



Your local supply, on tap

# **OFWAT Request for information Review of March 2018 freeze/thaw incident – further questions**

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Affinity Water

10<sup>th</sup> May 2018





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## **Assurance**

We recognise the importance of providing high quality information to support Ofwat's review and have taken care, in the limited time available, to ensure the information and data given have been subject to internal review for accuracy and, where applicable, derived from maintained formal records. Data has not been subject to review by an external assurance provider.

The information contained herein has been assessed for security requirements under the Security and Emergency Measures Directive and we consider that no redaction is necessary.

**In the period leading up to the freeze and thaw, can you please explain in more detail how your Executive and, where appropriate, your Board:**

- 1. Were involved in any planning or preparation, or approved any planning and preparation, for exceptional winter weather events. Please also detail when this occurred.**

We were fully prepared to respond to these challenges. Our preparations for events of this nature are supported by a number of detailed operational plans, which ensure we are ready to respond, with the right resources, in the right place at the right time. In the autumn of every year, we raise customer awareness of the risk of burst pipes and our operational teams and out of hours standby arrangements are made ready should we experience cold weather episodes. As part of our ongoing planning, during January we increased our leakage detection (both direct labour and contract) and repair teams to assist in our drought management and leakage programmes.

Our planning for, and response to, emergency events, is founded on a gold, silver, bronze command structure which ensures that tactical operational decisions are made at an operational level while strategic co-ordination takes place at the highest levels of our business. This is consistent with best practice principles developed under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and government advice to water companies under the Security and Emergency Measures Direction 1998. Members of the EMT discharge the role of Gold Command on a 24/7, 365 days per year basis, thereby ensuring appropriate oversight of emergency planning and response activities at the highest organisational level, and effective communication with our Board.

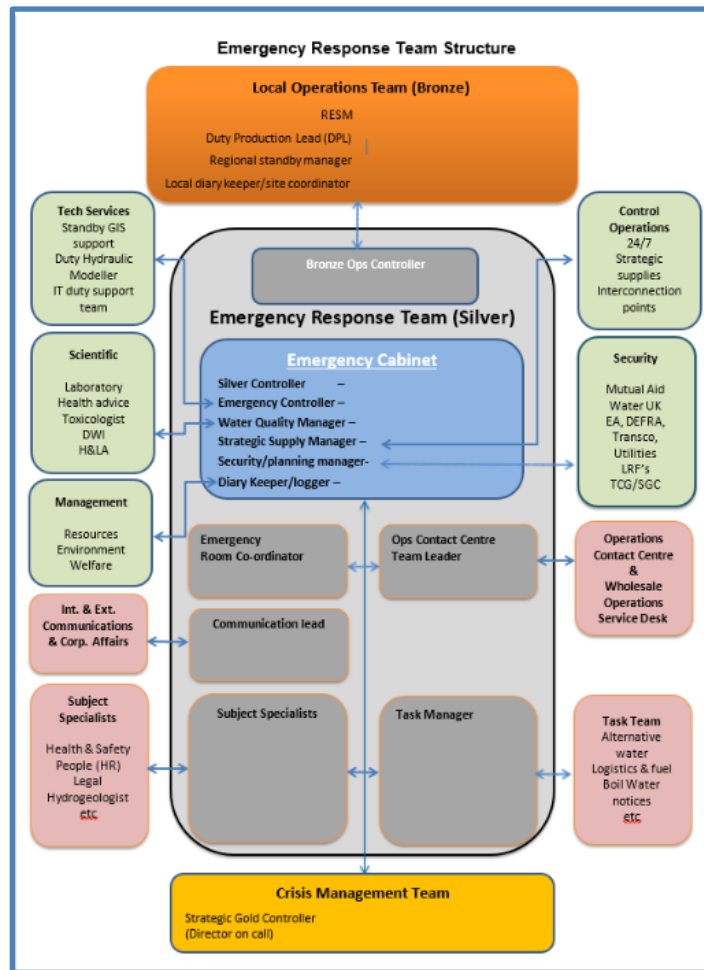
This approach is engrained into our policies and procedures and sets out how we manage our resources and responsibilities to ensure we are well prepared and agile to respond to any adverse situation that may arise. Our Emergency Plan and Crisis Management Plan are reviewed and approved by the Managing Director of Wholesale Operations and the Chief Executive Officer respectively.

