

PWSCG (34) Meeting
10:30 – 16:00 Wednesday 15th July 2015
 Conference Centre, BIS, 1 Victoria Street, London

In Attendance:

Wyn Williams (WW)	PWSCG Chair
Denise Harker (DH)	PWSCG Independent Member
Mike Gray (MG)	PWSCG Secretariat
Paul Riches (PR)	PWSCG Secretariat
Katrina Lidbetter (KL)	ShEx
Alessia Morris (AM)	Scottish Government
Colin Hord (CH)	Civil Aviation Authority
Martin Jones (MJ)	MOD
George Tabcart (GT)	MOD
Liz Howell (LH)	BBC
Craig Woolhouse (CW)	Environment Agency
Ian Hault (IH)	Local Government Association
Patricia Abbott (PA)	CLG
Phil Evans (PE)	Met Office
Derrick Ryall (DR)	Met Office
Richard Orrell (RO)	Met Office
Mel Harrowsmith (MH)	Met Office
Sophie Purdey (SP)	Met Office
Julia Slingo (JS)	Met Office

Apologies:

Charlie Hall	Association of Chief Police Officers
Keith Hodgkinson	Innovation Policy Team, BIS
Nathan Travis	Chief Fire Officers Association
Steve Barnes	Civil Contingencies Secretariat
Richard Jackson	Maritime & Coastguard Agency
Dane Marsh	Welsh Government
David O'Connor	Highways England
John Irvine	Northern Ireland Executive

Agenda item	Discussion, Decisions and Actions
1	<p>Welcome & Introductions</p> <p>WW opened the meeting and welcomed George Tabcart who has taken over from Gregor Birse as the MOD representative. MG noted the apologies received and that the meeting was not quorate</p>
2	<p>Minutes</p> <p>The group approved the minutes of the last meeting and noted the progress to complete the actions. The group approved the updated Consultation Plan which could now be published.</p>

	<p>PWSCG Annual report MG suggested that the new Interdepartmental Met Office Strategy Group would be an appropriate mechanism for circulating the annual report to other Government departments. This would be prepared in a format suitable for circulation to this Group from next year.</p>
3	Reports
3.1	<p>PWSCG Chair's Update – WW, including PWSCG Wales and Scotland</p> <p>WW gave a short update on activities since the last meeting.</p> <p>Responder Workshops The recent NSWWS responder workshops were highlighted as a recent success and the chair was pleased with how they were delivered.</p> <p>PWSCG Wales The first Welsh PWSCG meeting was held in May and following its success it has been decided to hold it as an annual event.</p> <p>PWSCG Scotland A notable development is the work that is well under way to establish their National Resilience Centre.</p> <p>European Centre for Medium-range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) WW, DH and MG visited the Centre in Reading. ECMWF portrays itself as primarily a research institute and WW was satisfied that there was already good collaboration between the Met Office and ECMWF and that ECMWF outputs were already well utilised within the PWS. One issue high up on the ECMWF agenda is the need for new premises and possible relocation.</p> <p>Interdepartmental Met Office Strategy Group WW attended the first proper meeting of the Group on Friday 10 July. WW will be representing the interests of the PWSCG at future meetings, and will review Government Departments' priorities for the Met Office to ensure that the requirements of the PWSCG are captured.</p>
3.2	<p>Met Office General Review – ShEx KL provided the group with a summary of the Met Office General Review, what the review was intended to do and the high level findings.</p> <p>Clarifying it was a research project and not a report to make specific recommendations. Its aim was to measure the value of the Met Office to the UK. It was not reviewing the Met Office status as a Trading Fund.</p> <p>The review concluded that, taking account of investment already committed, the Met Office would bring some £30 billion of value to the UK over the next ten years - a benefit-cost ratio of around 14:1. Around a third of that value can be attributed to the world-class standard of the Met Office, with its unified weather and climate model.</p> <p>There is no cross-cutting Government view of the national weather and climate requirements. An integrated view of strategic requirements could</p>

	<p>help Government weigh up priorities, manage funding risks and set a clearer long term vision. KL confirmed that the economic analysis will be published. WW stated that the Met Office is world class because of the hard work and milestones they meet not because it is funded with the aim of being ranked number 1.</p> <p>The Interdepartmental Met Office Strategy Group had already been established to draw together a national statement of priorities. It was mentioned that more work needs to be done in order to define the full underpinning capability but it was recognised that this would be difficult. There was agreement that this would need to be achieved in order to make a clear point to HMT that the PWS and Met Office work provides such a specialist service.</p> <p>PE noted that the General Review has timed well with the spending review process and should help the Met Office and the PWSCG to set out and demonstrate the value of the PWS.</p> <p>Action: Secretariat to circulate to members the formal summary of the General Review when published.</p>
4	15/16 Performance
4.1	<p>Met Office quarterly summary</p> <p>DR initially focused on the record July temperatures recorded on 1 July. The level of reach to the general public on this event was high especially through social media. MH noted that feedback from the Peterborough responder workshop included the view that a heat warning would have helped with escalating messages within their organisation to senior colleagues.</p> <p>There was some discussion around a coding error that had recently been discovered which affected the forecast accuracy for clear sky. LH said they were getting complaints from the public about forecast problems a long time before the problem was officially acknowledged. The Group was assured that the problem had been fixed as soon as it was identified, but requested that the Met Office prepare a formal report on this event for the next meeting of the PAG.</p> <p>Action: Met Office to prepare a report on the recent coding error for the September PAG meeting.</p> <p>There was some discussion about nowcasting, particularly of thunderstorms, and what opportunities there may be for being able to put out the advice from the Chief Forecaster more rapidly at the time a weather event is actually underway. This was a theme that came out in the recent responder workshops.</p>
4.2	<p>Update on Milestones</p> <p>IH provided the group with an update on the work associated with MS3a – Update to iPhone and Android apps which is undergoing user testing. The</p>

