



---

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY  
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT

*Committee Report*

---

Item No. 6

**Meeting: CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE: 31 JANUARY 2011**

**Subject: GREAT NORTH RUN 2010**

***Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer***

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The 30th Great North Run was held on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The event, sponsored by BUPA, is now a firm fixture in the international sporting calendar and has become embedded in our cultural heritage as the premier event in the North East.
- 1.2 This report informs Members of the detailed planning required to ensure that the event is delivered safely.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Great North Run is the World's largest half marathon with runners from every postcode area in the UK being represented. This year there were 54,000 entrants from around the world.
- 2.2 A number of diverse events take place during the Great North Run weekend in addition to the main half marathon. These include the junior categories, i.e. 9, 10, and 11, and 12 to 16 year groups competing over 1 to 2 miles. The junior races are held on the Saturday with both events starting and finishing on Newcastle Quayside. This year there was also a Mini North Run over a distance of 1 mile for children from 3 to 8 years.
- 2.3 The main event though is the half-marathon race held on the Sunday. The BBC provides extensive coverage of the day beginning with top presenters interviewing participants including elite athletes from around the world, show business personalities, and 'fun runners' most of whom take part for sponsorship and raise large amounts to support a host of charities.
- 2.4 Following the start by local celebrities Ant and Dec, a now traditional element was the Red Arrows flying over the runners on the Tyne Bridge at 11.00 o'clock releasing red white and blue smoke and providing an iconic image recognised worldwide. The Red Arrows later appeared at the Finish to provide a spectacular display over South Shields for runners, spectators and television viewers.

- 2.5 This year's race was won by Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie, widely recognised as the world's greatest ever distance runner. The women's title went to Berhane Adere also from Ethiopia.

### **3 THE COURSE**

- 3.1 The race begins on the Central Motorway in Newcastle, and crosses the Tyne Bridge into Gateshead. The route then proceeds along the A184 past the Gateshead International Stadium on the Felling By-pass before turning onto the A194 at White Mare Pool. It then turns onto the A1300 John Reid Road, then Prince Edward Road towards the coast, and finishes on the seafront in South Shields opposite the Bamburgh Public House. All of these roads are closed off to normal vehicular traffic to ensure the safety of the participants.
- 3.2 A detailed aspect of the pre-planning arrangements relate to the road closure and re-opening schedules which have to be carefully coordinated to ensure as little disruption as possible, and to ensure the speedy and safe restoration of the highway system.

### **4 SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP**

- 4.1 Towards the end of the 1990s the Northumbria Senior Officer Co-ordination Group (now the Local Resilience Forum) agreed a Safer Events Policy with the aim of ensuring that public events taking place in the Northumbria Police area were delivered safely.
- 4.2 The Great North Run Safety Advisory Group was formally established in 1999. Prior to that time, during the development of the event in the 1980s and 1990s safety procedures were developed and refined through a less formal planning group comprising relevant organisations that would meet prior to each Event to co-ordinate the safety arrangements for the Run.

#### Northumbria LRF Safer Events Policy

- 4.3 In accordance with nationally recognised good practice a Safer Events Policy was formulated in 1999 jointly between:
- Local Authorities in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear;
  - Northumbria Police;
  - North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust;
  - Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service;
  - Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service;
  - Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit; and
  - Northumberland Emergency Planning Department.
- 4.4 Its purpose is to provide a rational framework for organisations to ensure event safety and ensure uniformity in the application of safety requirements and guidance across the locality.

- 4.5 The Policy requires that for any relevant event, irrespective of licensing requirements, a Safety Advisory Group be established and an 'Event Safety Management Plan' be produced by the event organiser.
- 4.6 In general terms membership of a safety advisory group comprises representatives of the core constituent bodies (local authority, police, fire and rescue service, ambulance service and emergency planning unit) together with the event organiser and any other body considered appropriate.
- 4.7 Safety Advisory Groups are ordinarily co-ordinated and Chaired by a senior representative of the lead local authority.

