

# Wales Coastal Flooding Review Project 3 Report – Community Resilience

## Recommendations 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17

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## Context

Following the coastal flooding of late December 2013 and early January 2014, the Minister for Natural Resources, asked Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to undertake a two stage Review into the coastal flooding events. The Minister requested that the Review be undertaken in collaboration with all Risk Management Authorities in Wales. Phase 2 of this Review identified 47 Recommendations for future progression and in January 2015 NRW published a Delivery Plan outlining a proposed way forward to address each Recommendation. The Minister directed NRW to collaboratively implement the Delivery Plan in 2015/16 with supporting funding made available.

Thirty of the Recommendations have been packaged into ten Projects to reflect common themes. The remaining seventeen Recommendations stand independently outside of these projects with individual leads for progression.

The 10 Projects and their broad technical themes are listed below:

Project 1 – Flood Forecasting and Coastal Design

Project 2 – Flood Warning and Forecasting

**Project 3 – Community Resilience**

Project 4 – Operational Response

Project 5 – Coastal Defences

Project 6 – National Coastal Defence Dataset and Inspection

Project 7 – Skills and Capacity Audit and Roles and Responsibilities

Project 8 – Review of Coastal Groups

Project 9 – Coastal Adaptation

Project 10 – Infrastructure Resilience

Recommendations 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17 form Project 3 – **Community Resilience**. This report summarises the work undertaken to complete Recommendations 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17.

## The Vision for Wales

*‘Self-supporting communities that are resilient to flooding’*

### What this looks like

Everyone across Wales with a role to play in managing flood risk are well connected, there is clarity on where and how to access good quality, easily accessible advice and information whether Professional Partner or member of the public.

Strong face to face and virtual networks exist which actively promote best practice, encourage innovation and foster relationships between members of the public and professional organisations.

At community level, organisations and individuals work together collaboratively to manage their local flood risk. Everyone involved has a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, limitations and opportunities and what essential part they play, before during and after a flood.

Social capital and resilience levels are high, gauged in terms of the ability to prepare, respond and recover, as a community and as an individual – from a physical, emotional and social perspective.

Everyone’s input is valued equally. Communities are empowered and taking the lead, they look to long term solutions and opportunities, not just quick fix options, to ensure longer term sustainability. They are supported by professionals through specialist technical advice and support.

### How to get there

This report builds on previous work relating to Coastal Flooding Review Recommendations 13 - 17. This report aims to take these Recommendations one step further by providing specifics on how this can be achieved, by whom and to what timescales.

## Background to Project 3

Project 3 covers Coastal Flooding Review Recommendations 13-17. These are defined in the table below:

13.	<b><i>Work with sample communities to identify options to help sustain an effective local response to flood warnings. This should consider communities where effective response and or confidence in the warning system is low.</i></b>
14.	<b><i>Identify and evaluate options to help communities to become more self-sufficient and resilient and identify a recommended option</i></b>
15.	<b><i>Produce and communicate nationally consistent, public focused flood information. Produce and communicate the types and availability of property level protection measures and the support available within Wales.</i></b>
16.	<b><i>Using the experience from these recent storms, identify and evaluate options for the future development of local Flood Plans in coastal areas and identify a recommended option to help these be more effective at improving community resilience.</i></b>
17.	<b><i>Using the experience from these recent storms, identify and evaluate options for the future development of local Flood Plan Leads / Warden Volunteers in coastal areas and identify a recommended option.</i></b>

*Table 1 - List of Coastal Flooding Review Recommendation 13 -17*

## Methodology

As there are links between the 5 Recommendations, they are considered collectively, with similar methodology being applied to address the Recommendations in Project 3. This methodology comprises of four steps, as follows:

### Step 1 – Professional Partner Workshop

An initial workshop was held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015. The purpose was to bring together statutory and voluntary organisations who have a role to play in supporting flood resilience within Wales.

Attendance was carefully planned to ensure contributions to the workshop would capture expertise from a wide and varied range of organisations. Organisations who contributed either on the day, or by pre- or post-feedback, included:

- Local Authorities – Emergency Planning and Flood Risk Management staff.
- Welsh Government – Flood Risk, Resilience and Communications Departments.
- National Flood Forum.
- Save The Children.
- Fire & Rescue Service.
- Police.
- British Red Cross.
- Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA).
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW).
- Network Rail.
- Met Office.
- Public Health Wales (PHW).
- Welsh Council for Voluntary Associations (WCVA).
- Local Resilience Forums (LRF).
- Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI).
- Faith Groups.

The workshop aims were to:

1. Bring together representatives of Risk Management Authorities and other key delivery organisations within Wales who contribute to Recommendations 13-17.
2. Act as a technical multi-partner advisory group, considering evidence, identifying gaps and opportunities which help to create more self-sufficient and resilient communities in Wales.
3. Contribute ideas and suggestions as to how the Recommendations are best taken forward.

