

**5<sup>th</sup> January 2016****Agenda Item: 11****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR SOUTH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE  
AND PUBLIC PROTECTION  
UPDATE ON EMERGENCY PLANNING AND REGISTRATION SERVICES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on recent key activities and events in the work of the Emergency Planning Team and of Registration and Celebratory Services.

**Information and Advice****Emergency Planning**Syrian Refugee Resettlement

2. The emergency planning team fulfilled the lead role in coordinating the County Council's preparations for the arrival of the first contingent of Syrian refugees into the County following the Prime Minister's announcement that an additional 20,000 would be brought to the UK during the lifetime of the current parliament. The first flight of refugees for Nottinghamshire arrived at Birmingham Airport on 14 December. They had come from camps near the Syrian border and had been identified by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) on the basis of being among the most vulnerable people in the region.
3. Planning for the County Council's continuing contributions to the care of refugees coming to Nottinghamshire is being led by Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle, as Chairman of the Community Safety Committee. Paul McKay is the lead Service Director, and Rob Fisher, Group Manager Emergency Planning and Registration, is the 'Single Point of Contact' for access to County Council services. Contributing County Council services include:
  - Adult Social Care
  - Children's Social Care
  - Community Engagement and Development
  - Community Safety
  - Customer Service Centre
  - Education
  - Finance
  - Health and Safety
  - Media Relations
  - Public Health.

## Emergency Response Exercises

4. Exercises are an essential part of validating emergency plans and ensuring that training can be put into practice. Most large exercises involve close collaboration with external partners, with whom the County Council would be working in responding to a major emergency. One recent major exercise was Exercise 'Astral Climb', which was a multi-agency Local Resilience Forum exercise to test contingency plans for responding to a major Road Traffic Accident involving a release of hazardous materials into the environment. The scenario for the event was that a serious incident had occurred on the M1 resulting in the need to evacuate people from a 600m cordon around the scene and to shelter people in a 5km area downwind. For the purposes of the exercise, it was supposed that the incident had occurred in Broxtowe, and that there was a plume of hazardous smoke drifting from the site across parts of the City.
5. The event involved two locations. An area of Newark Showground was used for a rehearsal of the on-site response to an accident of this type, while a Multi-agency Coordination Centre was established at Police HQ. The County Council's Chief Executive, Anthony May, participated in the Strategic Coordinating Group element of the exercise, Paul McKay (Service Director) was the County Council's representative on a Tactical Coordinating Group. Councillor Alice Grice observed events at Police Headquarters, while Councillor Glynn Gilfoyle observed exercise events at Newark Showground. Overall, the exercise provided a realistic simulation of the effects of an incident of this type, and the media coverage that would accompany it.
6. An exercise to test countywide multi-agency arrangements for emergency communications took place on 1<sup>st</sup> December. Exercise 'Courier' examined the communications capability for each participating agency and was run in parallel with a Cabinet Office exercise to test communications at a national level. Participants included emergency services, Public Health England, Highways England, the Environment Agency and Nottinghamshire County Council. The equipment used in the exercise included mobile telephones, the Public Switched Telephone Network, fax, email, the national 'Resilience Direct' online system, 'Airwave' radios, satellite telephony and (by the police only) the HITS (High Integrity Telecommunications) system.
7. Finally, the team participated in Exercise 'John Knight' in Lincolnshire on 15<sup>th</sup> December. This was to test a strategic alliance document for evacuation and shelter in the event of an East Coast flooding incident. A tidal surge and inundation on the east coast could affect up to 70,000 people, with a substantial proportion of these requiring emergency accommodation. During the exercise, a member of Nottinghamshire County Council's emergency planning team received injects in relation to Nottinghamshire's response. These involved how many evacuees could be accommodated and what transport was available to move evacuees (our plans are that Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will endeavour to receive 1500- 2000).

## Safety of Sports Grounds

8. In view of the fact that a sports stadium was targeted in the recent terrorist attack in Paris, the emergency planning team has passed key information to the major sports grounds in Nottinghamshire. The correspondence was addressed to Safety Certificate holders, safety officers and senior management, and referenced a statement issued by

Karen Eyre-White, Chief Executive of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority, who said that the fact that a stadium was targeted during a sporting event must give all of us pause for thought, and we must consider whether there is anything else we need to do to protect spectators attending events.

9. The level of threat faced by venues varies considerably, and any action taken must be proportionate. Some of the venues in Nottinghamshire have been assessed by police counter terrorism officers who have provided advice on actions to mitigate any risk. Also, references were given for training resources available to use with stewards and security staff on topics such as preventing hostile reconnaissance and responding to an attack.
10. A match-day safety inspection was undertaken at the Nottingham Forest versus Derby County fixture on 6<sup>th</sup> November. The result of the match was an unexpected victory for the home side, which precipitated a pitch incursion by approximately 40 home supporters, which is now the subject of a Football Association inquiry. Unfortunately, there were other reported instances of poor behaviour, including objects being thrown at Derby supporters by Forest fans. The fixture had been scheduled by football authorities for 7.30 p.m. on a Friday evening, which may have been a contributing factor to the poor behaviour of some groups in the crowd. These matters will be considered at the next meeting of the Safety Advisory Group on 7<sup>th</sup> January.
11. An unannounced match-day inspection was carried out at the Mansfield Town versus Exeter City fixture on 24<sup>th</sup> November, and was focussed on stewarding. It was noted that the pre-match briefing of officials was very professional, and comprehensively covered safety and emergency procedures. There were no significant issues expected at this game, but vigilance was required particularly around the possibility of pyrotechnics being set off by fans. The briefings also covered counter terrorism issues in view of recent attacks in Paris. The message was to be 'alert not alarmed' and to report anything unusual or suspicious. During the match the stewards were seen to be attentive to their roles. Overall the match was well managed by the safety team in the control room, and the ground was generally in good condition.
12. A routine Safety Advisory Group for Trent Bridge Cricket ground took place on 24<sup>th</sup> November. There were no significant concerns raised during this meeting, which looked back over the past season, including the club's performance in hosting the Ashes Test Match between England and Australia.

