

05 September 2019**Agenda Item:8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES****UPDATE ON KEY EMERGENCY PLANNING AND REGISTRATION MATTERS****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, and to seek approval for the introduction of the European Union Settlement Scheme service on a cost recovery basis.

Information**Emergency Planning**Emergency Plans

2. The emergency planning team has continued to maintain a comprehensive set of emergency plans arising from an assessment of risks and hazards affecting the County. Some plans are exclusive to County Council services, others are made in collaboration with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners to ensure multi-agency coordination of emergency response. The plans are maintained by means of routine reviews, staff training and various types of simulation exercises. Some plans address specific risks, such as flooding, others are generic for use in any emergency and address common needs such as public information, transportation and accommodation.

UK Terrorist Threat Level

3. At time of writing, the threat level for international terrorism in the UK is at 'Severe,' meaning that an attack is highly likely. This is the second highest level of alert behind 'Critical'. An escalation to the highest level would mean an attack is expected imminently. Consequently, in line with other key agencies, the County Council maintains a specific emergency plan to guide decisions that may need to be taken by Nottinghamshire County Council should the UK Terrorism Threat level be raised to 'Critical'. Officers involved in this work are able to link with Special Branch through the LRF Severe Threats Group and the Risk Advisory Group.

4. The emergency planning team is contributing to preparations for a set of interrelated counter-terrorism response exercises taking place later this year and early next year. In addition, security considerations are embedded within the team's work on safety at sports grounds.

Safety of Sports Grounds – Inspections

5. Satisfactory annual pre-season audit and safety inspections have been completed for the City Ground (Nottingham Forest) and the One-Call Stadium (Mansfield Town Football Club). Both took place on 9th July.
6. The programme of during-performance safety inspections included the final home fixtures of the 2018 – 2019 season for Nottingham Forest and Mansfield Town Football Clubs. The Nottingham Forest game was against Bolton Wanderers on 5th May, and Mansfield Town played Newport County on 12th May. No significant safety issues were found at either match.
7. Satisfactory during-performance inspections were completed at Trent Bridge Cricket Ground prior to and during Cricket World Cup fixtures at the ground.
8. Details of inspections at Southwell Racecourse are given in the following section.

Safety of Sports Grounds – Regulatory Activity

9. The Safety of Sports Grounds Act, 1975, places a responsibility on all local authorities to issue a safety certificate to designated sports grounds and regulated stands, and enforce to its conditions. Regulatory action was taken in November 2018 following identification of shortcomings in the safety culture at senior management level at Southwell Racecourse. This related to how maintenance and development projects had been managed over the preceding months. The outcome of an assessment and consultation process was that the permitted spectator capacity of the racecourse was reduced by 10% from 3,380 to 3,056. The racecourse managers have now completed specific actions required of them and the full capacity has been restored.

Mansfield Town Football Club - Proposed Public Spaces Protection Order

10. Local elected members have been approached, seeking their support for a proposed 'Public Spaces Protection Order' at Mansfield Town Football Club's One Call Stadium. This will assist in preventing crowd disorder and antisocial behaviour by limiting a public right of way through the car park at the ground on match days. Supporting documents outlined why this is a reasonable and proportionate measure which will enhance public safety. As Safety at Sports Grounds falls within the remit of Communities and Place Committee, the Chair of that Committee has been briefed on this topic and has lent his support to the proposal.

The City Ground – Re-development

11. The emergency planning team is now engaged in work to support Nottingham Forest Football Club in work to re-develop the City Ground and surrounding area. The team will monitor the plans as they develop to ensure they adhere fully to Safety and Sports Grounds requirements. Central to the re-development will be the replacement of the current Main Stand (dating from 1964) and improvements to the Trentside area. It is anticipated that, in addition to seating, the new Stand will include a museum, club shop, hospitality lounges, restaurants and

executive boxes. The club are hopeful that building work will commence at the end of the 2019-20 season with first use of new facilities during the 2021/22 season. The work will see The City Ground's capacity rise from 30,000 to 38,000.

Exercises

12. On Tuesday 11th June, an exercise took place to test the off-site emergency response plan for the Misterton Petroleum Storage Depot. The County Council is required to maintain this plan under the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) Regulations, 2015. The scenario for the exercise involved a multi-vehicle crash leading to a large explosion, fatalities, road and school closures and environmental contamination. The exercise brought to light a number of useful lessons regarding road closures, information to the public and access to buildings. This learning will be incorporated in amendments to the plan.
13. The emergency planning team contributed to a Severn Trent Water exercise to test their plans for responding to a major incident, with a specific objective to increase their understanding of key stakeholders needs. The LRF Critical Infrastructure Group took the opportunity to take part and test the LRF Disruption of Water Supplies plan and Vulnerable Peoples Directory. This highlighted some minor areas for improvement.