The workshop participants reached **agreement** that:

- The scope of Project 3 work should be expanded to include all sources of flooding (not just coastal).
- Recommendations 13, 15, 16 & 17 should sit under the umbrella of Recommendation 14, as they are all essential components that contribute to achieving longer term sustainable resilience.
- Recommendation 15 should be split and considered in 2 parts:
  - General public flood advice and information.
  - Property level protection (PLP) measures and support available in Wales.

Full detail of May workshop outputs are available on request.

## **Step 2 – Analysis**

All workshop outputs were collated and analysed by the Project Manager. This exercise produced the following:

1. Identification of matters that needed onward referral (scope of which was outside Project 3)

These related to policy and strategy matters around housing and insurance that needed consideration Wales or UK level.

A meeting was held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2015 between NRW, WLGA and Welsh Government to highlight these. The meeting resulted in identification of appropriate individuals and stakeholder groups including Wales Flood Group, LRFs for the issues to be referred to.

2. Identification of emerging themes to be developed into recommended options for consideration at the December 2015 workshop.

As part of the analysis stage, a review of current research and literature was undertaken by the Project Manager, with advice and support provided from social research and community resilience experts (within NRW and Environment Agency/Defra and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)). The review was used to inform the options appraisal workshop in December and provide content and Recommendations against Recommendation 15 (as this was not considered during the December workshop).

## **Step 3 – Public and Professional Partner Workshop**

A follow up workshop was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015. Attendance was sought from members of the public as well as professional partners. This was to ensure that those from flood risk affected areas were given an opportunity to contribute their expertise and experience.

The workshop aims were:

To bring together members of the public affected by flooding with professional partners with responsibility for, or interest in, managing flood risk within Wales.

1. To build on work to date including outputs from 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 workshop by further developing options appraisals for Recommendations 13, 14, 16 & 17.
2. To collectively prioritize final options to be put forward to Welsh Government for consideration.

Full details of the December 2015 workshop outputs are available upon request.

## Step 4 – Flood Volunteer Network Event Pilots

5<sup>th</sup> November 2015 Swansea

28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 – Llandudno

Following a telephone consultation exercise with NRW Flood Plan Volunteers, 2 pilot network events were arranged in response to demand from those currently undertaking the role across Wales. One event was originally planned, but based on feedback and demand after the initial Swansea event, another was held in Llandudno.

Small, but representative attendance from across Wales was achieved at both events which helped ensure that an all Wales perspective and network was progressed. Both sessions ran to the same format in order to ensure that the pilot could be evaluated consistently.

The aims of the network events were to:

1. Provide an opportunity for Volunteers to meet others carrying out similar roles and share best practice.
2. Share advice from specialist partner organisations to obtain an increased understanding of roles and responsibilities at the 3 stages; before, during and after a flood.
3. Discuss health and safety risks associated with flood volunteer roles and identify ways to mitigate them.

Key messages and outputs from both events have been incorporated into Recommendations within this report, specifically under Recommendation 17.

Full details from both the Swansea and Llandudno events, including lessons learnt are available upon request.

The following communities have been represented via input from members of the public to Steps 3 & 4 above:

- Bangor on Dee.
- Beaumaris.
- Bryncrug.
- Cardigan.
- Crindau North.
- Dale.
- Fairbourne.
- Gwent & Wentlooge.
- Kinmel Bay.
- Llanddulas.
- Llanddowror.
- Llanfair Talhaiarn.
- Pontcanna – Talbot Street.
- Pontfaen.
- Roath – Marlborough.
- Rhydymwyn.
- Rhyl Spashpoint.
- Rogerstone.
- St Asaph.
- Trefriw.
- Talybont.

## **Involvement & Contributions to Project 3**

As well as contributions, expertise and experience from the public, specific thanks must be extended to the wide range of professional partners, statutory and voluntary organisations, both inside and outside Wales, who have played a vital part in development of Project 3 Recommendations and this final report.

Contributions have been received through a variety of means; attendance at Project 3 workshops or volunteer network events; face to face meetings with project manager; telephone and skype meetings and email contributions.

As a result, the combined expertise and contributions equate to many tens of years of collective experience in matters around community resilience, covering both policy and practice and span aspects that range from policy development, research and evidence to front line delivery of flood warning services and community response and recovery.

### **PROFESSIONAL PARTNER WORKSHOP MAY 2015**

### **SWANSEA VOLUNTEER NETWORK EVENT – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015**



## LLANDUDNO VOLUNTEER NETWORK EVENT – 28th January 2016



### The Recommendation

#### Recommendation 14 – Community Resilience

**Rec14: *Identify and evaluate options to help communities become more self-sufficient and resilient and identify a recommended option.***

As this Recommendation was agreed as the overarching one for Project 3, each of the 5 options are considered in more detail below.

5 options for appraisal emerged. They are presented below in ranked order from the December workshop exercise.

However, feedback was clear - all 5 listed below need to be delivered concurrently, delivering just one or two will not fully deliver Recommendation 14. This is due to the causal links that emerged.

1. Improved Inter-Agency Working.
2. Better Engagement (current).
3. Better public information about options.
4. Develop a broader community resilience plan – not just flooding.
5. Better engagement with future generations (education of young people).

