

**06 January 2015****Agenda Item: 12****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.
2. To seek approval for an administration fee during a trial of copy certificate orders from elsewhere undertaken on behalf of customers.

**Information and Advice****Emergency Planning**Major Emergency Exercise Jarrell

3. Over recent months, members of the County Council emergency planning team have led the multi-agency planning and delivery of the annual major emergency response exercise of the Local Resilience Forum. The main part of the event was an exercise held over two days, designed to test elements of a range of emergency plans, using the scenario of a major structural collapse at a sports ground. For the purposes of the exercise it was imagined that a tornado had caused a partial roof collapse at Nottingham Forest football ground causing multiple fatalities and casualties.
4. The exercise tested elements of the LRF Generic Major Incident Response Plan, and examined the inter-dependencies and links between this and other plans. It also provided an opportunity for key individuals to experience the multi-agency co-ordination centre at Highfields Fire Station, Beeston.
5. The exercise included:
  - a call-out exercise to establish the actual resources, in terms of people and equipment, that could be expected to be available for such an incident.
  - Day 1 (17 November) – Operational, tactical and strategic response and immediate care of survivors, their friends and families
  - Day 2 (20 November) – Recovery, humanitarian assistance and site clearance

6. There were eight overall objectives for the exercise to:
- test 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
  - provide an opportunity for responding agencies to practise the use of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme principles
  - test the response and recovery elements of the LRF Site Clearance Plan
  - test elements of the LRF Humanitarian Assistance Centres Plan
  - test the LRF arrangements for Survivor Reception Centres
  - test the LRF arrangements for Family and Friends Reception Centres
  - test the LRF arrangements for a Recovery Co-ordinating Group
  - test elements of the LRF Telecoms Resilience Plan.
7. At the end of each section of the exercise, participants took part in a debriefing process to capture their thoughts on what were the most challenging part of the response, the most successful aspects and things that did not work well. They were also asked to identify training needs and any changes required to emergency plans. Outcomes and findings from Exercise Jarrell will be reported to the next meeting of the Local Resilience Forum, along with a proposed Action Plan for implementation of lessons from the event.

#### Support for flood risk communities

8. Advice and assistance has been provided to Thurgarton Parish Council to support their development of a Community Emergency Plan. This culminated in a training event for around twenty volunteers at Thurgarton Village Hall on 25<sup>th</sup> November. Many of the volunteers had agreed to be Flood Wardens and Road Closure Wardens. In delivering the training the emergency planning team was joined by colleagues from County Council Highways and Health and Safety, and from Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service. The audience also included four representatives from Collingham who have volunteered to help their community in a similar way to those in Thurgarton. The training covered the role of Community Emergency Volunteers, the content of the Community Emergency Plan, water awareness, and health and safety, including manual handling.
9. In Southwell there are now 57 trained Flood Wardens, of whom 37 have also volunteered of the community road closure scheme for flood emergencies. A first session of annual refresher training was provided to around twenty volunteers at Southwell Fire Station on 26 November.
10. The emergency planning team has also supported the early activities of the Arnold Flood Forum, and has drawn on experiences from working with Southwell Flood Forum. Key outcomes from a recent meeting with a small number of retailers included plans for representatives of the County Council, Gedling Borough Council and Severn Trent Water to form a specific Working group. An early action for the Group will be to organise a 'walk round' in January of the affected areas to highlight where there are particular issues and assign these to the relevant agency to address.

11. It is also anticipated that volunteers will be found from the community to implement a suggested road closure scheme to close off Arnold's main shopping street to stop water being washed into shops by the bow waves of vehicles passing through.

### National Capabilities Survey

12. The biennial UK 'National Capabilities Survey' took place during November 2014. The survey is completed by all 'Category One' organisations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, including emergency services local authorities, health services and others. Local Resilience Forums also complete a set of questions within the survey. The purpose of the survey is to evaluate the ability of the United Kingdom to respond to and recover from any civil emergency.

13. Survey questions explored capabilities that are common to most types of emergency, regardless of whether these are caused by accidents, natural hazards or man-made threats. These capabilities encompasses a variety of interdependent and interrelated factors including appropriate numbers and types of personnel, the right types of equipment and supplies, relevant and sufficient training and exercising, as well as clear plans. The information gathered is used to provide assurance to central government ministers on how ready the UK is to respond to civil emergencies.

