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NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Community Safety Committee

RISK REVIEW 2017

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 06 October 2017

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the review of new and existing site specific information on operational risks within Nottinghamshire.

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 In 2012, the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CRFA) in partnership with the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published operational guidance for fire and rescue services (FRS) for operational risk information. The availability of relevant and timely information is recognised as critical to the successful management of all operational incidents attended by any FRS.

1.2 Operational risk information provides robust yet flexible guidance on developing and maintaining a consistent approach to managing, processing and using strategic and tactical operational risk information that can be adapted to the nature, scale and requirements of the individual FRS.

1.3 The purpose of the guidance is to provide a consistency of approach that forms the basis for common operational practices, supporting interoperability between FRSs and other emergency responders. These common principles, practices and procedures are intended to support the development of safe systems of work on the incident ground and to enhance national resilience.

1.4 Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRA) have a responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of their employees. This runs parallel to a responsibility to mitigate the risk from fire (and other emergencies) to the community and to the society that it serves, and the environment within which it operates.

1.5 As part of these responsibilities, the FRA must have in place appropriate policies and procedures to address the issues concerned in achieving these objectives and, through training and development, to provide appropriate knowledge, skills and understanding to enable its employees to operate safely.

1.6 To assist the FRS to meet their statutory duties and responsibilities in relation to operational risk information, the guidance published in 2012 introduced a model approach, entitled Provision of Operational Risk Information System (PORIS).

1.7 PORIS provides a strategic framework that is compatible with other relevant data and information systems such as the Incident Recording System, generic risk assessments, fire safety data, and security guidance. The model provides a common methodology and approach to managing the identification, gathering, analysis, provision, audit and review of operational data, whilst allowing individual FRSs the flexibility to integrate its processes into their own systems.

1.8 In 2015, PORIS was introduced and implemented within Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS), which included training for crews, a new way of storing risk information and a rationalisation of existing risk information held by the Service.

2. REPORT

2.1 Identifying and managing risk is central to the role and responsibility of the FRS, whether this is risk to its employees, the environment in which it operates, or the society that it serves. The gathering, providing, sharing, maintaining and protecting of operational risk information is an important and significant challenge for the FRA.

2.2 Since 2015, NFRS has embarked on a programme of collecting site specific risk information (SSRI), with the purpose of achieving the following strategic objectives:

- The prevention of injury and ill health of firefighters and other emergency responders;
- Management and mitigation of risks in the community;
- Continual improvement in the provision of accurate, relevant and timely operational information;
- Compliance with the legal duties placed upon the FRA in relation to operational risk information;
- Audit and review of operational risk information.

2.3 Staff identify risk premises through a variety of routes:

- Knowledge of a premises change of use;
- An awareness of a new-build development;
- Information provided by the protection department (FP) or other FRS departments;
- Attendance at an operational incident.

2.4 Once potential SSRI premises have been identified and initial information about the hazards associated with the risk gathered, districts prioritise potentially high risk premises.

2.5 The PORIS categories into which a premise may fall are:

- Category 1:   premises offers very low or no risk
- Category 2:   premises offers low to medium levels of risk
- Category 3:   premises offers medium to high risk
- Category 4:   premises presents high levels of risk
- Category 5:   premises requires a comprehensive multi-agency plan.

2.6 Generic risk assessments and standard procedures are adequate to control the risks associated with category 1 and 2 premises. NFRS therefore focusses on category 3, 4 and 5 within its risk based information gathering, review and training programme.

2.7   Typical premises that fall within a Category 3 risk include:

- Industrial units with hazardous processes;
- Heritage buildings;
- Sites of scientific interest;
- Buildings where design/construction may cause operational difficulties;
- Environmental loss;
- Historical buildings;
- Crown premises;
- Courts;
- Biohazard storage;
- Chemical storage.

2.8   Typical sites that will fall within a Category 4 risk include:

- Lower tier COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) sites;
- Explosive storage sites;
- Large hospitals;
- Large heritage sites;
- Sports stadiums;
- Major shopping centres;
- Prisons and Secure premises.

2.9   Typically sites that fall within category 5 will be subject to a multi-agency response which will be planned for as part of the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

2.10   NFRS has an internal process for the collation of information through a network of station based SSRI coordinators.

2.11   The NFRS PORIS approach is quality assured by staff within the operational assurance team.

2.12   The internal quality assurance process identified that some of the SSRI information currently held within NFRS requires review. This review has now been started.

2.13   Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London, NFRS also established a Serious Event Review Group (SERG) which has requested that all 'high rise' SSRI information held is reviewed and updated if necessary.

2.14   As a consequence, the Service has commenced a review of all its existing category 3 and category 4 risk information. In addition, a programme of activity has commenced to identify any risks (highlighted in 2.7 and 2.8) which may not already have a SSRI record. This work has commenced with immediate effect and it has been set as a Service priority. Phase one of this work is for the risk review to be completed before the end of the 2017. Identification of new premises requiring SSRI records will form part of phase two work commencing in January 2018.

2.15 Periodic audit is a useful means to enable a deeper and more critical appraisal of the elements of the operational risk information system. This audit should determine whether the system has been properly implemented and maintained. In addition, it is a proactive approach to confirm if NFRS is effective in meeting the organisation's policy and objectives.

2.16 The results of the audit will be reviewed to support continual improvement. The service will share the outcomes of the review with regional partners to ensure that they are aware of any risk NFRS sites may represent. In addition, we will seek an independent third party sample audit and validation to ensure NFRS has a robust review programme.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 As part of the risk review, all SSRI coordinators will receive refresher training completed on station by the operational assurance department and will be funded through existing Service Delivery budgets.

4.2 SSRI coordinators will cascade this training to operational crews during normal working hours and therefore there will be no additional learning and development or funding implications. There will however be a knock-on impact to other work whilst this task is prioritised.

4.3 This updated operational risk information will be used to influence and shape training and exercises to ensure that operational personnel can develop their skills in using the information in the operational environment.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because the information contained in this report does no relate to a change in policy or procedure.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorders implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The responsibility to conduct a review of risk is specifically identified in a number of different elements of legislation, including: The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

7.2 Section 7(2)d of the Fire and Rescue Services Act, places a responsibility on the FRA to make arrangements for obtaining information needed for that purpose. Sections 8(2)d, and 9(3)d place a similar responsibility on the FRA in respect of road accidents and other emergencies.

7.3 There is also a range of other legislation that places responsibilities on FRAs in respect of the collection, use, storage and sharing of data. These include:

- The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (England) Order 2007;
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004;
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005;
- Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007;
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974;
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999;
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Data Protection Act 2014;
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000.

7.4 In support of these legislative responsibilities, The Fire and Rescue National Framework places a requirement on all FRAs to have in place effective arrangements for gathering risk information and making it readily available to operational crews. These arrangements should include an effective audit and review system to ensure that the information is current.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The management of health and safety at work is key to maintaining firefighter and public safety. SSRI is a method of pre-planning through knowledge, training and exercising to ensure that risks can be managed and control measures introduced to maximise firefighter safety and public protection.

8.2 The importance of using a harmonised approach is highlighted by the need to ensure that operational risk information can be shared and understood across FRSs in England and other parts of the United Kingdom. This is increasingly important due to the ongoing integration of operational response and through the continuing expansion of blue light interoperability to support mutual aid and national resilience capabilities.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

Service Delivery is currently conducting a review of which appliances attend incidents, identifying any opportunities to work closer with other FRS to maximise efficiency and to provide the highest level of service to the public. The risk review will support this process of collaboration.

10.   RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report.

11.   BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None

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