### **Option 1 – Improved Inter-Agency Working (Recommended Option)**

**This emerged as the recommended option from the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 workshop (based on group consensus). 3 of the 4 groups ranked this as highest, the other group ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>.**

#### **Rationale:**

- All organisations will need to deliver more with less resources in the future.
- Underpinned by Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015<sup>1</sup> which puts into law the required new ways of working.

#### **Strengths:**

- Allows for identification of who, how and when respective professional organisations can deliver, reducing the risks associated with delivery if left to goodwill and organisations and individuals who may not have the skills or training required.
- Allows for greater involvement of Third Sector, and the skills and expertise they bring.
- Reduces / removes duplication of effort by all involved.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Lack of clarity on current and future roles and responsibilities with regard to engagement and community resilience.
- Uncertainty around future resources (this challenges the aspiration to support the recommended 'before, during and after cycle of planning and delivery' as organisations will revert to delivering only their statutory duties when pressured).
- Current LRF structures and resources are focussed on the 'during' planning and response phase of flooding, not for before or after.
- 22 Local Authorities have different operating models across Wales as a result of resource levels and local priorities.

#### **Practical actions to take this forward:**

- Increased promotion of, access to and training for the use of Resilience Direct website for a wider range of organisations. Also ongoing improvement cycle to review and improve content hosted here.
- Public Service Boards (requirement under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act). The PSB structure will be consistent at National Level (membership, outcomes etc.) but there is flexibility around the local membership and operations of these Boards. This will improve local cohesion and planning of services by involving all organisations and individuals who have, or could have a role to play in community resilience and specifically flood risk management at the preventative / planning stages. This will address before and after periods, which can be tailored more to local area based needs.
- Improved Inter-Agency working needs to start with direction from Welsh Government – through the All Wales Community Resilience Group to consider and advise on the identified actions within this report. The new Flood and Coastal Risk Erosion Committee would also have a key role to play in supporting and progressing these recommendations.
- Better Engagement at local level can also be improved by sharing of existing best practice and local resources. The mechanism for this is the same as above.

#### **Who should take this forward:**

- All Wales Community Resilience Group in the first Instance. This group was resurrected on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and has a Wales wide representative membership which includes a

wide range of statutory responders and voluntary organisations including representation from the 4 LRFs in Wales. It is the only group at this level that has representation from all of the required stakeholders. In addition to this, each of the 4 LRFs are establishing more local Community Resilience Groups. This Group is the appropriate forum for consideration and progression of this Recommendations (and a number of others in Project 3).

- Welsh Government – to give direction and steer for all organisations with a stake in flood risk management within Wales.
- Future Public Service Boards, who have a strategic goal for community resilience.

### **When can this be implemented: short medium or long term:**

- Improvements to and access to Resilience Direct – Immediate improvements can be achieved (short term – 6-12 months).
- Consideration and progression of Recommendations (in a coherent coordinated way) at the All Wales Community Resilience Group. (Medium & long term – 2-3 years).
- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act places a statutory requirement on all organisations to plan and deliver services against 5 ways of working. This will ensure that more services are focussed on preventative interventions, and that services are planned and delivered so that short term improvements and efficiencies are made, but with a focus on ways that work towards medium and long term sustainability.

### **Option 2 – Better Engagement**

One of the key messages emerging from workshop sessions and evidence gaps is that the key to both improving existing practice and to achieve longer term resilience starts with Better Engagement:

#### **Rationale:**

Behavioural research and evidence<sup>2</sup> demonstrates that people will engage with different things at different times. Engagement is actioned by various ‘trigger points’ that can be an effective hook in overcoming apathy to promote engagement and therefore desired behavioural change with matters that are not perceived as a priority to the individual, including that of flood related issues.

Examples of known trigger points include Climate change, finance, care of pets, children and their schools, buying and moving house. Evidence<sup>3</sup> demonstrates that engagement strategies that understand the audience and are then tailored to engage with messages around these triggers is more effective in achieving behavioural change and increase engagement and subsequently preventative actions taken by individuals and communities to reduce impacts on them, physically, emotionally and socially.

#### **Strengths:**

- Effective engagement demonstrates multiple benefits: greater and quicker buy-in from the community and inclusion of hardest to reach or excluded groups.
- Pockets of very good engagement approaches are already happening across Wales that can be expanded and learned from which target specific groups with tailored messages in ways that are trusted sources.

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<sup>2</sup> Floodwise EA/Defra

<sup>3</sup> Behavioural Insights Team

- Volunteers can deliver very effective engagement at local level – with the right volunteer, this model can deliver tangible benefits for the community, organisations and the volunteers themselves.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Effective engagement is a specialist skill – not every organisation required to undertake this has the necessary resources or skilled staff to deliver this.
- Poor engagement can have negative implications<sup>4</sup> – (which may result in reputational damage for organisations and disengagement or anger from members of the public).
- Lack of mechanisms currently available which allow co-ordinated sharing of best practice, and training and development opportunities available.