#### Great North Run Safety Advisory Group – Terms of Reference

- 4.8 The role of the Great North Run Safety Advisory Group is to ensure, as far as possible, that any risk to public, participant or worker safety is minimised. In particular the Safety Advisory Group:
- Ensures that a Safety Officer is appointed who can demonstrate their competence throughout the planning and the duration of the event;
  - Ensures that the Event Safety Management Plan is validated by all Safety Advisory Group members;
  - Ensures that there is an agreed contingency plan in existence for dealing with major incidents;
  - Ensures that, when appropriate, a Statement of Intent is prepared which sets out the responsibilities of the relevant organisations involved in the event; and
  - Ensures that a thorough debrief is held after the event, making recommendations as necessary.
- 4.9 It should be noted that the Great North Run does not require an entertainment licence from the local authority and that the Safety Advisory Group approach is an essential aspect of planning for the event.

#### Great North Run Safety Advisory Group – Membership

- 4.10 In respect of the Great North Run the core constituent members of the Safety Advisory Group are:
- South Tyneside Council
  - Gateshead Council
  - Newcastle City Council
  - Tyne & Wear Emergency Planning Unit
  - Northumbria Police
  - Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service

- North East Ambulance Service

4.11 South Tyneside Council is the lead local authority, and as such has responsibility for co-ordinating and chairing the Group.

4.12 The event organiser, Nova International Limited, is represented at meetings of the Great North Run Safety Advisory Group.

#### Great North Run Safety Advisory Group - Working Groups

4.13 The scale of the event demands significant detailed planning and organisation and for this purpose a number of working groups, overseen by the Safety Advisory Group, have been established, each of which focuses on particular planning aspects. These working groups are as follows:

- Start Working Group;
- Course Working Group;
- Finish Working Group;
- Medical Working Group;
- Traffic and Travel Working Group;
- Event Control Working Group; and
- Contingency Planning Working Group.

4.14 Each of these working groups meets on a regular basis over a number of months in advance of the event and is responsible for the planning and development of respective aspects of the event. This work culminates in the production of the Event Safety Management Plan for consideration and agreement of the Safety Advisory Group.

#### Start Working Group

4.15 The 'Start Working Group' is concerned with safety planning issues concerned with the start of the event including such matters as the start infrastructure, start scheduling, stewarding and participant baggage handling. The group meets on a 6 weekly basis from May onwards.

#### Course Working Group

4.16 The 'Course Working Group' is concerned with safety planning issues associated with the route of the course and their work extends to matters such as the scheduling of road closures and re-opening, the provision of water stations, stewarding and spectator management. The Course Working Group meets on a 6-8 weekly cycle from February/March onwards.

#### Finish Working Group

- 4.17 The 'Finish Working Group' is responsible for safety planning aspects associated with the finish infrastructure, including matters such as stewarding, security, crowd management and all matters relating to the safety of ancillary events held in the locality of the event finish. The Finish Working Group meets on a 6 weekly basis from May onwards.

#### Medical Working Group

- 4.18 The 'Medical Working Group' is responsible for the planning of all aspects of medical provision in relation to the event extending to such matters as the provision of first aid/medical treatment, Field Hospital provision, casualty and fatality procedures. The Medical Working Group meets on a 6 weekly basis following the event debrief of the previous year's event (October/November) through to completion of the Event Safety Management Plan. From 3 months prior to the event the Medical Working Group meets on a monthly basis – and more frequently if considered necessary.

#### Traffic & Travel Working Group

- 4.19 The 'Traffic and Travel Working Group' is responsible for the development of the traffic management plan which sets out vehicular access and egress routes, car parking, Metro, ferry and road signage etc. Further the working group is responsible for the regional public transport planning ensuring the adequacy of public transport provision for the event. The Traffic and Travel Working Group meets on a 6-8 weekly basis from February/March onwards.

#### Event Control Working Group

- 4.20 The 'Event Control Working Group' is concerned with planning the necessary support infrastructure to ensure that the event is safely delivered; such support infrastructure extends to the establishment of the necessary 'Command and Communications Structure' identifying the lines of communication and responsibilities of personnel throughout the day of the event. The Event Control Working Group meets twice between July and the finalisation of the Event Safety Management Plan.

