

MINUTES

PWSCG (52) Meeting

09:30 – 15:00 Wednesday 28th April 2021

Virtual meeting due to COVID-19

Attendees

PWSCG Members		BEIS and Met Office	
Duncan Potts (DP)	PWSCG Chair	Sarah Davies (SD)	PWSCG Secretariat (BEIS)
Kim Shillinglaw (KS)	Independent Member	Paul Riches (PR)	PWSCG Secretariat (BEIS)
Tracy Goode (TG)	Welsh Government	Eli Johnson (EJ)	PWSCG Secretariat (BEIS)
Des McFarlane (DM)	Department for Infrastructure Northern Ireland	Penny Endersby (PE)	Met Office
Paul Furlong (PF)	Highways England	Richard Orrell (RO)	Met Office
David Gibbs (DG)	Civil Aviation Authority	Alison Wood (AW)	Met Office
Tammy Newey	Maritime and Coastguard Agency	Lisa Martin (LM)	Met Office
Mark Vartan	MOD	Ian Belcher (IB)	Met Office
Charlotte Wood (CW)	Environment Agency	John Harrison (JH)	Met Office
Peter Davison (PD)	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Ian Cameron (IC)	Met Office
Jim Kerr (JK)	Scottish Government	Will Lang (WL)	Met Office
Ben Brook (BB)	National Fire Chiefs Council		
James Partington (JP)	BEIS		
Karen Bradley (KB)	Scottish Government		
Apologies			
Emer O'Connell (EO)	Public Health England		
Seb Lawrence	Cabinet Office		

Actions

Owner	Action	Date
Secretariat	To streamline the PWSCG papers into a more exec summary format with supplementary annexes for the detail	Next PWSCG
Secretariat	Change the reference from October in the header section of the January minutes	Done.
Secretariat	Ask Met Office to arrange a call between Tammy Newey and Ian Cameron to discuss the links between Mountain Rescue and the Coastguard.	By end May
WL	TN and Met Office to meet and discuss NSWWS work.	
PR	The PWSCG Annual Report will be updated to reflect conclusions from this meeting.	14/05/2021
PR	PR to discuss with PF data from M5.	Done.
Met Office	Indicator graph 5.3 to be clarified in future presentations of similar data.	Rolling
PWSCG	Members will all feedback to the secretariat on PAG meeting structure and governance by Mid may.	14/05/2021

Decisions

Requirement	Decision
2021-2026 CSA signoff	JH confirmed the Met Office executive agree with the CSA requirements and aims. The PWSCG unanimously agreed to signoff the CSA for 2021-2026.
MS1.1 signoff	The PWSCG agreed that Milestone 1.1 has been met.
PPM5 signoff PPM6 signoff	The PWSCG agreed with the PAG conclusion that PPM5 and PPM6 have been met.
PPM3 signoff	The PWSCG agree that PPM3 has been met. The PWSCG also agree with the recommendations arising from PPM3.
MS2.2 signoff	The PWSCG agree that MS2.2 has been met.

Requirement	Decision
MS3.1 signoff	The PWSCG agree that MS3.1 has been met.
MS4.1 signoff	The PWSCG agree that MS4.1 has been met.
2020/2021 CSA signoff	The PWSCG agree that the Met Office have achieved the requirements of the 2020/2021 CSA.

Main PWSCG Meeting including Met Office colleagues

2.0 DP opened the meeting and welcomed attendees

- DP opened the meeting, emphasising the work done between the Met Office and BEIS team on the CSA in the interim period between meetings. DP highlighted that the teams have been working well together, which was supported by BEIS and Met Office PWS teams.
- DP said that there are two aims for the session:
 1. We will ask the PWSCG to sign off Met Office performance for 2020/2021 against the CSA requirements
 2. We will ask the PWSCG to sign off the new 2021-2026 CSA this morning, and discuss governance and the structure of meetings for the new CSA at the end of the day

2.1 Minutes & actions from last meeting

- It was highlighted that the date at the top references October; the BEIS team will amend this and sign the minutes off as a true record of the meeting.

