Ports & Harbours Annual Return Form

BRIGHTLINGSEA HARBOUR COMMISSIONERS (BHC); EXERCISE NOVEMBER CHARLIE
Annual return for period 2019
EXERCISE HELD ON 20TH MARCH 2019

Exercise Objectives:

- Validate the OSCP for BHC and record discrepancies or potential problems for future action
- Exercise and develop the necessary skills required of key individuals with a Tier 2 oil spill
- Set up the joint OMT in situ
- Test the operational interface between BHC, Adler and Allan and other external agencies
- Test the capability, response time, and deployment of physical resources and personnel
- Use the most appropriate available resources to make the response effective
- Exercise and refresh the deployment skills of Tier 1 responders
- Consider arrangements for disposal of recovered oil and oily waste
- Confirm the OSCP fully considers the environment and habitat regulation in controlling and cleaning up pollution in the area
- Log all documents, information and actions to assist / prevent claims and costs
- To test the operation of the Incident Command Centre (ICC).

Attendance of the Exercise consisted of:

James Thomas – BHC Incident Commander (IC)
Bob McClean – BHC On Scene Commander (OSC)
Peter Stonebridge – BHC Assistant On Scene Commander (AOSC)
Owen Evans – BHC Assistant to Incident Commander (AIC)
Jill Herman – BHC Loggist
Pamela Hatswell – BHC Media
Dave H – BHC Pilot
6 x BHC Tier 1 Responders
Will C – Exo Environmental
Beth Esau – Adler and Allan (A&A) Exercise Facilitator
David Bray – A&A Facilitator Support
Garry Cormack – A&A Marine Adviser
Phil Durrant – A&A Response Team Leader
2 x A&A Marine Responders
Andrew Healy – MCA CPSO
Sam Holder Mark – Environment Agency (EA)
Gavin Senior – EA
Dave Bond – Essex Fire & Rescue Service (FRS)
Phil Stevens + 4 – Essex FRS Local Station
Jen Hill – HM Coastguard
RNLI Crew
Marine Police.

Scenario

Location:	**Minters Point, Brightlingsea Harbour**
Time:	**1004**
Date:	**20 March 2019**
Weather:	**Real weather**
Tides:	**HW 1131 5.2m LW 1759 0.6m**

A ship departing “Olivers Wharf” has had to take avoiding action, due to a kayaker cutting across the ships bow. Due to the actions taken the ship has collided with B pontoon (AKA visitors pontoon) and a number of vessels along the pontoon.

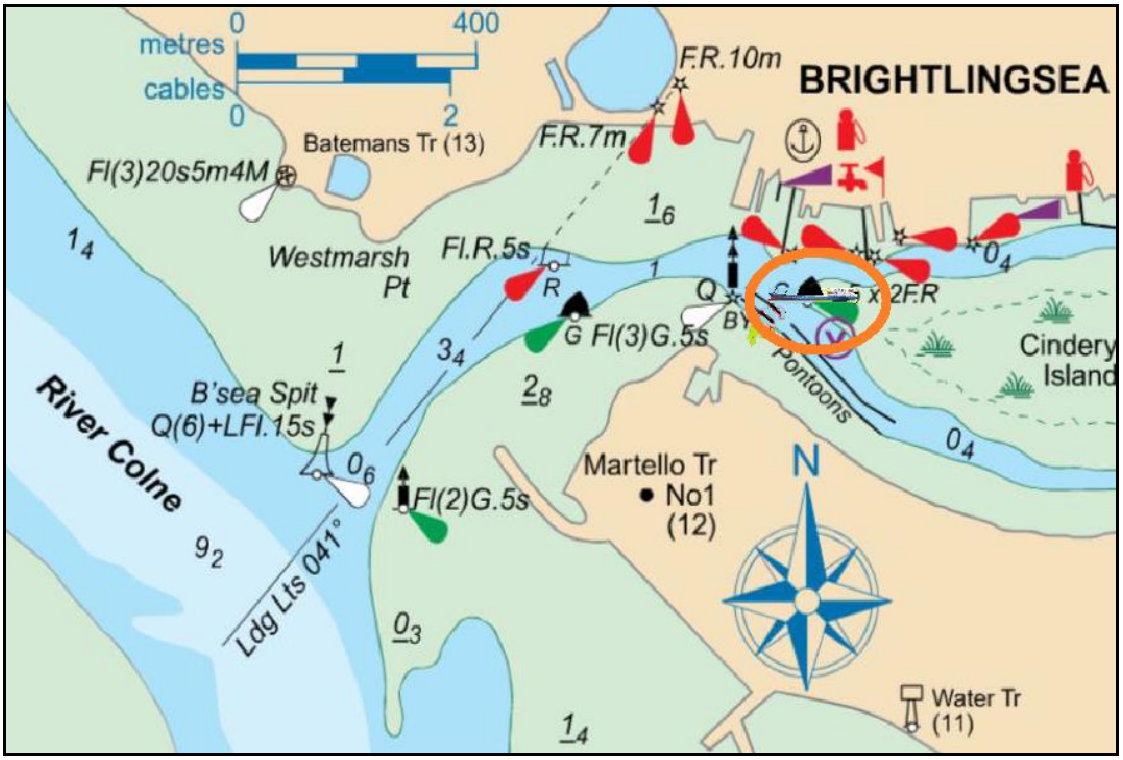
Reports on VHF 68 are coming in, that persons are in the water (PIW), a number of vessels are on fire and sinking, with oil and fuel within the water.

