

18th June 2013**Agenda Item: 7****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, and an end of year summary, of the work of the Emergency Planning Team and of Registration and Celebratory Services.

Information and Advice**Emergency Management**Emergency response to an explosion in Newark

2. During the early evening of Sunday 19th May, an explosion occurred in a residential property on Wright Street in Newark. Tragically, two people were killed and another was seriously injured. Approximately 100 people were evacuated from their homes from Wright Street, Private Street, Cromwell Road and Cromwell Mews. An initial call was received by the emergency planning duty officer at approximately 1730 hours and two colleagues were deployed immediately, one to the scene and another to the 'Place of Safety' (Rest Centre) established at the Grove Lane Leisure Centre. Soon afterwards, the Adult Social Care Group Manager on the emergency duty-rota was contacted and a Social Care Group Manager was also deployed to the place of safety.
3. A multi-agency 'Tactical Coordinating Group' was established on the morning after the explosion and meetings were called at suitable intervals throughout the following week. At the request of Nottinghamshire Police, a telephone 'Helpline' was established for those affected, using the normal County Council's Customer Services Centre number 0300 500 80 80. Also, an 'Information Point' was established at Charles Street Methodist Church, where representatives of the County Council (emergency planning) and Newark & Sherwood District Council (emergency planning and housing) maintained a presence and provided support to residents throughout the week. Representatives of gas and electricity suppliers also attended. The emergency planning team also called the Support to Schools Service and Educational Psychology Service, who worked closely with local schools to assess the needs of any children affected by the incident. Later, a 'Crisis Support Management Team' meeting took place in accordance with our emergency plans, chaired by a Service Director from ASCH&PP Department.

4. Many evacuated residents went to stay with friends or relatives nearby, and those who were unable to make their own arrangements were provided with temporary accommodation by Newark and Sherwood District Council. Gas and electricity supplies to the affected area were switched off, and during the course of the next few days the Police and Fire Service undertook a detailed forensic demolition of the scene and a detailed structural examination was made of nearby properties to make sure they were safe before anyone was permitted to return. When it was safe to do so, National Grid accessed properties to restore and check supplies, according to their normal procedure after any disruption to gas supply.
5. A 'Recovery Co-ordinating Group' was established, chaired by Newark and Sherwood District Council with guidance and assistance from the County Council emergency planning team. This Group assisted the return to normality and assumed the lead role in coordinating the longer-term recovery of the community. A member of the emergency planning team also participated in and provided a secretariat function for a local authorities meeting with owners and insurance companies of the properties on Wright Street that had been particularly badly damaged.
6. The emergency planning team provided information to the wider community by means of numerous media interviews and information releases. Specialist information was provided to the affected community, including by means of a leaflet about coping with the tragic events, and copies of this were also passed to the Customer Services Centre should they receive requests for further such information and support.
7. An important feature of this incident was the response of the local community. Many local people wished to help with the relief effort, and the local Methodist Church became the prime focus for this. Goods and materials, as well as money, were donated by the community and collected by the church. The emergency planning team put the church in touch with the British Red Cross, whose members have plans for disaster appeal funds and an awareness of the legal issues arising from public donations to a local tragedy.
8. By the end of the Friday following the explosion, the main coordinating groups were able to step back from a physical presence in the community, and coordinated a handover to the local Methodist Church who had arranged activities for the weekend. Finally, internal and external debriefing meetings were arranged with all involved.

Safety of Sports Grounds

9. The 2012-2013 football season ended with great success for one of our local teams as Mansfield Town FC were promoted as Champions from the Blue Square Premier Division. Their return to the Football League will bring higher profile fixtures and greater attendances and so the emergency planning team is supporting the club in their preparations. Pleasingly, the key fixtures towards the end of the season were well managed and no significant incidents occurred. A pre-season Annual Inspection and Safety Audit has been arranged on 18th July.
10. Nottingham Forest, unfortunately, did not quite make the play-offs for a place in the highest division of English football, and so will play in the Championship again next season. Their pre-season Annual Inspection and Safety Audit will also take place on 18th July. The emergency planning team is currently in discussion with the club regarding their proposals to re-locate visiting supporters to a different part of the ground. The safety implications and

contingency arrangements for the proposal will be examined in close detail and advice will be taken from members of the Safety Advisory Group before any approval is given to these proposals.