The plan provides guidance on the management of operational events and the escalation towards declaring an emergency. The scale of an emergency will govern the response required and the resources needed. Affinity Water operates a stand-by rota which ensures that a senior manager is always appointed Emergency Controller. The Emergency Controller is responsible for declaring an emergency and assumes full charge of the response to the emergency. The Emergency Controller decides who will be Silver Controller.

The Silver controller provides management of the tactical response to an emergency identifies the cause and directs the actions to recover the situation to normal using all necessary resources. They also convene the Emergency Cabinet (see graphic below) comprising themselves and at least three senior managers (normally a Water Quality Manager, Supply Manager and another EC), and the Diary Keeper. The composition of this team will be dependent upon the nature of the emergency.

Bronze (onsite) Controllers are appointed as required to monitor and control the operational response to the event through the Local Incident Response Team.

The Emergency Cabinet is supported by a member of the Executive Team known as Gold Controller (Strategic Director) on the standby rota that leads the crisis management team if required and supports high level decision making and stakeholder engagement.



The Emergency plan provides links to checklists and to the wealth of supporting documentation which underpins the Emergency Plan including: Emergency contact details, guidance notes and procedures, contingency plans and alternative water supply framework agreements.

The plan also provides guidance on preparedness and resilience under normal day-to-day operational conditions to prevent emergencies and avoid having to react under pressure during an incident. This outlines the preparations that individuals and departments should make to improve resilience.

The plan is continually reviewed and revised in response to learning from testing exercises and direct experience from emergency events and near misses.

Our Emergency Plan, briefed to all standby resources for awareness, clearly sets out who is required to form part of the Emergency cabinet (Silver), who should feed into this (Bronze) and who should be kept informed (Gold). It also outlines the governance framework to be used and how key decisions are to be made.

**2. Were notified of each applicable weather status update (amber alert, red alert) and the earliest point at which this occurred.**

We operate a Priority Information Notice (PIN) notification system that is used to cascade key messages across the business including the Executive Management Team. The PIN process is used to send extreme weather warnings to the business. The first of these was sent on 10th February 2018 and subsequently on 26th and 27th February as well as the 1st, 17th and 18th of March.

**3. Were involved in any planning or preparation in advance of the freeze and thaw event, following the amber or red alert notification. Please exclude any “business as usual” winter preparedness planning, unless the planning specifically considered the freeze and thaw event.**

The Board discussed the extreme cold weather forecast during its meeting on 22 February 2018 in the context of performance against our leakage target.

The Executive Management Team (EMT) met on 26th February and reviewed the weather predictions and satisfied itself that our arrangements for dealing with emergencies detailed in our answer to Question 1 would be robust in managing the forthcoming anticipated extreme weather event.

