

15 December 2021**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES****UPDATE ON KEY EMERGENCY PLANNING MATTERS****Purpose of the Report**

1. To update the Committee on recent key activities and events in the work of the Emergency Planning Team.

Information

2. The County Council's emergency planning team reports to the Group Manager, Emergency Planning and Registration, and comprises two Team Managers plus six emergency planning officer positions. Recent successful recruitments have filled previous vacancies for two permanent positions, however it has not yet been possible to attract suitable applicants to appoint to two fixed-term positions that have arisen from a period of maternity leave and from Covid-19 and LRF related funding. This includes reimbursement of the staffing costs from the release of one member of the team for Resilience Review work (see paragraph 6 below). As a consequence, it has not been possible for the team to fulfil all of the non-critical objectives in its Service Plan for the year.
3. The team has continued to ensure that all statutory responsibilities and critical commitment to the Local Resilience Forum are fulfilled. Support for meetings of County Council's Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board (RSEMB) and departmental RSEM Groups has been maintained, as well as support to District and Borough Councils under the long-standing Service Level Agreement for emergency planning services.

Covid-19 – Supporting the work of the County Council and Local Resilience Forum

4. The team has continued to support the County Council and Local Resilience Forum (LRF) responses to the Covid-19 pandemic, as previously reported. In particular, this has included facilitation of meetings of the LRF 'Tactical Coordinating Group' and providing support to the chair of this Group. Also, an officer has supported the County Councils contributions to preparations for an LRF Covid-19 Recovery Coordinating Group. Another officer has facilitated meetings of the LRF Covid-19 Humanitarian Assistance Group, supporting the chair and sub-groups regarding Community Hubs and Volunteer Co-ordination.
5. Support for education has included preparation of a template Covid-19 Outbreak Management Plan for schools. The template details the actions that schools should take if notified (through an official channel) of an outbreak in the school or nearby. The actions are designed to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus and include measures to respond to any newly emerging variant of concern. The template recognises that the impacts of missed education during the pandemic are also severe, and so schools are encouraged to carefully manage the impact on

staff, governors, visitors and volunteers. The template notes that the benefits from managing transmission should be weighed against any potential detrimental effects on education. Control measures described in the template include testing, face coverings, shielding, contact tracing and attendance restrictions. There are sections also on pupil and staff wellbeing and support. The emergency planning team will provide ongoing support and updates to the template as national restrictions and guidance change.

Local Resilience Forum Funding Pilot

6. As previously reported, as part of The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy, the Government is developing a National Resilience Strategy. One member of the emergency planning team has been released to participate in the LRF's part in this work. The outcomes of the pilots are expected to lead to strengthened roles and responsibilities of Local Resilience Forums.
7. The government has approved the LRF programme funding for the 2021-22 financial year, with the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LRF receiving £200,097. The purpose of the funding is to support LRFs to build core strategic capacity and capability and to take an active role in developing and delivering the national priorities set out in the Integrated Review. Government funding for the 'capability development' part of the LRF's allocation is £80,000, and this is being used to purchase equipment to facilitate hybrid multi-agency meetings and to commission the development of a series of training animations for inclusion in new LRF e-learning modules.
8. The Government's call for evidence on the development of a National Resilience Strategy included a set of 90 questions. These were based on the themes of risk and resilience; responsibilities and accountability; partnerships; community; investment; and resilience in an interconnected world. The LRF's response was submitted on Monday 27 September, following approval by the chair of the Resilience Working Group and the Chair of the LRF. A similar submission was made by the County Council emergency planning team. It is envisaged the Government will publish a response to the call for evidence by the end of 2021, which is expected to include an outline of the future steps the Government intends to take.

Emergency Plans

9. A review of County Council's Emergency Centre Plan is underway and will embrace hybrid and remote working to include the concept of a virtual operations centre. Previously, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and the advent of technology for virtual meetings (such as MS Teams), the County Council's part in a major emergency response was coordinated from the physical Control Centre in the Lower Ground Floor at County Hall. In future, it is anticipated that (normally) it will not be necessary for the management team to be co-located. At the same time, consideration is being given to planning for national or local power outages that would compromise the viability of virtual meetings.
10. In respect of reservoir emergency plans, a new ministerial directive was issued earlier this year following an independent review into the Toddbrook Reservoir Incident in Derbyshire in 2019. Under the Flood Plan (Reservoirs Emergency Planning) Direction 2021, it is now a legal requirement for the reservoir undertakers of registered reservoirs to have on-site flood plans in place by April 2022. To fulfil this statutory responsibility the emergency planning team is working to develop draft plans already in place for the County Council owned reservoirs at Mill Lakes, Bestwood Country Park, and Rufford Lake at Rufford Abbey Country Park. This work is being progressed in partnership with the designated supervising engineer, the commissioning team Group Manager, health and safety colleagues, Gedling Borough Council, and Parkwood Leisure operational staff.

Winter / Cold Weather Planning and Preparedness

11. November saw the annual start of the Cold Weather Alert Service, provided by the Met Office in collaboration with the Department of Health. This runs until the end of March each year. The emergency planning team receives these alerts and passes them on to relevant teams across all departments. There are 5 alert levels:
- Level 0 – All year round planning
 - Level 1 – Winter preparedness and action - This is the permanent level from 1st November until the end of March, unless the Met Office issue an alert to raise it.
 - Level 2 – Severe winter weather is forecast - Met Office are forecasting a 60% chance of severe winter weather, which as defined by forecasts of temperatures of 2°C or less for at least 48 hours, and/or snow and ice.
 - Level 3 – Severe weather action - Triggered as soon as the weather in level 2 actually happens.
 - Level 4 – National emergency - Emergency response and will be declared by central government in the event of prolonged severe winter weather.
12. From the start of November until the end of March the UK is always at least at Level 1. Should the alert level be raised then the Emergency Planning team will forward the details of the alert to the people on our cold weather alert circulation list. The government's Cold Weather Plan for England, provides information on severe cold weather planning and can be accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cold-weather-plan-cwp-for-england>.
13. The emergency planning team has also completed an annual review of the 4x4 Plan that will source vehicles capable of driving safely in icy conditions and snow. There are fewer County Council vehicles available for this purpose this year, and so there is now a greater reliance on the voluntary agencies that are part of this plan.

