

20th November 2012

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT & REGISTRATION

UPDATE ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND REGISTRATION SERVICES

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide an update on recent key activities and events of the County Council's Emergency Planning Team and of Registration and Celebratory Services.

Information and Advice

Emergency Management

Update on Safety at Sports Grounds

2. Recent work in support of Mansfield Town Football Club has included scrutiny and approval of the clubs' plans to introduce two structural changes to their stadium. This involved the creation and use of new accommodation within the Ian Greaves Stand, plus the construction of a TV scaffold on the Bishop Street side of the ground. In addition, a 'Special Safety Certificate' was issued to the club to enable the use of the stadium for a fireworks display that took place on 4th November.
3. Work in support of Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club included approval, from the Safety of Sports Grounds perspective, of plans for the construction of a new scoreboard.
4. One 'no-notice' matchday inspection was completed since the last committee meeting. This was for the Hucknall Town Football Club home fixture with Mickleover Sport. A full report will be provided to the relevant Safety Advisory Group meeting, however there were no significant safety issues to note, other than the point that the club are in transition from one holder of their General Safety Certificate and Safety Officer to another.

Incidents

5. There have been no major incidents affecting Nottinghamshire since the last meeting of the Community Safety Committee. However, in mid-October, the Emergency Planning Team was in touch with other agencies regarding the effects in Nottinghamshire of a large fire in Derbyshire. A large smoke plume, that was dense in places, affected residents, visitors and road users in parts of the west of the County. The fire was at a recycling plant in Stanton-by-Dale, near Long Eaton. The materials involved were mainly timber products, and so Health Service colleagues were able to advise that there was not a major toxic risk. The

Emergency Planning Team monitored the incident and maintained communication with other County Council departments as necessary. Information was sent to all Elected Members.

Testing and validation of emergency plans

6. Exercise 'Over and Out' took place on 10th October to test emergency plans for two sites in the north of the County. The DHL Supply Chain site, on Brunel Industrial Estate, Harworth, and the Misterton Petroleum Storage Depot are both 'top-tier' sites under the COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) Regulations 1999 (amended 2005).
7. The COMAH regulations require the County Council to prepare adequate emergency plans for dealing with the off-site consequences of possible major accidents. These 'off-site' plans detail the roles to be carried out by the emergency services, local authorities and other relevant organisations, and detail the arrangements in place to co-ordinate an effective response in the event of a major accident.
8. The 'table top' exercise was organised and facilitated by the emergency planning team, and involved 50 officers from 15 different organisations. The scenario for the exercise involved a smoke plume from the DHL site and a fuel leak, and subsequent ignition of fuel, at the Misterton site. The exercise included the steps required to identify vulnerable people who might be affected, with County Council and Health partners able to activate systems to assist with evacuations and provide details of the vulnerable that may be affected by the smoke plume. The exercise highlighted topics for further investigation, including environmental impacts and drainage systems.

Planning for the recovery phase of emergencies

9. The County Council leads the 'Recovery and Site Clearance' sub group of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The LRF 'Recovery Plan', and the training that accompanies it, provides generic guidance to assist in the recovery phase of emergencies. A revision of the plans has been completed recently, and training has been provided to staff who would be involved in the event of a major incident.
10. In any major emergency, the formal recovery management process will commence as soon as possible after the initial response, and run in parallel with it, until a formal handover from response to recovery takes place. Recovery is a complex and long running process that will involve many more agencies and participants than the response phase. It will be costly and will be subject to close scrutiny. It is, therefore, essential for the process to be based on well thought out and tested structures and procedures.
11. Training entitled 'Leading the Recovery from a Major Emergency' was held on 16th October. This was provided to organisational representatives identified as possible participants in a 'Recovery Coordinating Group' (RCG). The event raised awareness of the principles of recovery and the organisation of an RCG. Evidence-based materials were used, including case studies from recent incidents. The training was delivered by a team comprising members of the emergency planning team with representatives from Nottingham City Council and the Highways agency.

12. Feedback from the training will be discussed at a future meeting of the LRF Recovery and Site Clearance Group and will be taken into account when the training is reviewed ahead of a further training events on an annual basis.

Registration and Celebratory Services

Citizenship Ceremonies

13. In excess of 400 new British Citizens are welcomed to the UK each year through the County Council's Citizenship Ceremonies. These are held once a fortnight, hosted at County Hall and at the Registration Offices in Worksop, Mansfield, Newark and West Bridgford. The ceremonies are arranged and delivered by registration service staff, and include a civic welcome by the Chairman of the County Council.
14. Commencing in October, the ceremonies now include the attendance of a Deputy of the Lord Lieutenant for Nottinghamshire, who delivers a brief statement in support of the Chairman's address, and offers a welcome on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.
15. The first of the new format ceremonies took place on 24th October at County Hall, and was very warmly received by the 25 new Citizens and their guests.

Removal of restrictions on time of marriage and civil partnership

16. The recently introduced 'Protection of Freedoms' Act, 2012, included a provision to remove the time restrictions on marriage and civil partnerships. Previously, these were restricted to taking place between the hours of 8 am to 6 pm. Now, a marriage or civil partnership may take place legally at any time of the day or night.
17. This change is permissive, and so there is no obligation on local authorities to provide services outside traditional hours. However, the change offers the opportunity for the County Council to consider if it wishes to do so. Specific proposals on this matter will be raised with the Community Safety Committee by means of the forthcoming Registration Fees report.

Premium Rate Working

18. As previously reported, Registrars pay is fully consistent with County Council policy except in respect of ceremonies on Sundays. The arrangement whereby registrars are paid double time on Sundays arises from agreements reached following the transfer of registrars to County Council employment. However, this arrangement must be replaced to bring staff fully in line with County Council policies.
19. With assistance from Human Resources colleagues, it has been determined that the previously considered mechanism of fixed payments for ceremonies does not offer a viable option, and so staff have been given 12 weeks notice that from 10th January 2013 Sunday working will be at the agreed County Council rate of time and a half.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. 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.

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Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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