

*This additional information note from Bristol Water includes references to our original response to Ofwat's request for information on the "freeze/thaw" in late February/early March 2018. References are made under each question to the original response which we feel provided sufficient summary detail to provide an overview of the Executive and Board involvement. In this note we provide additional information which was referred to in the original response which provides detailed evidence that supports the statements made. As mentioned in the original response, the "MissionMode" log of incident response decisions has been used to provide this information and is available on request.*

**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.**

The Executive discuss all business matters at its weekly meeting, which includes the role of the Severe Weather task Force. We described this in section B1.

The specific involvement of the Executive was described in full in section B2i:

*"The Executive Team as a whole discussed the specific preparations in anticipation of the weather on the 26 February and individual members of the Executive led by the CEO attended the regular incident event briefings. As the operational response was successful in achieving the necessary response, the incident did not escalate through the defined steps in our incident management procedures to the level that required the command structure that formalises the role of the Executive – the incident was successfully run by the Incident Managers."*

In advance of the thaw, the Chief Customer Officer, Network Director, Asset Management Director and Director of Strategy & Regulation were present in Bristol Water Head Office (when travel was not advisable) on Friday 2 March to ensure staff wellbeing and to deal with any immediate issues.

Such arrangements are described to the Board through the monthly CEO report. The Audit & Risk Assurance Committee oversee these procedures and are considered through quarterly updates to our risk assessments. As noted on page 44 of the Bristol Water plc Annual Report 2016/17 both Water quality, Health and Safety and Environmental operational risks and Major Incident risks are considered and scrutinised within this framework. For instance the monitoring and mitigation section states *"We assess and improve resilience to reduce the population exposed to major disruptions to water supplies. We also undertake exercises and training, developing business continuity plans to minimise customer impact"*. This therefore includes exceptional weather events (although this was not a major incident, the business continuity procedures in place monitor and mitigate the situation developing that far). We describe in our submission the story of this event and provide more details of the specific role of the Executive and CEO in particular.

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

The weather was anticipated by 26 February. The “MissionMode” incident room alert system (which keeps all of the Executive and Incident room staff up-to-date with the latest system) was routinely testing on 26 February. The Chief Customer Officer and Director of Strategy & Regulation were incidentally in correspondence with Ofwat on 26 February concerning the weather as the potential for the customer engagement visit on Friday 2 March needing to be rearranged (which was ultimately quickly rearranged for Friday 9 March when the weather status was confirmed on 1 March).

Below we provide the specific detailed evidence that confirms our reference to the Severe Weather Task Force planning meetings in section B3 (i to iii) of our submission, that involved various members of the Executive and operational management team, led by the CEO.

As planned, a briefing from the CEO was issued on Wednesday 28 February to all staff to ensure that consistent messages about working arrangements and service levels were made. A copy of this briefing is attached as evidence of this engagement and response to the likely shift from amber to red alert



Wintry Conditions  
Forecast 28th Februa

As the red weather alert was confirmed from c15.00 Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March and Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March, our CEO sent the following message to all staff at 10:04 on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March confirming final arrangements:

*“Following yesterday’s communication regarding the severe weather, I am keen to let you all know that plans are currently being discussed and put in place to ensure the safe and effective running of our business over the coming days.*

*The Severe Weather Task Force met this morning and are making operational contingencies to allow for the disruption caused by the inclement weather. For all Head Office / non-critical / non-operational staff we will be communicating what you should do in terms of leaving the office and getting home safely.*

*If you have a longer journey, or you need to leave the office to ensure dependants are cared for (in the event of school closures etc.) then you should speak to your line manager / head of department and arrange to leave as soon as necessary. The Task Force will meet again at 11am and after this meeting an update will be provided for the remaining staff in the office.*

*Operational staff and critical staff will be contacted accordingly; whilst staff safety is paramount we do need to ensure the business continues to run for our customers.*

*If you have any concerns please speak to your line manager / head of department. If you are unable to contact your line manager / head of department please contact Martyn Bowden (who is onsite at Head Office in HR).*

Then at 11.51, as the red alert accelerated time estimate was updated:

*The Task Force have met again and decisions have been made with regards to staff welfare, safety and continued working for non-critical and non-operational staff.*

*As we noted earlier, we continue to operate our business and provide a full service to our customers. Employee wellbeing is of critical importance and therefore the Task Force have decided to issue guidance to staff which will allow them to leave Head Office after 2pm today as a practical measure to ensure safety.*

*Please tell your line manager when you intend to leave the office as it is important that we know who is in, who is travelling and who is home safely. Heads of Department will be responsible for making sure we know all staff are accounted for.*

*The Met Office guidance, as it stands now, shows that the majority of the severe weather will occur later this afternoon and over the course of the evening. Tomorrow, as today, the office will be open and operational, however we ask that you all 'risk assess' your journey to work. If you feel it is unsafe to travel please contact your line manager to confirm your plans. If you do decide not to work and stay home, the company will provide a flexible approach to taking the day off as annual leave.*

*If plans change, we will update all staff either through line management or via direct email.*

At 12:24 the Extended Leadership Team (Executive team, direct reports and "Heads of") were reminded as below. Each ELT / line manager kept records of staff location and arrangements to ensure operational delivery and staff safety were both understood.

