

24th September 2013**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE
AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****UPDATE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 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 Management**Summer Flooding Incidents

2. A long period of warm dry weather ended abruptly with violent thunder storms across many parts of the UK during the late afternoon of Tuesday 23 July. In Nottinghamshire, heavy rainfall caused significant surface water flooding and some fluvial flooding. The communities most severely affected were Southwell, Lowdham, Thurgarton, Hucknall, East Bridgford and Arnold. In response, the Environment Agency opened their local incident room and issued Flood Alerts for the River Erewash, River Leen and Day Brook, and the Trent Tributaries. In accordance with emergency plans, they also called a 'Flood Advisory Service' telephone conference for responding agencies.
3. The Emergency Planning Team relayed requests for sandbags and road closures, and reports of debris and fallen trees on roads across many parts of the County, but most particularly in the Newark and Sherwood area. Initial reports suggested that up to 100 properties were flooded internally in Southwell and that flooding was worse than had been seen in the summer floods of 2007. A police-led 'Tactical Coordinating Group' was convened, in accordance with Local Resilience Forum emergency plans. This involved all of the agencies that were participating in the response.
4. The emergency response continued throughout the night and Nottinghamshire Police maintained a presence in affected areas. In collaboration with Nottinghamshire County Council Social Care services, checks were carried out on known vulnerable people in areas believed to have flooded, and in Southwell there was an evacuation of vulnerable residents of Potwell Close.

5. A number of other residents in Southwell also left their properties and were able to go to alternative accommodation. Therefore a 'Rest Centre' was not required on this occasion, however an operations hub and information point for people affected by the floods was established at Southwell Town Hall.
6. The response quickly moved to a recovery phase and the County Council convened a 'Recovery Coordinating Group'. This met several times to look at issues from the affected communities and established a Recovery Strategy based on the following topics:
 - Community impact assessments
 - Creation and implementation of a Recovery Action Plan
 - Agency engagement with affected communities
 - Public information and communication through the media
 - Liaison with local Elected Members
 - Investigation of causes and lessons arising from the response.
7. During the response, the Emergency Planning Team worked closely with other County Council departments and colleagues from other agencies, including:
 - Ashfield District Council
 - British Red Cross
 - Broxtowe Borough Council
 - East Midlands Ambulance Service
 - Environment Agency
 - Gedling Borough Council
 - Newark & Sherwood District Council
 - NHS England
 - Nottingham City Council
 - Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
 - Nottinghamshire Police
 - Public Health England
 - Severn Trent Water
 - Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
 - Western Power Distribution
8. Rushcliffe Borough Council staff attended East Bridgford Mobile Home Park regarding a landslip caused by the flooding. This required an ongoing response by the Borough Council and County Council staff from Countryside Access and Flood Risk Management.
9. Once the immediate emergency response activities were completed, the Recovery Coordinating Group turned its attention towards arranging a set of public engagement events. These will take place in various locations during September and October, with the objective of addressing community issues, and will be informed by the Community Impact Assessments. The events include:
 - Monday 23 September, Thurgarton
 - Wednesday 25 September, Southwell

- Monday 30 September, Lowdham
- Saturday 5 October, Southwell

10. The Recovery Coordinating Group is scheduled to meet again on 24 September and a multi-agency debrief meeting has been arranged to take place on 26 September.

Other Incidents

11. The emergency planning team responded to a variety of other incidents during this period. By their nature, some of these could have been serious however, on these occasions, none escalated to be a major emergency. The incidents included a freight train derailment near Stoke Bardolph, disruption of overhead power cables by a train on the East Coast Main Line, and three major fires, including a long-running incident at Worksop Recycling Centre.

Registration and Celebratory Services

Accommodation

12. Plans are now well advanced for three significant changes in registration accommodation over the coming months. In October, registration services in Newark will transfer from Baldertongate to the Gilstrap Centre situated within the curtilage of Newark Castle just off Castle Gate. Then in December services will move from the Hall in West Bridgford to two new venues. Arising from both of these moves, the registration records (from which copy certificates are produced) will transfer to the Basford Registration Office in Bulwell.

13. Building, decorating and furnishing work at the Gilstrap Centre is close to completion, and the doors will be opened to the public from Wednesday 02 October 2013. Services during the first few weeks will include birth and death registrations, including the 'Tell Us Once' service, and appointments for notices of marriage and civil partnership. Because wedding ceremonies are booked well in advance, and as a precaution in case there had been any delays in the building works, no ceremony bookings have been taken during October. Consequently, the first ceremony in the Gilstrap is currently booked for 05 November. The first Citizenship Ceremony at this venue is scheduled for 13 November.