The ship has grounded on “Minters Point” whilst trying to come away from the visitors pontoon. The ships pilot has reported that they are missing a crew member, and now has steering gear failure. Master is also reporting a rapid loss of Marine Gas Oil (MGO).

For the purpose of this exercise there were some time variables. The Emergency Response and Management Teams were all already present in the ICC for an exercise briefing before ‘startex’. This allowed attendees to observe the initial actions that would take place in the ICC before such time that they would normally be expected to arrive.

There was also some time compression regarding the arrival time of the Tier 2 response teams in order to keep the exercise duration to a minimum.

Overview of spill area



Exercise Observations, Outcomes and Suggestions:
Suggestions for further action are written in green.

Notification

- A call to 999 would have been an immediate action, including the RNLI.
- The majority of internal notifications were simulated.
- The majority of notifications were carried out in a notification exercise made before the exercise. It was noted that the notifications take a significant amount of time with some organisations wanting an in depth discussion.
- Notifications would have been made by a mixture of the IC, OSC and Loggist. This is noted as good practice as they can take a significant amount of time.
- The EA stated they were notified promptly. This was imperative that BHC notify the EA before the public do.
- The Tier 1 team were activated immediately by the IC; staff were generously provided.
- BHC ensured that the HMCG (MCA) was alerted at the first opportunity (1013). This allowed for MCA real-time alerting to stakeholders in parallel to BHC notifications. When alerting MCA, it is best practice to alert the nearest MRCC / CGOC / NMOC initially by phone, particularly of a potentially serious incident, or pollution in an environmentally sensitive location. The initial telephone alert can be followed up with more detail in an email/fax, using the CG77 proforma as an aide memoire, but it is not necessary to use this format to report a pollution incident to the Coastguard.
- A POLREP was not actually sent but was discussed and prepared.
- The team were aware to continually update the POLREP information. There was regular updates to the CGOC with the dynamic situation.
- Contact details should be updated in the OSCP (i.e. Tendring District Council).
- The CPSO recommends calling Harwich in the early stages of a spill to see if any assistance will be offered.