Flood Response Planning

14. Early preparations have begun for a major flood exercise to take place in 2022 as part of a wider national event. The overarching objective for FloodEx 22 is for LRFs to validate their multi-agency flood plans and work through lessons learnt from recent flooding events. Locally, the event will combine the East Midlands 'TrentEx' (last staged in 2018), 'CoastEx' for East Coast flooding and the next in the series of 'Diamond' exercises that have been run in Nottinghamshire at (normally) three-yearly intervals for the past decade and a half. The whole exercise could involve up to 18 LRFs in total, with the intention to run regional coordinating groups as part of the event.
15. Recent flood events in Europe have shown that there can be less time to respond to extreme weather events than previously thought, prepared for and exercised. While it is not proposed to make FloodEx 22 an extreme event the LRF can recommend scenario challenges locally with an opportunity to put incident responders and decision makers under exercise stress.
16. In recent flood response preparations, County Council emergency planning staff joined with colleagues from the Environment Agency and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to deliver training to new Flood Wardens in Burton Joyce and Stoke Bardolph. The session included presentations on the core principles of being a Flood Warden, plus roles and responsibilities, and actions to take before, during and after a flood. Particular emphasis was given to hazards and risks faced in flooding emergencies, and the key principles of water safety.

17. The team has continued to support existing Community Flood Signage and Road Closure Schemes, and to facilitate the establishment of new schemes. Signage scheme training has been delivered in Sutton Bonington, and site visits have been made to Colston Bassett in the development of schemes for these communities.
18. Members of the team contributed to the review and LRF approval process of the Bassetlaw LRF Local Flood Response Plan. The Local Flood Response Plans adds local details to the wider Nottingham and Nottinghamshire LRF Flood Response Plan, and gives an overview of the flood risk in the communities that are at risk of flooding, plus details of critical infrastructure and vulnerable people in the area. Improvements include:
- Formatting and accessibility changes to make the plan more practical to use.
 - Improvements and updates to mapping, including use of the latest models to outline areas most likely to be affected by flooding.
 - Data updates and improvements, including details for rest centres, welfare facilities, flood warning, community provisions, historical risk, plus access to and egress from affected areas.

Incidents

19. During September, County Council services were only minimally affected by the issues seen in national commercial fuel supply. Across the UK, the immediate demand for fuel outstripped the short-term supply chain capacity, and so there were shortages at filling station forecourts. The 'Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board' convened to coordinate the County Council's response, and an LRF Tactical Coordination Group was activated to manage the local multi-agency response. Generally County Council services that store fuel for daily use had sufficient supply to avoid disruption to their schedules. The concern for many services was around staff getting to work to operate those vehicles and for staff delivering services through the use of their own vehicles.
20. As part of their business continuity arrangements, many services have an arrangement in place with Via EM to access fuel during a disruption. The RSEMB was ready to agree prioritisation of support should this have been required, and there was recognition that further measures would be required if fuel supply issues had persisted for a longer period. Under these circumstances, it was expected that national contingency plans (not required for this incident) would have been activated to enable critical public services to access fuel from priority sites.

Safety of Sports Grounds – SGSA Audit

21. The Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 places a responsibility on all local authorities to issue a safety certificate to designated sports grounds and enforce its conditions to ensure the reasonable safety of spectators. Under the provisions of Section 13 of the Football Spectators Act 1989, the Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) reviews how local authorities fulfil their functions. As part of this, the SGSA carries out audits that inform their level of involvement with individual local authorities and the football clubs they regulate under the Act. The recent audit of Nottinghamshire County Council covered nine key areas of performance.
- Compliance with actions from previous audit
 - Safe capacity
 - SAG governance and performance
 - Safety certification
 - Monitoring

- Enforcement
- Training and expertise
- Business continuity and resilience planning
- Confidence in LA discharge of duties and safety culture

22. The audit outcome was that a maximum score was awarded in eight of the nine areas of inspection and one point only was lost in respect of 'Safety Certification'. The overall outcome is expressed as a Risk Rating score, with 'High Risk' being 0 - 65, 'Medium Risk' 66 - 89, and 'Low Risk' being 90+. The County Council's overall score was 97 out of 100.

23. Since the last update to the Committee, Safety Advisory Group meetings have taken place for both Nottingham Forest Football Club and Mansfield Town Football Club, and a Special Safety Certificate was issued to Mansfield Town for a fireworks display.

Other Options Considered

24. The report provides an update on the work of the emergency planning team, which addresses statutory requirements on the County Council. Prioritisation of the work of the team is based on assessment of the risk of major emergencies.

Reason for Recommendations

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

Statutory and Policy Implications

26. 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee notes the information contained in the report and,

- 1) Commends the work undertaken by the emergency planning team, as detailed in the report;
- 2) Agrees to receive further updates on key activities of the team.

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Service Director, Place and Communities

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

Constitutional Comments [RHC 24/11/2021]

27. Communities Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments [RWK 22/11/2021]

28. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- SGSA Local Authority Multiple Grounds Audit Report, September 2021.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

