

AGENDA FOR A MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO BE HELD IN THE CIVIL DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, 7 ELCOAT AVENUE, HENDERSON, WAITAKERE CITY, ON TUESDAY, 14 JUNE 2005, COMMENCING AT 9.30 AM.

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1 APOLOGIES



2 URGENT BUSINESS

Section 46A(7) of the Local Government Official Information 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 Committee by resolution so decides; 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 and decision, why the item is not on the agenda, and why it cannot be delayed until a subsequent meeting.

The Committee may make a decision on a matter determined to be urgent.

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



3 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Meeting Minutes - Tuesday, 5 April 2005.

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Meeting of the Emergency Services Special Committee held on Tuesday, 5 April 2005, as circulated, be taken as read and now be confirmed.



4 OVERVIEW OF CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND RURAL FIRE ACTIVITY

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of this report is to give the Emergency Services Special Committee an overview of Civil Defence Emergency Management and Rural Fire activity since the last report, and future planned activity.

BACKGROUND

The Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Act 2002 introduced a new framework for Civil Defence and Emergency Management in New Zealand. The legislation has established a regional basis for the leadership of Emergency Management with the establishment of Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups (CDEMG) and Co-ordinating Executive Groups (CEG) to support them. Alongside this regional framework, there is still a strong responsibility for local emergency management that lies with district/city councils. The basis for this management is summarised within the "4R's" of Emergency Management namely Reduction, Readiness, Response and Recovery.

Reduction - Identifying and analysing long terms risks to human life and property from natural or man made hazards: taking steps to eliminate these risks where practicable, and where not, reducing the likelihood and the magnitude of their impact.

Readiness - Developing operational systems and capabilities before an emergency happens. These include self help and response programmes for the general public, as well as specific programmes for emergency services, utilities and other agencies.

Response - Actions taken immediately before, during or directly after an emergency, to save lives and property, as well as help communities to recover.

Recovery - Activities beginning after initial impact has been stabilised and extending until the community's capacity for self help has been restored.

Rural Fire is an integral element of the City's Civil Defence Emergency Management response organisation, although generally involved on a daily basis in dealing with fire events. In this regard they work in the same way as the volunteer forces of the New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS) but under the auspices of the Waitakere Rural Fire Authority. In an emergency, Rural Fire Forces become an element of the overall Civil Defence Emergency Management response and would be tasked accordingly by the Local Controller.

Since December 2003 Council has undertaken a programme aimed specifically at ensuring Council provides for the future development requirements of its Civil Defence Emergency Management organisation. In line with the requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, local plans and supporting Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) have been rewritten based on the requirements of the draft Group Plan, which under the requirements of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002 were formally approved for use at the May 2005 meeting of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group. At that time, the current requirement for any declaration of a state of emergency within Waitakere City to be made under the Civil Defence Act 1983 legislation ceased and the new Waitakere City Local Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan and supporting documents were officially recognised and implemented.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Civil Defence Emergency Management is a responsibility of Council under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002. Civil Defence Emergency Management forms part of Council's strategic framework in that it contributes to the community wellbeing and building strong communities by increasing community readiness for and resilience to emergency events, reducing exposure to such events, and providing for emergency response in the case of such events. The requirement for local planning and co-ordination is essential to meeting these requirements. Rural Fire contributes to the Green Network through protection of rural forest areas and strong communities through its volunteer programme, supporting communities to meet their own emergency needs.

ISSUES

1. New Emergency Reporting Centre

At the last meeting Mr Ellis, Chief Fire Officer, Waitakere District, verbally briefed the Committee on progress on the purchase of sections between the North Western Motorway and the Te Atatu roundabout. As the Committee is aware, the Council and the New Zealand Fire Service are exploring the co-location of Council's Civil Defence Emergency Management Emergency Operating Centre with the New Zealand Fire Service Waitakere Headquarters and a new Te Atatu Fire Station.

Further progress on this proposal has been made since the last meeting and the New Zealand Fire Service and Council staff will provide an update at the meeting.

2. Civil Defence Emergency Management Plans

The Auckland Group Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan was formally approved for use at the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group meeting at the Auckland Regional Council on Friday, 6 May 2005.