14. The works have involved internal refurbishment and conversion of the building to create:

- A public reception and waiting area
- Three offices for registration appointments
- Two ceremony rooms (one for small ceremonies, involving just the couple and their witnesses, and the other for larger scale 'enhanced' ceremonies of up to 100 people).
- A registration service staff area

15. There is parking provision for ceremony cars to drop off and pick up the bride and groom and civil partners at the front of the building, and an area in the castle grounds at the rear for photographs.
16. The project has also included refurbishment of the existing public toilets (already located within the building) and the inclusion of two new entrances, one for the public toilets to the rear of the building and an enlarged side entrance suitable for wheelchair and double child buggy access. Original features have been retained; including a pane of glass on which the first librarian had etched his signature, which will be kept on permanent display. An existing Romanesque Arch will remain in the building and is expected to be a popular focal point for photographs. The capital and revenue costs of this project were approved earlier this year by the Property and Finance Committee.
17. Later in the year, the registration services will be vacating the Hall in West Bridgford, as leasehold of the building is set to transfer to a private company, who wish to extensively refurbish the building before welcoming registration back to the venue in 2015 or early 2016. During the period when the Hall is unavailable, day-to-day registration services will continue from three venues. Birth and death registrations already take place in an office within West Bridgford library, and this will continue. Notice appointments and administration activities will be at County Hall, and ceremonies will be hosted at Welbeck Hall under an agreement approved by the Property and Finance Committee on 09 September.
18. As a consequence of the office moves in Newark and West Bridgford, the historic registration records (from which copies of birth and other certificate are made) must be moved from their current strongrooms into alternative secure storage. In the longer term, the permanent home for these and other Nottinghamshire Registration Records will be the County Archives facilities, which is currently undergoing building work to create greater storage capacity. However, in the immediate term, the registration records from Newark and West Bridgford will be stored at the Basford Registration Office in Bulwell within existing strongrooms plus secure cabinets that will be purchased for this purpose.

Marriage (Same sex couples) Act 2013

19. The Marriages (Same Sex Couples) Bill received Royal Assent on Wednesday 17 July and became an Act of Parliament. As a consequence, from summer 2014 same-sex couples will be able to marry in a civil ceremony at a register office or approved premises or on religious premises if the religious organisation concerned is in agreement. Under the law, such marriages will be the same as marriages between a man and a woman.
20. There is provision in the legislation for a couple already in a civil partnership to convert their relationship to a marriage if they choose to do so. However, the new Act does not remove the availability of civil partnerships for same sex couples if that is their preference.
21. During the debates in the House of Lords, Peers consider the question of conscientious objection to same sex marriages and whether a registrar could

object to carrying out a same sex marriage, however Peers voted against the suggestion and the provision was not included in the Bill.

22. Under the terms of the new legislation, most religious organisations will be able to "opt in" to offering marriages if they wish to do so, however, the Church of England and Church in Wales are prohibited in law from doing so. During the passage of the Bill through Parliament, the Government recognised the level of interest in whether groups such as the humanists should be allowed to carry out marriages. As a consequence, the government has undertaken to conduct a statutory review, including a public consultation, on this topic. The outcome may be to permit organisations that are registered charities concerned with advancing or practising a non-religious belief to solemnise marriages, however it is not anticipated that this would apply to commercial organisations. A report on the outcome of this is expected to be published early in 2015.

The 'Tell Us Once' (TUO) Service

23. Thanks have been expressed on behalf of the Senior Leadership Team within the 'Tell Us Once' Delivery Partnerships Contracted Customer Services Directorate of the Department for Work and Pensions for an article Helen Scaman, Service Development Manager, contributed to for the recent national TUO Newsletter. The article concerned work in Nottinghamshire Registration Service, across a range of TUO related issues, with the aim of increasing take-up of the service while, at the same time, improving the lives of Nottinghamshire citizens. It was observed that Helen had led from the front on this and made real differences in terms of addressing operational and cultural challenges and ensuring that changes were introduced as soon as practicable. The Department for Work and Pensions noted that the article sparked interest in other parts of the Country where services are keen to understand the work in Nottinghamshire.

Statutory and Policy Implications

24. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are included in the report.

Financial Implications

25. There are no financial implications contained in this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee notes the Emergency Management Team's response to the summer flooding and other incidents and the developments in the Registration and Celebratory Service.

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Constitutional Comments

26. As this report is for noting only, no constitutional comments are required.

Financial Comments (KAS 11/09/13)

27. There are no financial implications contained in this report.

Background Papers

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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