



NOTICE OF MEETING

EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIAL COMMITTEE

I hereby give notice that an Ordinary Meeting of the Emergency Services Special Committee will be held on:-

DATE: **Thursday, 11 September 2003** **TIME:** **2.30 pm**

VENUE: **Civil Defence Headquarters, 7 Elcoat Avenue, Henderson, Waitakere City**

to consider the business as set out herein and to take any necessary action connected therewith.

Sharon Simiona .

4 September 2003

Sharon Simiona
COMMITTEE SECRETARY

Telephone (09) 836 8000 extn 8820

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillors	DQ	Battersby, JP (Chairperson)
	VS	Neeson, JP (Deputy Chairperson)
	RP	Dallow, QPM, JP
	AC	Fenton
	GW	Russell, JP

Mayor Bob Harvey, QSO, JP (ex officio)
Deputy Mayor CA Stone (ex officio)

(Quorum 2 members)

(The reports and recommendations contained in all agendas are reports and recommendations only and are not to be construed, in any way, as Council policy until adopted.)

**AGENDA FOR AN ORDINARY MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIAL
COMMITTEE TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIL DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS,
7 ELCOAT AVENUE, HENDERSON, WAITAKERE CITY,
ON THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2003
COMMENCING AT 2.30 PM.**

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1 APOLOGIES



2 URGENT BUSINESS

Section 46A(7) and (7A) of the Local Government Official Information Act and Meetings Act 1987 provides that where an item of business is not on the agenda, it may only be dealt with at the meeting if:

- (i) the item is a minor matter; and
- (ii) the Chairperson has explained at the beginning of the meeting (when open to the public) that the item will be raised for discussion, why the item is not on the agenda, and why it cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting; and
- (iii) the Committee resolves to deal with the item.

No resolution, decision, or recommendation may be made in respect of the item except to refer the item to a subsequent meeting for further discussion.

NOTE: Urgent Business need not be dealt with now and may be delayed until later in the meeting.



3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Ordinary - Tuesday, 5 August 2003

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Emergency Services Special Committee held on Tuesday, 5 August 2003, as circulated, be taken as read and now be confirmed.



4 **NATIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to enable the Emergency Services Special Committee to:

- consider and comment on the National Civil Defence Emergency Management Strategy proposal for discussion document as attached to this report; and
- comment on the proposal document in relation to planning work already undertaken on the Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan.

BACKGROUND

A series of reviews in the 1990's looked at how Civil Defence Emergency Management in New Zealand was being carried out under the Civil Defence Act 1983. The outcome of these reviews identified the need for a new holistic approach to Civil Defence Emergency Management including:

- greater focus on identifying and reducing the risks posed by hazards;
- enhancing knowledge about New Zealand's hazards and the associated risks;
- integrating planning and promoting inter-agency coordination;
- greater ability to adapt to societal, political and economic change;
- enhancing the capacity to deal with a disaster of national proportions;
- promoting a risk management approach to hazards.

To address these issues, the Auckland Region became one of four pilot study programmes nationally to develop plans and strategies for future Civil Defence Emergency Management. These developments worked in closely with what was then a proposed new Civil Defence Emergency Management Act which was originally hoped to be passed into law in 1999. The expected outcomes of the pilot programme were:

- determination of preferred methods of achieving comprehensive emergency management in each of the pilot areas;
- full documentation of procedures and processes, including the consultation process;
- local agreement approach to the new ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management for the establishment of regional Emergency Management Groups.

A1-A33

The Act did not come into law until December 2002 by which time the Auckland Region were in a well advanced stage to implement the requirements of the Act into a draft Civil Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan. Time frames have been established by which the Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups must implement their own plans as required by the Act which includes a wide range of strategic goals and objectives. Aligned with the regional requirements, a Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management National Strategy is required to be developed. A proposal for discussion on the strategy has now been received and is the focus of this report attached at pages A1 to A33.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Council has a statutory responsibility to be involved in Civil Defence Emergency Management under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. Civil Defence Emergency Management Activities fall principally under the strategic platform of strong communities in the Long Term Council Community Plan. The aim of Civil Defence Emergency Management activities is to help protect people and property from the impacts of hazards and emergency events, by undertaking activities that: **Reduce** exposure and likely impacts from hazards and emergency events; increase the **Readiness** of communities and organisations (emergency services, lifeline utilities; social infrastructure agencies) to respond in emergency situations; provide an emergency **Response** capability within the Council and in other organisations; and, provide the ability and capacity to **Recover** from the impacts of emergency events.

