Longford County Council

# MAJOR EMERGENCY PLAN

2021



| Title: | Major Emergency Plan |
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| Revision: | 12 |
| Date: | November 2021 |
| Status: | Released |
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| Approved By: | John Brannigan, Director of Services |

## Record of Issues and Amendments

| Revison No. | Date | Section Amended | Amended By | Description |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Sep-2008 | Initial Release | J Keane | |
| 1a | Feb-2009 | Appendices | J Keane | |
| 2 | Jan-2010 | Plan & Appendices | J Keane | |
| 3 | Oct-2011 | Plan & Appendices | J. Keane | |
| 4 | Mar-2013 | Plan & Appendices | M. Lough | |
| 5 | Feb-2015 | Plan & Appendices | M. Lough | |
| 6 | May-2015 | Plan & Appendices | M. Lough | Updated Ciaran Murphy as Acting D.O.S. replacing Jack Kilgallen |
| 7 | Feb-2016 | Plan & Appendices | M. Lough | Section 1.7, 1.8, 1.9 Updated details of plan revision and distribution<br><br>Updated Contact Details, Training Details and persons nominated to roles in Appendix |
| 8 | Nov-2016 | Appendices | M. Lough | Updated Contact Details, Training Details and persons nominated to roles |
| 9 | Dec-2017 | Appendices | M. Lough | Updated Contact Details, Training Details and persons nominated to roles |
| 10 | Oct-2018 | Appendices | M. Lough | Updated Contact Details, Training Details and persons nominated to roles |

| 11 | Feb-2020 | Appendices | M. Lough | Updated Contact Details, Training Details and persons nominated to roles |
| 12 | Sept–2021 | Appendices | D. Kilcline | Updated Contact Details, Training Details and persons nominated to roles |

**Contents**

# Section 1 - Introduction to Plan

## 1.1 Introduction

This document sets out mechanisms for co-ordination at all levels of Major Emergency management – onsite, at local level and at regional level. It defines common language or terminology to make inter-agency working simpler and it introduces a system to immediately determine a lead agency in every emergency situation. It also provides for linking to national level emergency management.

## 1.2 Background to the Major Emergency Plan

This Major Emergency plan for Longford County Council has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Government issued document 'A Framework for Emergency Management' (2006).

## 1.3 The objectives of the Major Emergency Plan

### *Definition*

The purpose of the Major Emergency Plan is to have arrangements in place that will enable the three principal emergency services (P.E.S.) of the Principal Response Agencies (P.R.A.s) i.e. the County Council, An Garda Siochána and the Health Service Executive to co-ordinate their efforts to the Planning, Preparation and response to a major emergency event.

**A Major Emergency is any event which, usually with little or no warning, causes or threatens death or injury, serious disruption of essential services or damage to property, the environment or infrastructure beyond the normal capabilities of the principle emergency services in the area in which the event occurs and requires the activation of specific additional procedures and the Mobilisation of additional resources to ensure an effective, co-ordinated response.**

### 1.3.1 Protection and care of the public at times of vulnerability

The primary objective of any response to a major emergency is to provide effective arrangements for the rescue, care, treatment and rehabilitation of all of the individuals who are affected by the emergency.

### 1.3.2 Clear leadership in times of crisis

The Chief Executive of Longford County Council is responsible for the organisations Major Emergency management arrangements and preparedness, as well as for the effectiveness of the response to any major emergency which occurs in its functional area.

### 1.3.3 Early and appropriate response

The Major Emergency Plan outlines the process used to determine if a major emergency is to be declared and will specify the principal response agency and the personnel authorised and trained in the procedures for declaring a major emergency.

### 1.3.4 Efficient, coordinated operations

The Major Emergency Mobilisation procedure for Longford County Council will be implemented immediately on notification of the declaration of a major emergency. Each principal response agency will work together in a preordained co-ordinated response.

### 1.3.5 Realistic and rational approach, capable of being delivered

Major emergencies are, by definition, rare events, which overwhelm the normal capabilities of the Local Authority organisation. This plan will outline the arrangements in place to authorise the procurement and use of resources in the response to a major emergency.

### 1.3.6 Transparent systems, with accountability

Longford County Council will identify, match and formally nominate competent individuals and alternates to the key roles in the management of a Major Emergency, to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in this Plan.

### 1.3.7 Harnessing community spirit

Longford County Council will play an important role in developing and strengthening the resilience of communities as part of their mitigation efforts. Resilient communities are particularly important in coping with certain kinds of emergency, such as flooding or those involving evacuation or sheltering. Resilient communities can play a key role in the protection, rescue and care of any individuals within the community, who, because of dependency or disability, need particular attention during emergencies.

### 1.3.8   The ethos of self protection

In many emergency situations, the public respond to assist friends, neighbours and even complete strangers when disaster strikes. It is well recognised that communities that are empowered to be part of the response to a disaster, rather than allowing themselves to be simply victims of it, are more likely to recover and to restore normality quickly.

### 1.3.9   Maintenance of essential services

It is essential that services to the community are maintained throughout the duration of the emergency and that the functions carried by those involved in the principal response agencies are still maintained and strengthened if possible.

### 1.3.10   Safe working

Longford County Councilare committed to the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff who are responding to emergencies.  Appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are to be provided for response personnel at the site, as well as for survivors. These facilities may include the provision of food and drink, rest facilities and sanitary facilities.

## 1.4 The scope of the Major Emergency Plan and the situations / conditions in which the Plan will be activated.

The Plan provides for a coordinated response to major emergencies arising, for example, from fires, explosions, gas releases, transportation accidents, spillages of dangerous substances, and severe weather emergencies.

The types of emergency normally resulting from oil supply crises, electricity blackouts, industrial disputes etc. are of a different nature and are not catered for in this Plan. It is recognised, however, that such emergencies could result in a situation, requiring activation of the Major Emergency Plan.

This plan shall consist of **two** distinct parts;

1. The Plan is to provide uniform procedures in relation to those matters which can be standardised nationally e.g. activation of Plan, control of operations, allocation of functions etc.;

2. The Appendices which are attached to this Plan are specific to Longford County Council and contain information relevant to their functional areas and the operation of the Plan;

## 1.5 The relationship / inter-operability of the Major Emergency Plan with other emergency plans.

This Plan sets out arrangements which will facilitate the principal emergency services in scaling-up the response required, so as to utilise the full resources of the principal response agencies, and to work together in the management of large-scale incidents. The Framework also provides mechanisms for linking the work of the principal response agencies with those at other levels of Government.

"A framework for Major Emergency Management" (2006) requires that each principal response agency's individual Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed for inter-operability with the plans of its partner principal response agencies and for consistency with the Framework by the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management.

When each principal response agency's individual Major Emergency Plan has been reviewed for consistency with the Framework, all of the plans within the region must be assessed for inter-operability including a check for consistency in the following areas:

1. Procedure for declaring a Major Emergency

2. Identify the point of contact for all other agencies and follow agreed activation procedures

3. The role of the Controller of Operations

4. The designation of the Lead Agency

5. Exercising the Co-ordination role at the site

6. Nomination of Local Co-ordination Centre

7. Activation of the Local Co-ordination Group

8. Operation of the Local Co-ordination Group

9. Activation and operation of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

10. Arrangements for dealing with the media.

## 1.6 The language / terminology of the Plan;

In situations where different organisations are working together, there is a need for common vocabulary to enable them to communicate effectively.

Differences in terminologies and nomenclatures used by responders from various agencies or diverse technical disciplines can seriously impede the achievement of coordinated and safe emergency management. Therefore a set of relevant terms and acronyms are provided in *Appendix U* which should be used by **all** agencies.

## 1.7 The distribution of the Plan

Copies of the plan will be distributed to all departments of Longford County Council. The distribution list is given below and a full set of names and addresses is provided in *Appendices E and Appendix I.*

**Longford County Council MEP Distribution List**

| Longford County Council | Chief Executive Officer |
|---|---|
| | Senior Management Team |
| | Senior Officers with key roles in MEM |
| | Senior Fire Officers |
| | Civil Defence Officer |
| | MEM Resource Box in Document Store (3 Printed Copies) |
| | All members of the Local Coordination Group, Onsite Coordination Group and Crisis Management Team shall have access to the plan |

| | |
|---|---|
| | on a sharepoint or network location and will be notified of any revisions. |
| **Neighbouring & Regional County Councils** | Westmeath, Laois, Offaly (uploaded on regional extranet and notified)<br><br>Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan (circulated electronically by email) |
| **An Garda Síochána** | Roscommon/Longford Division and Westmeath Division<br><br>(circulated electronically by email) |
| **Health Service Executive** | Dublin Mid-Leinster Region (circulated electronically by email) |

## 1.8    The status of the Plan and when and how it will be reviewed / updated

The Major Emergency Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. If deemed necessary, the plan may be updated/ reviewed after each Major Emergency Exercise has been carried out and after its activation in a real emergency. This plan was initially implemented on the 30th September 2008.

## 1.9    Public access to the Plan

The Major Emergency Management Plan, excluding the appendices will be available to the public on Longford Fire Service website at https://www.longfordcoco.ie/services/emergency-services/fire-service/mem/

# Section 2    Longford County Council and its Functional Area

## 2.1    Longford County Council functions in emergency management, and response capability.

The functional area of this plan is the administrative county of Longford County Council and includes the towns of Longford, Granard, Edgeworthstown, Lanesboro and Ballymahon. In the event of a major emergency the role of Longford County Council is to ensure life safety by providing a top class emergency service in the form of the Fire Service and Civil Defence.

Longford County Council will ensure that danger areas are made safe in order to permit other agencies to undertake their recovery and rehabilitation operations. In the immediate aftermath of an incident principal concerns include support for the other emergency services, support and care for the local and wider community, use its resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and co-ordination of the voluntary organisations.

In the 'recovery' phase the local authority will be responsible to lead and co-ordinate the rehabilitation of the community and the restoration of the environment.

## 2.2    Characteristics of the functional area of Longford County Council.

Longford is a county of approximately 1091 km$^2$in area, occupying a central position within the Country and bounded by Counties Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan and Westmeath. The River Shannon, Lough Forbes and Lough Ree form the County boundary to the west and south, while Lough Gowna forms much of the north-eastern boundary. The general topography of the County may be described as undulating lowland, however, within this classification comes several sub-types such as the extensive commercial peatlands of the south-west, lake lands of the west, south and north-east and agricultural lowland with deciduous forest of the south-east and intermittent pockets of coniferous forest. Ardagh Mountain and the Cornhill area through to Lough Gowna represent the two upland areas. (see Appendix R)

## 2.3    Partner principal response agencies and their assigned functions in major emergencies.

Other agencies responsible for Emergency Services in this area are:-

- An Garda Síochána Roscommon/Longford Division.

- Health Service Executive (Dublin Mid-Leinster Area).

Assistance may be required by other agencies such as the Defence Forces, Civil Defence, Red Cross, Mountain Rescue etc.

Where Defence Force assistance is required to aid the Civil Power this should be channelled through An Garda Síochána to Defence Forces Headquarters (DFHQ).

Where Defence Force assistance is required to aid the Civil Authority Longford County Council can contact the Operations Duty Officer of the 4th Western Brigade based at Costume Barracks, Athlone.

In accordance with Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreement (SLAs), the Defence Forces will operate under the provisions of the Defence Act, 1954 to 1998, as amended.

## 2.4 The region to which Longford County Council belongs for major emergency preparedness purposes, and the areas from which it may receive mutual aid (or may contribute aid to) via the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination.

Under certain specific circumstances regional level major emergencies may be declared, with a Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination activated. This will provide for mutual aid, support and co-ordination facilities to be activated in a region, the boundaries of which are determined to suit the exigencies of the particular emergency. There are eight regions in total that have been created for Major Emergency purposes, see Appendix S.