### **Practical actions to take this forward:**

- Use published learning to tailor engagement programmes, sharing best practice approaches and hooks. Share this on Resilience Direct and public micro site (see Recommendation 15).
- Identify the appropriate organisations and skilled personnel to deliver this at local community level. Do this as part of developing local resilience plans (see Option 4 below).
- Develop training programme for organisations and individuals across Wales which signposts to accredited community engagement training and good quality supporting tools.
- Checklist tools, processes and approaches being used, or as they're being developed against the National Principles for Public Engagement within Wales (below), to ensure compliance and to ensure that gaps, especially the hardest to reach, are being identified and provided for.

### **Who should take this forward:**

- Wales Community Resilience Group supported by Wales Flood Group and member organisations.

### **When can this be implemented: short medium or long term:**

- Short term for awareness raising on current good practice techniques and methods.
- Medium and long to implement learning based on research in a more integrated cohesive manner across Wales.

### **Option 3 – Better public information about options**

Refer to Recommendation 15 for detail on what the information should be.

Refer to Option 2 above on how this needs to be delivered.

### **Option 4 – Develop a broader community resilience plan – not just flooding**

#### **Rationale:**

Widening LRF plans to include preparation and community response to other incidents apart from flooding will increase the relevance of the plan for those involved at local level. It will facilitate honest discussions about resources that can be deployed, identify the role and value that others can play (volunteers etc.), increase ongoing engagement, subsequently lifespan and ownership of the plan<sup>5</sup>. This will lead to greater sustainability and future resilience. For example if a local area

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<sup>4</sup> Pathfinder evaluation - Twigger-Ross et al (2015)

<sup>5</sup> DEFRA - Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder Evaluation (2015)

hasn't experienced flooding for a long time apathy may set in, and involvement from purely a flood perspective will reduce. However, if one plan was developed which also covers a number of other threats or disruptions the community could feel rehearsed and prepared (e.g. fire, pollution and flooding etc.) this increases relevance, buy in and local ownership)<sup>6</sup>.

- As a result, there is still a lack of cohesion and understanding of roles and responsibilities and how these can come together at local level to increase community resilience and recovery.
- Currently, LRF have incident response plans in place across Wales that deal largely with the during stage of an incident (response and immediate or short term recovery).

### **Strengths:**

- LRFs are already working towards better integration of LRF plans with local community developed flood plans, improvements are being made, but not in all areas and not in a way that considers before, during and after cycles.
- Testing locally developed plans is a proven way to embed ownership and involvement and build community capital - both of which are essential in achieving long term resilience within communities<sup>7</sup>. Annual community events or local table top testing are both examples of how this can be achieved.

### **Weaknesses:**

- There are too many existing plans at the moment (with an acknowledgement that they need to be rationalised).

### **Practical actions to take this forward:**

- Develop a single plan to meet the local community's needs (undertaking this activity will increase awareness, buy-in and future engagement from the community).
- Integrate with existing LRF plans by getting public and local organisations around the table in pre-planning stage or when the plan is due for review.
- Develop a framework/checklist produced by professionals (statutory/voluntary) and public as this will assist with cohesion and consistency of rollout across Wales. Ensure that ongoing review and improvement from those delivering services (professionals) as well as those who would be receiving them (public) is inherent in this process.

### **Who should take this forward:**

- Wales Community Resilience Group,
- Supported by Wales Flood Group, and member structures including LRFs.

### **When can this be implemented: short medium or long term:**

- Short term improvements are being made to existing plans as part of local reviews led by LRFs where possible.
- Medium – long term to achieve consistency and co-ordination across Wales.

## **Option 5 – Better engagement with future generations (education of young people)**

### **Rationale:**

- Feedback from Flood Awareness Wales' telephone consultation with flood volunteers identified a gap in the involvement of younger community members in community flood

<sup>6</sup> emBRACE Policy Brief 8.2 an evidence based approach to supporting EU policy making and international engagement in building capabilities and capacities for Community Disaster resilience

<sup>7</sup> Resilience to extreme weather (2014) The Royal Society

risk management ('younger' referred to pre-retirement age and specifically 16-25 year olds).

- There are evidence gaps in existing literature and research around the value of engagement of young people regarding flood resilience.
- Evidence, then consideration is needed before organisations feel confident in understanding the value and allocating diminishing resources to targeting children and young people. There is a perception that this is longer term investment which may cause conflict, or be seen as a lower priority over immediate here and now funding requests, such as building or repairing flood defences, which are often locally or politically driven.

### **Strengths:**

- Young People research and evidence<sup>8</sup> demonstrates that although engaging this group can be challenging – if this is achieved, two key dimensions of the lifelong impacts of youth engagement in social action will be achieved;
  1. The acquisition of personal benefits for the young people which have lasting not just immediate effects and;
  2. Engagement in youth social action is more likely to increase an individual's willingness and engagement in future social action as an adult, which is likely to be accompanied by a second wave of benefits.
- Younger generations are the future home or business owners of Wales. Investing now and engaging at a younger age will ensure that they understand and accept challenges they will face in the future and what they can do to reduce them.
- Building flood risk resilience into the taught curriculum ensures consistent delivery of messages across Wales which reduces duplication of efforts by organisations who may be undertaking local or project based interventions.
- Delivery of flood risk resilience (through use of appropriate materials tools and methods in both formal and non-formal settings) is undertaken by experts who can engage and change behaviour without scaremongering.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Hard to integrate flood and resilience into an already full National Curriculum against competing priorities.
- Evidence Gap in literature and research around value of engagement of young people regarding flood resilience<sup>9</sup>.