The National Civil Defence Emergency Management Strategy document under discussion is a part of the framework established under the 2002 Act. It provides National outcomes being sought and the action required to achieve these. It forms the basis of national-regional coordination. It will ultimately be supported by a National Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan and the regional plans being developed by the Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups.

The Act states that regional group plans must be consistent with the National Strategy and ultimately the National Plan.

ISSUES

Submissions relating to the National Strategy discussion document have to be received by the Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management by 12 September 2003. The Regional Emergency Management Officer requested that group submissions be forwarded to his office by 27 August 2003 in order that a discussion paper can be forwarded to the Co-ordinating Executive Group for a consolidated reply. Regardless of whether submissions are forwarded on a regional or local basis, the ultimate determination of what the final National Strategy contains is the responsibility of the National Plan and Strategy Steering Group.

The primary issue is that our Group Plan goals and objectives are not consistent with the National Strategy as is required under the Act s.53 (1). Although objectives have been based on the requirements of the 4R's, there is still a considerable variation compared to the National Strategy. The problem now is how the two become aligned.

Council's goals and objectives are also considerably more detailed compared to the National Strategy and tend to have a greater emphasis on response measures over mitigation but that is something that can still be worked through.

Despite the very good work that has been done in developing the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan, the National Strategy is an easy to understand document and despite submission comments is unlikely to be altered significantly before it becomes the definitive document for national planning in December. Requirement will be to align the goals appropriately to the National Strategy and then incorporate measurement objectives accordingly.

It is not considered that a detailed submission of the proposal for discussion paper is required. It would be sufficient to support the direction of the proposal.

RESOURCES

The requirement to align to the National Strategy will require staff resource assistance for the Emergency Management Officer office. In this respect the Emergency Management Officer is well placed to assist being already a member of the Regional Group Plan steering team.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the National Strategy is a well written and easy to understand document that Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups can base their own plans, goals and objectives upon. There is a considerable variance between the Group's objectives and these will need to be aligned accordingly to be consistent with legislative requirement. The Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group is well placed to carry out the alignments required given the already advanced nature of its Plan and for the purpose of national consistency should be commenced as a matter of priority.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information be received.
2. That the Emergency Services Special Committee endorses the National Strategy proposal for discussion as distributed as the basis ongoing development of the National Strategy and as the basis for Group Plan goals and subsequent measures nationally.
3. That Waitakere City Council advises the Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and the Co-ordinating Executive Group that the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan should be aligned to the National Strategy as required by the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002.

Report prepared by: Bill Morley, Manager Emergency Management.



5 RURAL FIRE SPECIALIST TRAINING

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to enable the Emergency Services Special Committee to:

- consider and comment on correspondence relating to a request on behalf of the Volunteer Rural Fire Force Units of the Auckland Region for formal and programmed access to New Zealand Fire Service training resources for volunteer rural staff; and
- seek the Committees endorsement of the Principal Rural Fire Officers approach to the New Zealand Fire Service and to support the request to formalise New Zealand Fire Service training support for the Volunteer Rural Fire Force Units within the Auckland Region and in particular Waitakere City.

BACKGROUND

Basic levels of training for volunteer rural fire fighters are delivered either on a Local or Regional basis. This training is programmed and conducted by the Waitakere City Principal Rural Fire Officer utilising whatever suitable venues are available. More advanced levels of training require specialist trainers and venues. Historically, staff have been able to gain the required skills through the co-operation of the Fire Service training department, where “spare places” on certain courses have been offered to rural fire volunteers. Such courses were reciprocated by the Principal Rural Fire Officer conducting rural fire courses for New Zealand Fire Service staff.