Response

Mobilisation

- The IC immediately mobilised the OSC to assess the situation and report back.
- It would generally take about 10 minutes for most first responders to mobilise.
- The FRS would have mobilised a Hazmat Officer, Environmental Protection Unit (from Malden), Decontamination Unit, USAR, boat teams and assistance with chem data. It is likely that these resources would have mobilised to the local station to be brought in when required. The initial crew (five personnel) arrived at 1011 on site to assist the response teams.
- The ICC was set up quickly, albeit some was set up in advance of the exercise. There is an agreement in such instances that BHC have access to the Yacht Clubs facilities for an ICC.
- A scribe was available in the ICC, ensuring relevant information was captured.
- The delegation of tasks to the various team members was effective. The AIC, IC and comms personnel effectively worked as a team sharing the work load of an incident commander.
- The Tier 1 responders mobilised and deployed booms accordingly.
- The EA would have been on site in approximately one hour.
- A&A received an activation call soon after confirmation of the incident (1035). With time compression for exercise purposes, the A&A team arrived on scene at 1110.
- When ordering a tanker through whatever company it is important to remember to state if a long length of hose is required. However, there was significant amounts of hose available through other harbour operations.

Spill Response and Strategy (please see photos in Appendix 1)

- Tier 1 team focused on trying to isolate the spill once it was deemed safe to enter the area.
- It was later confirmed on scene that the maximum loss amount would be up to 5 tonnes of MGO (one tank). 10 tonnes of MGO was on board as a total. There was small amounts of petrol and extra MGO on the two damaged leisure vessels.
- The fire aspect was minor and almost instantly went out on its own accord. There was no concerns regarding fumes in particular (FRS).
- For exercise purposes a barge simulated the casualty vessel.
- At the first opportunity, the ship was requested to transfer fuel in tanks accordingly to reduce the risk of further pollution.
- An initial Tier 1 action was to boom around one end of the casualty vessel (sorbent boom) in respect to the tidal conditions. This was in place by 1058 after helping to deal with casualties and safety of

life. Later on, a further Tier 1 sorbent boom was deployed around the other half of the vessel. This totalled two, 20m sorbent booms.

- There were spare anchors available from the Tier 1 stock pile which are useful to the Tier 2 response in such a location.
- The OSCP was present in the ICC and action sheets were extensively used.
- There was knowledge of the product and its behaviour.
- Maps and charts were utilised to highlight strategies and incident details
- Exo Environmental advised on tidal rates and flow.
- The Tier 2 strategy was to line the jetty with 50P fence boom and then to use sea sentinel boom as a spur off the end of the jetty.
- The fence boom, 50m, deployment was highly effective and was deployed quickly with several responders assisting.
- The spur boom, 60m, was not as successful as the flow rates were underestimated. Therefore this posed challenging to manoeuvre the boom into position and even once in position, product would have escaped the containment measure (entrainment) with the currents in the channel.
- The Tier 2 strategy was then to recover the corralled product via vac tanker and skimmer.
- To make the exercise a little more challenging several 'injects' were put in to report of varying nature which the IC and his team dealt with in a professional manner.
- Harbour staff had full involvement of practical element of the exercise.
- The EA used their internal guidance and stated that it was generally comprehensive.
- Saturated sorbent booms would have needed to be replaced. There was awareness to order more in quickly.
- The ongoing strategy for patches of oil in remote places was to use sorbent mopping. This consists of a sorbent boom between two vessels.
- It should be remembered that booms are limited in respect to the angle against the current. Acuter angles allow for safer loads on the rope and for more effective booming.
- Another element which provided a lesson for future deployments was that anchors were not biting in the channel. This was not anticipated and the strategy had to be altered to anchor to lines already in place.
- The debrief session has provided a strategy to be tested at a future exercise, to keep the same fence boom but to deploy inflation boom between the town pontoon and the yacht club pontoon. This is more likely to catch product on the ebb.
- 'Prop washing' was discussed as a strategy for small sheens outside of the containment areas. If this was to be used, it would need approval from the EG, which would probably be rejected in this location due to the shellfish beds.
- The OSCP was present and frequently referred to, however, it proved difficult to find the relevant information. It is therefore recommended that a grab pack of relevant information to individuals is made (i.e. separate action cards).