Longford County Council belong to the Midlands region. This region incorporates the following counties of Longford, Westmeath, Offaly and Laois. The map below shows the eight regions and Longford's place in the Midlands region. An inter-agency Regional Steering Group and Regional Working Group have been formed for the Midlands Region and a Regional Plan has been prepared to deal with Regional Level Emergencies.
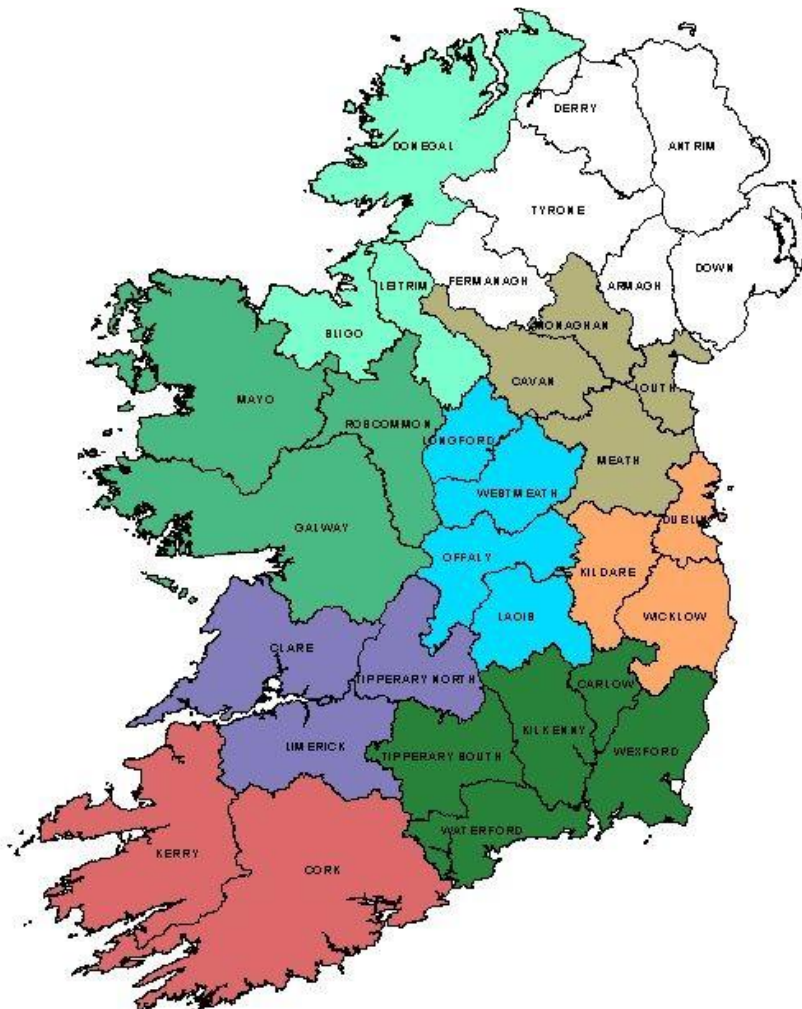


**Map of Regional Areas**

# Section 3 - Risk Assessment for the Area

## 3.1 History of area in terms of emergency events.

Longford County Council has recorded only one event which necessitated the activation of the Major Emergency Plan. This event occurred in 1995 and involved a Bulk L.P.G. Tanker igniting and the resulting evacuation of the town of Edgeworthstown including a Nursing Home. The driver of the L.P.G. truck was the single fatality.

## 3.2 The general and specific risks that may be faced locally and regionally.

The Longford County Council All Hazard Risk Assessment Process and the Midland Regional Major Emergency Planning Group recorded the general and specific risks that may be faced in County Longford and within the Midland region, see Appendix T.

- Meteorological – Severe Storms or Blizzard.

- Hydrological – Heavy Rainfall or Flooding.

- Geological – Forest and Peat land Fires.

- Transportation – Rail, Road &Waterway.

- Technological – Industrial Accident & Building Collapse.

- Civil Hazards – Personnel, Power Supply & Animal Disease.

## 3.3 A list of the scenarios selected as exemplars on which preparedness is based.

The Longford County Council All Hazard Risk Assessment Process did not highlight any specific risks to the operations of the organisation which required an immediate preventative or mitigation response.

The process did highlight potential vulnerabilities in the organisations current state of preparedness for a Major Emergency event in the County. It is one of the objectives of this Plan to assist with addressing how Longford County Council plan and prepare for a potential Major Emergency in the future.

The process of completing the All Hazard Risk Assessment identified several potential hazards presenting similar risks within the county. It is considered that by planning response strategies for the scenarios recorded as part of the regional Risk Assessment that these will represent exemplars for the organisations preparedness for a Major Emergency event, see Appendix T.

## 3.4 Reference to risk management / mitigation / risk reduction strategies, including contacts with risk holders and risk regulators.

The All Hazard Risk Assessment process identified a schedule of Hazards and the following Risk management / mitigation / reduction strategies were examined where their elimination is not feasible;

- Reduce the risk that the hazard will be realized (likelihood);

- Reduce the immediate impact of any emergency on the communities, regions or facilities threatened;

- Reduce the risk that the event will result in an escalating emergency.

This process identified the organizations with the responsibility for the mitigation of specific hazards within their care ("risk holders") as well as the bodies with the function of regulating such companies through statutory provisions or self-regulation ("risk regulators").

The risk mitigation measures which are either in place or are required are recorded in Parts 5 and 6 of the Risk Assessment process for each Hazard considered.

## 3.5 Site / event specific emergency plans that exist or are required.

The Longford County Council Risk Assessment process recorded some examples of existing site specific emergency plans for facilities in the county. These include;

- The Crisis Management Emergency Plan prepared by the ESB for the Lough Ree Power Generating Station.

- Event Management Plan developed for Flancare Park by Longford Town FC.

- Event Management Plan developed for Pearse Park by Longford GAA County Board.

- Abbeyshrule Air Show Plan developed by Longford Aviation Ltd.

- Event Management Plan for the Longford Town Dead of Night Festival.

There may be other Event Plans prepared from time to time for what are relatively small scale local festivals held at temporary venues around the County.

This Major Emergency Plan will endeavor to inform the bodies who have responsibility for the development of site / event specific emergency plans that such plans should have complementary operating procedures in place.

**Longford County Council will review site and event-specific emergency plans for consistency with its Major Emergency Plan, in conjunction with site and/or event emergency plan owners and appropriate regulatory bodies.**

# Section 4 - Resources for Emergency Response

## 4.1 The structure / resources / services of the Council, which may be used for emergency response.

There are 3 Directors of Service at Longford County Council who report directly to the Chief Executive and are responsible for the functions of their sections within the council. These sections are;

- Human Resources& Corporate Services, Economic & Community Development Directorate

- Infrastructural, Environmental & Emergency Services

- Finance, IT, Housing & Building Directorate

The Chief Executive is responsible for supervising government operations and implementing the policies adopted by the council.

Each section of Council will be called upon to respond in the event of a Major Emergency, *see Appendices A, C, E.*

## 4.2 Specify any special staffing arrangements such as voluntary basis call-in of off-duty staff and arrangements for managing spontaneous volunteering by staff.

The majority of Longford County Council staff requested to carry out functions in relation to a Major Emergency will be acting on a voluntary basis with the exception of specific Local Authority staff such as the rostered Senior Fire Officers, Fire Fighters and rostered Road Overseers. In addition the Civil Defence, under the Authority of Longford County Council operate on a call out system.

## 4.3 How resources of the Council are matched to the functions assigned to it.

Longford County Council will identify, match and formally nominate competent individuals and alternates to key roles to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in the plan.

Support teams will be put in place for key roles and operational functions. Protocols (Action Plans) set out the arrangements which will enable the agency's support teams to be mobilised and how they will function in accordance with the arrangements set out in the plan. Assignment of key roles and how those roles are to be delivered are documented in Appendices B & C.

## 4.4    Other organisations / agencies that may be mobilised to assist the Local Authority:

The Defence Forces

The Irish Red Cross

Voluntary Emergency Services Sector

The community affected

Utilities

Private Sector

There are a number of organisations and agencies which may be called upon to assist the principal response agencies in responding to major emergencies in addition to specialist national and local organisations. These organisations may be grouped as follows;

### 4.4.1    Civil Defence

The Civil Defence service is a statutory organisation of volunteers, which can provide a very important resource for use in major emergencies in support of the principal response agencies. Civil Defence services are structured on a county basis and are operated by the County Council. A Civil Defence Board, with a national Civil Defence Headquarters, oversees and assists the development of the Local Authority based Civil Defence organisation. See Appendix K.

### 4.4.2    The Defence Forces

The Irish Defence Forces can provide a significant support role in a major emergency response. However, provision of Defence Forces capabilities is dependent on the exigencies of other demands and on prior agreed arrangements through Memorandums of Understanding and Service Level Agreements between the Department of Defence, the Defence Forces and relevant Government Departments. In addition, the Defence Forces have a key role in responding to all emergency incidents involving improvised explosive devices, when they are called upon by An Garda Síochána, by the provision of Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) teams, see Appendix J.

### 4.4.3    The Irish Red Cross

The Irish Red Cross is established and regulated under the Red Cross Acts, 1938-54. These statutes define a role for the Irish Red Cross as an auxiliary to the state authorities in time of emergency and also provide a specific mandate to assist the medical services of the Irish Defence Forces in time of armed conflict, see Appendix L.

### 4.4.4  Voluntary Emergency Services Sector

The normal range of voluntary emergency services includes the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps, St John's Ambulance Service, Mountain Rescue Teams, Cave Rescue Teams, Search and Rescue Dog Associations, River Rescue Units, Community Inshore Rescue Units, RNLI, Sub-Aqua Units, etc., see Appendix L.

### 4.4.5  The community affected

People regularly volunteer to search for missing persons; these volunteers are referred to as casual volunteers. In a major emergency they can provide a valuable resource to the principal response agencies, as well as to casualties and those needing assistance. It is recognised that communities that are empowered to be part of the response to a disaster, are more likely to recover and to restore normality.

### 4.4.6  Utilities

It is important that there is close co-ordination between the principal response agencies and utilities involved in/affected by an emergency. Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory frameworks but, during the response to an emergency, they need to liaise with the On-Site Co-ordinator, see Appendix M.

### 4.4.7  Private Sector

Private sector organisations may be involved in a major emergency situation in two ways. They may be involved through, for example, ownership of the site where the emergency has occurred or through ownership of some element involved in the emergency e.g. an aircraft, bus, factory, etc. They may also be called on to assist in the response to a major emergency by providing specialist services and equipment, which would not normally be held or available within the principal, response agencies.

## 4.5    How mutual-aid will be sought from neighbours.

In the event that resources within Longford County Council are not sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended such that additional resources are required, then support may be obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring counties. County Council will support each other on a mutual aid basis. Support is most likely to be requested from;

- Westmeath County Council

- Roscommon County Council

- Leitrim County Council

- Cavan County Council

## 4.6    Regional level of co-coordinated response: the procedure for scaling up the response to regional level and the procedure for determining and declaring the region for response, where required.

Longford County Council is one of four authorities in the Midland Region who make up the Midland Regional Major Emergency Group, *see section 2.5*. In certain circumstances, the local response to a major emergency may need to be scaled up to a regional level. This may occur where the nature of an emergency is such that:

- the resources available in the local area where the incident occurs do not appear to be sufficient to bring the situation under control in an expeditious and efficient manner; or,

- the consequences of the emergency are likely to impact significantly outside of the local area; or,

- the incident(s) is spread over the area of more than one Local Authority or Division of An Garda Síochána; or,

- the incident occurs at or close to a boundary of more than one of the principal response agencies functional areas.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare that a regional level major emergency exists and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. The key provision for ensuring co-ordination of the extended response is the activation of a Regional Co-ordination Group. The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the principal response agencies involved from the extended "response region". The boundaries of the actual "region" for response purposes should be determined by the lead agency, which has declared the regional level

emergency, in light of the circumstances prevailing, or likely to develop. The regions for response purposes need not necessarily coincide with the designated regions for preparedness.

The lead agency which has declared the regional level emergency will convene and chair the Regional Co-ordination Group.

## 4.7   Arrangements for seeking national / international assistance where required.

In the event that the scale of the emergency becomes too large, complex or long in duration a request may be made to seek assistance from neighbouring or other regions of the country, or from outside the state. This decision should be made by the lead agency in consultation with the other principle response agencies at the Regional Co-ordination Centre.

The Midland Regional Co-ordination Group should identify and dimension the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. It should also seek to identify the possible options for sourcing such assistance, be that from neighbouring Regions, elsewhere in the state, the United Kingdom or from other EU member states.