14. The survey included twenty categories of questions for local authorities to respond to, including for example:

- Generic resilience
- Business Continuity Management
- Flooding
- Evacuation and Shelter
- Exotic notifiable animal diseases
- Community Resilience
- Warning and informing the public
- Recovery

15. As in previous years, the County Council was able to make robust and mostly very positive responses to all of the most crucial questions in the survey. The joint response from Local Resilience Forum partners was similarly reassuring.

### Emergency Planning for Critical Infrastructure

16. Three new multi-agency emergency plans have been approved by the Local Resilience Forum. The plans were developed through the County Council led 'Critical Infrastructure Working Group', and address incidents involving disruption of the key utilities of electricity, water and gas.

17. The plans each provide an overview of the arrangements these industries have for interruptions to their services, and the support they may need during major incidents. If the incident is in the County area, then the County Council will usually act as the lead 'Category 1' responder for the incident, however this role may be undertaken by Nottinghamshire Police if the cause of disruption is suspected to have been deliberate.

18. A key area of support from local authorities and health services to infrastructure companies, during emergencies, is in relation to identification of and support to vulnerable people. The companies involved prioritise support to their known vulnerable customers, and will do so also to others identified by partner agencies during the response to an incident.

#### Business Continuity promotion to care home providers

19. In November, a presentation on the topic of Business Continuity and Emergency Planning was given to a meeting of the Nottinghamshire Care Home Providers Forum. The contract the County Council has with Care Home providers stipulates that they must maintain an appropriate business continuity plan to enable them to cope with any emergency. The contract goes on to require that the plan is designed to allow swift and appropriate action to be taken to either prevent the emergency occurring or reduce and mitigate its effects and maintain appropriate standards of service. Contract monitoring indicates that many Care Home do have such plans, but that some may not be fully developed and regularly tested.
20. The presentation was provided an overview of the topic, encouraged planning work and sign-posted participants to guidance available to assist them. The presentation included an account of a fire at Wren Hall Nursing Home, during which the providers Business Continuity Plan was an important factor in the successful response by staff of the home. The remainder of the session included information about the recommended content of a plan and specific ideas for effective procedures.

#### Incidents

21. The emergency planning team were called to assist in the response to a fire at a property on Cobwell Street, Retford, on the evening of Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November. A small number of residents had been evacuated to Retford Leisure Centre. The manager of the leisure centre advised that he had attended a presentation of our Rest Centre training about one year ago, and so was familiar with the process. A member of the emergency planning also attended the leisure centre to assist those evacuated.
22. Hotel accommodation was organised through Bassetlaw District Council for two evacuees, from Friday evening to Monday morning, and the County Council provided refreshments at the nearby Little Chef restaurant. Further support was arranged by the emergency planning Duty Officer and the Red Cross Fire & Emergency Support Service (FESS) vehicle attended the Travelodge on Saturday to provide shoes, clothes and toiletries for the evacuees. The incident called on staff to provide for the needs of evacuees who had accommodation and medication requirements, who had no access to personal possessions, including money, and no transport. The response raised questions around what support can be offered to people in these circumstances, by whom, and for how long.

#### Review of Local Resilience Forum (LRF) working processes

23. As part of the current LRF Work Plan, a review has been undertaken of how the LRF organises its work. The review considered the number and nature of sub-groups that report to the LRF, the frequency of meetings, and existing mechanisms for consultation

and decision making. Partner organisations had earlier considered if a more thorough review would be undertaken, due to budget reductions amongst LRF partners, and the possible consequences of this for response capabilities and the operation of the LRF. However, it was recognised that the LRF is operating well, based on the strength of relationships between partners and there was no evident appetite for or perceived likely benefit to be gained from fundamental change. All local authorities, emergency services and other emergency response agencies in Nottinghamshire already collaborate very closely in emergency planning to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure there are no gaps in shared arrangements for responding to major emergencies and disasters.

24. The review work was completed in December and the outcomes will be reported the LRF Resilience Working Group for approval in the New Year.

