

The Highland Council

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee
13 June 2013

Agenda Item	9
Report No	CPE 24/13

Emergency Planning

Report by the Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services

Summary

This report invites Members to approve the approach taken by the Council to fulfilling its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) and the Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005 to maintain an Emergency Plan. The report has been written with direct input from Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

A copy of the latest version of the Council's General Emergency Plan can be found at:

<http://ntintra1/General-Emergency-Plan-30-May-2013.pdf>

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the CCA) and Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005 places a number of duties on Local Authorities, as a Category 1 Responder, including that of preparing and maintaining an Emergency Plan.
- 1.2 This report describes the Council's approach to Emergency Planning and how it works with the other key agencies to plan and respond to emergencies.

2. Integrated Emergency Management

- 2.1 Scottish civil protection is based on the principles of Integrated Emergency Management (IEM) which addresses the consequences of emergencies, rather than their causes.
- 2.2 The underlying aim of IEM is to prepare flexible and adaptable arrangements for effective management of a multi-agency response to any crisis, whether it is an emergency as defined in legislation, or another disruptive event that affects our community.
- 2.2 IEM seeks to ensure that senior staff within key organisations, such as the Council, can respond to emergencies through their normal day-to-day activities, and should be prepared to contribute to the management of the Council's response to an emergency.

3. Duty to Maintain Emergency Plans

- 3.1 The legislation defines two categories of responder; Category 1 and Category 2.

Category 1 Responders are the organisations that provide vital services in an emergency and to which all of the duties of the CCA apply. The seven Category 1 Responders are:

- The Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance and Coastguard)
- **Local Authorities**
- Health Boards
- SEPA

3.2 Preparation for emergencies is a duty under the Act and is a key aspect of responders' efforts to protect the public. It encompasses planning, training and exercising activities. Therefore Category 1 responders must maintain Emergency Plans to ensure that, so far as is reasonably practical, they are able to perform their functions to:

- Prevent the emergency
- Reduce, control or mitigate its effects; or
- Take other action in connection with it.

Prevention, in this context, means carrying out functions to prevent an imminent emergency occurring. It does not require responders to prevent all possible emergencies.

4. Council's General Emergency Plan

4.1 The Council's General Emergency Plan is an all-encompassing document for the guidance of Highland Council personnel who are likely to be involved in dealing with a Major Incident. It is designed to provide a flexible and adaptable framework for the co-ordination of any actions required. It includes the agreed roles and responsibilities of the Category 1 responders as well as those of a wide range of other organisations, including, for example, the Utilities, transport agencies and voluntary organisations.

4.2 The Emergency Plan recognises the essential supporting role which the Council has towards the emergency services and acknowledges the co-ordinating role which these services, especially the Police, undertake in an emergency. It also recognises the crucial need for a multi-agency approach to both planning and responding. All relevant agencies have contributed to the creation of the Plan.

4.3 There are site-specific plans which the Council has to prepare under legislation other than the CCA. These include plans for dealing with emergencies involving major industrial sites (e.g. Nigg Oil Terminal) and nuclear sites (e.g. Dounreay). There are also function-specific plans which address issues such as the provision of emergency mortuaries.

4.4 These Plans depend upon the generic, all-hazards approach which the General Emergency Plan takes in describing how the planning, activation and the response are co-ordinated. This co-ordination demands close co-operation across all Category 1 and Category 2 Responders as well as the voluntary sector. This close co-operation underpins the planning process as does the successful sharing of information.

5. Multi-Agency Approach to Emergency Planning

- 5.1 Whilst Police have undergone reorganisation into a single force, this has not materially altered the manner in which planning is undertaken. However, the names have changed. What was previously called the Highlands & Islands Strategic Co-ordination Group (HISCG) has become the Highlands and Islands Local Resilience Partnership (HILRP). The group embraces Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland. This is a truly multi-agency group and its planning structure is described in the Plan.
- 5.2 This group sets the strategic framework within which all planning activity takes place. Its membership comprises the Chief Executives (or equivalent) of all Category 1 and Category 2 Responders as well as similar representation from the voluntary sector. Currently, this group is chaired by the Council's Chief Executive with a vice-chair provided by Police Scotland.
- 5.3 Working to this strategic group is another multi-agency group known as the Highlands and Islands Emergency Planning Group (HIEPG). This group applies the strategic objectives and agrees a common approach to any necessary planning. The group also provides several working groups to address key aspects of our overall capability. There are currently 8 such groups working on various aspects of planning and response such as Risk Assessment, Human Health and Recovery.
- 5.4 A number of local Emergency Liaison Groups have recently been formed to bring together representatives from across agencies to share information at this local level. A major benefit from these groups is that through effective liaison, key staff can also get to know their counterparts better since they are very likely to be responding together.