The Midland Regional Co-ordination Group may also request assistance from Government. National resources will be available in the event of a major emergency at local or regional level. Requests for assistance should be developed at local or regional co-ordination level and directed by the lead agency to the lead Government Department. The European Community has established a Community Mechanism to facilitate the provision of assistance between the member states in the event of major emergencies. Requests for such assistance should be made by the chair of the Longford Local or Midland Regional Coordination Group to the National Liaison Officer at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

## Section 5 - Preparedness for Major Emergency Response

### 5.1 The incorporation of major emergency management into the Council's business planning process.

In developing its corporate business plan Longford County Council will take into account the requirement to fully support the Major Emergency Plan. The business plan will also take into account the continuance of normal day-to-day functions and activities during any major emergency. This will involve acquisition of resources and all training of personnel into the Major Emergency Planning process.

### 5.2 The assigning of responsibility for leading preparedness, both within the Council and inter-agency.

The Chief Executive is responsible for all Major Emergency Management arrangements and preparedness through the Director of Services, Housing, Planning & Emergency Services. He has appointed an Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) with specific responsibility for Major Emergency Management (MEM) who work under the Chief Fire Officer and are responsible for drawing up and updating major emergency plans.

In respect of the inter-agency preparedness it is the responsibility of the Director of Services Housing, Planning & Emergency Services in conjunction with the Chief Fire Officer, to ensure that the Local Authority's plans are operable with the other Principal Response Agencies.

### 5.3 The documentation of a major emergency development programme to ensure that it has necessary arrangements, systems, people and resources to discharge the functions assigned to it by the Framework.

Progress on the Major Emergency Development Programme will be reviewed regularly at Longford County Council Management Team meetings.

### 5.4 The nomination of competent individuals and alternates to the key roles identified in the Major Emergency Plan.

Longford County Local Authority has nominated competent individuals and alternates to the key roles to enable the agency to function in accordance with the common arrangements set out in its Major Emergency Plan (*See Appendix).*

**5.5 The development of support teams for key roles and the preparation of Operational Protocols setting out the arrangements which will enable the support teams to be mobilised and function.**

Support teams will be formed to assist individuals in key roles. Operational Protocols setting out the arrangements which will enable the agency's support teams to be mobilised and function set out in the Major Emergency Plan. (*See Appendix).*

**5.6 The implementation of a staff development programme.**

Major Emergency Management arrangements involve a significant level of development activity, both within Longford County Council and jointly with our regional partners.

Major Emergency Planning is recognised by Longford County Council as an essential part of the organisations capacity to achieve its corporate goals. Longford County Council Corporate Plan 2010-2014 details as one of its strategic objectives to;

'Promote public health and safety and plan for major emergency.'

The Corporate Plan lists the following actions in order to deliver of the above objective;

 Review Plan for Major Emergencies with other emergency    services, and

 Train and equip personnel to deal with Major Emergencies in accordance with the  Major Emergency Plan.

The Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) will be one of the tools used to develop preparedness and resilience within the organisation. Staff designated to Key Roles and members of the Crisis Management Team and support staff will be offered training and development through the Performance Management and Development System.

**5.7 The implementation of a comprehensive training programme for those staff holding key roles and staff that will make a contribution via support teams.**

Training is a key element in the development of preparedness for Longford County Council, to ensure the provision of an effective, co-ordinated response to major emergencies when required. There are many levels of training, ranging from general awareness of the major emergency management arrangements to equipping people with knowledge and skills to perform key roles.

The key areas for training are identified in the Project Initiation Document along with a timeframe for delivery. They include;

- Risk Assessment Training,

- Staff Development Training,

- Inter Agency Training,

- Training in the Appraisal Process.

### 5.8    The implementation of an internal exercise programme with clearly defined and progressive objectives to validate the agency's preparedness for responding.

Training exercises will be used to raise awareness, educate individuals on their roles and the roles of others and promote co-ordination and cooperation, as well as validating plans, systems and procedures.

### 5.9    The implementation of joint / inter-agency training and exercise programmes with its partner agencies in the Major Emergency Region.

Joint interagency training will be provided at a Regional level, coordinated by the Midland Regional Working group. Exercises will follow on from this training to improve awareness and educate all involved in the roles and functions of the PRA's in the event of an emergency. Exercises will be performed on a three yearly cycle.

### 5.10   The allocation of specific resources including a budget for preparedness.

The Regional Steering Group shall provide a budget for major emergency preparedness, which reflects the expenditure required to meet the costs of implementing the agency's internal preparedness, as well as the agency's contribution to the regional level inter-agency preparedness.

### 5.11   The arrangements to authorise procurement and use of resources (including engaging third parties) to assist in response to major emergencies.

The arrangements to authorise procurement and use of resources (including engaging third parties) to assist in response to major emergencies are governed by the 'Local Government Act: Part 12: Section 104' which states: "Nothing in this section shall prevent a manager from incurring additional expenditure where he/she is of the opinion that such expenditure is necessary to avert or minimize a threat to public health, public safety, property or the environment."

Arrangements have been put in place by certain sections of the LA including Roads and Civil Defence, with local suppliers to supply urgent goods when required and issue purchase orders the following day in the event of an emergency.

**5.12 The arrangements for the annual appraisal of preparedness within the Council and for the submission of that appraisal to the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management and the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government.**

Longford County Council will carry out and document an annual internal appraisal of its preparedness for major emergency response, it shall then be sent for external appraisal to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. An annual appraisal of the Midland Regional level preparedness shall also be documented. A revised Major Emergency Plan will be issued each year.

**5.13 Steps taken to inform the public as to what action they should take in the event of an emergency.**

There may be situations where it will be crucial for the Longford County Council to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public on an emergency situation. This will be especially important where members of the public may perceive themselves and their families to be at risk and are seeking information on actions which they can take to protect themselves and their families.

The Local Co-ordination Group will take over the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency. The Local Co-ordination Group may establish a sub-group for this purpose and use all available channels to make concise and accurate information available. This may include the use of dedicated "help-lines", web-pages, Aertel, automatic text messaging, as well as through liaison with the media.

# Section 6 - The Generic Command, Control and Co-ordination Systems

## 6.1    Introduction:

The Chief Executive of Longford County Council is responsible for the principal response agency's major emergency management arrangement and preparedness, as well as for the effectiveness of the agency's response to any major emergency which occurs in its functional area.

### 6.1.1   Command arrangements within individual services belonging to the Council.

The phrases command, control and co-ordination are used to describe the hierarchy of relationships, and to establish decision-making arrangements.

Longford County Council Fire Service will exercise command over its own services in accordance with its normal command structure. At the site of an emergency, it will also exercise control over not only its own services but any additional services (other than the principle response agencies) which the Local Authority mobilises to the site. Control of the Local Authority services at the site of the Emergency shall be exercised by the Controller of Operations.

## 6.2     Control arrangements:

Longford County Council will appoint a Controller of Operations at the site (or at each site) of the emergency. The officer in command of the initial response of each principal emergency service should be the principal response agency's Controller of Operations until relieved through the agency's pre-determined process. In the case of a multiple agency response there should be only one Controller of Operations for each of the three principal response agencies.

### 6.2.1   Control of all services / sections of the Council which respond.

The activation of the Plan will ensure that the Fire Service Pre-determined attendance will be activated together with any Pre-determined attendance of other Local Authority departments.

The Crisis Management Team will control all Local Authority personnel that respond to the emergency. The members of the Crisis Management Team are the Senior Managers of the Local Authority, who will meet at the designated Headquarters of Longford County Council.

Information on the roles of the various personnel outlined in the Major Emergency Plan are contained in  Appendix B.

### 6.2.2   Control of external organisations / agencies mobilised to assist the Council during the response.

There are a number of organisations and agencies, which may be called on to assist the principal response agencies in responding to major emergencies. The arrangements for this assistance should be agreed with each agency.

At the site of an emergency, Longford County Council will exercise control over not only its own services but any additional services (other than the principle response agencies) which the Local Authority mobilises to the site.

### 6.2.3   Support arrangements for the Control function.

The Crisis Management Team provides support to the principal response agency's representative at the Local (off-site) Co-ordination Group, supports their own Controller of Operations on site and maintains the agency's normal day-to-day services that the community requires.

Longford County Council will have trained Information Management Officers at the scene and at the co-ordination centers to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordinator and the chairs of the local and Regional Co-ordination Groups. Information Management Officers will be experienced managers who have had practice prioritizing and presenting large amounts of information. The role of the Information Management Officer is key to the success of the information management process.

## 6.3    Co-ordination Arrangements

The co-ordination of the efforts of all services is recognised as a vital element in successful response to major emergencies, so that the combined result is greater than the sum of their individual efforts.

### 6.3.1   The lead service concept and the pre-determined and default arrangements for establishing a lead agency for co-ordination purposes.

The concept of the Lead Agency is accepted as the method for establishing which Agency has initial responsibility for Coordination of all Services on the site of a Major Emergency. There are two main mechanisms used to determine the lead agency in any situation, these mechanisms should be applied in sequence by the three Controllers of Operations at the site.

The first is by pre-nomination. *Details are provided in Appendix C and Section 7.6 of this plan*.  Pre-nominated lead agencies for common incident types are presented, and this should be the primary basis for determining the lead agency.

The second is a default arrangement, where the categorisations in the Table do not seem to apply and the lead agency is not obvious. In these situations, which should be rare, the County Council will be the "default" lead agency.

### 6.3.2   How the Council will perform the On Site Co-ordination function, including arrangements for support teams.

The primary mechanism used to deliver co-ordination on site is the arrangement for an On-Site Co-ordinator, provided by the Lead Agency. As soon as they meet, the three Controllers of Operations should determine which is the Lead agency.

The On-Site Co-ordinator will chair the On-Site Co-ordinating Group. This group will also include the Controllers of operations of the other two agencies, an information Officer, representatives' of the other agencies and appropriate specialists.

### 6.3.3   How the Council will perform the co-ordination function at the Local / Regional Co-ordination Centres

When a major emergency has been declared and the lead agency determined, the relevant officers of the lead agency should implement a Local Co-ordination Group mobilisation procedure. The Local Coordination Group will comprise representatives of the other two principal response agencies, an Information Management Officer, a Media Liaison Officer, an Action Management Officer (where considered appropriate), representatives of other agencies and specialists, as appropriate.

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. The key provision in ensuring co-ordination of the extended response is the activation of a "Regional Coordination Group". The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the principal response agencies involved from the extended "response region".

Any one of the nominated Local Co-ordination Centres may be used as a Regional Coordination Centre, or a specific Regional Centre may be designated for this purpose. The choice of location will be determined in each situation by the Chair of the Local Coordinating Group declaring the regional level emergency and will depend on the location and nature of the emergency and any associated infrastructural damage.

### 6.3.4    How co-ordination is to be achieved in other specific circumstances.

The declaration of a major emergency will involve the activation of the Longford County Council Major Emergency Plan, while this plan may provide an appropriate response to the emergency and its consequences, it may be necessary to draw support from other authorities.

### 6.3.4.1    How mutual aid and regional level co-ordination will operate.

Each Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of his/her individual principal response agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring principal response agencies. As they are national organisations, the Crisis Management Teams of the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána should arrange to provide the additional support required; County Council will support each other on a mutual aid basis. *See section 4.5 and 4.6 of this document.*

### 6.3.4.2    How incidents occurring on the Council boundaries are to be dealt with.

Where incidents occur at, or close to, County boundaries, where the Local Authority is determined as the Lead Agency, the Controller of Operations of each Local Authority involved shall convene to determine who will assume control of the incident.

### 6.3.4.3    How multi-site or wide area emergencies are to be dealt with.

Where the emergency involves a number of sites or where by its nature the geographical extent is large, it would be recommended that the operation be sectionalised and that Sector Commanders be appointed. These Sector Commanders should report directly to the Lead Agency Controller of Operations.

### 6.3.4.4　How links with National Emergency Plans will operate.

Longford County Council will respond to and activate the appropriate aspect of its Major Emergency Plan in response to requests from the national body following an emergency incident.