	<p>group agreed that the delivery date for the mobile app will be by mid-January 2016, with the preference for retaining the scope and quality rather than the time scale.</p> <p>RO provided an update on MS5 the Weather Observations from Schools project and the pilot project that is due to be promoted to schools this September. The pilot scheme is then expected to be underway from January to March next year. The project will provide schools with better access to more affordable weather observation equipment and can link to the national curriculum.</p>
4.3	<p>Responder Workshops (NSWWS)</p> <p>MH provided a summary of the workshop programme and initial themes and early findings. It has shown that the impacts based matrix is working well with the responder community and that there is appetite for the longer range forecast out to 7 days. There is a strong demand for more local detail and that the advisor service is valued very highly. A training video has been shown at the workshops guiding users in how to use the NSWWS matrix approach. Hazard Manager was referred to and a question raised as to when version 2 will be the default and the original version switched off. MH informed the group that a comms plan was being developed to handle the transition period and that no final decision on switch off timing has been agreed yet.</p> <p>Action: MH to provide the link for the training film to the secretariat for circulating to the PWSCG.</p> <p>Action: A request was made for MH to report the findings of the responder workshops to the PWSCG meeting in October.</p>
4.4	<p>Secretariat report on Met Office performance</p> <p>MG provided a summary of the Met Office performance against the agreed milestones and performance measures. PR provided a short highlight comparing UK and International forecast accuracy which had been requested at the last meeting.</p>
5	Future Plans
5.1	<p>Spending review and PWS priorities</p> <p>MG gave a brief outline of what we know about the timetable for the spending review process.. It is possible that the PWS could be re-classified as capital spend due to changes in the treatment of R&D investment in the national accounts. The PWSCG had a broad discussion around the spending review. Some of the points made included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The importance of defending R&D which may look like a soft target, but it is essential to deliver the benefits of new capability such as HPC and satellites - That further efficiencies would be required to meet spending review requirements, irrespective of the current level of efficiency or return on investment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - That it was not in the Met Office’s gift to deliver efficiencies on international commitments <p>PE noted that it will be crucial to make the Government/Ministers aware of the consequences of any cuts to the PWS.</p> <p>WW noted that a lot of work has been put into the funding scenarios which is prudent and will help with a speedy response to the spending review question when it arrives.</p> <p>WW suggested that an additional meeting of this group between now and October may be necessary in order to discuss some of these challenges especially in the context of the spending review.</p> <p>Action: Chair to consider the need for an additional meeting before the next quarterly meeting in October in order to respond the any requirements stemming from the spending review. A teleconference may be sufficient.</p> <p>Priorities of the Public Weather Service</p> <p>There was a discussion about the priorities of the PWS in the context of the Spending Review.</p> <p>Comments made included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The priority of UK weather forecasts over international ones - The importance of access to global earth observations, especially satellites - That choices which degraded forecast accuracy would be unacceptable to the Group - The results from the Responder Workshops would be important in driving the future priorities of the PWS <p>There was a suggestion that the head of International at the Met Office could come to PAG in September and present to the group on the international obligations.</p> <p>Action: PE agreed to put together a short note to explain the international commitments and costs of the associated infrastructure such as the satellites.</p>
5.2	<p>Met Office Science Strategy – Prof Dame Julia Slingo</p> <p>JS delivered an extremely informative presentation on the PWS-related aspects of the new Met Office Science Strategy. The PWSCG was pleased to note that the new strategy had a strong customer focus and would address some of the priority forecasting challenges identified by the PWSCG including fog/low cloud, convective storms and seasonal forecasting.</p> <p>MJ asked whether the strategy could be used to help to inform the public task and can go into advising the Minister and/or BIS? JS confirmed that the strategy aims to justify the scientific basis of the Met Office operation. It sets out that there is a scientific bedrock which supports the underlying capability and draws out the point that that there would be serious ramifications if this there were major cuts to this scientific base.</p>

The view of the Group was that it is important to demonstrate just how much science underpins the work of the Met Office and the PWS.
Action: Secretariat to circulate the Met Office Science Strategy to the PWSCG once it has been published by the Met Office.

Future PWSCG Meeting dates and locations:

PWS Assurance Group, Exeter, 15th September 2015
PWSCG 35th Meeting, Heathrow Airport, 21st October 2015
PWSCG Northern Ireland, Belfast, 11th November 2015
PWSCG 36th Meeting, BIS, 27th January 2016
PWSCG 37th Meeting, tbc, 27th April 2016

Summary of Actions

Action	Owner
Action: Secretariat to circulate to members the formal summary of the General Review when published.	Secretariat
Action: Met Office to prepare a report on the recent coding error for the September PAG meeting.	Derrick Ryall /Richard Orrell
Action: MH to provide the link for the training film to the secretariat for circulating to the PWSCG.	Mel Harrowsmith
Action: A request was made for MH to report the findings of the responder workshops to the PWSCG meeting in October.	Mel Harrowsmith
Action: Chair to consider the need for an additional meeting before the next quarterly meeting in October in order to respond the any requirements stemming from the spending review. A teleconference may be sufficient.	Wyn Williams
Action: PE agreed to put together a short note to explain the international commitments and costs of the associated infrastructure such as the satellites.	Phil Evans
Action: Secretariat to circulate the Met Office Science Strategy to the PWSCG once it has been published by the Met Office.	Secretariat