

To: SOCIAL WORK (OPERATIONS AND SERVICES) SUB COMMITTEE		Subject: EMERGENCY PLANNING - ANNUAL UPDATE
From: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK		
Date: 24 February 2004	Ref: EC/February /2004	

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To inform Committee of the progress made in Emergency Planning within Social Work over the past year.

## 2. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Emergency Planning has been an integral part of the Department's function since the inception of North Lanarkshire Council.
- 2.2 Every local authority is faced with the possibility of having to cope with the effects of a major civil emergency which would place an impossible burden upon the emergency services. Emergency Planning helps the Council prepare for this eventuality.
- 2.3 Each Department has their own Emergency Procedures Plan with the overall co-ordination of these Plans being done through the corporate Emergency Procedures Plan. There are also bi-monthly meetings of the Departmental Emergencies Co-ordination Group which oversees the development of all Emergencies Planning.
- 2.4 The role of the Social Work Department would be to help with the social and welfare needs of residents of North Lanarkshire who may be effected either directly or indirectly by a major incident.

## 3. DEVELOPMENTS

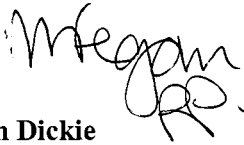
- 3.1. The Department has a store of emergency supplies in Coatbridge at Merrystone Care Base to allow 24-hour access. The supplies range from sleeping bags, emergency Arctic blankets to jogging suits, torches etc. These could be used in the event of any residents within North Lanarkshire being evacuated to Emergency Rest Centres.
- 3.2. In collaboration with the Corporate Emergencies Planning Unit and other Departments, 115 Emergency Rest Centres have been identified and documented within the North Lanarkshire Council area. All these are within Council facilities. There are also other buildings that can be accessed through the faith communities.  
These Centres would provide temporary alternative accommodation for residents of North Lanarkshire if any evacuation during an emergency incident were required. Although Rest Centres would be managed by the Housing & Property Services Department there would be a high staff input from Social Work.

- 3.3. The Department delivers services on a 24-hour/ seven days a week basis and Emergency Evacuation Plans have been written and put in place for all Social Work Residential & Day Care Units. This has also necessitated the identification of Temporary Evacuation Premises for all units in the event of a complete immediate evacuation of any unit.
- 3.4. Emergency Plans & Business Continuity Plans for Merrystone Care Base have also been written to cover any untoward eventualities within the Base or to the telecommunication structure.
- 3.5. After the recent temporary evacuation of the Wishaw Area Team Office Evacuation & Business Continuity Plans are being written to cover this eventuality. These will also be progressed on a corporate basis.
- 3.6. Business Continuity Plans for the Alert - Community Alarm service based at Merrystone Care Base are also being written to take into account failure of Communication Links.
- 3.7. Business Continuity Plans for the Social Work Information System (the main data system that service users information is stored in) are also being progressed.
- 3.8. Relevant staff continue to be sent to Easingwold Emergency Planning College (part of the UK Government Cabinet Office) as and when relevant courses are advertised.
- 3.9. The Department continues to be involved with the Emergencies Planning Unit and Housing & Property Services Department in organising and training staff in Exercise Odyssey - an awareness exercise in Emergency Planning & responses. Approximately 260 social work staff have been on this training event. Another two Exercises are planned for this year, which will enable most of the recently appointed staff to attend.
- 3.10. A further Live "Exercise Odyssey" is planned for later this year. This will be in conjunction with the Emergencies Planning Unit and Housing & Property Services Department and will involve opening an Emergency Rest Centre. This is to ensure continuity of staff training and to ensure points that were raised during the last "Live" Exercise are put into practice.
- 3.11. Joint training events are also planned with Housing & Property services Department to facilitate joint working within the Emergency Rest Centres as both Departments will provide the majority of staff in the event of an Emergency Rest Centre being opened.
- 3.12. In September 2003 the Department organised and hosted a major conference on staff care in the event of a major emergency. This was titled "Challenge to Practice in the Future" and was opened by the Chief Executive. The main speaker was Dr Marion Gibson from Staff Care Services in Northern Ireland who is a world expert in this area.
- 3.13. The Lanarkshire Major Incident & Support Team (comprised of staff volunteers from North Lanarkshire Council Social Work, South Lanarkshire Council Social Work & Lanarkshire Primary Health Care) continues to be strengthened. Currently there are 23 North Lanarkshire Social Work staff involved. There are 3 main training events per year for staff with a major conference being proposed for later this year. This will be held within North Lanarkshire.
- 3.14. The Department also sends staff when places are available to the Scottish Executive Emergency Awareness Training sessions and the Lanarkshire Joint Local Training Initiatives.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the progress made
- (ii) seek further reports to Committee on an annual basis
- (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report



**Jim Dickie**  
**Director of Social Work**  
**(24 February 2004)**

*For further information on this report please contact Edward Cherrie, Senior IM & T Officer  
TEL: (01698 332028)*