#### Humanitarian Assistance Planning

13. A meeting of the County Council-led Humanitarian Assistance sub-group of the Local Resilience Forum took place on 1<sup>st</sup> December, led by its interim chair Caroline Baria, Service Director. The main topics of discussion for the meeting were around the action plan from the major emergency Exercise Jarrell, and included discussions about the expectations placed upon local authority social care staff to lead multiple aspects of the humanitarian response to incidents. In some incidents this could include rest centres, humanitarian assistance centres, survivor reception centres, and providing crisis support to bereaved families. Plans are now being developed to provide a coordinated response, maximising the social care staff available, and providing the appropriate humanitarian response in relation to the scale of the incident. The group will also be

looking to voluntary agencies to assist the local authority response, for example with British Red Cross trained listeners to supplement the work of social workers with crisis support.

#### Planning for flooding

14. The emergency planning team, alongside other Local Resilience Forum partners, monitored the response of agencies involved in dealing with the impact of the major flooding in Cumbria and other areas arising from Storm 'Desmond' in December. In many cases, the properties that were affected had been inundated during floods in recent previous years, in Carlisle for example, despite the installation of new flood defences. This heightens the anxiety of the public in flood risk areas elsewhere in the country, including those in Nottinghamshire.
15. Current work (already in progress prior to the flooding in Cumbria) includes support for a newly formed Hucknall Flood Warden Scheme. The emergency planning team have a meeting scheduled with the group on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016. The team also continues to support the emergency planning activities of the Southwell Flood Forum, including participation in their emergency planning group meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

#### Preparations for Winter Weather

16. The 4x4 vehicle plan was developed after the bad winter of 2010 to provide suitable vehicles to teams required to provide critical services to the community, no matter what the weather, for example for home care, meals at home, mental health assessments, or safeguarding. The plan identifies sources of available County Council 4x4 vehicles, from country parks for example, that could be re-assigned in severe winter weather and passed on to critical services. The review of the plan for this year has encountered a lot of changes in the structure of the organisation, and unfortunately a reduction in the number of available vehicles. The knock on effect of this sees us relying more on the use of volunteers (NCC staff who own their own 4x4 vehicle and have offered their services) and voluntary agencies (Nottinghamshire 4x4 Response for example).

#### Attendance at Services for Schools marketplace event

17. The emergency planning team were represented at the recent Services for Schools marketplace event on 2 December. Positive feedback was received on the 'Coping with a school emergency' resources that are available to all maintained schools and academies in Nottinghamshire. The majority of queries received from schools focussed on how to develop suitable arrangements for lockdown procedures.

### **Registration and Celebratory Services**

#### Information Sharing Event for Registration Staff

18. A learning and development day was held for all registration service staff on 10 November. The event took place at Newark Registration Office and was supported by contributions from Councillor Gilfoyle, Councillor Grice and Councillor Bell, and from the Chief Executive Anthony May. Sessions were created to provide opportunities for staff

to learn, to share information, and to enhance how registration services are delivered in Nottinghamshire. Participants had the opportunity to showcase ideas for service improvement through workshops periods, while other sessions looked at the customer journey and ways of enhancing customer experiences.

19. The event enabled staff to reflect on the major changes that have occurred in registration services since the last event of this nature (held two years ago) and to plan ahead for further development. Significant service changes since then have included the introduction of same sex marriages, ceremony rehearsals, living eulogies, and the 'Celebrate in Nottinghamshire' website. Looking ahead, the near future will see more online booking, for appointments and services, through the 'digital first' approach, plus online copy certificate booking, which will make it easier for customers to order and pay for certificates needed for job applications, passport, and divorce processes, as well as family history research. Also, the website is being further developed to become more interactive so that couples will be able to choose, book, plan, and invite guests to their wedding all through the County Council service.
20. The Registration Services Management Team are building on the momentum of the hard work and energy that staff put into the Learning Day. To date, workshop feedback has been collated and reviewed, and summary of its contents has been produced. Arising from this a Development Programme is being produced that will encompass areas for improvements, further learning, and new avenues for income generation. The programme will have a communications plan attached so that all staff can see what is happening, where and when.

#### Service promotion pilots

21. Registration staff in the south of the county are piloting approaches to nursing homes and local charities to promote the County Council's civil funerals and living eulogy services. They have also been creating a library of information to assist staff who are doing renewal of vows ceremonies, and have created a trial package for customers to purchase additional items when booking ceremonies.

#### **Other Options Considered**

22. None.

#### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

23. To update the Committee on this area of work contained within its remit.

#### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

24. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such

implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

25. There are no financial implications for Emergency Planning or Registration budgets.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 1) It is recommended that the Committee notes the update on recent key activities and events in the work of the Emergency Planning Team and of Registration and Celebratory Services.

### **PAUL MCKAY**

**Service Director, South Nottinghamshire and Public Protection**

#### **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

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### **Constitutional Comments**

26. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

### **Financial Comments**

27. There are no financial implications

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

- None

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All