3 Reports

3.1 BEIS update (JP)

- Spending review has just been concluded. It was a challenging review; but PWS was allocated 97.8million for 2021/2022. The Met Office partnership with Microsoft to deliver the supercomputer has been announced.
- The new CSA is a strong piece of work and we will put the spotlight on this within government to raise the importance of PWS more widely.
- JP thanked DP for his contribution to the group; DP has led the group extremely well over the last year and JP wanted to recognise this contribution.
- JP also noted that there are a number of new strategies being developed in BEIS; the Innovation Strategy is being worked on, as is the People and Place strategy. These all related to Met Office work.

3.2 PWSCG Chair's Update

- DP has had a productive and enjoyable year, but not been able to do as many visits as he had hoped last year. DP is very keen to visit as many members as possible during the next year when able.

- The focus for the next period is discussing and developing accuracy and reach measures.
- The launch of the Extreme Heat Warning Service will also be a focal point over the next few months.

3.3 Independent members report

- KS has been having introductions with a lot of Met Office colleagues over the last few months as she stepped into the role.
- KS noted that accuracy, share of voice, perceptions of the Met Office and reach were key focal points for her and the importance of working together. KS wanted to emphasise that the Met Office teams have been very constructive and helpful as we dig into a number of complex issues surrounding these topics.
- KS also held her first MARG meeting. The focus was discussing the Extreme Heat Weather Warning Service with broadcasters and it was a productive session.

3.4 Met Office CEO Update

- PE said that the last year has been challenging due to COVID-19 with less than 15% of staff on site, however the Met Office's general performance has been extremely good despite these challenges.
- The Met Office are very pleased that they have delivered all 30 targets in their strategic work; with some highlights being getting approval for the new supercomputer, and ongoing developments on their underlying models.
- The organisation has restructured during the last year; this is aligned to the strategy, the CSA and workflows.
- Looking forward, the Met Office have awarded the supercomputer contract, and the Met Office will be working to ensure a seamless transition from the old HPC to the new one, with both running in parallel for a time. PWSCG should note that there may be a potential short term dip in performance, but that this will be managed and the group will be kept informed. The spending review settlement will allow the Met Office to accelerate work whilst being cautious about spending given current global uncertainties.
- On COP26, a lot of work done by the Hadley Centre will be feeding into COP26. The Met Office have put bids in for stands in both public and corporate areas. The Met Office may also do something in partnership with Microsoft. The PWSCG will receive a summary of this work at a future meeting, already noted.
- The Met Office have also found it a positive and constructive to work with BEIS on the new CSA.

4 New CSA Sign Off (SD)

- The group are asked if they give approval to sign off the 2021-2026 CSA. Comments made today and in the past week will be incorporated.
- SD described the main points and themes of the CSA. DP said that it is a 5 year CSA and the general direction of travel will be consistent over that period, but the detail within it (milestones, performance measures) will be reviewed annually to ensure that the yearly plans are aligned with factors such as spending review, supercomputer developments.
- There is a lot of work to do in the first year; a lot of this is finalising metrics and measures, and these will be used to define targets for future years.

- DP also said that governance is important. This will be covered in Agenda Item 6. It is important to ensure that the Met Office are striving to achieve everything in the CSA for yearly signoff procedures, but the CG will remain flexible in those and understand that some situations may fall outside of Met Office control
- TN thanked everyone for their collaboration on this; TN had recently sought some clarity on safety forecasts and has received positive feedback during these discussions. The MCA are content to signoff the document with these additions.
- CW said that the reach of service is important, as noted in this new CSA. There is a new push for cell broadcasting for flood warnings and there are some interesting conversations at the moment around climate change and surface water flooding. The EA appreciate the focus on customer needs and ongoing discussions with the Met Office, and it is important to be part of this group ensuring that the customer is represented. CW endorsed the CSA on behalf of the EA. IC agreed that reaching and engaging with audiences is a fundamental underpinning of the Met Office. We would like to continue to work with partner organisations to ensure this happens.
- **JH confirmed the Met Office executive agree with the CSA requirements and aims.**
- **The PWSCG unanimously agreed to signoff the CSA for 2021-2026.**