### **Practical actions to take this forward:**

- Raise awareness between professional and voluntary organisations of **current good practice**, share and build on this (using portals for professionals – e.g. Resilience Direct) such as:
  1. Innovative engagement approaches developed by Save the Children and Dwr Cymru.
  2. NRW developed materials (Brownies Guides, Scouts and Cubs' Flood Awareness Badges, Welsh Bacalaureate Resources being developed around resilience and awareness).
- Implement learning and Recommendations from NRW's commissioned research (2016).

<sup>8</sup> Behavioural Insights team – evaluating youth social action

<sup>9</sup> Walker et al (2012) – cited in ERS literature review (2016)

***'The value of engaging young people (16-25 yrs) to increase Community Flood resilience'***

This research will identify what type of communication and engagement is most likely to influence long term sustainable behaviour as well as consider cost benefits of different tools and methods of engagement. A comprehensive literature review, plus primary research with focus groups of young people across Wales will result in learning that can be applied wider than just in relation to flooding so is expected to be of relevance to many organisations in shaping future delivery and planning of services.

**Who should take this forward:**

- Wales Community Resilience Group supported by Wales Flood Group and member organisations.

**When can this be implemented: short medium or long term:**

- Short term for awareness raising on current good practice techniques and methods.
- Medium and long to implement learning based on research in a more integrated cohesive manner across Wales.

## **Recommendation 13 – Flood Warning and Community Response**

**Rec 13: Work with sample communities to identify options to help sustain an effective local response to flood warnings. This should consider communities where effective response and or confidence in the warning system is low.**

5 options for appraisal emerged:

1. Improve local gathering of information.
2. Better education about risks.
3. Better local communication.
4. Improve the quality of warnings.
5. Improve the response to warnings.

### **Recommended option (group consensus) – Option 2: Better Education about Risks Rationale:**

- This is the logical start point.
- Resolving this option will result in an increased understanding by the local community of their local and individual flood risk and what they can do.
- People need to know what they are dealing with locally.
- Dispels myths that defence schemes are ‘problem solved’ and will stop all future flood risk.

### **Strengths:**

- Better education helps authorities to clarify their roles and manage local expectations.
- Local people with knowledge are clear where they add value and can help themselves.
- Information is already readily available and organisations are focussing on improving what is available (for example NRW’s flood warning improvement service project).
- Helps to dispel myths that the public are helpless and reliant on organisations to take actions. Being better educated results in a greater understanding of what they can do about it themselves.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Dealing with apathy and disbelief that flooding will affect them.
- Practical implications are visible – increases in Insurance premiums once risk is highlighted, effect on house prices.
- Current information is available but this is still technical and not tailored to local communities needs.
- Unknown route to do this, who leads or how to link with other organisational priorities.

### **Practical actions to take this forward:**

- Ensure public messages about risk and actions are based on Recommendations and learning from Sciencewise<sup>10</sup> and Ipsos Mori<sup>11</sup> Research.

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<sup>10</sup> Public Engagement & Flood Risk Comms ‘Sciencewise’ (2014) DEFRA & EA

<sup>11</sup> Public Flood Survey - Wales (2013) – Ipsos Mori

### Overarching Principles for flood risk communication

- Consideration of different audiences.
- Small and limited information may be insufficient to motivate action through fear – accurately describing the risks and impacts is more likely to lead to action.
- Technical descriptions of risks and probabilities is unlikely to be widely understood.
- Clarity on what is happening before, during and after a flood, and what actions they should take is important in flood communications.
- Communicating what actions individuals should undertake should be accompanied by information on what local/national organisations are doing too – that is, we're all in this together.
- Focus on making information local, with historical context.
- Focus should be less on the negative impacts of floods (for example posters) and more about the positives, what people can do about it.

*Table 2 - Sciencewise (2015) Principles for flood risk communication*

- Consistent suite of National Public Information to be collated for wider use (Recommendation 15) which clarifies what warnings look and sound like, what actions need to be taken by whom and when.
- Produce a range of hard copy and online versions to cater for all public needs and to ensure maximum accessibility.
- Use area LRF groups, specifically newly forming LRF community resilience groups, as the network for sharing advice and information to other local partners and local community.
- Establish a continuous improvement approach that is based on customer feedback – at both the national level which draws in Flood Warning Service improvement projects and local level evaluation (those who deliver services and those who receive them).

#### **Who should take this forward:**

- National Level – NRW, Local Authorities and LRFs.
- Supported locally by 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector organisations and interest groups, Town and Community Councils and flood wardens.

#### **When can this be implemented: short medium or long term:**

- Short term (6 months) for collation of materials and dissemination through existing networks.
- Medium term for Flood Warning Service improvements and customer feedback processes (recommended annually).