11. The pre-season Annual Inspection and Safety Audits for Hucknall Town and Eastwood Town will take place on 4th July.

Working with Schools

12. The Emergency Planning Team has continued to offer support to schools following the release of a third edition of 'Coping with a School Emergency' in January. This document and the associated resources are designed to assist schools to develop and review a school emergency plan.
13. General advice and support on emergency planning is made available to schools free of any charge. However, the emergency planning team also provide more extensive assistance to schools as part of the County Council's 'Services for Schools' programme. Examples of support include helping schools to review their emergency plan, running training events and organising live or table-top exercises. Recent work with schools includes a meeting with Brunts Academy to review their emergency plan, plus meetings with St Philip Neri with St Bede's Catholic Primary School to review their emergency plans, and organising and delivery of a training event for approximately 30 teaching staff from these schools.

Business Continuity - Relocation Workshop

14. As part of the continuous development of the County Council's resilience to business interruptions, a workshop was held in April to explore options for relocation of critical services in the event of loss of key properties. The County Council's insurers, Zurich Municipal, were invited to assist with the development and delivery of the event, which involved representatives from all departments.
15. Outcomes from the workshop included agreed actions in respect of ICT and infrastructure, which will lead to response plans tailored to each building. This will be followed by the creation of a relocation strategy in support of existing business continuity plans for critical services. This will assist decision making in the event of a disruptive incident, and support the immediate and short term continuation of critical services. A longer term plan would then be developed to support the ongoing continuation of critical services and recovery of less critical activities.
16. The next steps in this work will be to
 - Prepare service response plans in consultation with service managers.
 - Test proposals by means of a desktop scenario exercise.
 - Finalise relocation arrangements.

Registration and Celebratory Services

Registration Service Accommodation

17. As part of the 'Ways of Working' programme, the County Council is withdrawing from the current Baldertongate offices in Newark. As a consequence of this, alternative accommodation for the Newark Registration Office has been found at the Gilstrap Centre, adjacent to Newark Castle. It is anticipated that this will soon become a much sought after venue for weddings, civil partnerships and other celebratory ceremonies. It will also offer a suitable venue for registering births and deaths.
18. Contracts to lease the building were signed in April, and work has begun to make modest adaptations to the building in order to make it fully fit for its new purpose. Works include the creation of improved disabled access and two offices within a previously extended section of the building. These modifications, plus decorating and furnishing are expected to be completed in early September and the office will be opened to the public in October.
19. Another office move will be necessary later in the year, when the Service will be leaving The Hall in West Bridgford as the owners of the building (Rushcliffe Borough Council) propose to sell the property. It is hoped that the service will be able to return when new owners have refurbished the accommodation, but in the meantime it will be necessary to provide registration services from other locations. It is planned that birth and death registrations will be at West Bridgford Library, notices of marriage and civil partnership, and service administration, will be at County Hall, and ceremonies will be at an external venue. Work is currently in progress with property and procurement colleagues to make arrangements with a suitable nearby venue. Seven local premises have been approached with a request for information, and meetings have taken place with four of them. At time of writing, this has resulted in two proposals from premises. These will be followed up and a preferred venue will be identified.
20. As a consequence of the two office moves detailed above, it will be necessary to re-house the historic registration records currently held in strongrooms in each of these premises. It is proposed that this will be done through the creation of a central registration records repository that will become a copy-certificate and family history research business unit. Original proposals were that this could be located within the current Basford Registration Office in Bulwell; however the service has since been offered space at County House, Mansfield, and has also been asked to re-examine whether it is possible to co-locate the service with the County Archives Service.

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, 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.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) It is recommended that the contents of the report be noted.

PAUL MCKAY

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Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All