### 6.3.4.5　How links with National Government will work.

In every situation where a Major Emergency is declared, each principal response agency should inform its parent Department of the declaration, as part of that agency's mobilisation procedure. The three parent Departments, should then consult and agree, which Department will be designated as Lead Department, in keeping with the directions set out in A Framework for Major Emergency Planning.
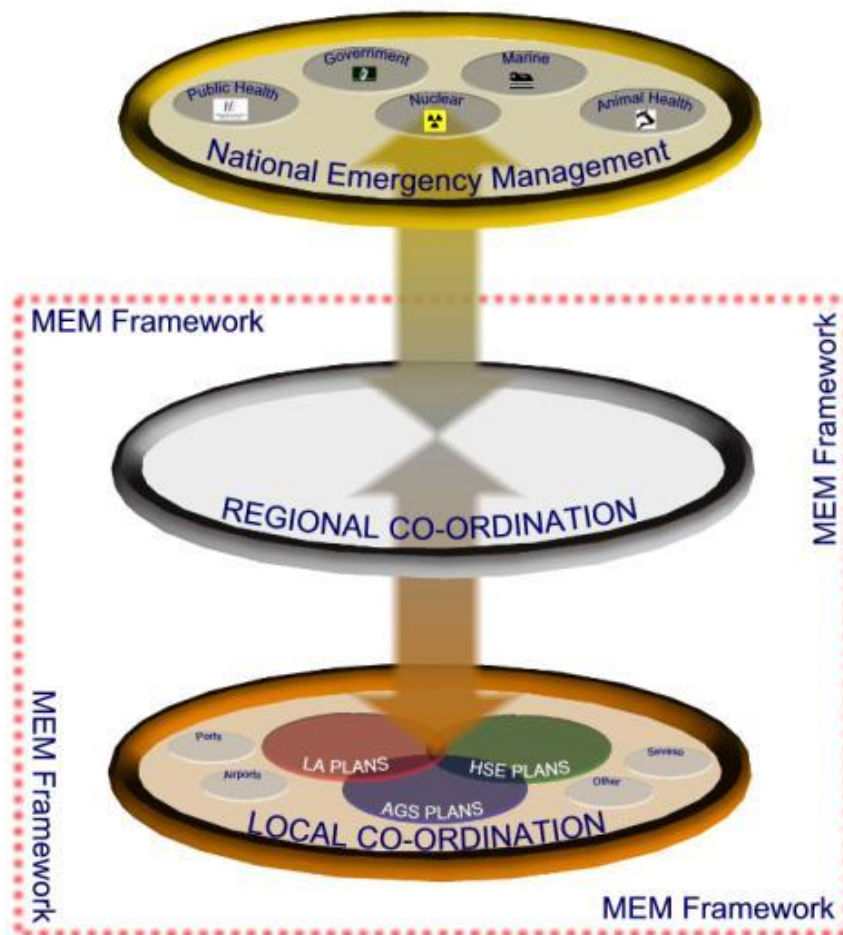


**Linking Major Emergency Plans with National Plans and Other Plans**

## Section 7 - The Common Elements of Response

### 7.0 Sub-sections setting out how the following common elements of the response to any major emergency will be implemented.

7.1 Declaring a Major Emergency

7.2 Initial Mobilisation

7.3 Command, Control and Communication Centres

7.4 Co-ordination Centres

7.5 Communications Facilities

7.6 Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles

7.7 Public Information

7.8 The Media

7.9 Site Management Arrangements

7.10 Mobilising Additional Resources

7.11 Casualty and Survivor Arrangements

7.12 Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials

7.13 Protecting Threatened Populations

7.14 Early and Public Warning Systems

7.15 Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways

7.16 Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations

7.17 Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents

7.18 Investigations

7.19 Community/ VIPs/ Observers

7.20 Standing-Down the Major Emergency

## Section 7.1 - Declaring a Major Emergency

### 7.1.1 Arrangements for declaring a major emergency and activating the provisions of the Major Emergency Plan in accordance with Section 5.1 of the Framework.

The Major Emergency Plan should be activated by whichever of the following agencies first becomes aware of the major emergency:-

Longford County Council Authority

An Garda Síochána

Health Service Executive

A typical message to declare a major emergency shall be in the following format:

> **This is ……………….. (Name, rank and service) ……………..**
>
> **A ……… (Type of incident) ……… has occurred/is imminent at ……**
>
> **(Location) …………………….……**
>
> **As an authorised officer I declare that a major emergency exists.**
>
> **Please activate the Mobilisation arrangements in the ……….. (Agency) ……….. Major Emergency Plan.**

The people authorized to activate the Plan are detailed in Appendix A.

### 7.1.2 The standard format of the information message METHANE should be set out in the Plan

After the declaration is made the Officer should then use the mnemonic **METHANE** to structure and deliver an information message.

| | |
|---|---|
| M | Major Emergency Declared |
| E | Exact location of the emergency |
| T | Type of Emergency (Transport, Chemical, etc.) |
| H | Hazards, present and potential |
| A | Access / egress routes |
| N | Number and type of Casualties |
| E | Emergency service present and required |

## Section 7.2    Initial Mobilisation

### 7.2.1    How the Council's initial mobilisation of resources will take place.

Longford County Council Major Emergency Mobilisation Procedure will be implemented immediately on notification of the declaration of a major emergency. When this Plan has been activated, all Local Authority services shall respond in accordance with pre-determined arrangements (Action Plans), *see Appendix A.*

In some situations, there may be an early warning of an impending emergency. Mobilisation within Longford County Council may include moving to a standby/alert stage for some of its services or specific individuals, until the situation becomes clearer.

There may also be circumstances where the resources or expertise of agencies other than the principal response agencies will be required. In these situations the relevant arrangements outlined in the Major Emergency Plan will be invoked. No third party should respond to the site of a major emergency unless mobilised by one of the principal response agencies through an agreed procedure.

### Section 7.3    Command, Control and Communication Centres

**7.3.1   Specify which command, control and communication centre(s) will be used to mobilise, support and monitor the principal emergency services, and other services of the Council and briefly describe these.**

In the event of a Major Emergency being declared the fire service command, control and communication centres will be used to mobilise, support and monitor the principle emergency services and other services of the local authority.

- Local (Off-site) Coordination Group will be located at the Longford County Council Office; Longford Town Fire Station offices will be used as an alternative.

### Section 7.4    Co-ordination Centers

#### 7.4.1    How On-Site Co-ordination is to be supported including the dispatch of a dedicated co-ordination vehicle where applicable.

On-site co-ordination is to be supported by means of the Incident Command Vehicle which is held by the Rostered Senior Fire Officer. The Incident Command Vehicle will mobilise to site on activation of the major emergency plan.

#### 7.4.2    How the Council's Crisis Management Team will operate.

The Longford County Council Crisis Management Team will meet at the primary Local Co-ordination Centre at the Council Chamber in Áras an Chontae, Longford or alternatively in the council offices in Camlin Court, Longford.

Appendix B - provides details of staff for Major Emergency Management who are nominated to carry out support functions at the local co-ordination centre.

#### 7.4.3    The location of pre-determined Local Co-ordination Centres, which are within the functional area, how these are to operate, and how the Council will support these if it "owns" the Local Co-ordination Centre.

Áras an Chontae will be the primary Local Co-Ordination Centre for any Emergency Situation requiring the activation of the MEP.A secondary Co-ordination Centre will be located at the County Council Offices on Market Square, Longford in the event that Áras an Chontae is inaccessible due to the nature and location of the major emergency.

It is envisaged that the co-ordination centre will have the following facilities;

- A spacious dedicated main area, where co-ordination activity takes place, i.e. where the relevant co-ordination group meet and work;

- An adjacent communications space (not a room with communications equipment), through which most communications in and out of the centre are routed;

- A range of adjacent meeting areas, one of which should be a refreshments area.

- The Centre will be provided with adequate communication systems including Satellite Phones and Wireless Broadband.
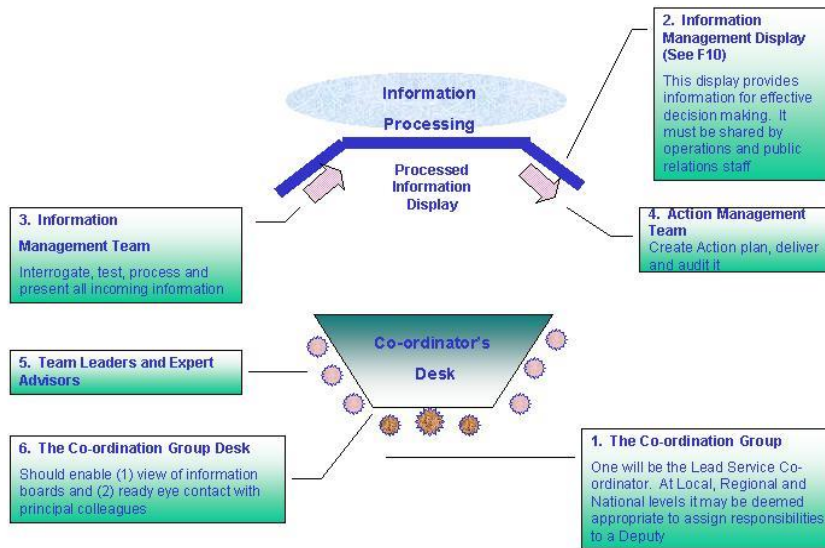
Figure 7.1 a schematic of a Local Authority Generic Co-ordination Centre.

### 7.4.4 The location of the predetermined Regional Co-ordination Centre(s) and how this will operate.

In the event of a Regional Major Emergency being declared the chair of the Local Co-Ordination group will decide where the Regional Co-Ordination Centre will be located, this will usually be at the most conveniently located Local Co-Ordination Centre. The Regional Co-Ordination Centre will be staffed by the pre determined personnel of that County's Major Emergency support team.

### 7.4.5 Who will act as information managers, how the common information management system will be used and how information management will be supported within, and transferred between, the various coordination centres.

Personnel detailed in Appendix B will act as Information Managers for the duration of the Major Emergency; Information will be managed through "smart boards" or an equivalent system with a back up system of white boards in the event of an I.S Failure.

Longford County Council has trained Information Management Officers that can be dispatched to the scene and to the co-ordination centres to support the work of the On-site Co-ordinator and the chairs of the local and Regional Co-Ordination Groups.

Please refer to Appendices C - Information Management Team for details regarding the personnel required to perform information management functions at the scene and at the Local Co-ordination Centre and Crisis Management Team.
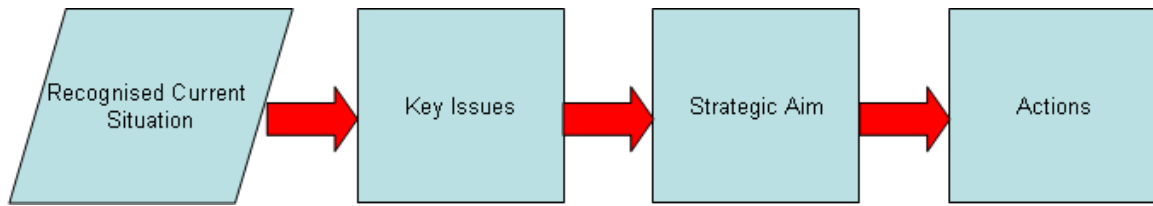
Figure 7.2  A schematic of Generic Information Management System
that will be incorporated by Longford County Council

## Section 7.5   Communications Facilities

### 7.5.1   On-site Communications Systems

Longford County Council rely on technical communication facilities to enable it to function and for different units to communicate, both at the site and between the site and its command, control or communications centre. Radio and other communications facilities are vital tools for the Local Authority.

<u>Fire service</u>

All front line appliances are equipped with tetra radios and have the ability to communicate within the functional area of Longford County Council. Also the fire service has hand held radios UHF available on all its appliances

<u>Civil Defence</u>

Communication equipment can also be supplied by the Civil Defence. The Civil Defence uses both private mobile radio (VHF) for communication between vehicles and communication centres and hand-portable radio (UHF) for communication on site.

### 7.5.2   Specify the mechanisms for inter-agency communication on site, including protocols and procedures.

The fire service has an Incident Command Vehicle. This vehicle will be utilised as part of the On-site co-ordination centre as appropriate. It is critical that robust arrangements for inter-agency communication on site(s) are provided for this purpose, the fire service will also bring a set of hand-portable radios, dedicated specifically to inter-agency communication.

### 7.5.3   Specify the arrangements for communications between site and coordination centres.

Communications between the site and the co-ordination centre will be facilitated by way of radio / phone system available to relevant personnel at the time. <u>All communication between On-site Co-ordination and the Local Co-ordination shall pass between the Controller of Operations / On-site Co-ordinator to the Local Co-Ordination group</u>, supported by the work of trained Information Management Officers at the scene and at the co-ordination centres. 2 no. satellite phones and a tabled enabled with data are provided by the fire service on site.