With the advent of the Group Plan adoption, the new Waitakere City Local Civil Defence Emergency Management Plan became operative and has now been distributed accordingly. Both Plans will remain in force for a period of five years and are subject to amendment throughout this time. Supporting Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) are not distributed with the Plans and are held within the respective Emergency Operating Centres for operational use requirements.

3. Staff Activity

In addition to responding to community requests for information and assistance and ongoing training activity, Council and Emergency Management staff are also involved in numerous other local, group and national activities as follows:

National

- Membership on the Project Rapid Advisory Working Group (see Section 5 on Project Rapid below);
- Membership on the Local Government Industry Training Organisation Civil Defence Emergency Management Advisory Group;
- Subject matter expert for Project Rapid training packages.

Regional

- Local Government Urban Search and Rescue and General Rescue Coordinator;
- Member of the Welfare Advisory Group;
- Group radio communications development;
- Member of the Regional Rural Fire Incident Management Team;
- Member on the Group Training Development Working Team;
- Warning Systems Development Group;
- Exercise Director for Group end of year exercise;
- Provision of assistance as directing staff for regional training activities;

- Controllers course coordination;
- Provision of Group Controller;
- Chairmanship of Coordinating Executive Group;
- Leadership of Emergency Funding Working Group.

In addition to staff input, Councillor Battersby is also the Deputy Chair of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group.

Local

- Local Welfare Plan update;
- EOC desk file and workstation upgrades;
- Activity Management Plan development;
- Welfare Centre and Volunteer Expansion Programme;
- Local radio communications network upgrade;
- Project Move;
- Cross Council Hazards Working Group;
- Child Safe Working Group;
- North West Emergency Management Committee;
- Waitakere Welfare Advisory Group;
- Initial Response Unit (New Zealand Response Team Three) training and development;
- Ongoing staff professional development courses and training;
- Monthly Coordinated Incident Management Systems training courses;
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority Unit standard training and assessment;
- Rural fire training and management.

As can be seen from the above, Emergency Management staff are involved in a wide range of activities and are acknowledged throughout the region for both local activity levels and the support given to other regional and national requirements. Of particular interest has been an increase in the number of requests for assistance from the public, schools and community groups over the last few months. While not necessarily the primary reason, it is considered that the level of staff service being provided to the public is beginning to have a snowball effect.

During the reporting period, staff were also involved in external assistance activities. Council's Emergency Management Officer, in his capacity as the Acting Principle Rural Fire Officer was deployed with the Regional Incident Management Team for support purposes at the peat fires on Department of Conservation land north of Kaitaia during the first week of May. Council's Civil Defence Emergency Management Officer, in his capacity as the Civil Defence Emergency Management Duty Officer provided overnight portable generator support to houses without power in Shelly Beach in the Rodney District.

The request for assistance came as a result of local fire services being unable to locate a suitable generator through their own emergency management sources. A letter of appreciation for this after hours action was forwarded to the Chief Executive Officer by the Chief Fire Officer, Shelly Beach Rural Fire Force.

4. Rural Fire

Despite the long summer, there were no fires of any major consequence throughout Rural Fire Authority area during the restricted fire season which ended at the end of April. While there were a few instances of permitted fires being burnt in contravention of Bylaw 6, mainly in the number of fires burning at one time, none of these posed a major problem. Through the quick action of the Waitakere Fire Force, a potential runaway fire was stopped at its head in strong wind before it had a chance to reach a pine plantation. This action averted what could have been a potentially serious fire situation. It is pleasing to note the awareness of the public in the rural area of the need to obtain fire permits during the restricted season and the in general responsible attitude to the control of fires in the open. There was the odd occasion of non permitted fires being reported which were investigated and acted upon. There were no fires attended that required any action in terms of fines for negligence.

All Rural Fire Forces and equipment are fully operational and the dedication shown by the Rural Fire volunteers is commended. This was particularly so during the recently ended restricted fire season.

