

Briefing Paper

Emergency Planning Shared Service Joint Committee – Rotherham and Sheffield

10 December 2013

Rotherham Town Hall

Purpose of paper:

To provide Members with a general update on key issues affecting the development of the EPSS in 2013/14 and beyond

Background information:

See next section

Key issues:

- **Revision of the Borough Emergency Plan (RMBC) and Major Incident Plan (SCC)** – Following the refresh of the plans in June 2012, the Shared Service has conducted a further review of both to identify any areas for improvement. Whilst both are sound documents some areas for development were identified which can only enhance their value as sources of guidance for both authorities. In addition, both authorities have undergone structural changes in recent months and necessitated a further refresh of the plans to take note of these changes, now that they are finalised. The revised Borough Emergency Plan has been issued and the Major Incident Plan is about to be re-issued. The major restructuring process in SCC has rendered the changes to the plan more complex, hence the delay in finalising the new draft. .
- **The Shared Service concept** - There continues to be little appetite elsewhere to take forward the wider development of this concept at this time.
- **Emergency Mortuary (EM) Arrangements** – Local authorities have the statutory duty to provide EM facilities in the event of a major incident resulting in a large number of fatalities that the normal day-to-day arrangements for such matters cannot deal with for capacity and other reasons. Members will be aware that the Shared Service is leading the LRF's Task & Finish Group taking forward this work. In essence, the draft plan has three components:

- Plan A – A temporary expansion of the capacity of the Medico Legal Centre (MLC) Public Mortuary in Sheffield to act as the primary EM site. The MLC provides an effective and VFM option to deliver an EM for a significant number of bodies and is acknowledged as both providing better facilities and being substantially less expensive than using an option based on demountable structures. Much progress has been made on developing this issue, although some outstanding issues remain to be resolved with both the police and NHS.
- Plan B – In the eventuality that the MLC is either unavailable or provides insufficient capacity, a purpose built demountable site on an alternative site will be constructed. Currently, discussions are being arranged with the procurement sections of all four South Yorkshire authorities to determine the contractor selection process. Since the last meeting, further potential sites have been identified and these will be assessed by both Coroners next week.
- Plan C – In an incident involving 300 to 600 bodies, the National Emergency Mortuary Arrangements (NEMA) will be instigated. NEMA is a government measure to supply a large demountable EM to cover such incidents; however, the floor plans for these structures are so large that, presently, South Yorkshire has only identified one suitable site.
- Whilst the planning is well advanced there are a number of ancillary and complementary issues that will require further detailed work. Although there is still much to do, we are confident that we have robust plans in place to deal effectively with this responsibility.
- **Reservoir Grant** – Members will be aware from previous reports that, under new DEFRA criteria in relation to Reservoir Plans, nine reservoirs in Sheffield now have to have their own site-specific Emergency Plan. This would detail actions to be put in place following a reservoir being compromised and SCC received a grant to meet this criterion. An update on the current position is as follows:
 - The plan has been finalised following multi-agency consultation with LRF and other partners
 - The Shared Service has commissioned the Emergency Planning College to develop a major, multi-agency exercise to validate the plan and this had been scheduled for October 2013. Unfortunately, due to industrial action in the Fire Service, this and other exercises had to be postponed. It has now been re-scheduled for February 2014.

➤ The development of a comprehensive Warning & Informing strategy to inform all members of the public at potential risk from a reservoir inundation is ongoing.

- **Transfer of Public Health functions to local government** – Public Health Teams transferred into both authorities in April 2013. As both authorities took different approaches as to how this process was managed, there have been some differences in approach adopted within each authority to public health issues. However, at this time, no significant issues have been identified, albeit we are still monitoring the integration process.

- **Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Matters**

- Members will be aware that the LRF underwent a change to its structure some 18 months ago. At that time, the Shared Service raises concerns over the support provided to maintain an efficient and effective structure and a paper was supplied to that effect by the Shared Service manager. This paper has been resurrected and is up for further discussion, with the four Local Authority Chief Executives having advocated an enhanced secretariat role within the LRF. If accepted by the other LRF members, this will result in some additional costs to the core LRF members (including RMBC & SCC) but should lead to a better performing LRF.

- The LRF review did not address the Community Resilience issue at a strategic level. However, following representations from several organisations, including the Shared Service, it has now been accepted as part of the Strategic Overview and a business plan objective is to be developed to fulfil this requirement. Whilst it is early days, this should lead to a more enhanced and coordinated approach across South Yorkshire.

Conclusion:

Notwithstanding budgetary restrictions, the Shared Service concept is still providing a good level of service to both authorities and is engaged in a number of areas to support the civil contingencies provision of both authorities.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note this report.