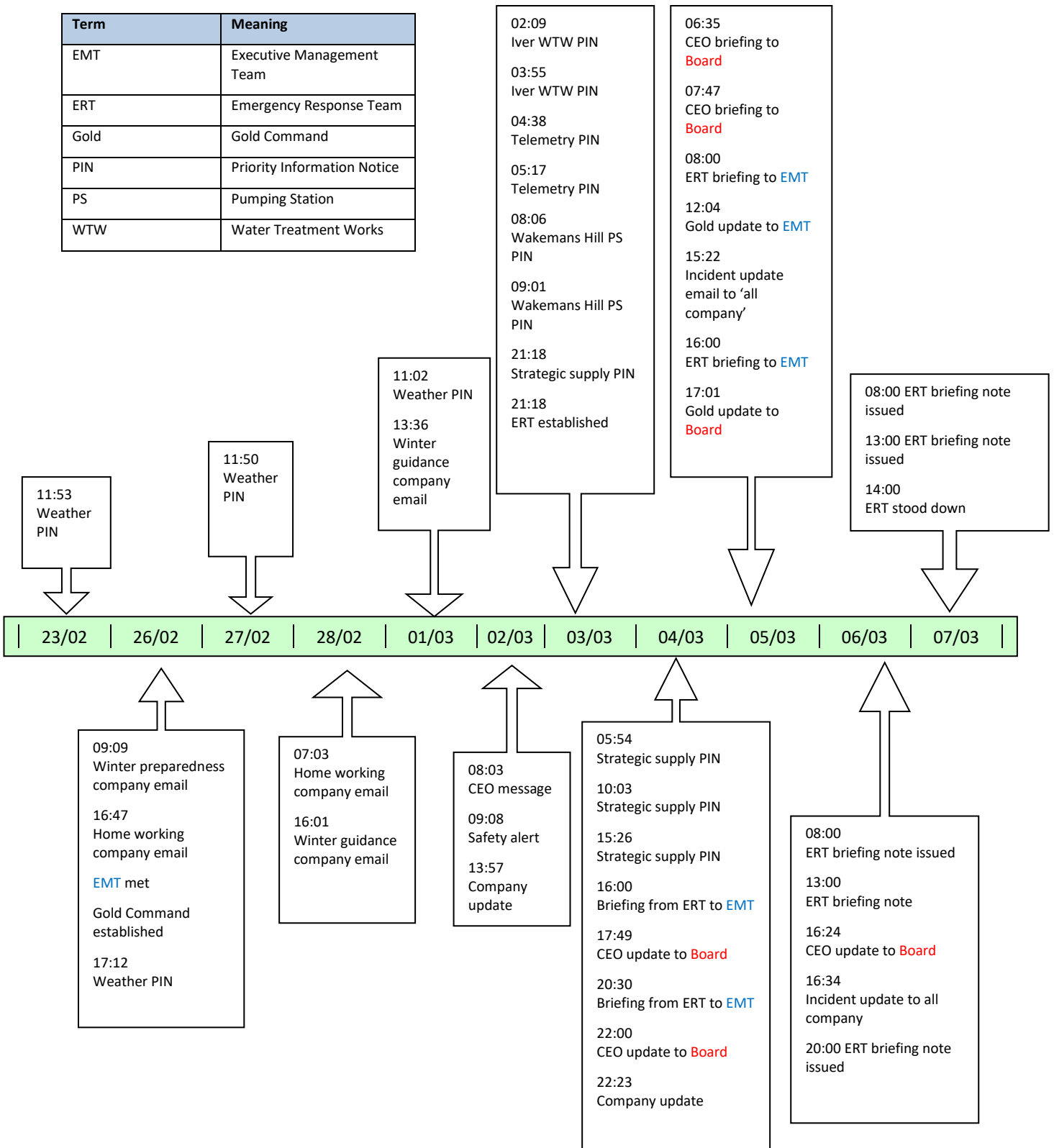
As such the internal Gold Command and Emergency Controller led on the strategy to prepare for the week ahead and co-ordinated activities from Monday 26<sup>th</sup> February. These strategies included the review of all planned work, increase in resources across Production, Network and Customer teams and a focused review of water available for use and storage levels. Our Emergency Response Team (ERT) was mobilised on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March and stood down on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> March.

**4. Had the freeze and thaw event escalated to them, such that they were aware of the full scale and severity of the event.**

The EMT and Board were escalated to in line with our procedures and as such were fully apprised of the full scale and severity of the event. The EMT were engaged early and throughout the response to the severe weather event. The EMT held calls at 16:30 and 20:30 on Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> March to review the situation. Our Director of Regulation and Corporate Affairs operated as Gold Commander. The CEO and Gold Command kept the Board informed throughout.

The timeline for all EMT and Board engagement is set out on the following page.

Term	Meaning
EMT	Executive Management Team
ERT	Emergency Response Team
Gold	Gold Command
PIN	Priority Information Notice
PS	Pumping Station
WTW	Water Treatment Works



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