### Safety at Sports Grounds

25. A Safety Advisory Group meeting was convened in November to discuss Nottingham Rugby Clubs' proposed move to Lady Bay Sports Ground. Depending on the club's detailed proposals, the ground may require a General Safety Certificate.
26. The land at Lady Bay is owned by the Rugby Club in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club and Boots PLC. The Rugby Club have been playing their home games at Notts County Football Club, however they are leaving the Meadow Lane ground two years before the end of the original contract. However, they have agreed they will return to Meadow Lane if they secure promotion to the Rugby Premiership.
27. The Rugby season runs from September to April, and there are fourteen home games in each season, plus two or three pre-season friendly matches, and additional fixtures if they reach the play-off matches for possible promotion. This season, the club are proposing to play their First-Team games at Lady Bay from January 18 2015.
28. The club is currently considering erecting temporary demountable stands that will be in place from 18 January to 17 April 2015. At time of writing, it is not yet clear what capacity these stands will have. However, under the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act, 1987, a General Safety Certificate is required for grounds with covered stands with capacity for 500 or more spectators. Other temporary structures at the ground will include containers holding ticket sales, a shop and a Control Room for the ground. Provision is being made for suitable access for emergency vehicles, and the club will use St John Ambulance for First Aid cover on match days. There will be a doctor present at all matches in case of injury to players and match officials, and second doctor. Will be brought in for the crowd if attendance is over 2000. An existing changing room will be adapted to create a first aid room.

### **Registration and Celebratory Services**

#### Conversion of Civil Partnerships into Marriages

29. From 10 December 2014, same sex couples in a civil partnership have been able to convert their union into a marriage. This followed the introduction of civil marriage legislation earlier in the year that enabled same sex couples to marry.

30. The process to convert a civil partnership can be as simple as making an appointment at a registration office, producing relevant documents and completing a declaration form, which must be signed in front of the registrar. Alternatively, if the couple wish their conversion to include a ceremony they must attend the registration office for completion of the declaration form, and then (within 12 months) attend a ceremony, at which the declaration is signed.
31. Three conversions took place on 10 December, two in Newark and one in Worksop, with six more with the next five days. Others have been booked for later dates, including two (at time of writing) that will include a ceremony.

### Copy Certificates

32. The registration service is currently examining the potential to offer a copy certificate service for events which took place outside the County. If successful, this would contribute in a modest way to the objective of the service to become cost neutral overall.
33. Each Registration District holds and maintains records of all births, deaths and marriages that have taken place within its boundaries. The authority is then responsible for the production and issue, upon request, of copy certificates from those records. On occasions a customer will approach a Nottinghamshire office seeking a copy of a certificate not held here. In a current trial, registrars have offered these customers the choice of either being signposted to the local authority in which their particular record is held, or for Nottinghamshire registrars to apply for the certificate, on their behalf, to the Registrar General for England and Wales (which the customer could otherwise do themselves). This involves completing a short online application form to arrange for the certificate to be posted direct to the customer. The national statutory fee for a copy certificate is £10. It is proposed to continue this trial and to charge an additional fee of £5 to cover administrative costs. Since July we have processed twelve such applications. This has been done on an ad hoc basis, with no advertising or marketing of the service.
34. If the service proves popular and financially viable, a proposal to introduce the service fully will be included in a future registration fees report to the Community safety Committee.

### **Other Options Considered**

35. Not applicable to this report.

### **Reasons for Recommendation/s**

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

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

37. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, 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 described in the report.

## **Financial Implications**

38. It is anticipated that (without any marketing and promotion) the introduction of a £5 administration charge for making copy certificate requests on behalf of customers for records held elsewhere will raise approximated £200 per year. If the trial indicates there is public interest in using this service, then future marketing and publicity could increase this figure. However, it is not anticipated that the service will contribute greatly to registration service income overall.

## **Implications for Service Users**

39. At present in Nottinghamshire, and generally elsewhere, customers requesting copies of certificates not held locally are signposted to the offices that hold the relevant records. The offer of obtaining the copy on behalf of the customer does not preclude them doing it for themselves; however experience to date suggests that a proportion of customers welcome the opportunity for the order to be made at the point of request, and for the certificate to be posted direct to them.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

1) It is recommended that Committee:

- notes the contents of the report
- agrees a £5 administration fee, during a trial period, for requesting a copy certificate from elsewhere on behalf of a customer.

**PAUL MCKAY**

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

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## **Constitutional Comments (LM 19/12/14)**

40. The Community Safety Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

## **Financial Comments (KAS 20/12/14)**

41. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 38 of the report.

## **Background Papers**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 'None'.

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

- All.