

21 April 2015**Agenda Item: 9****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR ACCESS 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**Emergency Accommodation Exercise 'Richter'

2. The testing and validation of emergency arrangements by means of simulation exercises is an important element of the work of The Emergency Planning Team. Exercise 'Richter' on 24th February was a multi-agency test of the 'Emergency Accommodation Plan', which details the arrangements in place for staffing, setting up, and running a Rest Centre. The exercise took place at the Dukeries Leisure Centre in Ollerton, and was organised with the support of Newark & Sherwood District Council.
3. The scenario used in the exercise was that of an evacuation following seismic activity in the area. Ollerton has long experienced small earthquakes, and for the purpose of the exercise it was imagined that a series of small tremors had occurred with the last one causing a large sinkhole to open up. It was supposed that the sinkhole was approximately 35 feet in diameter and that the Emergency Services had put a cordon in place encompassing approximately 130 properties. The scenario further imagined that there were no casualties or fatalities, but that there were concerns for those at risk in neighbouring properties. Consequently, an evacuation of the houses within the cordon had taken place, and residents had been relocated to a 'Place Of Safety'. They were then to be transferred to a 'Rest Centre' established at the Dukeries Leisure Centre.
4. The exercise ran in two concurrent parts, with 'live' exercise play accompanied by a table-top discussion exercise. The live exercise involved participation from the following organisations.
 - Nottinghamshire County Council
 - Newark & Sherwood District Council
 - Salvation Army

- British Red Cross
 - St John Ambulance
 - Nottinghamshire Police
 - Nottinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service
5. In addition, the discussion exercise involved participation from.
- Bassetlaw District Council
 - Gedling Borough Council
 - Mansfield District Council
 - Rushcliffe Borough Council
6. Councillor Gilfoyle attended the event, and was joined by the local Elected Member for Ollerton. Councillor Pringle participated by providing interviews to journalism students from New College, Nottingham, who were there to simulate media interest in any emergency of this nature. Also, 'Notts TV' attended to report on the event, and they also interviewed Councillor Pringle.
7. The exercise provided confirmation that the NCC Emergency Accommodation plan is fit for purpose. However, as with any exercise, a number of lessons were identified. These will be addressed during the next review of the plan and future training events. Key outcomes were that:
- Staff managing a Rest Centre need to be flexible and consider the staff resources available to perform the roles required in the plan.
 - There is a need to enlarge the pool of local authority and voluntary agency staff that can be trained as Rest Centre staff (for example to include business support staff who are able to assist with duties such as registration).
 - Consideration will be given to a number of suggestions to improve and streamline how evacuees are registered when arriving at a Rest Centre.
 - It was highlighted that further planning is required with colleagues from the Health Service on how they can best support the running of a Rest Centre.
 - On this occasion the leisure centre was able to remain partially open to the public rather than close completely. Individual leisure centres could consider how to do this to minimise the impact on day-to-day operations, without compromising the needs of those evacuated
 - Further guidance is required for inclusion in the Plan and during staff training sessions regarding data protection and data security.
 - Better use could be made of information points within the rest centre to provide updates to evacuees on details of the incident response.

Incidents

8. Having recently tested the County's plans for Rest Centres in Exercise 'Richter', it was thought that these were going to be needed in earnest when a coach carrying 36 passengers was involved in a road traffic accident. The incident occurred on the A1 near Markham Moor and resulted in a small number of injured people being taken to hospital. Initially, emergency services personnel took uninjured passengers into a 'Place Of Safety' established at Tuxford Fire Station, and requested local authorities to establish a Rest Centre. Newark and Sherwood District Council nominated the Dukeries Leisure Centre, and a County Council

Emergency Planning Officer was dispatched to Ollerton. However, the County Council's 'Emergency Accommodation Plan' was quickly stood-down as news arrived that the coach company involved had quickly been able to arrange another vehicle to collect their customers from Tuxford.

Local Resilience Forum

9. The Chief Constable chaired the most recent meeting of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) on 13th March, and began by recording his appreciation for Mick Burrows' support for resilience work during his time as Chief Executive.
10. The meeting included a review of the LRF activities over the past year to address its strategic aim to establish and maintain effective multi-agency arrangements to respond to major emergencies, to minimise the impact of those emergencies on the public, property and environment of Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, and to satisfy fully the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act. The LRF noted that the 'Plan Matrix', that lists all current LRF emergency plans, had been reviewed and updated to ensure that each plan has a review, training and exercising schedule.
11. At the end of each financial year the progress of the LRF is audited against the delivery plan objectives with evidence being provided as to how key deliverables have been met. This helps to highlight any gaps in current LRF arrangements that may exist, and provides assurance that the partners are fulfilling their duties under the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004. On this occasion, it was agreed that the work programme for the past year was substantially achieved, and a new work programme was established for the year ahead.
12. As part of the 2014/15 Work Plan it had been agreed to review how the LRF operates and to consider ways of improving the efficient operation of the LRF, to reduce the work burden that the LRF creates within organizations, without compromising the excellent work that the LRF does. The outcome of this was that the LRF will:
 - Hold agreed sub-group meetings and events on the same day
 - Make more use of teleconferencing / video conferencing
 - Adopt a structured, project management approach to the tasking of sub-groups
13. The LRF also agreed to establish an annual Information Sharing Day, which although involving additional work to organize, it is hoped that many of the 'awareness sessions', 'briefings' and some elements of training could be delivered to a large audience, in one place, at one time. This will reduce the cost of officer time involved in organizing many separate events.