Logistics

- The Police could have potentially assisted with a blue light escort for the Tier 2 resources.
- There was a rapid response of onsite resources for early deployment of equipment prior to the arrival of the contractor.
- The resources available, especially for the size of the harbour, are of great significance. There were numerous vessels able to assist.
- The MCA would have wanted to assess the vessel before it was moved (unsure of condition). A tug was on route to move the ship.
- A shift rotation would have been implemented for BHC responders. If additional personnel were required these could have been sourced via A&A.
- Other resources would have been requested via neighbouring ports if the incident escalated.
- It was recommended by the CPSO that BHC try to develop mutual co-operation from neighbouring ports (i.e. Haven Oil Working Group) to assist with additional counter pollution resources.

Communication

- Throughout the exercise the IC provided detailed SITREPs. The visual aids and maps were great to brief the room, especially externals that were mobilising to the ICC throughout the exercise. This was specifically highlighted by the EA.
- Early on, the FRS wanted to know who was in charge.
- Communications were mainly by public channel 68 which is open to the media. Sensitive calls would have been made by mobile.
- BHC should be prepared to receive many phone calls etc. from the public and the press wanting to know what's happening. It is important to make sure that important calls can get through if phone lines become jammed.

- Early on, a holding statement was prepared to pre-empt calls.
- The media team worked well and are a great resource knowing the 'port language' and how to put this across to the media.
- There was a breakout room used for media purposes. Numerous press releases were conducted
- The AIC worked well with tasks delegated from the IC.
- Good command and control was highlighted in feedback from the MCA with good facilities in the ICC.
- Awareness of the MCA Press Office and press assistance from Tendring District Council.
- Keeping the public and reporters up to date is vital to stop speculation. It is of importance that a common message is delivered from press releases of all stakeholders. The media team sent numerous press releases through the exercise (every half hour).
- Decision makers made it clear when a decision was made or rejected so that it was accurately recorded.
- The log was thorough and seen as good practice.
- Ahead of the exercise, the EA did not have a copy of the OSCP. This has now been rectified.
- In feedback, the EA stated that their logging could be improved.
- The media officer was worked hard and required an assistant.
- The Wi-Fi signal was intermittent.

Environment

- The Environment Group (EG) was activated including Public Health England (aromas) by the CPSO at 1100. This was to provide virtual environmental and public health advice via teleconference and email.
- EA representatives stated that the whole area was protected. Protection priorities were noted as the shellfish beds on the ebb and the nearby designated bathing area. However, the EA just wanted a focus on containment in the early aspects of the spill.
- A different season could have caused a much greater impact to public health and the environment.
- The EA advised accordingly on environmental receptors and sensitivities. In a real event, the on scene representatives stated that they would have significant support form officers and specialists within the EA.
- However, the EA were not aware of the oyster beds up river.
- It is possible in such a scenario that wildlife becomes oiled; the RSPCA would lead on this. As such they were contacted and the RNLI tasked with stopping the public from attempting to rescue oiled birds on the water.
- Dispersant would not have been used.
- Baseline data exists on current water quality upstream.
- It was envisaged that no intakes would have been impacted.
- There were no designated areas likely to be impacted. Nearby bathing waters would have been monitored.
- Sampling of the nearby Blue Flag beach can be suspended for an usual event, to ensure the status is kept.

Safety / Security

- A safety brief was provided by the IC prior to the exercise commencing.
- BHC is visually open to the public.
- It was very clear that once the safety aspects had been addressed; preventing the spread of the pollution was a priority.
- Two missing crew were a priority and were mainly dealt with by the Coastguard. Both casualties were recovered by 1028. Assistance was provided by other organisations such as the RNLI.
- The FRS set up a casualty area.
- The FRS stated that the diesel fumes would sit low and they would sent a notification to the public to close their windows.
- If the fumes resulted in moving the ICC location, this could move to either the sailing club of fire station.
- PPE was readily available in the Port and a local supplier could deliver more on short notice if required.
- The welfare of the responders was addressed.
- A data sheet for the product was obtained.
- Security of the Yacht Club would be important to prevent journalists and irate members of the public gaining access.

