

Emergency Planning Shared Service Joint Committee – Rotherham and Sheffield

Monday 21 March 2016

Rotherham Town Hall

Purpose of paper:

To provide the Joint Committee with a general update on key issues or work streams affecting the EPSS.

Key Issues:

1. South Yorkshire Community Risk Register (SYCRR)

Throughout 2015 the EPSS, along with other South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners has produced an updated SYCRR, this was ratified in draft by the LRF in June and following some minor amendments subsequently published as an endorsed version. No significant changes were noted, meaning planning remains in line with current risk and threat assessment.

2. Off-site Reservoir Planning (inc Reservoir Grant)

Under DEFRA criteria in relation to reservoir inundation, nine reservoirs within the Sheffield boundary have to have their own off site Emergency Plan in place, detailing actions to be put in place should a reservoir be compromised; this includes a communications strategy for warning and informing households within the inundation zone. SCC received a grant to develop these plans, and therefore meet this criterion. This plan was re-drafted earlier this year, including consultation with LRF Business Partners and “signed off” by the LRF Business Management Group in January 2016. EPSS continue to work with SCC communications team to deliver an appropriate communications strategy to households within the inundation zone.

3. Business Continuity Management

Maintaining enthusiasm and engagement in a corporate Business Continuity Programme often presents challenges for many organisations, notwithstanding additional pressures placed on organisations in the changing economic climate. The EPSS has, over recent years facilitated the use of an electronic tool to assist in the management of Business Continuity; with varying levels of success across both councils.

Not detracting from the duty under the Civil Contingencies Act the council has a responsibility to maintain up to date Business Continuity plans to ensure it can continue to exercise its functions in the event of a disruption occurring. Realistically the existence of robust Business Continuity Plans across both councils is at present sporadic; this has been the subject of a recent internal audit within RMBC. Through discussion at both council strategic resilience management groups, it has been agreed to revisit the corporate approach, and a preferred model for each authority has been presented to the respective strategic resilience groups, awaiting further discussion with respective leads.

4. Emergency Operations Room (EOR) Staffing numbers

When determining the minimum numbers of staffing required fulfilling each role within both council Emergency Operations Rooms and Directorate or Portfolio control rooms, a general rule of thumb has been applied in suggesting that as a minimum 12 officers should be pre-identified, trained and exercised for each specific role. This figure was arrived at, based on one

officer fulfilling a six hour shift (good practice nationally suggests this is appropriate), over a 24 hour period. 12 officers would give three days cover, assuming no staff absence or unavailability (realistically of course there would be) to be used on a rotational basis.

Current levels of resilience for the different roles are variable and continue to be based predominantly on a culture of volunteering; this is to be a key feature within the forthcoming action plan, and further discussions with HR departments to ensue.

5. Protests and Marches

Under current legislation, authorities cannot ban demonstrations or marches. Over the last couple of years, large scale public protests and demonstrations have become an increased work stream for the EPSS, working with South Yorkshire Police and other partners to mitigate the impact try to ensure any marches or protests are as peaceful as possible and maintain “business as usual” across the town or city. This of course does take resources away from core resilience business.

To date, since the beginning of the 2014, across both authorities the EPSS (coordinating wider council services) have been engaged with South Yorkshire Police on planning and responding to fourteen, averaging one every eight weeks, with no known indication to suggest these will decrease.

6. Human infectious Disease Planning; Pandemic Influenza

During April 2015, a regional multi-agency exercise aimed as testing the South Yorkshire LRF Pandemic Influenza Plan, and supporting Local Authority plans was held. The outcome of which documented in both internal and external debriefs that identified a number of areas to be progressed. For both authorities, these largely centred around similar issues, better integration of the changing health architecture, separation and clarity of roles between the council corporate business continuity (specifically for pandemic influenza) and public health response plans and increased mass vaccination and excess death planning; to build on existing frameworks.

These work streams been underway, resulting in separation of corporate and public health response plans (ratified at both strategic resilience management groups); excess death and mass vaccination planning continue.

7. Community Resilience – Kelham Island pilot

SY LRF commissioned a task and finish group to review community resilience in an urban area; Kelham Island in Sheffield. This group consists of representatives of the Emergency Services, Environment Agency, EPSS and Kelham Island Community Alliance (KICA).

The main aim of this pilot was to *consider and recommend a strategy to direct and coordinate future objectives in ensuring South Yorkshire’s communities harness local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of emergency responders.* There are a number of complimentary objectives of this pilot, including determining how residents and businesses can prepare themselves, how to help others in an emergency, working together after an emergency and assisting in the development of a community resilience plan.

In realising these aims, a number of significant milestones have been achieved to date and these include, well attended community event which raised the profile and concept of community resilience and informed people of local risks, through increased awareness; raised the community capacity of the local community group (KICA) from 3 members to 30 and enabled KICA to organise regular meetings and other community events through signposting to other Council resources.

