

**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, 4 APRIL 2006,
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, 6 December 2005

RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Meeting of the Emergency Services Special Committee held on Tuesday, 6 December 2005, as circulated, be taken as read and now be confirmed.



4 OVERVIEW OF CIVIL DEFENCE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 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 activity since the last report, and to outline future planned activity.

BACKGROUND

The Civil Defence Emergency Management 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, and Co-ordinating Executive Groups 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.

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 community well being 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 Operations Centre

Architectus have been engaged to prepare a preliminary design for the new Emergency Operations Centre and the first draft of this design has been reviewed by the Project Control Group. Some minor changes to the preliminary design will be made as a result of the review and a preliminary cost estimate will be prepared by Rider Hunt, who are the Quantity Surveyors for the project. The final preliminary design report and cost estimate will be reported to Council in April 2006 for approval. If the project, and the required budget, is approved by Council, then regular project update reports will be provided to the Projects Special Committee.

2. Pandemic Planning

Committee Members will recall that at the last meeting a report was made on avian bird influenza, and where pandemic planning was at nationally. The presentation also covered the work that was in progress locally, including the development of a pandemic planning guide for Council business continuity planning and emergency management purposes.

Committee Members will also recall that at the time of the last report there was considerable concern over the possibility of a pandemic occurring in the near future. While the threat still exists and is very real, the immediate likelihood is considered by health authorities as small at this time. Notwithstanding this, the current H5N1 virus has now spread from Asia to Europe and into Africa since the New Year, and there is significant concern that the virus could change into a form capable of human to human transmission.

Over the last three months an internal Pandemic Planning Team has been established, headed by the Manager, Emergency Management. At the time of writing this report the team has completed a draft pandemic response plan for Council and is currently awaiting Chief Executive Officer sign-off before implementation. The plan is based upon the 4R's principles of emergency management and identifies both internal (organisation) and external (community) planning requirements. Although the plan is now prepared, there is now the requirement for responsible units and personnel within Council to take responsibility for implementing identified sections of the plan. This will be an on going process and will be monitored by the Pandemic Planning Team. This plan is the first to be completed for any territorial authority within the Auckland region.

Personal protective equipment has also been purchased for contingency purposes, with sufficient items in storage to last for at least a month. Additionally, a programme for improving workplace hygiene has been implemented and this will become normal practice in the future and not just a part of the pandemic contingency.

Ongoing planning for the disposal of the deceased is also ongoing, with two general planning meetings having recently been conducted between the Police, Undertakers Association, Health and relevant Council staff (cemetery and crematorium, Emergency Management). In addition to being of benefit for local planning purposes, these meetings will also help to form a basis for mass burial planning across the region.

Primary responsibility for the management of a pandemic rests with the Ministry of Health. Although the lead agency for any outbreak is Health, any outbreak may also require a declaration of a state of emergency under the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act on a regional or national scale. Health would still manage the health response, but wider scale co-ordination would take place alongside Health under the umbrella of Civil Defence Emergency Management. The primary Civil Defence Emergency Management activities will be logistical support, transportation and communications. Within Council, there is a focus on planning for these Civil Defence Emergency Management activities locally, and also on keeping essential services operating in the community (water, sewerage, transport, network, etc.).

Once the regional and local Health Plans have been completed by the end of May 2006, it is intended that workshops will be held to consider various pandemic scenarios to further strengthen the overall levels of planning and co-ordination to date. Working relationships between Emergency Management personnel and Health personnel in Waitakere have been very strong.

The plan that has been completed is not just for avian bird influenza but for any pandemic situation. While the planning may have taken somewhat longer to complete than initially envisaged, it is the first time that planning for this type of event has ever been undertaken, it is very complex and requires a lot of co-ordination and assistance. Given the urgency to get plans completed, some other general emergency management work has had to be reduced accordingly.