The amendments to the Health & Safety in Employment Act of May 2003, have placed the Officers in charge of the units, and their respective Councils in a greater position of legal responsibility for the safety of their volunteer crews than has been the case previously. In fire fighting operations, the primary attribute to personal safety is competency for the task at hand, which can only be acquired through initial and on-going training. The only relevant and competent source of the required training is the New Zealand Fire Service.

A34-A41 Rather than continuing the current “favours” situation regarding access to training, the Principal Rural Fire Officer Waitakere City on behalf of all volunteer units established within the Auckland Region, wrote to the Chairperson of the Fire Service Commission requesting the formulation of a national training policy for rural volunteer staff. The Chairperson of the Fire Service commission subsequently delegated the request to Mr Mike Hall, National Commander/Chief Executive for reply. The copies of correspondence attached at pages A34 to A41.

It was hoped that Mr Halls reply would allow further direct progress on this matter through the Regional Rural Fire Force units, by consultation and discussion with Fire Service and interested parties. The Response received has prompted Officers to bring this matter to the attention of the Committee for support.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Council has a legislative responsibility to be involved in rural fire activities. The Fire Service Act Section 14A (h) provides that the Fire Service Commission “promotes and encourages the training and education of persons engaged in rural fire control”.

Section 10 of the Forest & Rural Fires Act states; “The Fire Authority of each territorial area shall be the territorial authority having territorial jurisdiction in respect of that area”. A Rural Fire Authority is responsible for the control of **all fires** occurring within the Rural Fire District.

The Rural Fire Management, Code of Practice Section 3.15.2 refers to attendance at structure fires, with reference to Fire Service Manual 8. This manual has been superseded by the National Commander's Instructions. Instruction four requires that breathing apparatus must be worn at all structure fires (and other situations).

Rural Fire activities contribute to the strong communities platform through the enabling of communities to help meet their own emergency response needs, and through the provision of support by Council to those needs. They also contribute to the green network platform through helping to protect the Waitakere Ranges and other natural areas within the Rural Fire District.

ISSUES

Competent breathing apparatus training in fire fighting operations can only be gained through the New Zealand Fire Service. For the safety of rural fire crew's, access to that training on a formal and programmable basis is essential.

The current situation of informal access to specialised training is no longer operationally feasible. The requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act now includes volunteer staff, who must now receive a "best practice" level of training for the tasks and duties they are expected to perform. Waitakere City Council as the Rural Fire Authority, is deemed to be the "employer" of volunteer staff under the amended Health & Safety in Employment Act

In order to achieve compliance with the Act, it is the intention to seek funding for introducing a breathing apparatus capability to all volunteer rural fire force units commencing in the 2004/2005 financial year. Prior to introduction, staff will need to undergo full training and to achieve this, a defined level of access to the training resources of the Fire Service will be essential.

This situation is not specific to Waitakere City as it affects all Volunteer Rural Fire units who attend at other than vegetation fires. Within the Auckland Region, all units fall into this category. It was with this requirement in mind that determined the Regional approach letter to the New Zealand Fire Service in the first instance.

RESOURCES

The Waitakere Rural Fire Authority operates through three volunteer rural fire stations namely Karekare, Bethhells Valley and Waitakere. In addition, Arataki operates as a resource station. Each station has a staffing complement of fifteen operational members, giving a total of up to sixty operational staff.

It is not intended that Arataki will require breathing apparatus training given that it is not a first attack station.

CONCLUSION

The National Commander's letter does provide some confidence that this matter can be resolved through discussions with the Fire Service and goodwill by all parties concerned. Given the requirements of the Health and Safety in Employment Act 2003 and the legislative requirement for rural fire forces to attend all fires within their respective districts, the requirement to pursue an agreement with the New Zealand Fire Service for formal breathing apparatus training is essential.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information be received.
2. That the Committee formally recognises the need for the introduction of formalised training for volunteer rural fire forces throughout the Auckland Region in respect of the use of breathing apparatus.
3. That breathing apparatus be introduced for the Waitakere Rural Fire Force Units during the next three years dependent upon the provision of approved formal training courses with the New Zealand Fire Service, and the provision of resources through the Annual Plan and Long Term Council Community Plan processes.
4. That the Chief Executive and Principal Rural Fire Officer be delegated authority to enter into a formal agreement with the New Zealand Fire Service for the provision of formal training in respect of breathing apparatus.

