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Committee Civil Defence Emergency Management Group
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Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning

1. Purpose

To inform the Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Group of the establishment of a Pre-Disaster Recovery Framework, the next step in the evolution of CDEM for our region.

2. Background

2.1 A case for planning Wellington's post-disaster recovery, today

The creation of the Wellington Region Emergency Management Office (WREMO) proved an opportunity to rethink the planning and provision of CDEM activities. To date, this has seen the amalgamation of the region's disparate Emergency Management teams into one semi-autonomous body which supports all nine councils comprising the Wellington CDEM Group. The result has been a single team, common strategy, consistent messaging and, most importantly, fresh innovative approaches to tackle traditional CDEM challenges. Greater emphasis has been put on enhancing resilience in our communities, as well as ensuring our operational structures are capable of responding to emergency events.

Through this unified approach, the region's emergency readiness and response capacity has already made great strides forward. However, as Christchurch is now experiencing, creating a strong and rapid recovery is the most unwieldy challenge.

Although recovery is officially an Emergency Management function, the sector has traditionally not had any significant involvement in recovery planning activities. This is largely because most facets e.g. urban planning, community development, economic growth, etc., predominantly reside outside of the sector's knowledge base. As part of WREMO's fresh approach to emergency management, which includes a wider appreciation and application of the many drivers that influence resilience, it has become clear that planning for the inevitable recovery is one of the important priorities for the region. Planning for tomorrow's recovery today will help reduce the impacts to lives and

property, accelerate a sense of normalcy, maintain the leadership of local government throughout the recovery and ensure Wellington retains its prominence as the capital of New Zealand. To achieve this, a new collaborative approach and model must be developed.

3. Comment

3.1 Pre-Disaster Recovery Framework

The development of a region-wide pre-disaster recovery framework (PDRF) would mitigate many of the risks associated with a large earthquake such as the loss of lives, irreparable damage to property and potential long-term flight of social, physical and economic resources. To be truly effective, this would require a collaborative approach between local governments, central government, the private sector and the community. The ongoing input and engagement of each of these four critical partners is paramount to creating an approach that addresses the many facets of a strong and rapid recovery.

Specifically, this framework would address issues such as the management of the recovery by local and central government, the sustained surge capacity required by local councils, and the business-as-usual processes that must be adapted and time compressed. Furthermore, this framework would create clearer pathways for meaningful input by the private and community sectors, pre and post recovery. Evidence from other international large scale disasters highlight these themes as some of the most common challenges that occur in every recovery.

The creation of this framework would require the inputs from representatives of the five environments of recovery – Built, Economic, Social, Cultural and Natural – with WREMO guiding the process through a facilitative approach. Methodologies such as Appreciative Inquiry and Design Thinking would be employed to capture the excellent existing work that is already occurring across the region while allowing for opportunities for greater innovation. This framework is already being slowly advanced through collaboration with Christchurch City Council, which is contributing valuable knowledge from their challenges and lessons learned over the last few years. Further, through the International Centre of Excellence in Community Resilience, WREMO is tapping into world leading thinkers in the recovery space, such as Laurie Johnson from San Francisco.

Local government is responsible for managing the day-to-day activities of a city from planning residential developments, to engaging with their communities on local activities, to the management of the area's natural resources. Existing research from around the world highlights that a successful recovery is driven by local government. A PDRF helps balance the inevitable tension of those that hold the purse strings, which is often the central government, and those that will invest in the future of the city (the private sector and the citizens that will choose to reside there). By developing a meaningful PDRF, the cities and districts of the Wellington region will better be able to maintain their role as the primary driver of any future recovery.

3.2 The next steps

Recovery is not something that can be planned for or implemented piece by piece. The creation of WREMO acknowledged that disasters do not abide by territorial boundaries. In a similar manner, recovery planning will require full and active engagement by all members of the Wellington CDEM Group along with those partners identified during the process outlined above.

WREMO and Group structures (the Co-ordinating Executive Group and the CDEM Group Joint Committee) are the current conduit for all Emergency Management work programmes in the region. While undertaking a PDRF represents a big step up, it is still within the scope of those activities defined by the CDEM Act 2002. Further, a coordinated approach to pre-disaster recovery planning ensures there is synergy in the region's resilience approach and mitigation efforts are applied holistically.

This would require:

- (a) council Chief Executives, along with the region's political leaders, to play a more active role, providing the necessary horsepower to bring local government officers, central government and the private sector to the table while recognising the value of community input; and,
- (b) acknowledgement that this level of recovery planning is beyond current WREMO work plans and would require additional resources to manage the required activities in a coordinated manner. Seed funding could be made available from the Group's surplus funding reserve to kick-start this initiative in the immediate future.

4. Recommendations

That the CDEM Group:

1. ***Receives the report.***
2. ***Notes the contents of the report; and***
3. ***Endorses the proposal for further development of a work programme to be submitted to Co-ordinating Executive Group on 10 October 2014.***

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