5 FY20/21 Deliverables and Performance

5.1 *Review of this year's weather & warnings evolution (WL)*

- The Met Office has exceeded the target and stretch target for warnings in 20/21. Although this is a 36 month rolling mean, there was sustained good performance for 20/21.
- Winter was wet and unsettled; slightly colder than normal with some notable cold spells.
- Storm Christoph was a high-profile storm, likely due to potential impacts on COVID-19 and the vaccine rollout. There were over 150 CCA meetings in 4 days and 6 COBR meetings. The warning covered the appropriate areas and impacts well. TG and WL discussed the warning in North Wales and whether in retrospect it should have been amber – this was a result of the likelihood of the event being lower in North Wales than in Northern England and not a result of any cross border issue.
- There was a significant cold snap in February followed by Storm Darcy where there was widespread disruption due to snow.

Review of warnings evolution (WL)

- This session described a Met Office consultation which was aimed to review the NSWWS service and understand user views of the system.
- A large amount of information was gathered during the consultation which will be used to develop services moving forward.
- The headline is that NSWWS system is broadly working, remains fit for purpose and will do for the next 5-10 years; however there are really important steps that can be taken to improve and enhance the system.
- There is a strong appetite for further information on impacts and actions, the NSWWS matrix is not understood by the public, there are many distinct groups of users who use warnings differently, there is an impact of warnings on mental health, and there is a desire from the broadcasters to understand and be part of the process of issuing a warning.

- Selected recommendations were given, including recommending actions, understanding peoples perceptions of risk, there should be greater emphasis on supporting services, linking climate change to severe weather.
- Work has begun to dig deeper into the results and to identify future changes. Work will be ongoing with responder community and partner organisations on this in the future, for example conversations with RNLI are ongoing to try and coordinate services but other organisations will be involved. TN would like to discuss this work with the Met Office.
- The results of this consultation tie in very well with a lot of the aims included in the new CSA. The BEIS secretariat have had an in depth briefing from B2B who ran the research.
- The group was pleased with the work and applauded the direction of travel. The public's desire for personalisation should not be underestimated, and are almost at risk of outstripping what technology can offer.
- The group discussed accessing those who are vulnerable to the impact of weather, asking if the right messages are getting to the right people. The Met Office intends to look at this more closely, and the Met Office Exec and Board are engaged in this thinking. The research showed that there are vulnerable groups that Met Office warnings do not currently reach.
- It is important to note that the Civil Contingency Advisors service (CCA) works well for those who know about it, but there are groups who are not aware of the CCA. The Met Office will now be attempting to bridge that gap.

Action: TN and Met Office to meet and discuss NSWWS work.

The PWSCG agreed that Milestone 1.1 has been met.

5.2 Secretariat report on Performance

a. PWS Assurance Group Report

- It was reported to the group that the PAG recommend sign off for PPM5 and PPM6. The PWSCG group were asked to agree or disagree with this recommendation.

The PWSCG agreed with the PAG conclusion that PPM5 and PPM6 have been met.

b. PWSCG Annual Report

- The annual report is put into the public domain to give the public an idea of the PWS and PWSCG activities. It will sit alongside the outcomes for the year. This will be updated after today to confirm if the new CSA is signed off. Members were content with the report, but PF queried some data in there. PR to follow up on this point.

Action: The Annual Report will be updated to reflect conclusions from this meeting.

Action: PR to discuss the M5 case study reference with PF.