Report prepared by: Peter Barber, Principal Rural Fire Officer and Bill Morley, Manager Emergency Management.



6 EMERGENCY OPERATING CENTRE FUTURE OPTIONS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform the Emergency Services Special Committee of future considerations relating to Civil Defence Emergency Management Emergency Operating Centres (hereafter Emergency Operating Centre's) both nationally, within the Auckland Region and in particular in Waitakere City.

BACKGROUND

Traditionally, Territorial Local Authorities and Regional Councils have been required to maintain a Civil Defence Headquarters (now known as Emergency Operating Centres) for emergency readiness and response purposes. Such Headquarters normally house the respective Civil Defence office where all aspects of Councils emergency management approach are managed and coordinated. In the event of a local emergency, district headquarters are activated and should the event be widespread the regional headquarters would assume the overall coordinating role.

Under the requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management 2002, the Draft Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan identifies the requirement for Emergency Operating Centre's to be maintained in Waitakere City, North Shore, Auckland City and Manukau City. Currently the Auckland City doubles as the principal Group Emergency Operating Centre for regional emergency response purposes, with the other three able to operate as Local Emergency Operating Centre's and provide alternate Group Emergency Operating Centre's. All of the nominated Emergency Operating Centre's need to be compatible in terms of operational readiness and capability and be able to perform the functions of a Group Emergency Operating Centre if required. This and the ongoing requirement to be able to ensure a dedicated readiness and response capability has specific future implications.

The current Waitakere City Emergency Operating Centre complex was purchased in 1968 and converted to become a Civil Defence Headquarters for what was then the West Auckland Civil Defence Organisation administered by the New Lynn Borough Council. The building had previously been a gospel hall and before that part of a vineyard complex. In 1984 the Waitemata City Council became the administering authority until 1989 when local government reorganisation came into effect. Throughout this period, various add-ons and extensions have been made within the complex to the extent of what exists today. When initially purchased and converted, the building was ideal for its intended requirement. Later conversion in the mid 1970's improved the performance capability for what was then a one-person operation. Since that time, staff numbers have increased and rural fire has become an added responsibility. The facilities in the building are now becoming constrained for current and future needs.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Civil Defence Emergency Management Activities fall principally under the strategic platform of strong communities in the Long Term Council Community Plan. The aim of Civil Defence Emergency Management activities is to help protect people and property from the impacts of hazards and emergency events, by undertaking activities that: **Reduce** exposure and likely impacts from hazards and emergency events; increase the **Readiness** of communities and organisations (emergency services, lifeline utilities; social infrastructure agencies) to respond in emergency situations; provide an emergency **Response** capability within the Council and in other organisations; and, provide the ability and capacity to **Recover** from the impacts of emergency events. Activities under the broader emergency management heading such as rural fire also contribute to strategic goals under the Green Network platform.

While the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 (hereinafter "the Act") places an emphasis on a regional approach to Civil Defence Emergency Management, the Act also clearly places a responsibility on Local Authorities to provide for Civil Defence Emergency Management measures within their area of responsibility. In addition to the requirement for a Group Emergency Operating Centre, the Draft Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Plan identifies the Waitakere City Civil Defence Emergency Operating Centre as one of three other Emergency Operating Centres within the Region. Within this context, the Waitakere Emergency Operating Centre could be called upon to be able to perform both Local and Regional functions. Additionally, all designated Emergency Operating Centres within the Auckland Region will ultimately be subject to audit for standardisation purposes to ensure overall compatibility and ability to function effectively in whatever role may be required. An Emergency Operating Centre working group has been established and some preliminary study has already been conducted to determine commonality as currently exists throughout the Region. Despite being identified in the Group Plan, no definitive time scale for the final determination of the number of Emergency Operating Centres to be established within the Region. Emergency Operating Centre standardisation has however been identified as one of the Group Plans more pressing establishment goals.

