

Appendix B

Further Details on Storms Arwen, Malik and Corrie

November 2021/January 2022

On Friday 26 November 2021, the Met Office issued a series of Yellow, Amber and Red Warnings across the United Kingdom, Scotland, Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire respectively for significant high winds. The red warning forecast winds of 90 mph. Storm Arwen was a powerful extratropical cyclone that was part of the 2021-2022 European windstorm season. It affected the UK, Ireland and France, bringing strong winds and snow. The IJB/Partnership, under its statutory duty to manage emergencies as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, worked together with other category 1 and 2 responders in the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership (GLRP) to coordinate the response, collaborate and share information with each other and the public. As a result of Storm Arwen, there was significant, extensive, and widespread power loss across Grampian with approximately 65,000 customers left without power. Many communities were without electrical power until Friday 3rd December 2021, although these were mainly in Aberdeenshire.

During incidents of this nature, the Partnership relies upon national resilience structures and will participate in GLRP meetings which in the case of Arwen were chaired by Police Scotland who had declared a major incident. Over and above these meetings, there is a strong reliance on partnership working to benefit our response and to support others with their own challenges. Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership was part of Aberdeen City Council's Incident Management Team from its inception as it was clear that there was significant potential for our vulnerable citizens to be affected by way of power outage or inability to travel for care or receive home care. Bon Accord Care colleagues also assisted with the overall Care for People cell function as and when needed.

Scottish and Southern Energy (SSEN) provided each local authority with details of customers without power, including SSEN priority customers, and this was used to check up on and support our vulnerable citizens. This is a challenging process during incidents of this scale, as partners are reliant on SSEN data which is changing constantly as engineers resolve faults and as part of that process, reveal new ones.

Currently the City only has two official community resilience groups (Cults and Peterculter). During Storm Arwen they worked with their communities and assisted the overall emergency response directed by partners. The Red Cross assisted, particularly in the Shire, offering staff if required for door knocking and leaflet drops. Working with the third sector and communities is key to the response as the blue light services and other category one responders are occupied and drawing on limited resources.

Some of the debriefing processes and indeed some of the elements of recovery

from the storm, are still ongoing. Subsequent storms Malik and Corrie have occurred during the recovery phases and this has added extra challenge but provided an opportunity to quickly implement some of the lessons learned. The debrief process is key to ensuring lessons are learned and shared swiftly and to continued evolution of resilience practice within the Partnership. The Partnership took part in debriefs held by both the Council and the GLRP and will consider the themes and outcomes at its own Civil Contingencies Group.

A number of themes/observations were picked up during the ACC debrief process to date and these are now set up as internal workstreams and a priority for 2022:

Persons at Risk Database (PARD) – this describes accessing databases which include data on pre-determined categories of vulnerable persons, for instance, those with carers, social care needs, those in areas of likely flooding. During an emergency the identified data can be extracted from one or more database from one or more partner organisation, integrated and laid over geographical information systems to allow our most vulnerable citizens to be quickly identified and supported. During all three storms, SEN were unable to give consistently clear data. This meant that the IMT, reporting into the Care for People cell of the GLRP, was reliant on heavily manualised checks to gather relevant data, which is inefficient and labour intensive. The Council has established a Task and Finish Group to oversee the development of a city PARD to completion, before next winter. The Partnership are represented on this group.

Community Resilience – individual, community and business resilience is a key priority as this has shown it supports the emergency services and local authorities' emergency response when incidents of scale take place. A communication plan is currently being developed by the Council which will be supported by the Aberdeen City Care For People Group (co-chaired by the Partnership) comprising social media campaigns, flyers targeting registered city volunteers and vulnerable areas of the city, as well as printed media such as posters for community centers. This is scheduled for April through to October and will cover individual resilience, community groups and business resilience.

The Partnership have engaged with the wider voluntary sector in the City to encourage volunteers and support for the response to incidents (storms and covid related). Any future planned response will require this "city" approach and the Partnership will continue to work with agencies and 3rd Sector/voluntary organisations to achieve this.

The priorities being taken forward, following the debriefs internal and external, over the next 12 months and where practicable before the start of the next winter period are as follows:

1. Completion of a Power Resilience Plan for the City which dovetails with partners' plans;
2. Further development of community and business resilience in the City to ensure that our communities and businesses are as resilient as possible during future weather events of this nature, as well as other emergencies;

3. Creation of a Persons at Risk Database for the City.

The Partnership have participated in the Council's debrief to Storms Malik and Corrie, with a debrief held on 9th February. Across the Grampian area over 40,000 homes lost power, with associated mobile phone coverage and private water supply issues. The City had approximately 2000 properties off power at the peak of the storms for a number of days. The priority throughout was the vulnerable in our communities and once again we worked closely with SSEN and the Council to identify and support these individuals. Whilst each of these storms had a lesser overall impact on infrastructure than Arwen, the impact of a double storm tested our resilience once more.

Many of the initial learnings from Arwen were taken forward into these most recent storm responses, as well as underlining what we had identified as a key gaps, such as need for a City PARD, wider community resilience teams, all of which are in train and the Partnership are represented at various working groups that are progressing this work.