

30 September 2014**Agenda Item: 9****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR FOR ACCESS 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**Planning for survivors and families affected by disasters

2. During the summer, the County Council-led Humanitarian Assistance Group of the Local Resilience Forum gained partners' approval for two new multi-agency emergency plans. One for 'Survivor Reception Centres' and the other for 'Family and Friend's Reception Centres'.
3. Previously, the ability to support these groups was based on plans to utilise existing 'Rest Centre' and 'Humanitarian Assistance Centre' plans in a flexible way, adapting them to whatever purpose was required. However, it was considered that the needs of survivors and the needs of the family and friends of victims were sufficiently unique that these topics would benefit from specific planning.
4. A Survivor Reception Centre provides secure accommodation for survivors not requiring hospital treatment. It is intended to provide short-term shelter, first aid, documentation, interviews and immediate humanitarian assistance. At the same time, it will provide a place where Nottinghamshire Police can address their investigatory and identification requirements. Because of this, the plan established that these centres will be acquired, established and managed by Nottinghamshire Police.
5. A Family and Friends Reception Centre will be required when a large number of relatives and close friends of people affected by a disaster are likely to be arriving in the affected area. The facility will be established to accommodate people until they are repatriated with, or know the whereabouts of, their loved ones. The plan

covers immediate care and support for including provision of information and advice.

6. Both of these plans include specific guidance on activation, operations, roles and responsibilities, training and exercises of the plan. They both have the objectives to:
 - provide a framework capable of a flexible response to cater for the identified needs of survivors / family and friends, who's loved one(s) has/have been involved in a significant incident in Nottinghamshire;
 - promote a personal, sympathetic and compassionate approach to those affected by such incidents;
 - pre-identify roles and responsibilities of the agencies involved;
 - pre-identify a management structure for these Centres;
 - support a Tactical or Strategic Coordination Group if established,
 - set out the requirements for multi-agency training and exercising of these arrangements
7. It is intended that both plans will be tested as part of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) multi-agency Exercise 'Jarrell' in November 2014. Planning and preparations for this complex and large-scale event is being led by the County Council emergency planning team.

Flood Warden Training

8. On the 5th August, the emergency planning team contributed to a Flood Warden training event, hosted by the Environment Agency, for new flood wardens. The training included attendance from five communities that wish to set up a new Flood Warden scheme. These are South Muskham, Bulcote, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Farndon and Burton Joyce. Topics covered at the event included the roles and responsibilities of Flood Wardens, health and safety, risk assessments, water awareness and a tour of the Environment Agency Control Room and equipment stores.
9. County Council Emergency Planning and Health and Safety representatives assisted in the design and delivery of the training, and positive feedback was received from participants. A further training event is being planned in November as a refresher event for all established flood wardens across the county.

County Emergency Centre Plan

10. The plan for coordinating the County Council's response to an emergency by use of the Emergency Centre (CEC) in County Hall has been revised and refreshed. No fundamental changes were found to be necessary
11. The plan outlines the procedures and facilities in place for working within the CEC and provides an overview of
 - procedures for activating the CEC
 - the CEC management structure

- roles and responsibilities of staff
 - operational arrangements for working within the CEC.
12. The plan has recently been reviewed to take into account changes within NCC and lessons identified from recent incidents. Operational aspects, including technical instructions for using CEC equipment, have been moved into an appendix and it is hoped this will provide a useful guide to staff working in the Centre. Training events have been arranged to accompany the plan.

Safety at Sports Grounds

13. Due in particular to the work of Wendy Harnan-Kajzer, who leads on the management of safety at sports grounds, the emergency planning team has gained the highest marks possible in a recent performance assessment by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA). The assessment gave maximum scores in all ten of the SGSA's assessment criteria, indicating exemplary performance.
14. The final major fixture of this year's season at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground was the One Day International between England and India. On this occasion the match was inspected by a structural engineer colleague from Highways, whose report highlighted no significant safety concerns. This was in line with the emergency planning team's observations at the Test Match earlier in the summer, and the findings of the pre-season annual audit.
15. Over recent weeks the team have assisted two smaller football clubs whose grounds included stands of sufficient size to be regulated under the Fire Safety and Safety at Sports Grounds Regulations 1987. In both cases, over many years, attendance at matches has been far below the capacities of their regulated stands, and so the clubs concerned have considered if they wish to remain regulated.
16. At time of writing, the main stand at the Watnall Road ground of Hucknall Town Football Club continues in regulation. The club have sought the Council's advice on alterations that can be made at the ground so that it no longer contains any stand that requires regulation by the County Council.
17. In Eastwood, the General Safety Certificate for the East and West stands at Coronation Park football ground was surrendered by the certificate holder when the former Eastwood Town Football Club ceased operations in February this year. No certificate has been in place since. In July, the lease for the ground was granted by Broxtowe Borough Council to a new club, Eastwood Community Football Club, who have since been working to get the ground into a fit state to be used. As part of the preliminaries for issuing a new safety certificate, the club asked the County Council to see if the stands still qualified as regulated stands. On the basis of the new measurements and calculations neither of the previously regulated stands at the ground now provides covered accommodation for 500 or more spectators (based on guidance provided by Home Office Circular 97-1988). Therefore, the ground does not now require regulatory control by the County Council.