ISSUES

Current Capability

When originally purchased and outfitted, the current facility would have been adequate to serve the then population as a dedicated Civil Defence Emergency Headquarters. Over the years an additional room and garage have been added plus more recently a portacom to meet resourcing and operational requirements that exist today. While still capable of operating effectively as a local emergency operating centre for short periods, the complex has limitations for extended operational response, day-to-day training and general work requirements. Exercises in recent years have been successful in their outcome but have only been conducted for a limited period. Catering has been pre-arranged and the number of persons present in the emergency operating centre limited to a workable number. It is considered that if ever required to function for an extended period in a local emergency or in the role of a Group Emergency Operating Centre, current building limitations could restrict overall operational effectiveness to the extent that it may not be adequate for the purpose.

The primary limitations currently identified are as follows:

- staff workspaces have been created out of necessity in non-purpose built areas due to increased staffing levels - this situation imposes functional restrictions and concerns;
- limited kitchen facilities with no dedicated cooking ability other than a microwave oven;
- limited toilet and shower facilities;
- limited training room space for any numbers in excess of twenty people;
- restricted liaison officer spaces and inadequate briefing room facilities for use in an operational environment;
- restricted communications room space for full operational use;
- a lack of space to cater for the introduction of computer driven emergency response systems;
- restricted space within the Operations Room to manage large-scale emergency events;
- increasing maintenance problems due to the age of the existing structure.

Possible Ways Forward

In making decisions under the Local Government Act 2002 framework, consideration must be given to all practicable options, with assessment *inter alia* of the costs and benefits of each.

This option is not really open to Council. Council is compelled by the Act to be involved in Civil Defence Emergency Management activities therefore withdrawing from the activity is not open to Council and has specific requirements to ensure the needs of its community are provided for.

Options therefore are:

Do nothing - Continue on current basis

Council could decide to just continue with its current level of provision in terms of Emergency Operating Centre. With ongoing ad hoc modifications, this could continue to meet short duration emergency requirements.

However, it is likely that the current Emergency Operating Centre may struggle to meet Group Emergency Operating Centre requirements over the medium to long term and may not be eligible for any regional investment in Emergency Operating Centre's. In addition workplace and Health and Safety issues are likely to arise over time in terms of the amount and type of space available to staff. These issues are becoming apparent already, and the preference of officers would be to address these issues sooner rather than later.

Close Emergency Operating Centre and rely on regional or response zone Emergency Operating Centre

One option available would be to contribute to other Emergency Operating Centre's in the region and close the Waitakere Emergency Operating Centre. This could mean sole reliance on the Group Emergency Operating Centre, or cooperation with North Shore in the North-West Response Zone, which is part of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group for the Auckland Region.

Additional space would need to be built in the new Civic Centre to house the emergency management staff as a range of activities including rural fire and input to regional processes would need to be undertaken.

This option is not recommended. Officers consider that the standard of the Waitakere Emergency Operating Centre and its staffing is higher than most others in the region. Relying on another Emergency Operating Centre would mean a loss of direct control and overview of Waitakere's response capability. It would also mean relying on another Council, which could place its priorities on its own needs if both Waitakere and they were affected at the same time. In terms of the current Group Emergency Operating Centre, this facility already has to cater for the needs of Auckland City and the needs of the Region as a whole. It would be inadvisable to add local Waitakere City needs to this workload, given the size and nature of the facility. In terms of relying on the North Shore facility, while it may be a newer and more spacious facility than the existing Waitakere Emergency Operating Centre, officers consider that it has functionality issues in respect of physical layout and reliance on a particular computer system, which Council has previously declined to install. Officers also had concerns over staffing and training standards.

Expand local Emergency Operating Centre capability to meet current and future needs

Given that the Districts population is now approaching 180,000 and is increasing at a rapid rate, it is considered that consideration be given to overhauling our current capabilities for day to day business requirements and to meet the response needs of the community and ability to act in a regional role if required. With this in mind, four possible options have been identified for future consideration as follows:

- upgrade the existing facility to meet the requirements as listed above;
- incorporate a dedicated emergency operating centre within the new Civic Centre and sell the existing facility;
- incorporate a dedicated emergency operating centre within the new Civic Centre project but as a stand-alone structure and sell the existing facility;
- build a dedicated facility in a strategic location (on existing council land if possible) complete with garaging and parking facilities and sell the existing complex.