5. Project Rapid

A1-A5

Project Rapid attached at pages A1 to A5 is a joint initiative between the Ministry of Civil Defence and the Local Government Industry Training Organisation for the development of professional training packages for use with the Civil Defence Emergency Management sector, particularly practitioners and volunteers. Overall some 41 packages will be developed and should all be available for use by early 2006. The packages cover a wide range of activity within the Civil Defence Emergency Management sector and Civil Defence Emergency Management Group should utilise the packages based on perceived threats. In order to be able to use the training packages, Civil Defence Emergency Management Group are encouraged to buy in on a per capita basis which the Auckland Civil Defence Emergency Management Group has done. In order to have recognised trainers and assessors, a system of selection and approval will be conducted and nominations forwarded to the Project Advisory Group for approval. Selection will be based on the recommendation of the respective groups through recognised current competency and qualifications. Given the level of current competency within the Waitakere City Civil Defence Emergency Management staff, this Council is well placed to nominate itself as a provider agency for the delivery of a wide range of the Project Rapid packages. While this may not be totally practical to achieve, staff are well placed to be considered for delivery and assessment for a wide range of the Rapid packages.

6. Initial Response Unit

Since the last report three senior members have left the Initial Response Unit (New Zealand Response Team Three) due to work and personal commitments. This currently only leaves the team with 11 members of which only eight are qualified as Response Team members. The remaining three members should achieve this level of qualification within the next few months, thus giving the team a stronger position for any operational deployment. In the mean time, a recruiting programme is being undertaken to recruit new members to replace the recent losses.

As a nationally recognised Response Team, it is of concern that the Team has not been officially requested to assist at any of the declared emergencies in the North Island over the last twelve months. This was particularly so for the recent Tauranga flood and storm event where nine members of the Waitakere and 11 members of the North Shore Response Teams were ready to deploy if required. The continual lack of deployment opportunity is having an affect on team morale and is not confined to our team alone. This particular problem has been represented in strong terms to the Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management and is a subject for discussion at a forthcoming Response Team Managers and Leaders Workshop to be held in Wellington in late June. This concern has also been strongly voiced to the Ministry's Auckland Advisor, Mr John Titmus. A further concern has been the lack of training opportunity with the Auckland based Urban Search and Rescue Task Force. Again this is a subject for further consideration at the workshop mentioned above.

7. Community Welfare and Volunteer Development

Since the last report, considerable work has been carried out in the area of community welfare. The welfare plan has been updated and reflects and expanded contact list plus a revamped section for the care of animals and livestock in an emergency. Further work has been carried out in expanding the numbers of available welfare centres plus the expansion of volunteers. Dedicated training for these new volunteers and group will commence in the near future. A welfare exercise will also be conducted in July in conjunction with our own welfare resources and the New Zealand Guides Association.

As previously reported, training for Council Library Support Staff in welfare response is also planned and will be commenced in August. Once completed this should provide a team of some 30 - 40 staff for ready use to support volunteer welfare resources.

Liaison has also taken place with local iwi as required under the Group Plan. A key issue is the integration of marae for Welfare Centre and volunteer purposes. Work on this has been carried out and will be formally proposed to Te Taumata Runanga at its June 2005 meeting.

8. Communications

Over the last few months, considerable upgrading work has been carried out on the City's Civil Defence Emergency Management radio communication network. Rather than the provision of new equipment, the upgrade has been directed at improving reception capability and an overhaul of the radio repeater site and masts. A particular highlight has been the improvement to radio reception from Huia, a site that has posed considerable reception difficulty in the past. A Radio Spectrum Management Audit is planned for early June and it is not considered there will be any major item of concern emanating from the audit.

CONCLUSION

Despite current staff shortages, Emergency Management staff have continued to progress numerous areas of activity for the overall improvement the City's Civil Defence Emergency Management readiness and response ability. Most of this work is designed to improve currently established processes which will be followed by the practical expansion of the people base for response purposes. In addition, a considerable level of external activity is also being carried out particularly in support of Group requirements. The Rural Fire Forces remain at a high level of capability in terms of numbers and equipment and are well placed to meet their expected requirements.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Overview of Civil Defence Emergency Management and Rural Fire Activity report be received.

Report prepared by: Bill Morley, Manager Emergency Management.