18. The emergency planning team will now no longer monitor safety at the ground, but does still have powers under section 10 of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 to prohibit admission of spectators in the event of serious safety concerns. Pleasingly, the club have demonstrated a very positive attitude towards safety management, and have inspired confidence in their ability to ensure the ground is safe for use.

Registration and Celebratory Services

Performance

19. The registration service routinely monitors statistical information about the performance of the service. Key observations from the period from April to the end of July this year are as follows.
20. The overall number of marriages and civil partnership ceremonies was 908, which was very similar to the figure of 913 for the same period last year. Within these totals there were variations based mainly on the availability of property. Registration Office weddings in the north of the County were up from 119 to 144, largely due to acquisition of the Gilstrap, whereas in the south the figure dropped from 170 to 117, mainly due to the (temporary) loss of the Hall in West Bridgford. Advance bookings for the County as a whole in 2015 – 2016 are already looking very healthy at 943, considering that the total achieved in 2013 – 2014 was 2,370.
21. The number of new British Citizenship applications has been substantially reduced over the summer months due to the redirection of central government Nationality Case Workers to assist with a substantial backlog of work in HM Passport Office. A phased return to normal duties by mid-September is expected to see output levels of certificates return to normal levels. However, it remains to be seen if the total number of certificates received by local authorities by the end of the financial year will be sufficient to recoup income lost over the summer period.
22. In respect of the most recently introduced non-statutory income generating services, by the end of July there had been 64 Nationality Checking customers, 38 ceremony rehearsal appointments and two living eulogies. These new services are expected to grow in recognition and popularity in the coming months and years.
23. The numbers of births and death registration are not routinely examined on a monthly basis, however during the financial year 2013 to 2014 the services registered 14,284 births and deaths, which was up from 13,911 in 2012 – 2013.

Revised statutory registration fees from 1 September 2014

24. The fees for statutory registration services are set nationally, and include the fees for giving notice of the intention to marry or form a civil partnership, and fees for the related ceremonies when taking place at a Register Office.

25. As reflected each year in the registration fees report to the committee, it is possible that during any year the Registrar General or Home Office may make changes to these fees. This year, following a review scrutinised by HM Treasury, the fees increases have been brought into effect from 1 September 2014. The revised fees are set out in Appendix A to this report. It is anticipated that these will make only a very small contribution to the overall income of the service.

Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013: arrangement for conversion fees

26. During the summer, the Government outlined the fee arrangements for the conversion of civil partnerships to marriage (for those who wish to do so) from 10 December this year. The announcement included the following details:

- For one year, no fee will be charged for those who registered civil partnerships before they had the opportunity to marry (that is those before 29 March 2014). This applies from 10 December 2014 to 9 December 2015.
- Anyone who registered a civil partnership after 29 March 2014, or who registers one in the future and subsequently wants to convert to a marriage, will be required to pay the full fee.
- From 10 December 2015, all same sex couples will be required to pay the full fee for conversion, including those who registered civil partnerships before 29 March 2014.

27. The full fee for conversion at a register office will be £45 and there will be separate fees for those conversions which take place for the housebound (£99) detained (£117) or for 'deathbed' conversions (£15).

28. The government has recognised that local authorities will be performing a function for no fee during the 12 months from 10 December 2014. Therefore, the cost of this implementation is to be met by central government. The mechanism for the transfer of funds to local authorities has yet to be announced.

Update on Registration Accommodation

29. The registration offices serving Eastwood and Hucknall for birth and death registrations are currently in the process of being relocated. The moves are being made to ensure business continuity, to improve customer service and link in better with other registration services.

30. In Eastwood, the service is moving from the Eastwood Health Clinic to the DH Lawrence Heritage Centre. This building is currently an 'Approved Premise' for marriages and civil partnerships, and it is anticipated that the increased footfall from birth and death appointments will increase public awareness of the opportunity to hold ceremonies there. At the same time the service in Hucknall is moving from the 'Under One Roof' facility to Ashfield District Council offices on Watnall Road.

31. In West Bridgford, the registration service has supported Rushcliffe Borough Council's plans to seek Heritage Lottery funding for the restoration and conversion of the Hall in West Bridgford. This is to include the return to building of registration services in spring 2017. The service has been able to make a partnership agreement with Rushcliffe Borough Council, that will pave the way for progressing the Hall project to a point where Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council can make a formal decision regarding future usage of the building.

Other Options Considered

32. Not applicable to this report.

Reasons for Recommendation/s

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

Statutory and Policy Implications

34. 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

35. The increases to statutory registration fees will have a very small positive effect (probably less than £100 per year) on the overall income raised by the registration service.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) It is recommended that the Community Safety Committee notes the content of the report.

PAUL MCKAY

Service Director, Promoting Independence and Public Protection

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Robert Fisher

Group Manager, Emergency Management and Registration

Tel: 0115 977 3681, Email: robert.fisher@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments

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

Financial Comments (KAS 22/09/14)

37. The financial implications are contained within paragraph 35 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.

- Updated plan for coordinating the County Council's response to an emergency by use of the Emergency Centre (CEC).

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.