5.3 Sign off FY20/21 Programme

a. Met Office PWS annual report & performance report

- Annual report will be published on the Met Office website;
- The group were asked for feedback on the PPMs:
 - o PPM1, PPM4, PPM5, PPM6, PPM7:

- No comments from PWSCG, apart from editorial points around including specific metrics in the summary.
- PPM2:
 - Perceived forecast accuracy was high, but the 'very accurate' component of this score does not seem to be increasing and the group would like to see this improve in the future, which is a target for the next CSA.
- PPM3 (covered later)

Action point: Met Office to add in actual metrics achieved before publishing the summary report.

b. PPM3 - 2020 responder survey

- Benchmark was >80%, which was achieved (on 94% of approximately 163 respondents being satisfied based on a quantitative survey). However awareness and access to the CCA service can be improved in the future.
- TG suggested that Wales PWSCG meeting could be used to discuss how to bridge the gap. National Fire Chief Councils also would like to engage on this issue.
- Important to note that consultation was done differently to previous years due to responders being overloaded with COVID-19 pressures and the NSWWS consultation.
- IC and DP highlighted the boundaries of where a PWS service could potentially stray into bespoke commercial services that are provided by the Met Office and that when developing or expanding any service PWS must be mindful of the boundary of the Public Weather Service and how public money should be spent.
- TG suggested the PWSCG Wales meeting to be used to discuss how to bridge the gap for responders to have more confidence to take decisions, and National Fire Chief Councils would like to engage on this issue.

The PWSCG agree that PPM3 has been met. The PWSCG also agree with the recommendations arising from PPM3.

c. Milestone 2.2 (PPM7)– increasing engagement of MO digital channels

- The Met Office continue to make constant marginal improvements which are reflected in increase service users on different platforms.
- The group noted that they would like the information to converge as much as possible on different platforms. The Met Office team said that there will be a future decision based on more research, but decisions will not be made without consultation with the PWSCG. Important to be aware that there are limitations put in place by the tech platforms for refresh rate in the widget vs app (e.g. apple and android) which can have an impact on consistency.

The PWSCG agree that MS2.2 has been met.

d. Milestone 3.1 (PPM7) – Hazard Manager consultation

- Responders value Hazard Manager and it should continue to be a significant component of the Met Office offer to them. The value should be maintained through developing the system according to the recommendations in the report.
- Important to note that Hazard Manager is designed for the responder community, and it is not a tool designed for the wider public.

The PWSCG agree that MS3.1 has been met.

e. Milestone 4.1 (PPM7)

- data from global model and high-resolution UK, lightning, radar models were prioritised for being made available. A roadmap for the release of this has been developed.
- This process has been seen as a success for the Met Office.
- MV stated that a lot of this work underpins MOD modelling work and would like to highlight that MOD are very happy with the progress of this work.

The PWSCG agree that MS4.1 has been met.

f. PWS reach report – questions to be fed through offline.

g. Service modernisation and decommissioning – questions to be fed through offline.

Side note: Indicator 5.3 graph, the average represents whole group of 20, whereas only the top competitors re included in this graph. Action point to address this in future reporting.

Action: Indicator graph 5.3 to be clarified in future presentations of similar data.

The PWSCG agree that the Met Office have achieved the requirements of the 2020/2021 CSA.

6 Revised PAG/PWSCG meeting structure

- A revised meeting structure is proposed for governance of the PWS and to enable scrutiny of the work and future looking. The group welcomes combined digital and in person approach, and agree with the overall structure but were concerned about the time commitment. Reading papers for each meeting is an additional time commitment, and a greater use of executive summary would be welcomed in the future along with receiving the papers in advance.
- Clear Terms of Reference for each PAG group would be useful in the PWSCG assessment of potential involvement. Longer meetings mean a massive amount of information to absorb and not everyone is able to attend full day meetings. Suggest these are limited to one or two per year with other being shorter and sharper with papers provided well in advance.
- Civil Aviation Authority sign off the revised structure.
- The meeting structure is agreed on, however meetings will be combined where possible.

Proposal for yearly sign off

- MV approved this proposal: Absolutely support your proposal for the KPI/PM RAG tracking with the ability to then discuss relative performance on a monthly basis. It is a very similar methodology operated in the Defence/Met Office CSA.

Action: Members will all feedback to the secretariat on PAG meeting structure and governance by Mid may.

Summary

- DP summed up saying that this year has been challenging but successful. The group are pleased to have signed off 20/21 work and the new CSA during the meeting.

- DP reiterate that the amount of paperwork has developed, and future meetings would welcome executive summaries with additional annexes to share the information. The Met Office and BEIS Secretariat will work together to streamline the process.