Social Media Exercise

14. On Wednesday 18 March, members of the emergency planning team participated in a training event for the Media Relations and Digital teams regarding the best use of social media during an emergency or crisis. Social media is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the overarching communications strategy during the response to a major incident or emergency.

15. As well as highlighting points of good practice and lessons from previous incidents, the event featured an exercise based on a scenario of severe weather and flooding affecting Nottinghamshire. The event was delivered by an external company (The Social Simulator) who provided a hands-on, private digital environment in which to practice our responses in an online environment. The emergency planning team were able to advise on the actions that the County Council, key partners and communities would be taking to enable them to develop handling strategies that could be used across social and digital channels. It also offered the opportunity to reflect on what further guidance could be included within our existing emergency plans. Outcomes from the event will feed into a social media strategy for the County Council that will include the use of social media during emergencies.

World Cerebral Palsy Games - Nottingham August 2015

16. A member of the emergency planning team is contributing to planning and preparations for the World Cerebral Palsy Games taking place in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire from 7th to 16th August. The main venue for the games is the Harvey Haddon Stadium in Nottingham; however the bowls events will be at the Richard Herrod Leisure Centre in Gedling.

17. A Safety Advisory Group has been established for the Games and has met on 11 December and 5 March. This is expected to develop in a similar fashion to the arrangements made for the Olympic Torch relay in 2012. Similarly, contingency plans for the event will include an escalation protocol linking to local emergency plans if an incident goes beyond the scope of the Games operational plans and if co-ordinated multi-agency support is required. With this in mind, the Games organiser gave a presentation to a recent meeting of the LRF's 'Resilience Working Group'.

18. Planning for the Games is taking account of the fact that the dates overlap with the Ashes Test Match taking place at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground from 6th until 10th August.

Outcomes from major emergency exercise 'Jarrell'

19. As previously reported, the emergency planning team led the multi-agency planning and delivery of the recent Exercise 'Jarrell', which was the annual major emergency response exercise of the LRF. The exercise set out to test key elements of eight important emergency plans using the scenario of a major structural collapse at Nottingham Forest football ground that had caused multiple fatalities and casualties. Lessons from the event were captured through debriefs, feedback sheets and notes taken by exercise umpires. These were used to compile a set of three detailed action plans which were reported to and approved by the 13 March meeting of the LRF. Each action is assigned to a group, organisation or individual. And their completion will be monitored and reviewed through to completion by the LRF's Resilience Working Group under the leadership of the County Council Emergency Planning Team.

20. The report concludes that the exercise met its overall aim, and that 7 out of its 8 objectives were fully achieved. These related to:

- The interface between the multi-agency co-ordination arrangements set out in the LRF Generic Major Incident Plan, and the site specific arrangements contained in the Nottingham Forest Major Incident Plan.

- The use of principles of the Joint Emergency Service Interoperability Programme (JESIP) national doctrine for multi-agency working to achieve a successful joint emergency response.
- Response and recovery elements of the LRF Site Clearance Plan
- Elements of the LRF Humanitarian Assistance Centres Plan
- Arrangements for Survivor Reception Centres
- Arrangements for Family and Friends Reception Centres
- Elements of the LRF Recovery plan

21. The objective which was not achieved related to the testing of the LRF Telecommunications Resilience Plan, and this will require further testing through another exercise at a future date.
22. It was a recurring theme of the exercise that strategic and tactical level response, and the recovery process, largely went smoothly and reflected the focus in recent years on training and exercising at these levels. There was praise for the chairing of the Strategic and Tactical Coordinating Groups as both completed their tasks and made decisions within the strict allotted timeframe.
23. The report recommends actions for five LRF sub groups, and is accompanied by an Action Plan in sections covering Overarching Outcomes, Humanitarian Assistance, and Recovery and Site Clearance.

Registration and Celebratory Services

Feedback from customers regarding implementation of the Immigration Act

24. Initial feedback from customers in Nottinghamshire indicates that registrars have successfully implemented the major changes arising from Phase 2 of the Immigration Act 2014. As previously reported, the notice period for all couples getting married is now 28 days rather than the previous 15 days. As part of this, couples who are identified for the new Referral and Investigation Scheme may have their notice period extended from 28 to 70 days where the Home Office suspects the marriage may be a sham.
25. Key registration officers attended a training session on the changes, and information from this was cascaded to others through team meetings during February. Staff awareness was enhanced by reference to circulars containing general information, however staff had little opportunity to get to familiarise themselves with the new process of issuing authorities as information only appeared on the website on the 27 February ahead of the 2 March implementation date.
26. Feedback from couples coming to give notice of marriage indicates that they were generally aware of the new processes prior to their appointment, and as yet there have been no cases in Nottinghamshire where the couple has been referred for investigation. The new notice taking process has had no detrimental effect on normal service delivery.

Other Options Considered

27. None.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

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

Statutory and Policy Implications

29. 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

30. Suitable preparedness for emergencies will reduce the cost of responding when incidents occur.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 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.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments

31. Constitutional Comments are not required as the report is for noting only.

Financial Comments

32. There are no financial implications contained within this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All