## Section 7.6    Exercising the Lead Agency's Co-ordination Roles

### 7.6.1    How the lead service is to be determined in accordance with Section 5.4.2 and Appendix C.

There are two mechanisms for determining and designating the lead agency, which are to be applied in sequence by the three Controllers of Operations at the Site. They are as follows:

1. Pre-nomination in accordance with the table provided in Appendix C. This method pre-nominates the lead agency for various types of incident and this should be the primary method of determination for the lead agency

2. In the event that the emergency does not fall into the categorisations of the table in Appendix C then the lead agency by 'default' is the Local Authority (Longford County Council)

3. Rapid determination of the lead agency is essential as this in turn determines which of the three Controllers of Operations is to act as the On-Site Co-ordinator.

| Emergency Incident Type | Initial Pre-nominated Lead Agency | Likely change |
|---|---|---|
| Road Traffic Accident[1] | An Garda Síochána | To Local Authority when involving Hazardous Materials |
| Hazardous Material | Local Authority[2] | |
| Fire | Local Authority | |
| Train Crash | Local Authority | To An Garda Síochána when rescue phase complete |
| Aircraft Incident | Local Authority | To An Garda Síochána when fire-fighting / rescue phase complete |
| Rescue | Local Authority | |
| Weather Related | Local Authority | |
| Biological Incident | Health Services | |
| Open Country Search & Rescue (low land) | An Garda Síochána | |
| Open Country Search & Rescue (high land) | An Garda Síochána[3] | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Public order / Crowd Events | An Garda Síochána | |
| CCBRN[4]<br><br>Conventional[5]<br><br>Chemical<br><br>Biological<br><br>Radiological<br><br>Nuclear[6] | An Garda Síochána | Local Authority<br><br>Health Service Ex.<br><br>Local Authority<br><br>Local Authority |
| Accidental Explosions / Building Longford County Council | | To An Garda Síochána to investigate when search and rescue completed |
| Environmental / Pollution | Local Authority | |
| Marine Emergency impacting on shore | Local Authority [7] | |
| Water Rescue inland | An Garda Síochána[8] | |

**Assignment of Lead Agency to Major Emergency Type**

### 7.6.2   How the lead service nomination is to be reviewed and transferred, if appropriate.

The lead agency role may change over time, to reflect the changing circumstances of the major emergency. Ownership of the lead agency mantle should be reviewed at appropriate stages of the major emergency. All changes in lead agency designation emanating from the site, and the timing thereof, will be by agreement of the three Controllers of Operations, and should be recorded and communicated as per the initial determination. As the emphasis of operations may shift from the site to other areas, the Local Co-ordination Group may review the issue and determine a change in the lead agency, as appropriate.

### 7.6.3   Specify how the Council will organise and deliver the co-ordination function during Major emergencies where it is the "Lead Agency"

In the event of Longford County Council been assigned the Lead Agency role, it will be assigned the responsibility for the co-ordination function (in addition to its own functions) and it should lead all the co-ordination activity associated with the emergency both on-site and off-site, and make every effort to achieve a high level of co-ordination.

### 7.7.1   The Council's role in situations where early warning and special public warning arrangements are needed.

In certain situations, it may be crucial for the Local Authority to provide timely and accurate information directly to the public in an emergency situation. Members of the public may perceive themselves and their families to be at risk and are seeking information on actions which they can take to protect themselves and their families.

The Local Co-ordination Group should manage the task of co-ordinating the provision of information to the public as soon as it meets. This activity should be co-ordinated by the lead agency.

### 7.7.2   Arrangements for the provision of telephone / help line / information line contact numbers, and handling of contacts with dedicated telephone lines.

Early warning and special public notices shall be relayed in the event of an emergency. The Public can be kept informed by use of the following;

- Internet service www.longfordcoco.ie

- Local broadcasters

- Emergency helpline service

On a national level the public shall be informed by use of the following;

- Television and Radio – arrangements exist whereby emergency announcements may be made on RTÉ television and radio channels.

- Television Text Services – not for emergency alerts, but useful for posting more information than would be communicable by emergency calls or broadcasts.

### Section 7.8    The Media

#### 7.8.1    Arrangements for liaison with the media.

It is the responsibility of the lead agency to establish a Media Centre at or near the site of the emergency for use by the principal response agencies in dealing with the media at the site.

Each principal response agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the site and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers on site should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency.

All statements to the media should be cleared with the On-Site Co-ordinator or his/her Media Liaison Officer.

#### 7.8.2    Arrangements for media on-site.

There shall be a media Liaison Officer appointed at both the Onsite and Offsite Co-ordination Centres.

The Media Liaison Officer must keep accurate and timely information on the emergency so that:

- He/She can be the point of contact for all media enquiries.

- He/She can answer information queries from the general public.

- He/She can obtain and provide information from/to Rest Centres, other agencies, press officers, local radio, press etc.

- He/She will be responsible for setting up an information helpline.

#### 7.8.3    Arrangements for media at Local and / or Regional Co-ordination centres.

The Local/Regional Co-ordination Group should take the lead in terms of working with the media, away from the site, during a major emergency. As with arrangements at the site, each principal response agency should designate a Media Liaison Officer at the Local Coordination Centre and the activities of the Media Liaison Officers should be co-ordinated by the Media Liaison Officer of the lead agency. All statements to the media at this level should be cleared with the chair of the Local/Regional Co-ordination Group.

### 7.8.4 Arrangements for media at, or adjacent to, other locations associated with the major emergency e.g. agency headquarters, hospitals and mortuaries.

In these situations the Media Liaison Officer will in conjunction with the Media Liaison Officers of the Health Services Executive and An Garda Síochána respectively make suitable arrangements for the media at the location.

## Section 7.9     Site Management Arrangements

### 7.9.1   Generic site management elements/arrangements, and the Council's role in making decisions about these arrangements as well as disseminating and implementing them.

Longford County Council shall appoint a Controller of Operations at the site (or at each site) of the emergency, *see section 6.2 of this document*. The initial important task of the Controller of Operations in association with the other two Controllers is the development of a Site Management Plan. Once agreed, the resulting site plan should be implemented and disseminated to all responding groups.

### 7.9.2   How control of access is to operate, and how the personnel and services of the Council are to be identified at the various locations associated with the Emergency.

In order to control access to a Major Emergency site cordons will be established as quickly as possible at the site of a major emergency.

Three cordons will be established. An Inner, Outer and Traffic Cordon, along with access cordon points *see Appendix H* for detailed information. An Garda Síochána will carryout this task after a decision by and agreement with the On-site Co-Ordination Group.

A Danger Area may also be declared where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel, over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations.
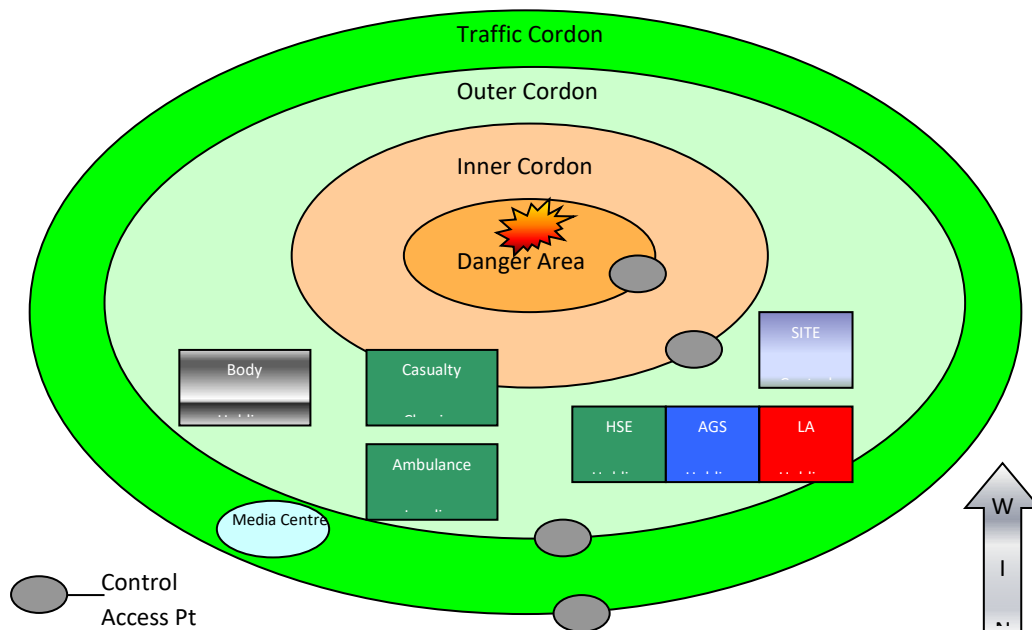
<u>Identification of Personnel at the Site of a Major Emergency</u>

All uniformed personnel, responding to the site of a major emergency, should wear their prescribed uniform, including high visibility and safety clothing, issued by their agency. The service markings on this clothing will be made known in advance to the other organisations that may be involved in the response.

Senior personnel who are acting in key roles, such as the On-Site Co-ordinator and the Controllers of Operations, should wear bibs designed and coordinated as follows: *see Appendix G.*

### 7.9.3    Air exclusion zones are to be determined and implemented by the Gardaí, via the Irish Aviation Authority, as appropriate

Where the principal response agencies consider it appropriate and beneficial, the On-Site Co-ordinator may request, through An Garda Síochána, that an Air Exclusion Zone be declared around the emergency site by the Irish Aviation Authorities. When a restricted zone above and around the site is declared, it is promulgated by means of a "Notice to Airmen" - NOTAM - from the Irish Aviation Authorities

### Section 7.10    Mobilising Additional Resources

### Section 7.10.1    Arrangements for mobilising organisations that may carry out / provide support to the Council. The Mobilisation of an external organization / agency should be through the Major Emergency Mobilisation

The Voluntary Emergency Services sector can provide additional equipment and support in the event of a major emergency.  Details of the local Voluntary Emergency Services, the resources they can provide and their Mobilisation procedure is outlined in *Appendix L*

Voluntary Emergency Services will link to the Principal response Agencies in accordance with Table below.

| Principal Response Agency | Linked Voluntary Emergency Service |
|---|---|
| An Garda Siochána | Irish Mountain Rescue Association<br><br>Irish Cave Rescue Association<br><br>Search and Rescue Dogs<br><br>Sub-Aqua Teams<br><br>River Rescue |
| Health Service Executive | Irish Red Cross<br><br>Order of Malta Ambulance Corps<br><br>St. John's Ambulance |
| Local Authority | Civil Defence |

Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Services is responsible for the Mobilisation of that service and their integration into the overall response. The internal command of volunteer organisations resides with that organisation

### Section 7.10.1.1  Mobilisation of Civil Defence

The Civil Defence Organisation can be called to assist in peacetime emergencies by contacting the Longford County Civil Defence Officer, County Clinic, Dublin Road, Longford. See Appendix K

### Section 7.10.1.2  Mobilisation of Defence Forces

Assistance from the Defence Forces may be requested through the Senior Garda present. Provision of Defence Forces capabilities is dependent on the exigencies of the service and within available resources at the time.

Where Defence Force assistance is required to aid the Civil Authority Longford County Council can contact the Operations Duty Officer of the 4th Western Brigade based at Costume Barracks, Athlone.

The Defence Forces -incorporating the Army, Air Corps, Naval Service and Reserve Defence Forces – will operate under their own command and control structure.

Please refer to Appendix J - Procedure for Requesting Assistance from Defence Forces

### Section 7.10.1.3  Mobilisation of The Irish Red Cross

Please refer to section 4.4.3 of this document, details also given in Appendix L

### Section 7.10.1.4  Mobilisation of Voluntary Emergency Services

Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Services is responsible for the Mobilisation of that service and their integration into the overall response. The internal command of volunteer organisations resides with that organisation.

### Section 7.10.1.5  Mobilisation of Utilities

Utilities operate under their own legislative and regulatory frameworks but, during the response to an emergency, it is important that they are involved in the co-ordination arrangements. Utilities may be requested to provide representatives and/or experts to the On-Site Co-ordination Group, the Local Coordination Group and/or the Regional Co-ordination Group, as appropriate.  A list of utilities and their emergency/out of hours contact arrangements are listed in *Appendix M. Please refer to section 4.4.6 of this document for further details.*

### Section 7.10.1.6  Mobilisation of Private Sector

Private sector representatives and/or experts may be requested to support the work of the On-Site Co-ordination Group, the Local Co-ordination Group and/or the Regional Co-ordination Group, as appropriate. A list of experts and equipment within the private sector is detailed in *Appendix O*

### Section 7.10.2 Arrangements for identifying and mobilising additional organisations that it may be appropriate to mobilise;

The Local Authority Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of the authority do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is expected to be extended, the levels, types and duration of assistance/ support are identified, and that the request for support is passed to either the authority's Crisis Management Team or the Local Co-ordination Centre who will arrange to obtain the support via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring authorities.

