Exercise Watermark", all four COMAH exercises and both of the "live" CBRN exercises - "Sheffield Steel" and "Godiva". **As well as forming part of the exercise planning groups, YAS was represented at the exercises by Hazardous Area Response Teams (HART) and Bronze/Silver managers.** YAS also participated in the "Purple Victory" and "Argon Choice" tabletop exercises and is contributing to the continuing development of protocols for Tactical and Strategic Coordinating Groups. **YAS contributed significant planning and resources to support "Operation Obelisk"** for the Liberal Democrat Conference in March 2011 (see below), leading to a successful event and valuable multi agency working.

YAS attended several major fires and chemical incidents in 2010-11 with South Yorkshire multi-agency colleagues. With the attendance of HART, **this gave YAS the ability to link with the Health Protection Agency via the Hazmed Officer** for advice on health implications for casualties at scene and in the wider health community.

Following debriefs after severe weather in 2009-10, significant lessons were learned and these led to a much improved response during the 2010-11 adverse weather events referred to earlier. **The most notable innovations were: the Staff Transport Plan; the VPN (ICT) capability which allowed many YAS support staff to log in from home; the creation of the medical on-call rota; and the Communications Templates, that had been created to keep YAS partners and staff informed.** In general, there were significantly fewer lessons identified for improvement in 2010-11 than in the previous winter, despite the fact that 2010-11 winter was significantly worse and lasted for a much longer period.

A robust training programme for the YAS Resilience Team and YAS commanders is currently underway to improve the knowledge and skills available both on-scene and to partner agencies.

South Yorkshire Police

As always, in addition to normal policing work, **South Yorkshire Police provided the key element of co-ordination at many major incidents throughout the county throughout the year.** SYP also provided support and mutual aid to several major policing operations outside the county, including the manhunt in Northumberland and public order operations required by a number of mass protests. **In addition, South Yorkshire Police has been heavily involved in the planning for the security aspects of the Olympic Games and the pre-Games procession of the Olympic Torch around the UK.** With many other public events planned nationwide for 2012, much detailed planning will have to be put in place to ensure that all eventualities can be dealt with.

There has been some coverage in the general media of the threat posed by a terrorist attack along the lines of that carried out in Mumbai. Work on the response to such an attack has naturally been led by the Police and this is also tied in with developing tactics and strategies for dealing with incidents where armed non-terrorist individuals may try to inflict multiple casualties and fatalities across a wide area. **SYP has therefore been leading on the furthering of "interoperability" amongst all responding organisations, which will be essential to the safe and successful resolution of such incidents.** A very well-received "LRF Gold Symposium" was held in January 2011, at which several senior Police speakers addressed Gold-level officers from across South Yorkshire on the issues. This was then followed up with a workshop dealing with an "active shooter" scenario, which highlighted for many attendees the very serious issues involved. Several exercises and seminars have also been held for operational personnel.

"Operation Obelisk" - The Liberal-Democrat Conference

Prior to the 2010 General Election, the Liberal-Democrat Party had arranged to hold its 2011 Spring Conference in Sheffield. In the past, such events have not raised many significant concerns, but with the Coalition agreement and the reaction to it, it became clear that a major security operation would be needed. This need was further emphasised following events in London and Manchester where demonstrators against government policies caused significant disruption. South Yorkshire Police gained early intelligence that some 5,000 demonstrators might be expected in Sheffield over the weekend of 11-13 March when the Conference was to be held.

Detailed multi-agency planning involving all three emergency services, the NHS and Sheffield City Council took place from November 2010 onwards, encompassing four main facets of what was subsequently called "Operation Obelisk". The operation covered the security of the Conference venue itself - Sheffield City Hall; the security of the delegates and guests and their hotels; how any resultant casualties would be managed by the health services across Sheffield and Rotherham; and the maintenance of public order - including the right to peaceful protest - on the streets of Sheffield.

In the event, although significant numbers of protesters did appear, particularly on Saturday 12 March, the procedures and precautions put in place (at a cost estimated in excess of £1 million) achieved these goals. The Party considered the conference to have been successful and well-attended and the protests were kept under control with few arrests or reports of disruption and minimal numbers of injuries treated. **Overall the joint working, much of it facilitated by the close contacts built up through the LRF, showed that South Yorkshire is more than capable of hosting such high-profile, large scale public events, which can provide significant economic benefits.**

Major Incidents

There have, as always, been **a number of major incidents requiring a co-ordinated multi-agency response across the county.** These included **several major fires** as well as a number of **chemical incidents.**

Once again, **fires in derelict and empty buildings as well as fires in barns, factories and scrapyards created major work for the emergency services and local authorities.** Fires in derelict buildings included those at Darnall Liberal Club (in April 2010), Granby WMC, Edlington and St Phillips C&I, Sheffield (both in June), at a storage shed in Loxley, at shops in Parson Cross, a Rotherham warehouse and a Barnsley public house (all in August), at a disused hall of residence in Sheffield (September), at the old Mexborough Fire Station (December) and at a derelict school in Barnsley (March 2011). A fire started in a skip in Owston in July required the attendance of eight appliances including two aerial platforms, while there were large fires at scrapyards in Kiveton in both August and November and another at a Barnsley car-breaking yard in September.