*I've been asked to re-circulate this to the ELT group and to reiterate that the line managers should implement the procedure across all members of staff, including those offsite / operational.*

*Specifically, I've been asked to confirm that the 'risk assessment' approach to travelling to/from work tomorrow applies to offsite / operational and Head Office employees.*

- 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.**

On 6 February reviews of the Critical Staff Database were requested as part of our normal business resilience process, in line with our Business Continuity Planning. This was checked once more on Wednesday 28 February and updates made to our HR system to ensure staff contact, home working and other arrangements worked effectively. The Executive ensured their teams had completed these actions.

As an example of the level of Executive involvement, the planning of water quality sampling can be seen from the following screen grab (names removed to allow publication of

evidence). This allowed contact and confirmation both of operational capability (e.g. land rover planning) and staff safety.

1	Scientific Services			
2	Name	Friday	Comments	Contact number
3		working from home		please consult the duty scientist rota for current contact numbers
4		in office	can walk in	
5		working from home		
6		home		
7		working from home		
8		home		
9		in office	can walk in	
10		not working today		
11				
12		home - snowed in	Pairing up	
13				
14		Barrow; Chelvey	Pairing up	
15				
16		holiday		
17		holiday		
18		Oldford; Stowey. ALS Trowbridge	has land rover.	
19		Littleton; Purton	has land rover.	
20		home - snowed in	Pairing up	
21				
22		Banwell; Cheddar	Pairing with I	
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The CEO responsibilities include Health & Safety as well as overall leadership, and the CFO whose specific responsibilities include Business Resilience planning reflect the executive Board members with specific roles. The CEO kept the Chairman informed and we also detail the specific communication to all staff by the CEO below to give an indication of the post weather engagement throughout the organisation with a single clear message and line of communication as set out in section B and section F1(ii) of our submission.

On Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 09:55 the following message was issued by the CEO

*“Many of you will have looked out of the window this morning, risk assessed the conditions outside including the implications for your journey to work, and decided to stay home. Severe weather warnings remain in place for the South West and the continuing advice of the local highways agencies/local news outlets is to stay home and only travel if absolutely essential.*

*The Severe Weather Task Force met again this morning and confirmed the latest forecast is for more snow today with warnings for snow/ice/high winds in place for our patch.*

*Operationally we are currently running well despite some issues in Production which are being managed by our Production teams on site.*

*The message to all staff is the same as yesterday; safety is our number one priority. Operational and critical staff are being assisted with transport and we are ensuring our field based employees are safe, kitted out correctly and utilising vehicles fit for the conditions outside.*

*If you have made it in to work/Head Office today; please ensure you are able to get home safely. Please liaise with your line manager to ensure they know where you are and when you are home.*

*Should the conditions continue in to Monday, please follow the same procedures we have put in place through yesterday and today. Risk assess your journey and if you have any concerns, or you are in doubt over what to do / what is expected, please contact your line manager or head of department.*

*I'd like to thank our operational staff who have been out working in the current conditions and I would like to thank the Task Force team led by Jamie Angelinetta. The team have done an excellent job of ensuring we have the right measures, people and contingencies in place and have provided a coordinated, cross functional response to the situation."*

#### **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 Executive, led by the CEO, continued to be aware of the full scale of events, and were directly involved at all times in the actions that avoided a major incident (in terms of Business Continuity planning status) rather than one which was managed operationally as a result of severe weather. As we show below, the internal messages anticipated the potential scale of the problems in communication to all staff in advance of the weather, when ultimately these preparations and plans avoided major customer service impacts or operational disruption over an extended period.

In addition to the preparation described above and the "MissionMode" briefings that all the executive members and those involved in the operational response receive via text message or email, the specific updates from the incident team briefings that were attended by the Executive, and for most updates specifically included the CEO, Network Director, Asset Management Director, Chief Customer Officer and Director of Strategy & Regulation. The update briefings from the incident team were held at:

9:00 Monday March 5<sup>th</sup>  
12:00 Monday March 5<sup>th</sup>  
15:00 Monday March 5<sup>th</sup>  
19:00 Monday March 5<sup>th</sup>  
22:00 Monday March 5<sup>th</sup> (Email status update – confirming that all actions in place and monitoring continues)  
08:30 Tuesday March 6<sup>th</sup> (Confirm operational response actions )  
12:00 Tuesday March 6<sup>th</sup> (Final update confirmation that incident room could be closed at 12:13. DEFRA/DWI informed)