An initial assessment of costs to upgrade the existing facility estimated something in the region of \$300,000. Resource Management Act and building code regulations have yet to be investigated regarding this option. An option 4 preliminary assessment has been estimated to cost about \$350,000 to \$400,000 (providing a Council owned site could be located) which would be offset by the sale of the existing facility. There are strategic advantages of having the Emergency Operating Centre separated from the Civic Centre interim of providing a back up facility in a different location in the event of the primary facility being affected by an emergency event.

Officers consider option 3 to be the best at this initial stage.

Considerable work is still required to investigate options further and it is not intended to go into any detail in this report. Officers would like to ascertain the views of the Committee toward the options, and get approval for further investigation work.

This work will be undertaken in a regional context. Regional discussions are taking place between Councils and Emergency Services about Emergency Operating Centre needs overall. The Emergency Operating Centre Standardisation project is also underway. Of interest is an initial approach by the Fire Service looking at the possibility of creating a joint agency emergency operating centre with buy in from across the emergency services. Such an approach could be the ideal and could have obvious economies of scale for all parties, provided individual needs and capacity issues could be catered for.

CONCLUSION

Given the need to be able to cater for normal business and training requirements, provide emergency response capability for an ever increasing population, and cover the possible requirement to function as a Group Emergency Operating Centre, it is considered timely that further consideration be given to how to provide for future strategic requirements for Emergency Operating Centre capability. It is proposed that this be done in the context of with Council's Civil Defence Emergency Management responsibilities under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 and the draft Regional Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan, and in cognisance of regional work on these issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information be received.
2. That further work to investigate the options outlined in the report be undertaken, and that the Emergency Services Special Committee provide a preliminary preference for option 3.

Report prepared by: Bill Morley, Manager Emergency Management.



7 WHENUAPAI AIRBASE CLOSURE - STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to consider the possible Civil Defence Emergency Management issues relating to the closure of the Whenuapai Airbase for Waitakere City and the Auckland Region. This consideration has been requested by His Worship, Mayor Bob Harvey following the receipt of the NZIER report on the social and economic impacts of the Airbase closure report to Enterprise Waitakere dated July 2003.

BACKGROUND

The Whenuapai Airbase has historically provided air access to the Auckland Region. It was constructed in the late 1930's primarily for use by Wellington bombers. During World War II, the base runway capacity and facilities were extended considerably and were used extensively for both Royal New Zealand Airforce requirements as well as a reserve aircraft staging base for United States and allied aircraft.

Following the war, military activity was scaled back considerably and in 1947 National Airways Corporation opened operations for national passenger and freight carrying purposes. International flights were introduced in 1963 until 1965 when civilian operations were scaled down following the opening of the International Airport at Mangere.

New airforce acquisitions in the late 1960's saw a considerable return of focus to military activities. It was also the time that the separate functions of Hobsonville and Whenuapai were merged to become RNZAF Base Auckland.

Changes in Government Military policy have signalled a massive reduction in military use of Whenuapai Airbase over the next few years. Possible closure of the airbase has been one of the options discussed.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Waitakere City is part of the Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management Group (hereinafter CDEMG). The Group is responsible for planning and putting in place and maintaining reduction, readiness, response and recovery measures and capability for the Auckland Region.

In the event of a large-scale emergency, air transport and support from national and international sources could be vital. Whenuapai currently provides both a military presence to provide support services, and an airport facility to supplement or replace the main regional airport at Mangere.

ISSUES

Support Services

The closure of the Military presence at Whenuapai will remove a large pool of trained and disciplined people who could be made available to assist in a civil defence emergency. Additionally, the base also provides a logistic supply capability through the provision of resources not purely restricted to aircraft. Currently, the base maintains a ready support group of personnel and associated transport that could be deployed to assist in a major incident within Waitakere City or the Auckland region. Approval for use has to be agreed at a national level but the response could be expected to assist at relatively short notice. This is the only ready to respond military capability in the Auckland Region that could be requested to assist in civil defence operations. The Navy could provide personnel assistance but this would take time to organise and would not be a dedicated response such as established at Whenuapai.

