



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

RESILIENCE AND SEVERE WEATHER

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 20 January 2012

Purpose of Report:

To provide Members with an update on resilience and severe weather

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Following the fuel crisis and the severe flooding in the autumn and winter of 2000 and the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001, the Deputy Prime Minister announced a review of emergency planning arrangements. The review included a public consultation exercise which reinforced the Government's conclusion that existing legislation no longer provided an adequate framework for modern civil protection efforts and that new legislation was needed.
- 1.2 Following public consultation on a draft Bill from June to September 2003 and pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Parliamentary Committee, the Civil Contingencies Bill was introduced to Parliament on 7 January 2004. Its development was informed from the start by close consultation with key stakeholders in what was an open and inclusive policymaking process. The Bill received Royal Assent on 18 November 2004 and henceforth became known as the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the "Act").
- 1.3 The Act is separated into two substantive parts:
- Part 1: focuses on local arrangements for civil protection, establishing a statutory framework of roles and responsibilities for local responders.
 - Part 2: focuses on emergency powers, establishing a modern framework for the use of special legislative measures that might be necessary to deal with the effects of the most serious emergencies.
 - The purpose of Part 1 of the Act is to establish a new statutory framework for civil protection at the local level. Local responders are the building block of resilience in the UK, and the Act will enhance existing arrangements by:
 - Establishing a clear set of roles and responsibilities for local responders;
 - Giving greater structure and consistency to local civil protection activity; and
 - Establishing a sound basis for performance management at a local level.
- 1.4 The Act divides local responders into two categories depending on the extent of their involvement in civil protection work, and places a proportionate set of duties on each. Category 1 responders are those organisations at the core of emergency response (e.g. emergency services, local authorities). Category 1 responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties. They are required to:
- Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
 - Put in place emergency plans;

- Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements;
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (Local Authorities only).

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Category 1 and 2 responders are required to come together to form 'Local Resilience Forums' (based on police force areas outside London) which will help co-ordination and co-operation between responders at the local level.
- 2.2 As a category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is a fully fledged member of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) participating in a number of relevant capability groups and chairing the CBRN and training sub group.
- 2.3 The risk assessment group (RAG) identifies which events pose the biggest threat to our locality; this helps to prioritise the work of the LRF and its capability groups and forms the basis of the community risk register. National risks are considered and risk assessments are reviewed by the relevant authority on an annual basis.
- 2.4 Multi agency plans are produced and a programme of testing and exercising plans is developed, activity is monitored by the resilience working group (RWG), the RWG reports to the LRF strategic group.
- 2.5 The LRF brings together category 1 and category 2 responders to prepare and plan for natural and man made events, the representatives of each organisation work together regularly and are fully aware of each others roles and responsibilities, this greatly assists multi agency working and our ability to resolve major incidents.
- 2.6 Two sites have been developed that can be converted into multi-agency co-ordination centres (MCC) at short notice, each site is equipped to facilitate multi-agency working and information sharing to assist in the resolution of and recovery from a major event.

- 2.5 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, local authorities have the responsibility to promote business continuity. Each category 1 responder is required to put into place business continuity arrangements.
- 2.6 Business continuity management (BCM) can be divided into three main areas for planning purposes, loss of staff, loss of accommodation and loss of ICT. BCM arrangements within NFRS are co-ordinated by the Corporate Services department, but it is the responsibility of each department to produce appropriate plans.
- 2.7 BCM plans may be implemented for a wide variety of reasons and should always be a consideration when events are out side of normal operational parameters and likely to impact upon NFRS ability to deliver its service. BCM events can be as a direct result of a single no notice type event or a rising tide type event such as pandemic flu.
- 2.8 Flood and weather forecasting has improved in the last five years and the services provided by the Environment Agency and the Met Office provide up to date and relevant information available twenty four hours a day, seven days a week at the touch of a button.
- 2.9 Severe weather can potentially disrupt NFRS's ability to deliver its service, in the case of hot weather large amounts of resources can be tied up dealing with large numbers of secondary forest, grass or heath land fires, a shortage of water can compound the difficulties associated with this type of occurrence.
- 2.10 At the other end of the spectrum is cold weather, snow and ice can cause major disruptions to infrastructure and could have an impact on NFRS across all three elements of business continuity, loss of staff (unable to get to work), loss of accommodation (access could be difficult) and loss of ICT (power cuts).
- 2.11 With winter upon us and the likelihood of severe cold weather affecting or disrupting our service delivery, NFRS preparations are complete and plans are in place. This provides an ideal case study to demonstrate resilience activity to members.
- 2.12 The response risk specific plan associated with this type of event contains staff briefing notes, action cards, check lists and guidance to provide a flexible framework that ensures we can continue to deliver our essential services under any circumstances.
- 2.13 To assist the planning and preparation the areas for consideration have been broken down into the following:
- General;
 - Personnel;
 - Operational;
 - Media;

- Premises;
- Equipment;
- Recovery.

- 2.14 Staff briefing notes have been prepared to keep personnel informed and to provide guidance on a wide variety of associated issues, which includes driving techniques, vehicle routines, getting to work, work arrangements, winter preparedness and general guidance on preparations for travel.
- 2.15 Action cards offer considerations for implementation covering themes associated with severe weather including degradation, transport and stores.
- 2.16 Arrangements have been made with the highways department of the local authorities following last years severe weather event, this has led to routes to fire stations and fire station forecourts being added to the gritting routes providing safe access and egress from NFRS sites.
- 2.17 NFRS has a number of four wheel drive vehicles which will be utilised to support elements of the severe weather plan and will be held at critical locations throughout Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.
- 2.18 Lessons learned from last year's severe weather event indicate that availability of four wheel drive vehicles becomes limited due to demand, so plans have been established to lease additional vehicles in advance. These will be used to get essential staff to work and provide appropriate vehicles to meet the demands of road conditions for flexible duty officers, which will mitigate road risk associated with mobilising in severe weather conditions.
- 2.19 Specific protocols have been developed by stores for the provision of rock salt; there are six holding locations around the county to reduce travel distances, in the event of a period of sustained or prolonged bad weather leading to a transport issue.
- 2.20 Winter packs are provided by stores for the four wheel drive vehicles which contain a blanket, water, hot pack, de-icer and a shovel.
- 2.21 The Service will consider activating the incident support room to coordinate and manage logistics e.g. getting essential workers to places of work such as control staff, distribution of resources and personnel to maintain service delivery and to support the liaison with other key agencies.
- 2.22 The LRF has a severe weather plan and if deemed necessary will call a Strategic Coordination Group or Tactical Coordination Group to facilitate the prioritisation of activity and cooperation between services, to ensure that those most vulnerable in the community get the services and support needed at the appropriate time.

2.23 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's severe weather plan is designed to ensure that the services legal obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Fire Services Act 2004 and our commitment to community safety are maintained.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are costs throughout the organisation in support of resilience, however there are no new financial implications arising from this report.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service personnel may be affected by any disruption to service and human resources business continuity plans will be activated to mitigate the risks associated with severe weather, or any other serious event.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken because this report is not a function, policy or service. Its purpose is to provide the Committee with an update on resilience and severe weather.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

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

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As a category one responder Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service has a legal duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to have business continuity management arrangements in place. The Service also has a legal duty to comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Failure to consider potential risks that may affect service delivery and the consequential lack of pre planning would present serious risks in both legal challenge and also public reputation. The work of the Resilience Team and broader approach of the Service with regards to business continuity management significantly reduces these risks.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the contents of the report and endorse the work of the Resilience Team.

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

- Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service Severe Weather Plan.
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER