

Briefing Paper

Emergency Planning Shared Service Joint Committee – Rotherham and Sheffield

General Issues Update

20 January 2015

Rotherham Town Hall

Purpose of paper: To provide Members with a general update on key issues affecting the development of the EPSS in 2014/15 and beyond

Key issues:

- **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. The Shared Service has led the LRF’s Task & Finish Group taking forward this work which has been a complex and difficult task with a number of stakeholders with divergent views. Some elements of it were exercised as part of Exercise Rutland in 2014, which was a ‘live’ multi-agency exercise involving some 200 participants based on a reservoir inundation scenario.

The plan has now been finalised and ‘signed off by both Coroners for South Yorkshire and the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). In essence, the 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
- Plan B - 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 in Doncaster

- Plan C. In the eventuality that neither the MLC nor NEMA is available a purpose built demountable site will be constructed. Two sites have been identified – one in Doncaster and one in Barnsley. It has been agreed to adopt an emergency waiver procedure for assigning a contractor to fulfil the requirement.
- **Reservoir Grant** –Under new DEFRA criteria in relation to reservoir inundation, nine reservoirs in Sheffield have to have their own off site 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 was re-drafted as part of the lessons learnt in Exercise Rutland, as mentioned above. This plan has been formally consulted with partners again and it is hoped that it will be ‘signed’ off by the LRF’s Business Management Group on 14 January 2015.
 - The dissemination of a comprehensive Warning & Informing strategy to inform all members of the public at potential risk from a reservoir inundation will commence in the near future
- **Business Continuity Management** – Business Continuity arrangements are continuously updated and migrated to BCMShared. In particular, significant work has been undertaken in SCC, following some IT difficulties in accessing BCMShared, and working with a small group from Facilities Management on the BCM arrangements for the major changes to the council’s accommodation due this year.
- **Staffing matters** – Since the establishment of the service, public sector funding cuts have hit both authorities hard and, given that the major part of the budget is on salaries and ‘on costs’, has resulted in significantly reduced EPSS staffing resources. Appendix A shows the establishment in 2011 and Appendix B the present situation. This has undoubtedly reduced its overall capacity and it is imperative that the service works to a strict prioritisation program to deliver the ‘essentials’ and, where possible, the ‘desirables’.

The Emergency Safety Manager has recognised that a smaller unit requires a new structure and the recent voluntary departure of the Senior Emergency Planning Officer has provided the opportunity to restructure the service as outlined in Appendix C:

- The Senior Business Continuity Officer post has been re-designated Senior Resilience Officer and will become the formal deputy to the Manager
- This will allow the Manager to be more strategically focussed on

future development; multi-agency partnerships and budgetary issues etc.

- The Senior Resilience Officer will be tactical and internally focussed on co-ordination, implementation and performance
- The Senior Emergency Planning Officer post is being replaced by a full time Resilience Officer post
- The current Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer posts have been re-designated as Resilience Officer posts to provide greater flexibility
- The role of the Technical Co-ordinator will be reviewed
- **Internal Governance Arrangements** - In recognition of diminishing resources across SCC, the formerly separate Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management groups were amalgamated in October 2012 to ensure a holistic approach was taken to resilience issues. Unfortunately, the new Corporate Resilience Management Group (CRMG) has not delivered the desired outcomes, particularly in relation to membership and, especially, senior representation. Accordingly, a new Senior Resilience Management Team (SRMT) has been established to provide the appropriate senior engagement, management and 'ownership' of resilience issues, both corporately and in portfolios. In essence, the SRMT will be:
 - Chaired by the Director of Capital & Major Projects
 - Provide Director level membership for each Portfolio, as well as representing the contracted services
 - Report to EMT on strategic issues
 - Provide direction to the CRMG and any other resilience groups.

This change was based on somewhat similar arrangements in place in RMBC, which will now be updated to be in line with the new SCC arrangements. It is believed that this reorganisation of structures will provide a more flexible and focussed approach to resilience issues for both councils and, in particular, form the basis for developing the future engagement of senior staff with resilience issues.

- **Training & Exercising** - Under the Civil Contingencies Act, both councils are required to have in place an effective emergency planning response, including emergency and business continuity plans. With this in mind, and recognising the changing dynamics of the councils and the Emergency Planning Shared Service, an annual programme of training and exercising is to be embedded which will be endorsed by

senior management teams. This will include a recommendation that Portfolio's and Directorates mandate attendance at such events.

• Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Matters)

- The LRF has undergone a favourable Peer Review process by Nottinghamshire's LRF against the criteria in the Act and Cabinet Office guidance. The LRF's Business Management Group is progressing the areas identified as warranting further development
- 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 work has been further developed and the LRF will shortly advertise for a part-time LRF Coordinator's post to 'manage' the LRFs business, as the SY Police officer currently undertaking this role will be retiring in the near future and his post will not be replaced. This new post will result in both councils, along with other partners, incurring some additional costs.
- The LRF has now addressed the Community Resilience issue at a strategic level and it has part of the Strategic Overview. A pilot project on two sites has commenced in 2015 and one of them is in Sheffield.

Conclusion:

The Shared Service concept is still providing a good level of service to both authorities, particularly given the reduced size of the service, and is engaged in a number of areas to support the civil contingencies provision of both authorities, as well as the wider LRF multi-agency partnership.

Recommendations:

Members are asked to note this report.