This task and finish group is expected to report back to the LRF meeting in November 2016, making recommendations that can then be applied in other urban areas to increase community resilience, this is supported by academic evaluation of the project to assist the LRF decision making process.

8. Resilience and Emergency Plans

Under the Civil Contingencies Act, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to put in place Emergency Plans specifically aimed at preventing, reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of emergencies in both the response and recovery phase. This duty includes a responsibility to provide training for key staff, provision for exercising the plan and arrangements to ensure the plan is reviewed periodically.

Since early 2015, the EPSS has been fundamental in the production or updating of the following plans:

- RMBC Severe Winter Weather Plan – Amendment 1 (February 2015)
- Medico Legal Centre (MLC) Transfer Plan (Emergency Mortuary) – Version 1.2 (March 2015)
- SCC Generic Emergency Response & Recovery Directory (July 2015)
- RMBC Generic Emergency Response & Recovery Directory – Amendment 3 (Aug 2015) * *additional issue given number of changes required*
- SCC City Centre Evacuation Plan - Version 2.3 (August 2015)
- RMBC Town Centre Evacuation Plan – Version 3.1 (August 2015)
- RMBC Severe Winter Weather Plan – Amendment 2 (Nov 2015)
- SCC Severe Winter Weather Plan – Amendment 2 (Nov 15)
- RMBC Generic Emergency Response & Recovery Directory – Amendment 4 (Nov 2016)
- SY Multi Agency Off site reservoir plan (Jan 2016)
- SCC Generic Emergency Response & Recovery Directory – amendment 2 (Feb 2016)

In addition to the completed plans as outlined above, the team are also preparing for the dissemination of newly refreshed plans as below:

- RMBC Borough Emergency Plan and SCC Major Incident Plan – a complete revision of each, to be more streamlined and focused whilst incorporating a more proportionate activation process
- Local Authority Flu Plans (RMBC and SCC) – to be disseminated March 2016

Prior to 2015, these plans in the main, had an annual review and update cycle, however given changes to available resources these have been adjusted in many cases and are now more reflective of the frequency of risk review as prescribed by the SY Local Resilience Forum risk assessment process; in some instances every three years. A timetable is in place and monitored via the EPSS, however given the protracted nature of some of these timescales now, the contacts details have been extrapolated and form a standalone document to all resilience plans (for each council) and this is to be updated on a six monthly basis (and benchmarked as part of the units performance targets).

9. Training and Exercising

Since the last meeting a number of training sessions have been delivered by the EPSS, a calendar of which is retained within service, much of which aimed at our Forward Liaison Officers (established and newly recruited), Emergency Liaison Officers, Operations Room Managers and other Directorate or Portfolio control room staff specific; a training needs analysis is to be sent out in the new financial year, to ascertain any further training needs of response staff; the outcome of which to be presented to respective resilience groups for

consideration, including any potential cost implications.

As well as participating within multi-agency exercises, across both authorities, annual corporate exercises have been run; Exercise Lodge (June 2015) within Rotherham MBC and Exercise Dusk (October 2015) within Sheffield, debriefs have been carried out following both exercises and recommendations, along with outcomes reported to respective strategic resilience groups. Additionally, Exercise Advent, a communications call out exercise was carried out in December 2015 within Rotherham MBC, to determine if, based on staff identified within the Borough Emergency Plan, a corporate emergency planning response could be initiated; largely this was successful, again debrief comments being reported to the strategic resilience group. It is proposed that exercises of this nature, be carried out on a frequent basis going forward across both councils to monitor out ability to respond corporately. A register of participation is maintained within the EPSS.

10. Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Matters

Prominent issues currently on the LRF agenda include:

- Fires at Waste Sites (particularly unregulated sites) continues to be an issue for the Fire Service and other partners, not only in tackling any blaze, but dealing with the health and other consequences that may subsequently arise. The EPSS is working with partner agencies to expedite an acceptable response.
- Inter-agency communications at Gold (strategic) level are being reviewed and options explored the impact within the authority to be determined once a course of action agreed.
- East coast tidal inundation, this issue was raised some time ago, however more engagement required with Humber LRF (facilitated by DCLG), some remodelling and scoping required to truly understand the expectations being placed on South Yorkshire; this could be upward of 80,000 evacuees inwardly displaced to our region.
- Capacity within power industries and risk of prolonged power outage – this is suggested to be an emerging risk as the country's reserve capacity shrinks (this principle being the basis of the SCC Corporate Exercise during 2015) . This is assessed nationally as very high, although there isn't an increase in likelihood, the consequences of such an event could be significant.

Conclusion:

The service continues to be an active member of the Local Resilience Forum, and associated subgroups, contributing to the vast achievements across multi agency partners under the LRF umbrella. Individually within the authorities, a number of achievements continue to be made, albeit given recent pressures, some actions have been deferred to feature as a priority for 16/17.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note the content of the report, and ensure continues support.