LRF Cyber Group

14. The County Council's emergency planning team has facilitated the establishment of a new LRF Cyber Resilience Group. The team (as LRF Secretariat) organised and chaired a first meeting of the group on 1st May and a second on 10th July. This has been an interim arrangement to ensure that the group was established and that work was being progressed while a group chair was being identified. Health partners have indicated that they hope to be able to provide a suitable nominee to lead the group in the future.
15. The group have assessed local arrangements against the National Standard for Cyber Incident Preparedness. A very positive overall picture emerged and work has been initiated to make improvements where possible.

REPPIR Regulations 2019

16. Revised Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information (REPPIR) Regulations, 2019, came into effect on 22nd May 2019. The Emergency Planning Team was briefed on these by the Health and Safety Executive and the Office for Nuclear Regulation. At present, we are awaiting an assessment report from the one (non-nuclear) operator in the County that has been identified as falling under REPPIR. The operator has a four-month period in which to complete their assessment and then the County Council has until 21st May 2020 to finalise its' work to comply with the regulations.

Corporate Alert System

17. The Corporate Alert System is designed to inform senior managers of emergencies and business continuity incidents by sending an SMS or voice message to their work mobile phone. Messages are sent using a web-based system called Esendex Echo. The system was introduced in March 2018 and a successful first test took place on Wednesday 4 July 2018. A second test took place on Monday 24 June 2019

18. Eighty senior managers. Include all members of the Risk, Safety & Emergency Management Board, are registered on the system, and here are 104 telephone numbers in total as some people have given consent for personal mobile numbers to be added. Analysis of the results of the recent test indicated that 95 voice messages (91%) and 91 text messages (88%) were received successfully. Reasons for failure of the remaining 9 voice messages and 13 text messages included that staff away on leave or handsets did not receive the message. Each case was checked individually to ensure all contact details on the system remain accurate.

Recent incidents

19. A period of heavy rain led to surface water flooding in parts of the county on 12th and 13th June. Significant highway flooding was experienced parts of Gedling, Newark and Sherwood, and Rushcliffe, and there was property flooding in Gedling and in Rushcliffe. The emergency planning Duty Officer responded to calls during the evening of 12th June and was joined by two other team members during the early hours of 13th June. They participated in multi-agency telephone conferences led by Nottinghamshire Police that allowed agencies to highlight issues and agree response requirements. It was not necessary to activate Local Resilience Forum major emergency processes on this occasion.
20. Trained community volunteers in Woodborough, Southwell and Thurgarton activated Flood Signage and Road Closure schemes to close roads where specific trigger points had been reached and the roads had become dangerous. Similar schemes currently established in Bleasby, Collingham and South Muskham were not required on this occasion, but elsewhere flood water and the emergency services closed roads in Arnold, Lambley and Coddington.
21. By coincidence, the emergency planning team (joined by ViaEM and Fire Service colleagues) had delivered a refresher training session and community briefing in Woodborough 48 hours before the scheme was used to close roads there.

Registration and Celebratory Services

Law Commission Review on Marriage Reform

22. The current legislation covering civil marriage is expected to change in the coming years, subject to the outcome of a national consultation and the availability of parliamentary time. The Government announced a review of civil marriage legislation in 2018 and this has begun with the Law Commission publishing the principles and scope for a public consultation. Once this has been completed they will make recommendations to the Government on how the law can be reformed. The aim of the review is to provide couples with greater choice, within a simple, fair and consistent legal structure that fits the needs of all couples and religious faiths.
23. The review will look at legal preliminaries, the content of a wedding ceremony, where weddings can take place, who can solemnize a marriage and how marriages should be registered. The Commission will also consider options for how marriage law could be extended to non-religious belief groups. The Government has said that a separate piece of work will explore what can be done to deliver interim reform within the existing system for certain civil ceremonies. In particular, the Government intends to consider if the regulations

governing approved premises can be reformed to allow outdoor locations for civil ceremonies, whilst maintaining the requirement that venues be seemly and dignified.