## Recommendation 15 – General Public Flood Advice and Information

***Rec 15: Produce and communicate nationally consistent, public focused flood information. Produce and communicate the types and availability of property level protection measures and the support available within Wales.***

This Recommendation was considered at the May Professional Partner workshop, and subsequently developed between May – to date. It was not considered or ‘ranked’ at the 3<sup>rd</sup> December workshop.

The reasons for this are twofold;

- Firstly, as there is a wealth of recently published evidence and learning available upon which to draw conclusions and Recommendations (including identification of **existing** portals, sites and networks that demonstrate good practice and host good quality advice and information).
- Secondly, as time was limited at the December workshop, it was unrealistic to plan for all Recommendations to be considered, so priority was given to those that would benefit most from the specialist local experience of the attendees, rather than for an issue that had generic commonalities.

### **Rationale:**

There are identified gaps and a lack of consistency in the provision of good quality consistent flood advice and information within Wales.

Many organisations are developing excellent resources, local advice and information guides, but without a consistent platform or communications strategy to promote and share these wider within Wales. As a result, resources, skills and efforts are being duplicated by organisations and there are still acknowledged gaps – such as the post recovery gap - where to signpost people for social and emotional support.

### **There is a clear need to;**

1. Produce separate tailored advice for professional and public audiences;
2. Consider and address issues regarding data protection, commercial sensitivity and confidentiality around sharing of information when storing and sharing advice for and between professionals.

For the **public** the following needs to be considered:

- Focus public information on message that there is a risk and what practical actions they can take (learning from R&D Recommendations – Sciencewise & Ipsos Mori Wales’ public flood surveys).
- Provide better and more timely information to the public – what they want, when they need it, who can help etc. using the most appropriate communication channels.
- Create standardised messages for public – which can be used for media and information purposes by all organisations.
- Advice on Insurance, property level protection funding and help available form the basis of most frequently asked questions and identified gaps.
- Improve the engagement of communities in the ‘before’ element of planning – especially in the development of flood plans, as an effective way of sharing information and advice to those who aren’t online or with access to ICT.

For professionals the following needs to be considered:

- Build better links with partners to increase understanding of who can provide support before, during and after a flood.
- Build better links with partners to share and communicate good quality public advice and information with a consistent approach to signposting public to sources of further support.
- Focus on the ‘after’ flooding gap support available - specifically considering the most vulnerable. These need to focus more on Faith Services, Third Sector and Independent provision including The National Flood Forum<sup>12</sup>.

### **Practical actions to take this forward:**

- Establish a **public** call centre/service - One point of contact for all different types of flooding – specific for Wales.
- Develop a National website/ microsite for **public** – ensure this links and signposts to other organisational websites. Use good practice model developed by SEPA<sup>13</sup>.
- Make **public** information more accessible too hard to reach groups – checklist against good practice guidance - what’s developed against DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) then disseminate through relevant networks and local groups
- Pilot an annual Wales Flood Conference for public, professionals and all partner organisations who play a role or have an interest in flood risk management. Consider using the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) event.
- Strengthen Joint Communications meetings between NRW, EA, SEPA, Met Office & DARDNI (Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland) established to generate and promote nationally developed consistent public messages and advice that can be shared and communicated by all organisations)
- Establish All Wales Professional Partner Network training events to increase understanding of roles and responsibilities, share new innovations, best practice examples and sharing of resources (time, expertise and money)
- Establish continuous improvement cycle and improve information provided through customer feedback and online evaluation to revise and respond to information needs.
- Increase access to and use of Resilience Direct for professional partners including voluntary orgs, and promote this through the Wales Flood Group, Warning and Informing Group, Community Resilience Group and LRF Community Resilience subgroups.
- Ensure information hosted on microsite addresses **known** information gaps;
  - Funding and grant availability for repair/recovery or general resilience.
  - Insurance information.
  - How to access and how to use Property/Individual Level Protection (PLP/IPP);
  - Advice on pets.
  - Health advice including tips for physical post flood clean up and dealing with contamination.
  - Health advice for immediate and long term social and emotional support for those affected by flooding.

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<sup>12</sup> National Flood Forum <http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk>

<sup>13</sup> SEPA Public Microsite <http://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/report-a-flood/>

### **Recommended option – (what to do first)**

All of the above are relevant, but the recommended next step is to establish an online ‘micro site’ for Wales that all organisations can signpost public to for consistent advice and information that covers before during and after a flood cycle.

Note – indicative costings have been obtained for development and launching of the site<sup>14</sup>. However, there needs to be a longer term commitment to funding to maintain and develop the service to ensure that it remains responsive, relevant and of use to the public who need to use it.

### **Who should take this forward:**

- This should be taken in the first instance to the All Wales Community Resilience Group (Welsh Government).
- Supported by Wales Flood Group; Wales Warning and Informing Group and member organisations.

The rationale for this is that this group functions at all Wales Level, its membership includes representation from many of the relevant organisations including the LRFs and has a wider remit that allows for consideration of the whole flood cycle in the context of longer term social and emotional resilience. NRW and other organisations can assist with the micro-site development.