Where resources that are held at a national level are required as part of the management of the incident, requests for those resources should be directed by the lead agency to the Lead Government Department.

### Section 7.10.3 Arrangements for liaison with utilities;

Utility companies are frequently involved in the response to emergencies, usually to assist the Principal Response Agencies in making situations safe. See Appendix M

### Section 7.10.4 Arrangements for integration of casual volunteers as appropriate

Where the On-Site Co-ordinator determines that casual volunteers may be engaged within the cordons of the emergency site, they will be issued with orange armbands emblazoned with the word 'Volunteer' or suitable abbreviation, e.g. 'VOL', by Civil. Defence, with whom they will be offered a temporary volunteer status.**\*\* Subject to further confirmation (Apr 2013) \*\***

### Section 7.10.5 Arrangements for command, control, co-ordination and deMobilisation of organisations mobilised to the site;

Each Principal Response Agency with a linked Voluntary Emergency Services/Organisation is responsible for the Mobilisation of that service and their integration into the overall response. The internal command of the organisations resides with that organisation.

*Please refer to section 4.4.1 through 4.4.7 and section 7.10.1 of this document.*

### Section 7.10.6    How mutual aid arrangements are to operate;

Each Controller of Operations should ensure that, where the resources of his/her individual principal response agency do not appear to be sufficient to bring a situation under control, or the duration of an incident is extended, support is obtained via mutual aid arrangements with neighbouring principal response agencies. As they are national organisations, the Crisis Management Teams of the Health Service Executive and An Garda Síochána should arrange to provide the additional support required; County Council will support each other on a mutual aid basis.

### Section 7.10.7    How requests for out-of-region assistance are to be developed, dimensioned and processed, and how such assistance is to be integrated into the response effort;

The decision to seek assistance from outside the region should be made by the lead agency, in association with the other principal response agencies, at the Local/Regional Coordination Centre. The Local/Regional Co-ordination Group should identify and dimension the level/type of assistance likely to be required and its duration. It should also seek to identify the possible options for sourcing such assistance, be that from neighbouring regions, elsewhere in the state, from Northern Ireland, the rest of the United Kingdom or from other EU member states.

### Section 7.10.8    How requests for international assistance are to be developed, dimensioned and processed and how such assistance is to be integrated into the response effort;

A Regional Co-ordination Group may also request assistance from Government. National resources will be available in the event of a major emergency at local or regional level. Requests for assistance should be developed at local or regional co-ordination level and directed by the lead agency to the lead Government Department. *Please refer to section 4.7 of this document and Appendix M*

### Section 7.11   Casualty and Survivor Arrangements

### Section 7.11.1  General

The primary objective of any response to a major emergency is to provide effective arrangements for the rescue, care, treatment and rehabilitation of all of the individuals who are affected by the emergency. These individuals may be divided into two main categories as follows: Casualties, including persons who are killed or injured, and Survivors. Survivors will include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured, such as, uninjured passengers from a transport accident or evacuees.

### Section 7.11.1.1   Arrangements for the rescue and care of all Casualties and Survivors and the Council's role in this

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will need to make an early assessment of the casualty situation and identify if there are particular aspects which may impact on casualty management, such as, significant numbers of  disabled, sick or immobile persons involved, and take action accordingly.

Individuals may be divided into two main categories as follows:

- Casualties, including persons who are killed or injured,

- Survivors. These include all those individuals who are caught up in an emergency but not injured, such as, uninjured passengers from a transport accident or evacuees.

### Section 7.11.2  Injured

At the site of a major emergency, the priorities of the principal response services are to save life, prevent further injury, rescue those who are trapped or in danger, triage casualties, provide them with appropriate treatment and transport them to the appropriate hospital(s) where necessary.

Ambulance paramedics and technicians need to be able to administer the appropriate pre-hospital treatment before the patients are taken to the receiving hospitals.

### 7.11.2.1   Arrangements for the triage, treatment and transport to hospital, where necessary, of all injured persons, and the Council's role in this

Once injured casualties have been rescued or found, they should be assessed or triaged as quickly as possible. Casualties are often found some distance from the primary site and search teams, co-

ordinated by An Garda Síochána, should be established where it is considered that this may be necessary.

Triage sieve quickly sorts out casualties into priority groups. Using the algorithm card this will systematically work through the patients, triaging and labelling them.

Triage is a dynamic process of assessing casualties and deciding the priority of their treatment, using a two-stage process of triage sieve and triage sort. Following initial triage, casualties will normally be labelled, using Triage Cards, and moved to a Casualty Clearing Station.

### 7.11.2.2 Arrangements for transporting lightly injured and uninjured persons from the site, and the Council's role in this;

It should be noted that while some casualties will be transported to the Receiving

Hospital(s) by the Ambulance Service, some casualties may leave the site by other means and may arrive at the designated Receiving Hospital(s), or other hospitals, in cars, buses, etc.

### 7.11.2.3 Arrangements for a Casualty Clearing Station, Ambulance Loading Point, the designation of receiving hospitals and the distribution of injured casualties are all the responsibility of the Health Service Executive.

Patients must be moved to the Casualty clearing station. The Casualty clearing station will be established by the ambulance service, in consultation with the Health Service Executive. At this location the casualties are collected, further triaged, treated, as necessary, and prepared for transport to hospital. The Health Service Executive Controller will, in consultation with the Site Medical Officer and the designated receiving hospitals, decide on the hospital destination of casualties.

### 7.11.3 Fatalities

The bodies of casualties, which have been triaged as dead, should not be moved from the incident site unless this is necessary to affect the rescue of other casualties. The only other circumstance where bodies should be moved, before the Garda evidence collection process is complete, is if they are likely to be lost or damaged due to their location or the nature of the incident.

Bodies to be moved should be photographed first and their original position clearly marked and recorded. The recovery of the dead and human remains is part of an evidence recovery process and, as such, is the responsibility of An Garda Síochána acting as agents of the Coroner. The Local Authority can assist An Garda Síochána in this function.

### 7.11.3.1    Specify the Coroners role and how the Council supports this.

The Coroner is an independent judicial officer, who has responsibility for investigating all sudden, unexplained, violent or unnatural deaths. It is the task of the Coroner to establish the 'who, when, where and how' of unexplained death. All such deaths in Ireland are investigated under the Coroners' Act, 1962.

### 7.11.3.2    Specify arrangements for dealing with fatalities, both on and off-site, including Body Holding Areas and Temporary Mortuaries, and the Council's role in this;

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers, will decide if it is necessary to establish a Body Holding Area at the site. The Body Holding Area, if established, should be situated close to the Casualty Clearing Station. Members of An Garda Síochána will staff this area and they will maintain the necessary logs to ensure the continuity of evidence.

It should be noted that the Body Holding Area is not the appropriate place for the prolonged storage of the dead and appropriate arrangements should be made to ensure minimal delay in moving bodies to a mortuary (temporary or otherwise).

### 7.11.3.3    Specify arrangements for identification of the deceased, and the Council's role in this;

The Coroner, with the assistance of An Garda Síochána, has overall responsibility for the identification of bodies and remains and s/he is entitled to exclusive possession and control of a deceased person until the facts about their death have been established. A full post-mortem and forensic examination will be carried out on every body from a major emergency and each death will be the subject of an Inquest. The post-mortem is carried out by a Pathologist, who acts as the 'Coroners Agent' for this purpose.

### 7.11.4    Survivors

Survivor Reception Centre should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. Transport from the Survivor Reception Centre to home/meet relatives/safe place will be arranged as soon as it is practicable. This responsibility will lie with Longford County Council.

### 7.11.4.1    Specify arrangements for dealing with uninjured survivors who require support, including the designation and operation of Survivor Reception Centres;

A Survivor Reception Centre should be designated and established at the earliest possible opportunity. The On-Site Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the other Controllers, should determine if such a centre is to be established, and its location in the site management plan. It is the responsibility of Longford County Council to establish and run this centre.

Longford County Council has identified the following as suitable types of buildings for setting up a survivor centre;

- Recreation Centres
- Parish Halls
- Local Churches
- Local Schools
- Sport Halls
- Any other building that is large enough to accommodate large amounts of people.

See Appendix P

### 7.11.5  Casualty Information

Dedicated telephone help lines should be established to facilitate the dissemination of casualty Information to concerned friends or relatives of those involved in the major emergency.

### 7.11.5.1        The Casualty Bureau will be operated by An Garda Síochána.

In the event of a major emergency involving significant numbers of casualties, An Garda Síochána will establish a Casualty Bureau to collect and collate the details (including condition and location) of all casualties and survivors.

### 7.11.5.2        How the Council will assist An Garda Síochána in the collection and collation of casualty information and the provision of this information to friends and relatives.

To facilitate establishment of the Casualty Bureau, a liaison/casualty officer will normally be sent by An Garda Síochána to each hospital where casualties are being treated. The local Authority may assist in the collection and collation of casualty data. This information may then be provide to family and friends. Any information collected on any casualty is transferred via An Garda Síochána to the Casualty Bureau, who will generally set up an information hot line, in order that concerned family and friend may inquire about 'loved ones'.

### 7.11.6  Friends and Relatives Reception Centres

The purpose of a reception centre is to provide a comfortable area where friends and relatives of those involved in the incident (primarily the casualties and survivors) can be directed for information. The Local Co-ordination Group will determine the need for and arrange for the designation and operation/staffing of such centres.

A building used as a Friends' and Relatives' Reception Centre should be secure from media intrusion and contain sufficient room to afford privacy to families receiving information about relatives. There will also be a need for a reliable process to establish the credentials of friends and relatives.

### 7.11.6.1  How friends and relatives of casualties are to be provided for, and the Council's role in this.

A reception centre is to provide a comfortable area where friends and relatives of those involved in the incident (primarily the casualties and survivors) can be directed for information.

### 7.11.7  Non-National Casualties

In some incidents an emergency may involve significant numbers of casualties from other jurisdictions. In such circumstances the Local Co-ordination Centre should notify the relevant embassy if the nationality of the victims is known. The Department of Justice should be approached if assistance is required in obtaining interpreters from private sector providers. The Department of Foreign Affairs (which operates an out of hours Duty Officer System) should also be approached for appropriate assistance and liaison purposes, see Appendix M

### 7.11.7.1  Arrangements for situations which involve non-national casualties and the Council's role in this including foreign language communication resources

Advice may be sought from An Garda Síochána as to the use of interrupters. Generally the local Garda Station will have a list of approved interpreters which may be call upon in the event of an emergency. Advice may also be sought from the Department of Foreign Affairs, s*ee Appendix M.*

### 7.11.8  Pastoral and Psycho-social Care

The On-Site Co-ordinator needs to ensure that, where appropriate, pastoral services are mobilised to the site and facilitated by the principal response agencies in their work with casualties and survivors. Similarly, individual services should make arrangements for necessary pastoral services at any other locations associated with the emergency, such as hospitals, *see Appendix Q.*

### 7.11.8.1  Pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements for casualties and other affected members of the public are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive.

Pastoral and psycho-social support arrangements for casualties and other affected members of the public are the responsibility of the Health Service Executive.

### Section 7.12 - Emergencies involving Hazardous Materials

**7.12.1  Arrangements for dealing with major Hazardous Materials incidents and the Council's role in this.**

Longford County Council is the lead agency for response to hazardous materials incidents, with the exception of those involving biological agents. Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the lead agency.  The Defence Forces, when requested, will assist An Garda Síochána in an Aid to the Civil Power role with Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams. Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a CBRN incident are contained in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents arising from terrorist activity

**7.12.2  Arrangements for dealing with CCBRN incidents and the Council's role in this.**

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a CCBRN (*CCBRN meaning terrorist incidents involving C - conventional explosives; C - chemical substances; B - biological agents; R - radiological and N - nuclear material)*  incident are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents (in Draft). These protocols deal with a range of matters relevant to managing such incidents, including the identification of the materials involved. They also provide for involvement of the National Poisons Information Centre and the National Virus Reference Laboratory.

Where terrorist involvement is suspected, An Garda Síochána will act as the lead agency.