Wedding Planner

24. The Registration Service is looking to improve services for wedding customers through the introduction of an online ceremony planner. The public will benefit as the online element of the planner will meet increasing demand for contact outside normal working hours. Payments and ceremony preferences will all be possible at the customers preferred time, knowing that they will get instant acknowledgement that the request has been processed. It is believed that use of planner will generate more visits to the Nottinghamshire County Council website from people in our local communities but also outside and provide greater exposure of the range of services we offer
25. Frontline registration staff will be able to direct customers to a single point of access, where a variety of services can be provided, rather than through multiple paper copies of documents, emails and website links. The planner will enable all registration staff to increase productivity by focussing more time on statutory duties and for marketing the additional services on offer.

75th Anniversary of VE Day

26. Registration Managers have taken steps to address the impact on wedding bookings arising from the government's announcement that the early May bank holiday in 2020 will move from Monday 4th May to Friday 8th May, to mark the 75th anniversary of V.E. Day. Some weddings had already been booked on the dates affected. There were couples who had booked for the Bank Holiday that won't be one now, and others who have booked for the Friday not expecting that it would become a Bank Holiday. Customers have been understanding of the change, and appreciative of registration service help to re-arrange ceremonies.

European Union Settlement Scheme

27. The EU settlement Scheme (EUSS) enables European Economic Area and Swiss citizens living in the UK, and their family members, to obtain the UK immigration status they will require to live, work and study in the UK after the 30th June 2021 (or after 31st December 2020 if there is a no-deal exit from the EU).
28. The EUSS has been available to the public since 30th March 2019 and a growing number of local authority registration services are offering the service (normally on a cost-recovery basis if £14 per appointment. The Home Office is encouraging more authorities to become involved, as there is a large number of the foreign workers that have yet to apply for settled or pre-settled status. A EUSS appointment will be a 15 minute interview with a registrar or registration support officer. In order to offer the service it will be necessary to purchase handheld devices at a cost of £170 each, and have WIFI or 3G mobile data available. It is anticipated that local authorities will draw on Brexit funding made available by the government to cover the start-up costs for the service. Based on the experience of local authorities already offering this service, it is anticipated that demand will be modest and will be accommodated within current registration staffing resources.
29. The Registration Management Team recommends that the Committee approves the introduction of the EUSS service, on a cost recovery basis, charging £14 per appointment.

Civil Partnerships for opposite sex couples

30. The Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration Etc.) Act, which received Royal Assent on 26 March 2019, contained provisions for regulations to be made to extend eligibility for forming a civil partnership to opposite sex couples. The registration service is now accepting bookings for these, however couple are made aware that the implementation date for the legislation has not yet been confirmed. Based on the current position, the earliest date for giving a notice of the intended formation of a civil partnership is 31 December 2019, with formation able to take place 29 days later.
31. It is possible that the implementation date could be earlier. This means that notices can be given ahead of 31 December, but any bookings taken for earlier dates are provisional, and cannot be guaranteed and will be subject to the terms and conditions of our booking policy. A civil partnership does not require a ceremony and couples can choose to simply sign the schedule in front of two qualified witnesses.

Brochure and Marketing

32. The registration team have been working with the County Council's digital team to produce a new registration service brochure to promote our services to audiences across the Midlands area. This contributes to the County Council's work to promote Nottinghamshire as a destination. Advertising space is being sold to offset the costs of the brochure production. The brochure will be distributed in our offices, at our wedding fayres, to relevant local businesses and libraries. A pdf version which will also go on to our website.
33. It has been recognised that in order to develop our service, further work is required on the current website for the service. This work is in its infancy but managers are working Communications and Marketing colleagues to rebuild the registration webpages and create new opportunity for more commercial activity and interaction with customers.

Other Options Considered

34. None

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

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

Statutory and Policy Implications

36. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment 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

37. There are no financial implications for Emergency Planning or Registration budgets as the costs associated with provision of the European Union Settlement Scheme will be found from the Brexit-specific funding provided to the County Council by central government. Also, based on the experience of other local authorities, it is anticipated that the service will be accommodated within current staffing resources.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) Ratifies the updates given regarding key Emergency Planning and Registration matters;
- 2) Approves the introduction of the European Union Settlement Scheme service, on a cost recovery basis, charging £14 per appointment.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact: Robert Fisher, Group Manager for Emergency Planning and Registration

Constitutional Comments (SLB - 29/07/2019)

38. Communities and Place Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report

Financial Comments (SES - 21/08/2019)

39. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 37 of the report. EU Exit funding for local government totalling £175,000 has been received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

Background Papers and Published Documents

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 Divisions and Members Affected

- All