### **When can this be implemented: short medium or long term:**

- Short term improvements can be made by greater sharing of existing information, using the Wales Community Resilience Group and LRF Community Resilience subgroups.
- Medium/long Term for development and roll out of Public Microsite.

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<sup>14</sup> Available from SEPA & NRW

## **Recommendation 16 – Flood Plans & Recommendation 17 – Flood Plan Leads / Volunteers**

**Rec 16: *Using the experience from these recent storms, identify and evaluate options for the future development of local Flood Plans in coastal areas and identify a recommended option to help these be more effective at improving community resilience.***

**Rec 17: *Using the experience from these recent storms, identify and evaluate options for the future development of local Flood Plan Leads / Warden Volunteers in coastal areas and identify a recommended option.***

The 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 workshop attendees considered plans and volunteers together – due to strong linkages and interdependencies.

The following 5 options have been considered for appraisal against both Recommendations.

1. Improve the engagement of communities in planning.
2. Better understanding of who does what in the local community flood plan.
3. Maintain community engagement if there is no flood, or after a flood.
4. Better implementation of the local community flood plan.
5. Learn and implement lessons after the event.

### **Rationale:**

Very good examples of integrated flood plans exist currently, but this is not the case for all communities facing flood risk across Wales.

Differences in statutory responsibility for management of different sources of flooding, resource restrictions and uncertainty about current and future roles and responsibilities is hampering the obvious good will of professional partners to do more collaboratively.

This is compounded by lack of support networks, and easily accessible information and advice.

Hundreds of volunteers are currently supporting flood work but support and advice networks for them are non-consistent. They cannot be fully effective in their roles whilst gaps and lack of clarity exist at local and national level within Wales.

### **Strengths:**

- Volunteers make a vital contribution to flood risk management, harnessing skills and experience which improves local preparation, delivery and response and can help to reduce impacts of flooding (physical, emotional and social<sup>15</sup>).
- Understanding who does what and when as part of a continuous planning process with good local engagement will improve the quality and execution of the plan in a more coordinated way.
- There are good examples which others can learn from of flood and resilience plans across Wales<sup>16</sup> including examples of community led work which is then supported by professionals, rather than being led by them<sup>17</sup>.
- Co-ordinated plans reduce duplication of efforts between professional partners and public; so save time and money.
- Planning and testing in advance acts as an effective mechanism to identify gaps around practical actions that would need to be carried out at all 3 stages of the plan cycle.

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<sup>15</sup> Pathfinder evaluation

<sup>16</sup> Flood Awareness Wales programme data

<sup>17</sup> Cynefin Case Studies – Good Practice Wales

<http://www.goodpractice.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=96&mid=187&fileid=78>

- ‘Scenario’ testing plans allows forward planning and consideration of local practical issues before they happen, this includes management of convergent/ spontaneous volunteers<sup>18</sup> can be addressed through plans.
- Volunteering provides a range of wellbeing benefits to the individual and increases social capital and resilience<sup>19,20</sup>.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Learning after the event is still reactive - this needs to be more responsive.
- Flood Plans – needs to be a circular not linear process – think sequence not priority and make sure they cover before, during and after a flood.
- Still too much reliance on emergency response stage – due to statutory responsibility.
- Lack of understanding on how to obtain wider engagement at community level – especially where apathy exists.
- Learning after the event - needs to be made less reactive and more responsive.
- Need to look at improving what’s done, how we learn and how this is shared wider across Wales to other communities (as organisations already do a lot of this, but it is piecemeal).

### **Practical actions to take this forward:**

- Consider and disseminate learning from FAW’s Independent Review commissioned by NRW. The final report will be published in April 2016. The review aims to;
  - Assess the effectiveness of community engagement and awareness raising approaches since the beginning of FAW (2010) to date; specifically the current operating model of Community Flood Plans, supported by Flood Plan Volunteers.
  - To provide evidence and Recommendations to inform future practice against current and new drivers.

Learning from this research can be applied wider than just to flooding so is expected to be of relevance to many organisations in shaping future delivery regarding community resilience.

- Run Flood Plan Lead Network events. They are valuable and provide multiple benefits<sup>21</sup>.
- Share emergency plans with relevant agencies and increase communication links with the public and partners on a more local level.
- Develop a blank Health and Safety risk checklist by Flood Wardens for Flood Wardens to be progressed.

### **Who should take this forward:**

- This should be led at National Level by Welsh Government – through the Wales Flood Group and Local Resilience Forum structures. NRW can and will assist with this, but it needs buy-in from all parties and to consider learning from FAW reports.
- All Wales Community Resilience Group (Welsh Government) to consider Network Event.
- Wales Flood Group and appropriate LRF structures to increase sharing of good engagement practice and encourage better integration of LRF and community flood plans.