6. Recent Incidents

- 6.1 Scottish Government's guidance on resilience states that *"an effective response will, in large part, reflect the preparedness of an organisation prior to an emergency"*. The Highland area has in recent times experienced a variety of major incidents requiring the activation of an emergency response.
- 6.2 The majority of these responses have been co-ordinated by Police although Fire and Rescue has had to co-ordinate the response to dealing with a significant series of very major wild fires.
- 6.3 Examples of recent incidents demonstrate both the multi-agency nature of the responses to them and the successful outcomes from them. They also show the very varied nature of these incidents which reinforces the need for an all-hazards approach to planning and response.
- 6.4 There are always lessons to be learned from major incidents. Therefore all major incidents have been debriefed, lessons identified and action plans made to incorporate these lessons. Since April 2008, there have been over 60 major or unusual incidents, some of the most note-worthy being;

- Major Fire in a Hostel April 2013
- Major Wild Fires, Fort William Area April 2013

- Major Fire in an HMO Hostel, Dingwall February 2013
- 999 Outage from Cable Theft, Loch Carron June 2012
- Severe Winter Weather Dec/Jan 2010/11
- Fire in Culloden Court Care Home October 2010
- Major Ship Fire, Glensanda July 2010
- Level Crossing Fatalities, Halkirk September 2009
- A9 Shearings Bus Crash April 2009
- Refinery Strike and Fuel Shortage April 2008

6.5 Examples of these debriefs can be found at;

<http://www.handiprepared.gov.uk/information/document-library/public-access/>

7. Training and Exercising

7.1 Training and exercising is an integral part of preparation. Over the last few years, training in Integrated Emergency Management has been delivered to several hundred individuals within the Council. The majority of this training has been delivered by small, multi-agency teams of trainers and Council staff have attended this training alongside trainees from all of the responder agencies. Very little training is conducted on a single-agency basis

7.2 In addition to this training, exercises have been conducted on a regular basis. Some have been statutory exercises (e.g. the off-site plan for the Whyte & Mackay Distillery; others have been as a result of identifying emerging risks (e.g. a major incident involving a cruise liner). As with real incidents, these multi-agency exercises are debriefed to identify learning points for incorporation into current plans.

8. A Police and Fire Perspective

8.1 Police Scotland (PS) and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) are committed to helping people stay safe from a wide spectrum of emergencies. The aim of both organisations is to ensure that the local community has the very best response possible in an emergency whatever the circumstances. Both organisations work in partnership with the other emergency services and other emergency response organisations to develop plans that will ensure a co-ordinated response in the event of an emergency. Partnership working is vital because the actions of one organisation could impact on all the other organisations involved. The Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service emergency planning teams support the multi-agency approach at the local level.

8.2 One of the ways cooperation and information sharing is achieved is through the local Emergency Liaison Groups which bring together members from emergency

services, local authority, voluntary organisations and businesses.

- 8.3 This promotes communication and information flow between local responders and planners at the regional level. It also encourages local activity such as training and exercises to support local emergency plans. For example the SFRS has recently been involved in exercises with HIAL and Exercise Salamander, and both have been closely involved in Exercise HIGH PORT (a nuclear berth exercise), Exercise ARCTIC BLAST (an extreme weather exercise) and Exercise LONESTAR (a Vulcan exercise).
- 8.4 A key area where a multi-agency approach works very effectively is the identification and assessment of local risks which could cause emergencies. This ensures that the correct measures are taken to reduce the risk and ensures that the responders are trained and the correct resources are allocated to deal with the risk.

9. Implications

- 9.1 The cost of providing Emergency Planning for the Council is contained within the TEC Service budget.
- 9.2 There are no legal implications arising as a direct result of this report.
- 9.3 There are no equality implications arising as a direct result of this report.
- 9.4 There are no climate change implications arising as a direct result of this report.
- 9.5 In relation to risk implications it is important that the Council has a plan in place, involving all partner agencies, and that relevant staff are appropriately trained.

10. Recommendation

- 10.1 Members are invited to approve the approach taken by the Council to fulfilling its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) and the Contingency Planning (Scotland) Regulations 2005 to maintain an Emergency Plan.

Designation: Director of Transport, Environmental & Community Services

Date: 30 May 2013

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