3. Activity

Current activity being undertaken by Emergency Management staff and Council management with Civil Defence Emergency Management responsibilities is as follows:

Nationally

- Continued membership on the Project Rapid Advisory Working Group (national project focussed on developing training material) - this project is now nearing completion and all new training module is due for completion by July.
- Auckland Regional Civil Defence Emergency Management representative to the Ministry of Civil Defence Emergency Management for pandemic planning.
- Auckland Region Civil Defence Emergency Management representative on the National Exercise Programme Operational Planning Team

Regional

- Local Government Urban Search and Rescue and General Rescue Co-ordinator.
- Member of the Welfare Advisory Group.
- Member of the Regional Rural Fire Incident Management Team.
- Member on the Group Training and Professional Development Working Team.
- Co-ordinator of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Pandemic Planning Team
- Co-ordinator for the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Warning Systems Development Group.
- Team Leader for the Civil Defence Emergency Management Working Group for Exercise Pacific Wave to be held in May 2006.
- Member of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Group Capability and Capacity Advisory Group

- Provision of assistance as directing staff for regional training activities.
- Chair of the Co-ordinating Executive Groups.
- Deputy Chair of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups.
- Group Civil Defence Emergency Management Controller.

Local

- Welfare Centre and Volunteer Expansion radio communications network upgrade.
- Move Project Working Party.
- Cross Council Hazards Working Group.
- Child Safe Working Group.
- North West Emergency Management Committee Chair.
- Waitakere Welfare Advisory Group.
- Initial Response Unit (NZRT3) training and development.
- Ongoing staff professional development courses and training.
- Monthly Co-ordinated Incident Management Systems Training Courses.
- NZQA Unit standard training and assessment.
- Rural Fire management, training and organisation.

Despite the amount of time being put into pandemic planning there has been a number of other achievements during the reporting as follows:

- Ongoing development of the Volunteer Rescue Team with nine new members obtaining their Urban Search and Rescue Category 1A qualification.
- Two level two CIMS courses have been conducted for personnel from within the North West Emergency Management Zone. Staff have also participated as directing staff for a Group Level 4 CIMS course.
- Ongoing distribution and promotion of the new Emergency Planning pamphlet for households. To date some 16,000 of the pamphlets have been distributed throughout the community.
- A considerable number of presentations to schools and community groups.
- Completion of all outstanding areas following the Radio Management Spectrum audit of the organisations Radio Communications Network.
- Ongoing improvements relating to emergency welfare response capability and updating of all school contact details.
- The introduction of smart board technology for use as a training and emergency management tool.

The Principle Rural Fire Officer has now returned to work full time after his debilitating accident last April.

4. Rural Fire Overview

Operational

Weather conditions during this summer period have seen an increase in the number of vegetation fires throughout the District. The commitment of our volunteer fire crews has ensured that with one exception, these have been controlled in their early stages with little damage to property or the environment. The exception was a fire involving coastal scrub which started part way up the cliffs at Mercer Bay. This fire burnt over a period of two days and was the subject of a claim on the Rural Fire Fund.

Training

Specialist training for crews recommenced in February and is continuing with Pump Operation. Personal Safety and Fire Science courses have been held with Basic Fire-fighters, and Fire Boss courses programmed for the next month. Currently crew skill sets are being expanded to include the qualification as Urban Search and Rescue Cat 1A responders. This will allow a greater level of integration of Council's response resources in a range of emergency situations. Normal on-station maintenance training continued throughout.

A specific training program has been developed for the Arataki crew who are progressing toward the National Certificate (Level 2) in vegetation fire-fighting.

Management

An OSH inspection was recently carried out on stations with only minor defects found. These are being rectified at the present time. An influx of new members at all stations is encouraging; although it has the effect of increasing the workload of the unit's training officers.

Memorandums of Understanding have been signed off between stations. These provide for the possible amalgamation of crews in a pandemic situation. This includes an agreement between Karekare Station and the Piha Fire District (NZ Fire Service).

An up-grade of protective and dress uniform is being carried out to bring crews up to standard, and additional stocks of medically protective equipment is being held specific to a pandemic situation occurring.

A meeting was held with Auckland Regional Council representatives in an attempt to gain clarification of the impact on Waitakere's Fire Control Bylaw of their "Air Land and Water Plan" with specific regard to smoke discharge. Discussions are continuing and Council will be kept informed of any developments.

The continuing commitment of our volunteer fire-fighting crews and their families in giving their time and energy toward the protection of the City is appreciated.

CONCLUSION

The first three months of this year continues to be an extremely busy time for all staff from a local level perspective and Civil Defence Emergency Management Group co-ordination activity. While well resourced under normal staffing levels compared to other Councils, there is still only so much that can be achieved at any given time, particularly given the increasing amount of Group related activity staff are required to carry out in addition to their normal work requirements. Despite this, our Civil Defence Emergency Management and Rural Fire organisational arrangements remain effective for local emergency readiness and response purposes.

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