<sup>18</sup> Considering the role of convergent Volunteers - DEFRA

<http://sciencesearch.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&Completed=0&ProjectID=18779>

<sup>19</sup> Investing and appraising the involvement of volunteers in achieving FCRM outcomes – DEFRA EA

<sup>20</sup> Volunteers contribution to flood resilience – Forest Research (2014)

<sup>21</sup> FAW Volunteer Network Event pilot Evaluation

- Natural Resources Wales to support volunteers with their H&S checklist and promote use through Volunteer network mechanisms (Facebook page, partner networks).

#### **When can this be implemented: short medium or long term:**

- Dissemination of learning from FAW review – short term.
- Network Events – Medium / long term.
- Flood plan integration and improvement – medium/long term.
- Volunteer H&S checklist – short term.

#### **Recommended option – (what to do first)**

A combination of the above is required, starting with raising awareness of a better understanding of who does what in all resilience plans, and particularly local community flood plans.

This should be led at National Level by Welsh Government – through the Wales Flood Group and Local Resilience Forum structures. NRW can and will assist with this, but it needs buy-in from all parties.

However, as indicated in Recommendation 14, this cannot be fully achieved without first achieving better engagement at local level.

## **Conclusion**

At first glance, project 3 can appear complex in nature, with many detailed interdependent Recommendations. The truth is that it is!

The initial scope of the project was expanded by all of those involved so that it didn't just look at coastal areas, it covered the whole of Wales. It was agreed as follows;

***'To create self-supporting flood resilient communities, from all aspects of flooding, for all of Wales that considers the whole cycle of flooding (before, during and after a flood)'***

Project 3 also needed to be fully inclusive in design, so that the Recommendations met the needs of every stakeholder involved. This covered everyone who had been, or could be affected by flooding, as well as individuals and organisations (statutory and voluntary) who provide essential support services to those at flood risk.

#### **What's needed?**

1. Improved Inter-Agency Working.
2. Better Engagement.
3. Better public information on all aspects of flooding.
4. Develop broader community resilience plans at local level.
5. Better engagement with future generations (education of young people).

The report usefully identifies whether the actions require short, medium or long term implementation and identifies which organisation/group or network should take it forward (*note – taking it forward does not necessarily mean they are responsible for delivery*).

## What are the immediate actions?

- **Improve Interagency Working** - At Wales level, this requires the All Wales Community Resilience Group and the Wales Flood Group to consider and advise on how the detailed actions within this report would best be taken forward and implemented within Wales. ([Recommendation 14](#)).
- **Establish an online public microsite for Wales** so that all organisations can signpost the public to a consistent source of good quality public information and advice on all aspects of flooding ([Recommendation 15](#)).
- **Better Engagement at Wales level** should be led by Welsh Government – through the Wales Flood Group and Local Resilience Forum structures.
- **Better Engagement at local level** requires the 4 LRF Resilience Sub Groups to integrate emergency response plans with community flood plans so that there is a consistency of approach across Wales ([Recommendation 16](#)). This will also increase and improve the local understanding of risks, roles and responsibilities; the response to flood warnings ([Recommendation 13](#)) and improve the engagement of local flood plan volunteers and other local resources ([Recommendation 17](#)).

## What else?

As well as the immediate actions, there are a number of ongoing improvement activities detailed in the report that will need to be progressed. Natural Resources Wales can and will assist Welsh Government with the co-ordination of this, but it needs buy-in from all parties to ensure effective implementation, in order to achieve long term sustainable community flood resilience for Wales.

## Appendices / Available Publications

All documents and publications referenced within the report can be accessed by clicking on the links provided;

Alternatively email; [floodawareness.wales@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk](mailto:floodawareness.wales@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk)

Or telephone 0300 065 4390 to request a copy.

### **NATURAL RESOURCES WALES**

Flood Awareness Wales;

1. 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 Project 3 Coastal workshop
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 Project 3 Coastal workshop
3. 5<sup>th</sup> November 2015 Volunteer Network Pilot - Swansea outputs
4. 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 Volunteer Network Pilot - Llandudno outputs

Public Flood Survey - Wales (2013) – Ipsos Mori

Value of Engaging Young People in Future Flood Resilience 2016 – ERS Ltd

Flood Awareness Wales – Independent Review 2016 – Collingwood Environmental Planning Ltd

### **WELSH GOVERNMENT RESEARCH;**

Welsh Government (2012) - Flood Advocacy and Support Service for Communities in Wales (prepared by AD research & analysis Ltd) <http://gov.wales/docs/desh/publications/130304flood-advocacy-executive-summary-en.pdf>

National Principles for Public Engagement (Welsh Government & Participation Cymru) <http://www.participationcymru.org.uk/national-principles>

### **OTHER;**

emBRACE – [www.embrace-eu.org](http://www.embrace-eu.org)

Good Practice Wales - <http://www.goodpractice.wales/home>

National Flood Forum - <http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk>

### **DEFRA /ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PUBLISHED RESEARCH;**

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=Detail&Completed=0&FOSID=12>

Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder Evaluation (2015)

Managing Convergent Volunteers

Investing and appraising the involvement of volunteers in achieving FCRM outcomes.

Volunteer's contribution to flood resilience – Forest Research (2014)

Supporting uptake of low cost resilience for properties at risk of flooding – including testing a new approach with properties in Tewkesbury



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