This was in anticipation, as well as in response to, the operational incidents described in our submission. For instance at 12.30 on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> of March the CEO sent the following message to all staff

*“I wanted to extend my thanks and share an update further to the recent severe weather disruption and the thaw over the weekend.*

*Firstly, I want to thank the Task Force, Operational, Customer Service and Head Office teams for all of their efforts over Thursday, Friday and the weekend. We received a huge volume of customer calls, there was an increased requirement on our Network and Production teams and a large support system covering everything from logistics to driving 4x4 vehicles to ensure the right people could be in the right place safely.*

*I can't name every individual involved, as the list is vast, but we really do appreciate all the hard work and long hours – I know some of you answered your phones and came in despite not being due to work. You all went above and beyond to support our customers, our network and each other to ensure that we had the best response possible to inclement weather.*

*And, the hard work isn't over yet, like our fellow water companies, the rapid thaw has taken a toll on our network. This morning we have set up Incident and AWS teams to deal with the impact; we have bursts and leaks and subsequent strain on our reservoirs - the effects of which are now being managed by a cross function team and our partners at Kier. Many of you may be called to support them as volunteers and I'd like to thank you all in advance for your efforts.”*

Members of staff, including members of the Executive, volunteered to man Alternative Water Supplies, but ultimately the planned scale was not required as the planned operational response was successful to repair bursts and leaks quickly and to avoid production of water being an issue. We describe the actual (rather than planned) response in section B4 (Dove Street example) and section C of our submission

The CEO thanked staff and summarised the response through his normal company-wide weekly message on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> March

*“Keeping this week's email fairly short given all of the communications sent out over the past week; I am keen to provide you all with an update on our response to the severe weather we faced at the end of last week and the resulting impact of the snow/sudden thaw on our system. The operational teams have been working hard to address the effect on our network; over Monday and Tuesday the incident team took swift and expert action to ensure we responded to the supply issues and the increase in bursts and leaks. The incident team, the volunteers and the operational teams managed to quickly mitigate the effect on our reservoirs, address the multitude of leaks reported and provide alternative water to those customers who needed it. Thank you to everyone who worked hard to get us back on track; this was a company-wide response from operational, customer service, head office and volunteer teams.”*

As well as normal communication between the CEO and Chairman, the Bristol Water Board (Chair and non-executives) were kept fully informed by the CEO, for instance highlighting the context of the national picture and the current Bristol Water position at 15:11 on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> March:

*“You may have picked up from national news that a number water companies are struggling with water supplies at the aftermath of the severe weather in England last week. Customers affected by loss of water supplies vary; Thames Water (10,000 homes without supplies, 20,000 homes at its peak on Sunday), Southern Water (13,000 homes), Severn Trent Water and Welsh Water (10,000 homes) have been mentioned in the national news amongst the companies who have reached out to customers to reduce water use. See the link below for the headline news:*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-43283167>

*The issues with water supplies are mainly associated with rapid thawing of frozen ground, and the resulting ground movement causing brittle cast iron pipes to fail. This would have been a known outcome of the freeze beforehand, however it seems to have taken some companies by surprise.*

*Despite the fact that the last week severe weather impacted South West of England most, so far Bristol Water has seen smaller impact with only around 500 customers affected. Alternative Water Supplies are in place and volunteered staff are manning water bottle stations round the clock.*

*We have experienced large number of bursts (over 60 in last 3 days), with customer side leakage increased as well as private networks (e.g. use of water by farmers) use increased, overall distribution input is up by 20%. We have also experienced production site availability issues. As a result, and on a precautionary measure, we have moved into an "incident Management" mode given the number of issues around the network. We are prioritising mains burst and leaks ahead of other operational activities.*

*The next 24-48 hours will be critical and if the situation changes I will provide another update.”*

At 15:40 in Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> March the following updated was provided to the Board:

*“As an update to the previous email on this, I can report that all our customers were back in supply last night. All reservoirs and Treatment Works are also back in normal operation. Although we continue with closer monitoring and control of the water system, the Incident was closed early this morning.*

*I attended a water company CEO call arranged at the request of the Water Minister this morning. Four companies (Thames Water, Southern Water, South East Water and Severn Trent Water) were singled out and asked by the Minister to provide update on customers without water. These include around 5000 customers in London, 2000 customers in Sussex and around 500 in Kent. The Minister stated that she will be providing a statement to the House of Parliament today, and that a review/enquiry is likely to follow in due course.”*

As you will note, the potential severity was not underestimated and the Board were fully aware of both preparations and the uncertainty given the weather, of what the effect of the operational impact and response could be. The actual impact over this 24 hours was therefore less than originally described, and the Board had the wider industry context as well as the Bristol Water status to consider. Through the CEO communication, staff were also fully aware of the event planning and operational response.