Business Continuity

- Obtaining samples from a spill is extremely important, even when it appears obvious where it has or hasn't come from. Samples were an early consideration, taken when safe to do so at 1051..
- The need for meticulous financial record keeping is vital in such an incident and logs must display all significant actions and decisions taken. It is just as important to record why certain actions were not taken to justify reasonableness.
- There would have been knock on effects to business within the harbour.
- It is likely that the ship owners would have paid. Any contaminated vessels would have been directed to claim via the insurance company after having their details taken.
- The IC has authority from the Chairman for financial matters.
- Operations were stopped on confirmation of the incident.
- It was noted how useful if would be to have the vessels insurer or representative on site.

Waste Management

- Fastanks were available, however it was pointed out how soon these would be full and that vacuum tankers/ lined skips/ IBCs should be used as soon as possible to minimise 'double handling' waste.
- A vacuum tanker was requested from A&A at 1110.
- The tanker was directed down the hard and was considered safe for HGVs to drive down.
- Lined skips would have been ordered for solid waste including PPE from a local provider.
- Consideration was given to managing waste to its final destination and appropriate steps followed. It was also noted that waste volumes should not be underestimated.
- Recognition of A&A assistance with tanker facilities, waste removal and disposal.
- A permit would not have been required from the EA but there would have been a 'regulatory position statement' that would need to be adhered to. This ensures no fines from the EA and lenience for a set time to hold temporary waste in an emergency.

De-mobilisation

- All equipment was recovered quickly and rehabbed appropriately.
- No equipment was damaged during the exercise.
- Hot, warm and cold zones would have been set up.
- The decision for 'how clean is clean' would be agreed with stakeholders, in particular the Environment Group.