Amongst major fires at industrial locations were incidents in Balby (April), at a laundry and a steel works (both in Sheffield in May), at a storage site in Meadowbank and an industrial estate in Armthorpe (June), a food frier in Dearne and a factory in Kilnhurst (both in July), a woodyard and a metals plant (both in August) and an industrial site at Neepsend in February. A more unusual location for a fire, also in February, was in the sauna in the gymnasium at Lindholme Prison. **All of these incidents also required multiple pumping appliances and specialist appliances to be deployed.**

At several chemical incidents, SYFR used their specialist personnel and equipment to make the area concerned safe. These included a serious spill at Sheffield Hallam University in April, a leak of nitric acid from a road tanker at Woodall M1 Services in January and explosive chemical reactions at metalworks in June, August and January. A runaway exothermic reaction required SYFR to provide emergency cooling at a works in Denaby in September.

Several major fires generated large smoke plumes visible for long distances. **Two fires in tyre dumps** (at Hampole in May and Mexborough in June) gained prominence in national news bulletins and also created **significant pressures upon personnel, resources and equipment**. In both cases, firefighting operations went on for several days and required the importation of foam from outside the county.

A worrying statistic was **the number of fire incidents in apartment buildings, both in traditional high-rise blocks and in purpose built modern blocks** - the latter often inhabited by students away from home for the first time. At least 17 significant incidents were attended by SYFR; of which the majority were in Sheffield, which has the largest number of such premises in the county. Amongst these were **several incidents where items in either bin chutes or communal areas had been deliberately ignited**. Without the prompt and expert response of the emergency services, this type of incident could very quickly result in serious injuries or fatalities. In addition, a number of incidents in modern accommodation appeared to have arisen as a result of a lack of knowledge of cooking skills, often amongst younger occupants. Alongside the long-running national fire safety campaigns aimed at reducing chip-pan fires, SYFR has initiated a campaign to inform students in particular of basic cookery and kitchen safety.

A different type of incident affecting residential premises was **an explosion at a house in Hackenthorpe in March which resulted in a fatality** and severe structural damage to neighbouring properties. Fortunately such incidents are rare.

Emergency services were also alerted to **a potential incident at Doncaster's Robin Hood Airport** in September, when the pilot of an inbound Boeing 737 declared an emergency with flap problems. Fortunately, the aircraft landed safely and emergency services were not needed.

Future Work

Much of the work cited above continues from year to year. One of the important "cultural" issues to get across within organisations is that **risk assessment, business continuity planning and emergency preparedness are not isolated issues that can be put in a "box" labelled emergency planning, but should be integral components of every manager's everyday activities**. At both strategic and tactical levels, alongside day-to-day operational work, the exercising and revision of plans and the training and liaison that these require has to continue, in order to ensure the continuing high standards of response preparedness that the public rightfully expect.

Conclusion

The South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum, its practitioner group, the General Working Group, and its sub-committees have continued to fulfil a vital need in bringing together agencies involved in emergency response. The groups provide forums for the dissemination of best practice and information about respective roles and also assist in building those working relationships based on trust and mutual respect which are vital to the efficient and effective resolution of major emergencies.

It is inevitable that not every aspect of the GWG's work will be covered in a report such as this, nor can every individual be thanked. The Group reflects the teamwork which exists in South Yorkshire and which is itself the best tribute to all those involved. However, some personnel matters cannot go unremarked.

Paul Reed, Emergency Planning Officer for Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, retired in December 2011 after being closely involved with multi-agency emergency planning in South Yorkshire for some fifteen years and being instrumental in the drawing up of the Strategic Framework Document which has acted as the basis of the LRF's activities throughout its existence so far. To him, GWG members would wish to say a heartfelt "thank you" for all his efforts on behalf of South Yorkshire and we send him best wishes for the future.

As well as the new faces who have joined the GWG during the year, to whom we say a sincere "welcome", there have been two, **Russ Parramore** and **David Owens**, who both having retired from SYP could not keep away from emergency planning and returned to the fray for SYFR and Sheffield CC respectively. To them we say "welcome back"!

*John Harthman, SYFR
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Annex: Attendance at the SY LRF General Working Group 2010-2011

Chairs: Chief Inspector Tony Jepson, SYP (June 2010)
Inspector Craig Patchett, SYP (September 2010)
Chief Inspector Richard Butterworth, SYP (December 2010)

Secretary: Christine Cartwright, SYP

Representatives of member organisations attending GWG Meetings during 2010-11

Insp Mark Payling	SYP
Sgt Chris Brown	SYP
Gary West	SYP
GM Stewart Layhe	SYFR
John Harthman	SYFR
Russ Parramore	SYFR
David Howell	YAS
Jim Richardson	YAS
Joanna Bingley	Barnsley MBC
Doug Cartwright	Barnsley MBC
Rosalind McDonagh	Doncaster MBC
Paul Reed	Doncaster MBC
Alan Matthews	Rotherham MBC & Sheffield City Council
Annette Senior MBE	Rotherham MBC
David Owens	Sheffield CC
Peter Whitwam	Sheffield CC
Dr Diane Smith	NHS-Sheffield (On behalf of SY PCTs and Foundation Trusts)
Trevor Dale	NHS Yorkshire & Humber (Strategic Health Authority)
Cressida Woodall	Government Regional Office
Tony Donohue	Military Liaison Officer
Graham Butler	Meteorological Office
Vince Jenner	Health Protection Agency
Dr Rosy McNaught	Health Protection Agency
Colin Atkinson	Environment Agency
Fiona Pickard	Environment Agency
Becki Whitelock-Wainwright	Environment Agency
Tony Lonsdale	Robin Hood Airport
David Whittle	South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive
Martin Rocks	British Transport Police
Guy Huckle	Highways Agency
Stuart Wersby	Highways Agency