

'Gun law' plans to keep order after the bomb

By Paul Brown

Detailed plans for controlling the civil population before and after nuclear war have been drawn up for rural areas. They include lists of civilians licensed to carry guns who could control law and order in the absence of police.

Towns and villages away from likely nuclear targets will be forced to take refugees by law, but once the required number has been reached, barricades will be allowed to be erected to keep more out.

Detailed civil defence plans for an unnamed village of 1,800 people, which must house an equal number of refugees, suggests recruiting 50 special constables to keep order in addition to an existing list of licensed gun holders who will form the volunteer force of armed men to control looting. The village has not been named to protect the source of the information.

The aim of the 100-page plan is to preserve lives and is designed to keep the community going for several months without any outside help.

It works on the assumption that casualties will be heavy and widespread although the majority of people will survive. It also assumes the breakdown of all normal services but ignores the concept of a nuclear winter, assuming that the weather would continue much the same after a nuclear war.

Communications would be by village broadsheet delivered by messenger and the plan involves laying in large stocks of paper for the purpose. To save paper the plan says that large notice boards should also be erected.

A proposed broadsheet has already been written giving details of how to construct a hide in which to spend the first 14 days after an attack. Advice on how to protect radios and deep freezers from electrical discharge produced by nuclear weapons and keeping water free of contamination are included.

Among the advice is the

note that chickens have good resistance to radiation and their coops should be brought into the house with enough food and water for 14 days.

The circular ends: "The peoples of these islands have in times of national stress acted with great courage. In moments such as these our unselfish help to our neighbours and others will uphold that great British tradition."

The locally raised police force is necessary to enforce "unpopular" decisions such as rationing and imprisoning malcontents. Wilful, persistent or violent offenders may have to be detained until they can be expelled.

The circular points out that while it is illegal to form a private army there is no bar to collecting names of volunteers now so they could be recruited at short notice. This is being done.

Lists of occupations of the inhabitants of the villages have been made so that they can be used after the emergency. A survey is being made to see which homes are suitable for use as shelters.

The village is one of the government-designated reception areas being nearly 20 miles from the nearest nuclear base and therefore not expected to be hit in the first blast. Reception areas are expected to absorb refugees into their homes until house occupation reaches three people for every two rooms in the house.

Details of food stock and medicines in local shops have been listed in the village plans. It even suggests "drain cocks" should be fitted to all hot water cylinders in the village so after the attack this "safe" drinking water could be tapped.

The Home Office said that the plans were produced locally in consultation with civil defence planning officers at county council level. The powers conferred at parish level would depend on Parliament at the time of a national emergency passing the necessary legislation. Currently they did not have the force of law.

Nuclear-free areas consider disaster plans

By Susan Tirbutt

About 120 local councils which have declared themselves nuclear-free zones are to plan local and national action to cope with a nuclear accident of Chernobyl proportions, a conference decided in Sheffield yesterday.

The decision is something of an about-face for the authorities after their long campaign of resisting Home Office directives to make civil defence plans for a nuclear war.

"It is a different situation altogether now. The Chernobyl accident changed people's perceptions," said a conference spokesman.

"Authorities throughout the country in the aftermath of that accident were presented with a situation in which they were quite unable to provide basic information to their local people."

As well as considering local plans, the authorities will study the possibility of funding and organising collective research.

They hope to work with the Central Electricity Generating Board and central government, passing on suggestions for better planning to both. "I say hope, because our past experience has been that they are not very helpful," the spokesman said.

Speakers at the one-day conference included Dr Peter Taylor of the independent Political Ecology Research Group, based in Oxford, who said there was a complete lack of planning by the CEGB and local authorities for accidents.

Dr J. K. Wright, the CEGB corporate director of health and safety, told the conference the board has a belt and braces approach to safety with inbuilt safety mechanisms.

Doctors 'will decide who to treat' after N-attack

By Andrew Veitch, Medical Correspondent

The Government will not draw up categories of people who will be given medical aid after a nuclear attack, the junior health minister, Mrs Edwina Currie, said yesterday. Doctors would have to decide at the time which casualties should be treated, she told Labour's social services spokesman Mr Michael Meacher in a Commons written reply.

This follows the Guardian's disclosure of a British Medical Association report which would spell out who, of the millions of injured survivors

of an attack, should be allowed to live and who left to die.

The aim, according to Dr John Dawson, head of the BMA's science division, is to prevent the Government ducking the issue. Senior doctors are convinced that the Home Office has plans for selecting casualties for treatment on the basis of their value to society rather than on humanitarian grounds, and they argue that the public ought to be able to debate the issue.

Mrs Currie told Mr Meacher yesterday that revised guidance on civil defence in the NHS would not attempt to categorise casualties.