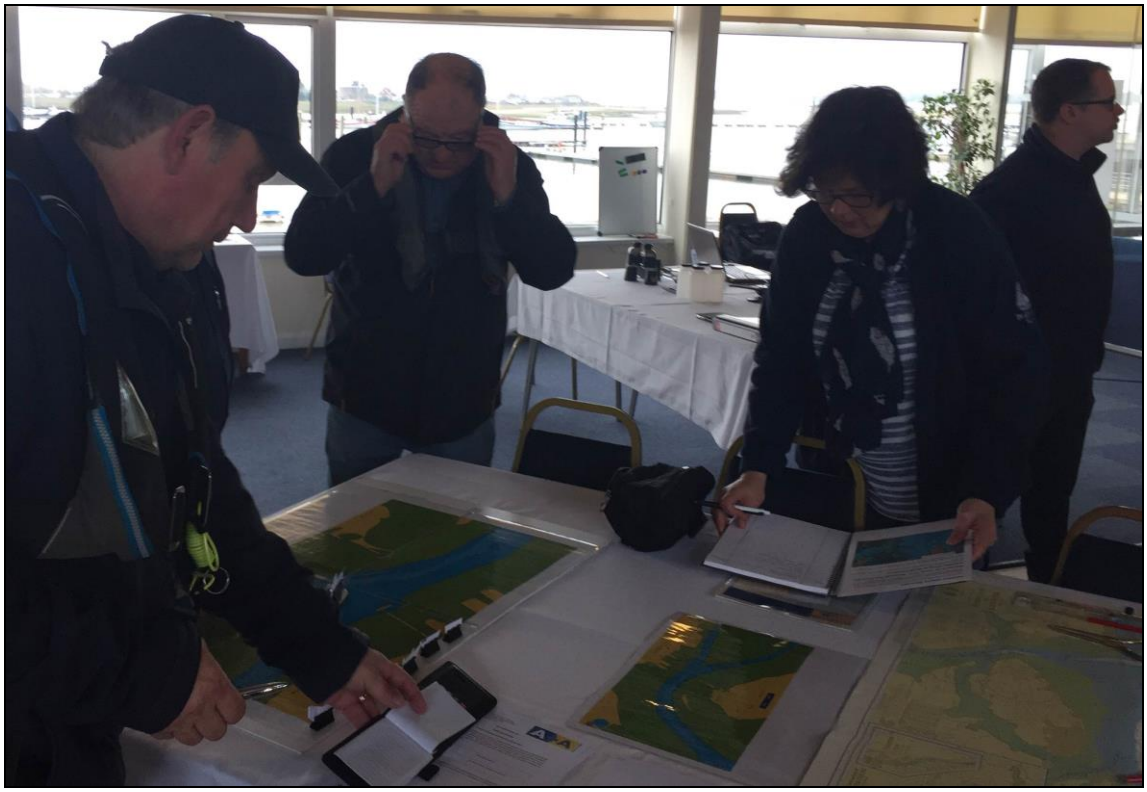
Conclusion

This exercise displayed a positive ability to respond to a pollution incident and raised awareness of some of the wider issues surrounding them. The scenario had a great attendance from stakeholders and proved a successful way for the response and management teams to learn more about each other's roles, responsibilities, and probable course of action under such circumstances. It would be beneficial for other environmental bodies such as Natural England and the MMO to attend future exercises.

There are a few areas where minor improvements could be made, but overall attendees worked well together and there was a good show of enthusiasm and level of involvement from many of the exercise players. A recommendation that should be followed up is the availability of assistance with neighbouring ports. One point to highlight is awareness of BHC personnel in their identified roles and the associated responsibilities, especially impressive given it being the first time in the roles for the IC and AIC.

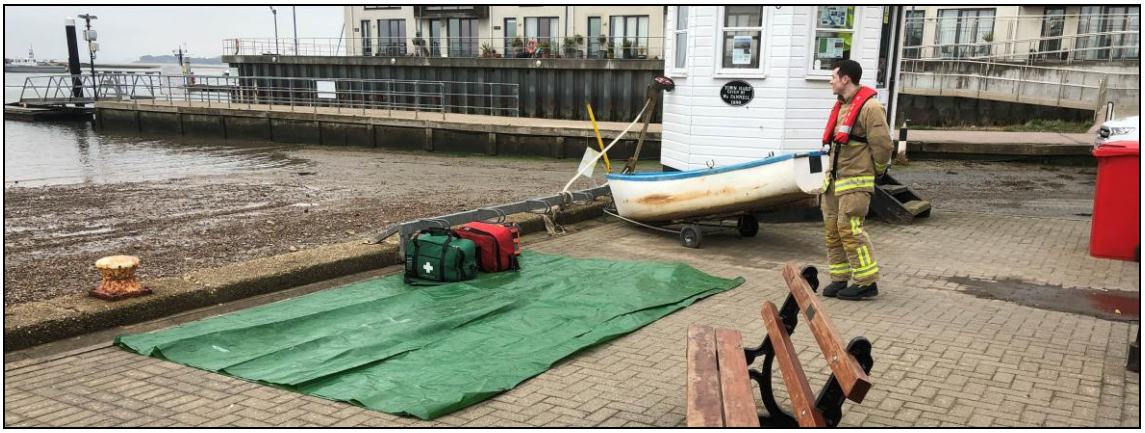
The IC was clearly in control, even though it was his first experience in this position, and was fed detailed information from his team (especially the AIC, OSC, AOSC and media personnel) and was willing to discuss and take advice on matters raised by the injects. The Tier 1 resource at Brightlingsea is good for both personnel, vessels and equipment. The on scene team were tested in unfamiliar roles in the exercise and did extremely well. Updates should be made for any lessons learnt and amendments to the contact directory.