**7.12.3    Linking the Major Emergency Plan with the Sub-Plan / Protocol / Code Instruction for dealing with biological incidents (such as the suspected Anthrax incidents of 2001);**

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a biological incident are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Suspect Chemical and Biological Agents. Protocols drafted by central government are available at www.mem.ie.

**7.12.4    Linking the Major Emergency Plan with the Sub-Plan on response to activation of the National Public Health (Infectious diseases) Plan;**

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu, Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth there will be a link to the National Plan as outlined by the government. Longford County Council Authority will provide assistance under the command of the lead government department.

**7.12.5    Linking the Major Emergency Plan with the Sub-Plan on response to activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents;**

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies (in Draft).

### 7.12.6 Arrangements for clinical, personnel and mass decontamination and the Council's role in each.

The On-Site Co-ordinator, in association with the other Controllers of Operations, will establish the need for decontamination. The Health Service Executive has responsibility for providing clinical decontamination and medical treatment to casualties affected by hazardous materials. The fire services have responsibility for providing other forms of physical decontamination of persons at the site. The Health Service Executive will be responsible for decontamination where required to protect health service facilities, such as hospitals, from secondary contamination.

Where emergency decontamination of the public is required, decontamination facilities are available at Mullingar Fire Service, or improvised equipment may be used prior to thearrival of dedicated equipment. Where it is decided that persons should undergo this practice, it should be carried out under the guidance of medical personnel. It should be noted that emergency contamination carries risks for vulnerable groups, such as the elderly and the injured. It may be more appropriate in certain circumstances for outer clothing to be removed and blankets provided as a temporary measure to alleviate potential harm through surface contact with contaminants.

## Section 7.13 - Protecting Threatened Populations

### 7.13.1 How decisions are to be made and implemented, and the Council's role in this.

The On-Site Co-ordinator will take the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations This protection is usually achieved by moving people temporarily to a safe area, by evacuation where appropriate or feasible, or by advising affected individuals to take shelter in an appropriate place.

### 7.13.2 Evacuation arrangements including evacuee reception centres, accommodation and welfare arrangements, and the Council's role in this.

The On-Site Co-ordinator will take the decision on how best to protect a threatened population, after consultation with the other Controllers of Operations. Evacuation is usually undertaken on the advice of the Fire Service or Health Service Executive. Where decided upon, the process of evacuation will be undertaken by An Garda Síochána, with the assistance of the other services. In some circumstances, personnel from all services may have to assist in carrying it out. A suitable evacuation assembly point will need to be established and rest centres set up by the Longford County Council. See 7.11.4.1.

### 7.13.3 Arrangements for the involvement of The Public Health service are made by the Health Service Executive, where appropriate.

Where an emergency results in a real or perceived threat to public health by, for example, the release of chemical, radioactive or biological agents, the contamination of water or food supplies, or the spread of contaminated flood water, it can be anticipated that there will be considerable concern among both the persons immediately affected and the wider public. In such situations, the Health Service Executive Controller should ensure that the local public health services are informed of the situation as soon as possible so that they can become involved in the response at the earliest possible stage.

### Section 7.14 - Early and Public Warning Systems

**7.14.1 Specify how the Council monitors potentially hazardous situations and decides when to issue warnings, and how these warnings are to be created.**

Met Éireann operates a "Public Service Severe Weather Warning" system whereby they notify County Council where weather conditions are forecast to meet specified criteria.

Not all severe weather warnings/events will be a Major Emergency. In certain situations where the forecast weather is sufficiently severe the members of the Crisis Management Team are to be notified.

All public warnings are to be issued via the designated Media Liaison Officer.

**7.14.2 How warnings are to be disseminated.**

Warnings may be disseminated to the public by use of some or <u>all</u> of the following mediums

- Door to Door
- Radio and T.V. broadcasting
- Local helpline / information line
- Web services and internet services
- Automated Text services

**Section 7.15  - Emergencies arising on Inland Waterways**

**7.15.1  Local arrangements for liaison with the Irish Coast Guard**

The Framework provides that An Garda Síochána should be the principal response agency to undertake initial co-ordination at inland waterway emergencies. After the initial response, this role may be re-assigned, following consultation between the Irish Coast Guard and An Garda Síochána.

**7.15.2    The Plan should note that the Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to inland waterway emergencies**

The Irish Coast Guard has responsibility for receiving 999/112 calls and the mobilising of resources to Inland Waterway emergencies. Civil Defence may be requested to provide support to the Coast Guard in the carrying out of its functions in respect of emergencies arising on Inland Waterways

## Section 7.16 - Safety, Health and Welfare Considerations

### 7.16.1 Responsibility for safety, health and welfare of staff, and safety management procedures and preparedness.

Each principal response agency (and other responding organisation) is responsible for the Safety, Health and Welfare of its staff responding to emergencies and should operate its own safety, health and welfare management procedures in relation to meeting its statutory requirements under Section 20 of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005.

### 7.16.2 Command support arrangements at the scene of the emergency and responsibility for the oversight and management of the safety of the Council's rescue personnel.

When working inthe environment of a Major Emergency the On-Site Co-ordinator will apply normal incident and safety management arrangements, a 'Safety Officer' will generally be appointed having responsibility for the overseeing and management of the Council's rescue personnel. All other relevant officers will continue to exercise command over their own personnel working in the area.

### 7.16.3 A 'Danger Area' may be declared at the site where there is a definite risk to rescue personnel over and above that which would normally pertain at emergency operations.

The Council is responsible for the health and safety of its staff when they operate within the 'Danger Area'. Each service should establish from the On-Site Co-ordinator if a Danger Area has been defined (*see Section 7.9.1 of this document*) as part of site management arrangements and, if so, what particular safety provisions may apply.

### 7.16.4 Procedures and evacuation signal for the 'Danger Area'.

Where a situation deteriorates to a point where the officer in charge of the Danger Area decides that it is necessary to withdraw response personnel from a Danger Area, a signal, comprising repeated sounding of a siren for ten seconds on, ten seconds off, will be given. All personnel should withdraw on hearing this signal to a pre-determined safe zone.

### 7.16.5 How physical welfare of responders (food, shelter, toilets) is to be provided.

Longford Co. Co. will ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site. This will be provided by the Civil Defense under the direction of the Council.

### 7.16.6 How the Council will provide appropriate psycho-social support for its own personnel.

Those who are particularly traumatized by the events of a Major emergency will require skilled professional help, this is will be provided by Longford County Council. Currently a 'Careline' exists

which enables employees to access confidential advice and support 24 hours a day 365 days a year. This type of service ensures confidentiality and overcomes the cultural resistance in the emergency services to such a step. These facilities should also be made available to support staff, even if they are not directly involved at the scene, e.g. administration staff, drivers and communications staff.

### Section 7.17 - Logistical Issues/ Protracted Incidents

### 7.17.1  Arrangements for rotation of front line rescue / field staff

Front line rescue / field staff will be relieved at protracted incidents in accordance with agreements for rest and recuperation. Crews from the Midlands region may be called upon to assist and support the emergency.

### 7.17.2  Specify arrangements for re-organising normal emergency and other services cover in areas depleted by commitments to the major emergency

Staff welfare arrangements need to be given priority in the recovery stage of an incident, so that the needs of all staff, both emergency response teams and general staff (including management), are catered for. In addition, the needs of staff that are not directly involved in responding to the incident should also be considered. Those members of staff who continue in their normal work are supporting colleagues in the emergency response and may be taking on additional work in the process. They can be as critical to the organisation's response as those involved at the 'coalface'.

### 7.17.3  Arrangements for initial and ongoing welfare for field staff

The Local Authority Controller should ensure that appropriate rest and refreshment facilities are provided for response personnel at the site, as well as for survivors. Staff welfare will be considered at all times. Civil Defence may be called upon to provide or aid in the administration of such needs. Welfare facilities such as toilets etc may also be required and supplied by Longford County Council. Meals will be provided at all meal times to field staff or every 4/5 hours during an incident.

## Section 7.18 - Investigations

### 7.18.1 An Garda Síochána will retain control of site and lead investigations arising from the emergency.

The scene of a suspected crime will be preserved until a complete and thorough examination has been made. An Garda Síochána will need to obtain evidence of the highest possible standard and will require that all evidence is left in situ, unless a threat to life or health prevents this. Statements may be required from the members of Local Authority staff on their involvement.

### 7.18.2 How the Council will ensure its emergency response functions are carried out to minimise disruption of evidence, and how personnel will provide information / chain of evidence for An Garda Síochána

The preservation of the site of a major emergency, which results from criminal action, is of paramount importance and should receive a priority rating from the outset by all PRA's. The first member(s) of An Garda Síochána to arrive at the site of a major emergency where a suspected crime has been committed automatically incurs the responsibility of preserving the site. While the priority is the protection of life, the provisions of the Framework are intended to assist An Garda Síochána's investigative role.

### 7.18.3 Other parties with statutory investigation roles will liaise with An Garda Síochána e.g. Air Accident Investigation Unit, Health and Safety Authority, etc

Depending on the nature of the Major Emergency, agencies other than An Garda Síochána may require access to the site for the purposes of carrying out an investigation. These agencies include the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), the Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). An Garda Síochána is responsible for carrying out criminal investigations.

Any agency including the Local Authority, with an investigative mandate should liaise in the first instance with the On-Site Co-ordinator, who will direct them to the Controller of Operations of An Garda Síochána.

## Section 7.19 - Community / VIPs / Observers

### 7.19.1  How links are to be established with communities affected by an emergency.

All requests for visits to the site or facilities associated with it should be referred to the Local Co-ordination Group. Requests for visits to agency specific locations should be referred to the Local Authority management. Public representatives and other dignitaries may wish to attend the site of the emergency, as well as associated facilities, such as hospitals, to express sympathy on behalf of the public to the injured and bereaved, and to support the emergency response workers.

### 7.19.2  Arrangements for receiving VIPs who wish to visit

Visits by dignitaries will usually require security arrangements and liaison with the media. It is important that the organisation of such visits does not distract from the response effort. As a general rule, VIPs should be advised not to visit sites where dangers still exist or where ongoing rescues are in progress.

### 7.19.3  Arrangements for national / international observers

National and International observers may request to attend the incident. The presence of experts from other regions or jurisdictions, who wish to act as observers at an incident, can greatly enhance the operational debriefings and facilitate the process of learning lessons from the emergency. The Local Co-ordination Group should make arrangements for any such observers.

## Section 7.20 - Standing-Down the Major Emergency

### 7.20.1 How the status of the emergency, as well as the various services of the Council, will be stood-down.

A decision to stand down the major emergency status of the incident at the site should be taken by the On-Site Co-ordinator, in consultation with the other Controllers of Operations at the site and the Local Co-ordination Group. Where organisations other than the principal response agencies have responded, they should be informed of the decision to stand them down by the Controller of Operations of the agency which mobilised them. Services operating at other locations should be stood down in a similar manner.

A great deal of activity may continue at locations other than the site (such as the hospitals, temporary mortuary, etc.) after the major emergency is stood down at the site. The Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Groups may need to continue their work after activities at the site have ceased.

### 7.20.2 How operational debriefing and reporting of activity will be undertaken.

When the incident has ended, each agency will be obliged to give a debrief to the members of its service that were involved in the emergency. Longford County Council will review the inter-agency co-ordination aspects of the response after every declaration of a major emergency.

A multi-agency debrief will then be held and lessons learned will be incorporated into this Plan. This review should be hosted by the lead agency and involve all services which were part of the response.

Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by other, non-emergency service agencies to expand the knowledge and learning process that debriefs should collate. This is notwithstanding the potential conflict of interest that may result in later investigations. This aspect should be considered when inviting agencies other than emergency services to the debrief.

Operational debriefs should identify areas for improvement in procedures, equipment and systems. They should not be forums for criticising the performance of others.

Debriefs should not interfere with or comment on investigations into the incident carried out by investigative or judicial authorities.

## Section 8 - Agency Specific Elements and Sub-Plans

When planning and preparing for a major emergency it is important that the Major Emergency Plan ties in with existing plans and procedures that are in place within the various Sections of Longford County Council Authority. The Sub-plan included are as follows:

- Business Continuity Plan

- Severe Weather Plans


All Agency Specific and Sub Plans will be attached in Appendix E of this plan.