Operationally, Civil Defence and Rural Fire management maintain a close liaison with the Airbase. Airforce personnel are represented on the North West Emergency Management Committee and exercises with the local emergency services are conducted on a regular basis. The base fire fighting resource is also used as a back up for some local fire fighting.

The departure of these services will be missed but can be overcome if they can be transported in when required from elsewhere. The days of being able to rely on military support in terms of personnel and equipment in large quantities are well gone and haven't existed within the Auckland Region for many years. Whenuapai is the primary source of personnel and maintains a 40-person response team. As previously mentioned, Navy response is limited and very much determined by what ships might be in Auckland at any given time. Army assistance has virtually ceased since the closure of the Papakura Military Camp, with the nearest support now being based at Waiouru and Linton.

Regionally, the closure of the base would be of greater concern, as it would remove a dedicated military airlift resource for government support in a major emergency. It could be argued that this type of support could be provided through the Mangere Airport complex, but would require some form of on the ground support, and might be affected by other Airport operations.

Airport Capability

The key benefit of Whenuapai Airbase in terms of Emergency Management is as a landing and airlift base in the event of an emergency. Airports can be used to transport in emergency equipment, personnel and supplies in case of an emergency. This use is not reliant on retention of the base as a military facility, and could be maintained were Whenuapai converted into a commercial airbase or a commercial/military shared facility.

The total closure of Whenuapai Airbase would be considered by officers to be extremely short-sighted from an emergency management perspective. While Mangere Airport may have runway capacity, under its plan for expansion, to provide landing slots for emergency air transport, retaining Whenuapai would make greater sense than closing it. Auckland is New Zealand major City nearing 1.3 Million in population. Relying on one airport instead of two is an "all eggs in one basket approach", particularly when the second airport already exists. Mangere is low lying, and on a Harbour and could within the realms of possibility be affected by an emergency event. More importantly it relies on access to the region via SH1 or 20 which could be affected by an emergency event. Retaining Whenuapai provides a backup option to Mangere, or a primary option should Mangere not have the capacity required for normal and emergency requirements. Whenuapai also provides a facility close to the Northern part of the region if this is where emergency requirements are most pressing.

While the purpose of this paper is not to address military policy, retention of Whenuapai as an airport if the military presence is withdrawn, provides the Government to maintain a small military presence close to Auckland, with the ability to use the facility to increased operations if ever required. With Auckland being the largest City this would seem desirable. It would also provide a place for military personnel to land if they were required for Emergency Management response duties.

It is suggested that Council add emergency management reasons to its arguments for retention of the Whenuapai airbase as an airport. It is also suggested that the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and Co-ordinating Executive Group be requested to support the retention of the base from an Emergency Management perspective.

CONCLUSION

The closure of the Whenuapai Airbase would remove an emergency airlift facility from New Zealand's largest urban population centre. This is considered undesirable from an Emergency Management perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the information be received.
2. That the Emergency Services Special Committee formally declares that it considers the retention of the Whenuapai Airbase as an airport necessary in terms of regional capability for Emergency Management response.
3. That Council advocate for the retention of the Whenuapai Airbase as an Airport on regional Emergency Management grounds as set out in the report in addition to the other grounds for retention.
4. That the Mayoral Taskforce on Whenuapai be advised of the Emergency Services Special Committees declaration in respect of the need to retain Whenuapai as an airport on Emergency Management grounds.
5. That the Director: Corporate & Civic Services and the Chairman of the Emergency Services Committee be authorised to approach the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group and the Co-ordinating Executive Group to gain formal support for retention of Whenuapai as an Airport on regional Emergency Management grounds if they consider it appropriate to do so.

Report prepared by: Bill Morley, Manager Emergency Management, and Ross McLeod, Director: Corporate and Civic Services.