Appendix 1 – Exercise Photos



Photograph 1: Initial planning and set up of the ICC

Photograph 2: FRS quickly on scene



Photograph 3: Casualty area set up

Photograph 4: Recovery of casualties

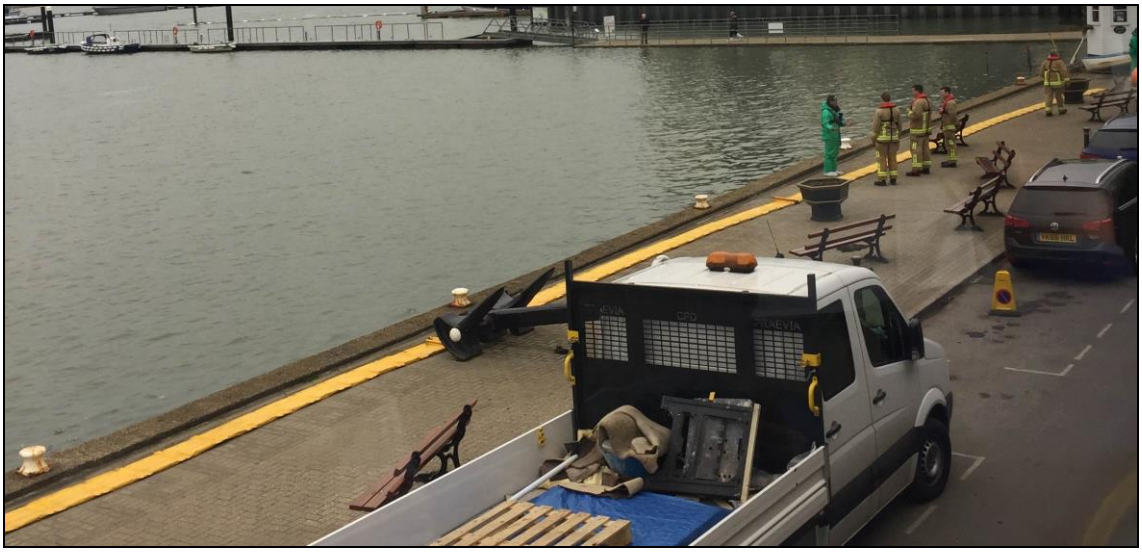
Photograph 5: Preparation of Tier 1 sorbent boom

Photograph 6: Tactics and visual display in the ICC

Photograph 7: Briefing from the IC to the A&A Team Leader

Photograph 8: Arrival of Tier 2 resources

Photograph 9: Instructions to responders from the A&A Team Leader



Photograph 10: Fence boom flaked for deployment

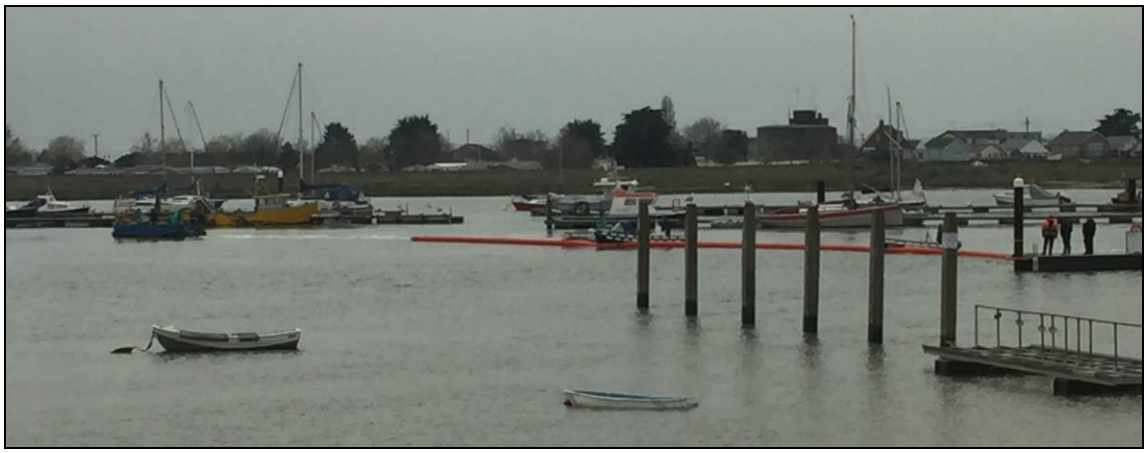
Photograph 11: Deployment of Tier 2 fence boom

Photograph 12: Deployed Tier 2 fence boom

Photograph 13: Flaked Tier 2 sea sentinel for deployment

Photograph 14: Deployment of Tier 2 sea sentinel boom

Photograph 15: Tier 1 sorbent boom (left) and difficulties with sentinel deployment against the current



Photograph 16: Deployed sea sentinel boom