# Section 9 - Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination

**9.1** **This section of the Major Emergency Plan should set out how the provisions of the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination will be invoked and operated. Relevant aspects of the plan for Regional Level Co-ordination should be included.**

The Chair of the Local Co-ordination Group may declare a regional level emergency and activate the Plan for Regional Level Co-ordination. The key provision in ensuring co-ordination of the extended response is the activation of a "Regional Coordination Group". The primary function of the Regional Co-ordination Group is to maintain co-ordination of the principal response agencies involved from the extended "response region".

*Please refer to section 6 of this document for a more in-depth look at a Regional Level Major Emergency Response.*

## Section 10 - Links with National Emergency Plans

### 10.1 How the Plan may be activated on request from a body acting under the provisions of one of the following National Emergency Plans:
- **National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents**
- **National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan**
- **Animal Health Plan**

Each principal response agency should provide for working with appropriate national bodies and responding to and activating appropriate aspects of their Major Emergency Plan following requests arising from national emergency situations. *Please refer to section 6.3.4.4/ 6.3.4.5 of this document for further details.*

### 10.1.1 National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of a local radiological emergency or the activation of the National Emergency Plan for Nuclear Accidents are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Radiological/ Nuclear Emergencies (in Draft)

### 10.1.2 National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan

Details of specific actions to be taken in the event of an activation of the National Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Plan are detailed in the Protocol for Multi-Agency Response to Emergencies arising from Infectious Diseases Pandemics (in Draft)

### 10.1.3 Animal Health Plan

For infectious diseases such as Avian Flu (The Department of Agriculture and Food: has an emergency plan designed to contain outbreaks of H5N1 avian influenza in poultry should the disease arrive in this country), Pandemic Flu, Foot and Mouth there will be a link to the National Plan as outlined by the government. Longford County Council will provide assistance under the command of the lead government department.

### 10.2 How the Plan may be activated on request from Irish Coast Guard following a threatened or actual emergency in the Irish Maritime SAR region (where relevant).

It also be activated by any Principle Response Agency in response to a request from the Irish Coast Guard, following a threatened or actual emergency in the Irish Maritime Search and Rescue Region;

### 10.3   How the Plan may be activated on request from a Minister of Government in light of an emergency / crisis situation.

The Major Emergency Plans of the principal response agencies may be activated by an agency in response to a request from a Minister of Government in light of an emergency/crisis situation.

# Section 11 - Severe Weather Plans

## 11.1 The Major Emergency Plan should have a specific Sub-Plan for responding to severe weather emergencies, whether major emergencies are declared or not. The Sub-Plan should include the Council's response plan for
### Flooding Emergencies.
### Severe Weather Conditions (Excluding Flooding Emergencies)

Severe weather emergencies may involve significant threats to infrastructure and support may be required for vulnerable sections of the community. It has been pre-determined that County Council are the lead agency for co-ordinating the response to severe weather events.

Arrangements have also been put in place by Met Éireann to issue public service severe weather warnings to the County Council. The target time for the issuing of a warning is 24 hours before the start of the event, but a warning may be issued up to 48 hours in advance when confidence is high. On Fridays before a holiday period it may be appropriate to issue a preliminary warning or weather watch to County Council.

Not all severe weather events will be major emergencies, but the principles and arrangements for co-ordinated response to major emergencies should inform all response to severe weather events. County Council should ensure that effective arrangements are in place to receive and respond promptly to public service severe weather warnings issued by Met Éireann.

The Local and/or Regional Co-ordination Centres for Major Emergency Management may be activated to manage the response to a severe weather event, whether a major emergency is declared or not.

### 11.1.1 Flooding Emergencies.

Refer to Section 8.

### 11.1.2 Severe Weather Conditions (Excluding Flooding Emergencies)

Refer to Section 8

# Section 12 - Site and Event Specific Arrangements and Plans

## 12.1 Reference to the specific plans for the sites / events.

There are both legislative and procedural arrangements, which require that emergency plans be prepared for specific sites or events (e.g. SEVESO sites, airports, ports, major sports events, etc.). Arising from the risk assessment process described in *Section 3*, Longford County Council's Major Emergency Plan has identified sites/events where specific plans/ arrangements exist for responding to emergencies.

The generic response arrangements set out in the *Section 7*, will govern the principal response agencies' response to such sites/events, whether a major emergency is declared or not.

## 12.2 The Major Emergency Plan should identify sites arising from the European Union (Control of Major Accident Hazard) Regulations, i.e. the 'Seveso Regulations', where specific plans / arrangements exist for responding to emergencies. The Major Emergency Plan should set out the generic arrangements governing the response to such sites / events and should contain reference to the specific plans for the site.

There are currently no sites which fall within the scope of the Seveso Regulations in County Longford.

# Section 13 - The Recovery Phase

## 13.1    Support for Individuals and Communities

The recovery phase can typically include:

- Assisting the physical and emotional recovery of victims;

- Providing support and services to persons affected by the emergency;

- Clean-up of damaged areas;

- Restoration of infrastructure and public services;

- Supporting the recovery of affected communities;

- Planning and managing community events related to the emergency;

- Investigations/inquiries into the events and/or the response;

- Restoring normal functioning to the principal response agencies; and

- Managing economic consequences.

A structured transition from response to recovery is critical for agencies, both collectively and individually. The recovery stage may be as demanding on the Local Authority resources and staff of the individual agencies as the emergency itself, as work may extend for a considerable time after the incident.

### 13.1.1  How individuals and communities affected by the emergency will be supported during the recovery phase

The recovery phase is the process of restoring and rebuilding the community in the aftermath of an emergency. This process requires a co-ordinated approach from all of the agencies involved.

In general, it is the function of the Local Co-ordination Group to provide strategic level management for the immediate, medium and long term consequences of an incident. Consequently, at the point when the issues on the agendas of the Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focused, it may be appropriate for the Local Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead.

The specific requirements for the Local Authority in the recovery phase are as follows;

- Clean-up

- Rebuilding the Community and infrastructure

- Supporting the recovery of affected communities

- Responding to community welfare needs (e.g. housing, water)

- Restoration of services.

### 13.1.2 How public appeals and external aid are to be organised and managed

There is a need for the co-ordination of emerging recovery issues, such as managing public appeals and external aid, from the earliest stages of the response phase. For this reason, the arrangements for co-ordination of response should continue to operate during the transition from response stage to recovery stage. At a point when the issues on the agendas of Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group. From the earliest stage, it may be appropriate also for the Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead.

### 13.2    Clean-Up

In the aftermath of an emergency the clean-up operation has been assigned to the Local Authority. The removal of debris and contaminated waste is one of the principal concerns for Longford County Council. In consultation with the EPA and specialist companies the Local Authority will commence clean up of a site as soon as possible but without hindering the investigation process. Careful consideration must be provided for the removal of decontaminated debris to locations that will not affect communities.

### 13.2.1    Arrangements for clean up of sites / removal of debris / decontamination of sites of emergency and the Council's role in this.

Longford County Council will undertake the following functions arising from and in response to a major emergency with response to a major emergency with respect to Clean up of the area/s affected by the incident;

- Arrange and oversee the clean-up of the affected area/s
- Engage any specialist contractors required to assist with the recovery operations
- Arrange for the site clearance, demolition, clear up operations, removal and disposal of debris.

### 13.3    Restoration of Infrastructure and Services. How restoration of infrastructure and services is to be achieved.

The Crisis Management Team will monitor the situation and mobilise senior staff to deal with the crisis as required. In this way, the objectives of the prioritising and managing of a protracted crisis can be dealt with effectively, while keeping the day- to-day business running of the Authority.

Furthermore, the Crisis Management Team will continue to function until the issues arising in the response phase are more appropriately dealt with by the Local Authority's normal management processes.

### 13.3.1  Procedures and arrangements for monitoring the situation;

At a point when the issues on the agendas of Co-ordination Groups are largely recovery focussed, it may be appropriate to re-title the group as the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group. From the earliest stage, it may be appropriate also for the Local, Regional or National Co-ordination Group to appoint a Recovery Working Group to plan ahead. These groups will be responsible for the co-ordination of the recovery phase, managing resources and monitoring the situation until the issues arising are more appropriately dealt with by the normal management processes.

### 13.3.2  Procedure for liaison with utilities;

The utility companies may need to be mobilised in the recovery phase in order to provide essential services such as gas, water and electrical supplies and communications facilities.

The IS Section will also has a roll to play in the recovery phase and will need to liaise with utilities in order to bring services back on line, such as communication links etc.

### 13.3.3  How the order of priorities are to be determined;

It is the responsibility of the Local, Regional or National Recovery Co-ordination Group together with the Recovery Working Group to priorities events during the recovery phase.

It should be noted that staff welfare arrangements need to be given priority in the recovery stage of an incident, so that the needs of all staff, both emergency response teams and general staff (including management), are catered for. In addition, the needs of staff that are not directly involved in responding to the incident should also be considered. Those members of staff who continue in their normal work are supporting colleagues in the emergency response and may be taking on additional work in the process. They can be as critical to the organisation's response as those involved at the 'coalface'.

### 13.3.4  Protection measures against continuing hazards.

The Local Co-ordination Group and Crisis Management Team will ensure that adequate resources are deployed and managed to prevent further escalation of the emergency while restoring normality to the site or persons affected.

The Crisis Management Team will continue to function until the issues arising in the response phase are more appropriately dealt with by Longford County Council's normal management processes.

# Section 14 - Review of the Major Emergency Plan

## 14.1 How the Major Emergency Plan is to be reviewed and amended internally, within the Council on an annual basis.

An internal review of the Major Emergency Plan will be undertaken by Longford County Council on a yearly basis, the review should be held every September or on the annual date of implementing the plan. The review should include;

- Updating the roles of individuals that hold key positions in the Major Emergency plan

- Updating the risk holders within the functional area of Longford County Council.

- Update names and numbers of utility companies, private companies etc

- Review current risk assessments and update as required.

- Plan exercises

## 14.2 How the Major Emergency Plan is to be reviewed and amended externally.

Longford County Council's appraisal will be reviewed and validated by the Midland Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management. This appraisal should also be reviewed and validated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to Longford County Council for appropriate action. In cases of disagreement between the Local Authority and the Regional Steering Group, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide on the issue.

## 14.2.1 How the Major Emergency Plan is to be reviewed and amended with the other principal response agencies at the Regional Major Emergency Group

Each principal response agency's Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed and validated annually by the relevant Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management. This will include updating and amending the plans as mentioned in *section 14.1* of this document.

Each agency's appraisal should also be reviewed and validated by the relevant parent Department in the case of the County Council and by the national headquarters, in consultation with the parent Department, in the case of Divisions of An Garda Síochána and Health Service Executive Areas, in accordance with the normal appraisal/reporting relationships within that sector. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the principal response agency for appropriate action. In cases of disagreement between a principal response agency and a Regional Steering Group, the National Steering Group should be consulted and should decide on the issue.

The regional level report will also be reviewed and validated by the National Steering Group. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to the Regional Steering Group on Major Emergency Management for appropriate action.

### 14.2.2 How the Major Emergency Plan is to be reviewed and amended by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

In addition to Longford County Council's Major Emergency Plan being reviewed locally and regionally on an annual basis it must also be reviewed and validated by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Any issues arising from the review should be referred back to Longford County Council for appropriate action.

### 14.3     After every activation, the Major Emergency Plan should be reviewed and reported upon.

Once the Major Emergency Plan has been stood down, each of the services and agencies involved in the incident will hold a series of operational hot-debriefs. Initially these will be confined to each particular service, but later a multi-agency cold-debrief will be held (Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by other, non-emergency service) and lessons learned will be incorporated into this Manual and other service manuals, as appropriate.

### 14.3.1 How the agency's performance of its functions will be reviewed and reported upon internally.

In addition to the review process outlined in the sections above, which takes place annually on a local, regional and national level, the Major Emergency Plan for Longford County and the performance of the Longford County Council as a principal response agency will also be reviewed proceeding a major incident within the county/ region or even national, when there are learning to be gained. Should any new risks become apparent in the County, the plan will be reviewed to reflect this.

### 14.3.2 How the co-ordination function will be reviewed and reported upon externally and jointly with other principal response agencies.

Multi-agency debriefs should consider the contribution provided by not only each other but also other, non-emergency service agencies. This is notwithstanding the potential conflict of interest that may result in later investigations. This aspect should be considered when inviting agencies other than emergency services to the 'debrief'.

Multi agency reviews must also be conducted on an annual basis between the principle response agencies on both a local and regional level basis. This will include reviewing and reporting on the co-ordination function of the agencies.