#### Contingency Planning Working Group

- 4.21 A 'Contingency Planning Working Group' is established in the event of a particular issue being identified that requires a specific planning approach. As such the membership of this working group would be determined according to the particular issue. For the 2010 event a working group was established to test the road closure and re-opening arrangements and to review the loss of the Tyne Bridge route options.

## Event Safety Management Plan

- 4.22 The in-depth event safety planning undertaken by each of the working groups contributes to and culminates in the production of a comprehensive Event Safety Management Plan by Nova International. Throughout this planning process, progress is formally reported to the Safety Advisory Group which meets on a 6-8 weekly basis.
- 4.23 The Event Safety Management Plan is submitted in draft form to the Safety Advisory Group in late August/early September. In the case of the 2010 Great North Run the Event Safety Management Plan was submitted to the Safety Advisory Group at its meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010.
- 4.24 Members of the Safety Advisory Group were requested to consider the Event Safety Management Plan in advance of reconvening for its final pre-event meeting.
- 4.25 The Safety Advisory Group held its final pre-event meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2010 and formally accepted the Event Safety Management Plan as being fit-for-purpose.

## **5 EVENT SAFETY CONTROL**

- 5.1 'Event Control' was located in the Police 'Gold Command' Suite, Southern Communications Centre at Mill Bank, South Shields, from where the safety aspects of the event were monitored by the Police, the Event Safety Officer and representatives of the other relevant organisations including the three Local Authorities.
- 5.2 The Plan has a well developed communications system through which information can be disseminated from Event Control to the Race Director and through to the relevant Directors (Start, Course and Finish) and their staff.
- 5.3 The emergency procedures are well rehearsed, and should an incident have occurred which necessitated a Major Incident response, then Event Control would have become the multi-agency 'Strategic Control'. Arrangements are also in place for the Event Safety Officer to relinquish command to the Police in the event of a major incident, and to make all event resources available to respond to the situation.

## **6 EVENT DE-BRIEF**

- 6.1 Every year following the event each of the Working Groups reconvenes to hold a debrief in respect of their area of planning responsibility. These meetings take place in the weeks immediately following the event and their findings are then formally reported to the Safety Advisory Group.

- 6.2 The Safety Advisory Group met in November 2010 to consider what worked well, and which aspects could possibly be improved for future events. The meeting was held in accordance with the LRF De-brief Protocol, and is part of the continuous process of striving to improve the safety of the Run.
- 6.3 The de-brief meeting identified 24 items to be addressed where improvements can be made, and an Action Plan has been developed whereby particular actions are allocated to the appropriate Working Group. This will allow the Safety Advisory Group to oversee the process and ensure the identified improvements are actioned.
- 6.4 The majority of these items are minor such as 'tweaks' to transport arrangements and parking facilities which will help to improve the experience for runners and spectators. It was particularly pleasing to note that the Medical Working Group reported that although the Field Hospital at the Finish did experience high demand, the Medical Team arrangements worked effectively.
- 6.5 Although the 2010 Run was another great success, and the detailed safety arrangements set out in the Event Safety Management Plan worked well, the Safety Advisory Group is constantly seeking to improve the safety management arrangements in place for the event.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The comprehensive safety planning arrangements for the event have aided in the delivery of a successful 30<sup>th</sup> Great North Run.
- 7.2 A wide-ranging de-brief process is now underway which will help inform further improvements in the planning arrangements for next year's event.

## **8 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the collaborative arrangements in place for ensuring the effective planning and management of safety for the Great North Run.

---

### **Background Papers**

The under-mentioned Background Papers relate to the subject matter of the above report and are held by the Service Lead – Risk Management and Resilience, South Tyneside Council:

- BUPA Great North Run 2010 – Event Safety Plan.
- Great North Run Safety Advisory Group Minutes 2010.

- Great North Run Safety Advisory Group Working Group Minutes 2010.
- Northumbria LRF – Safer Events Policy.
- Health and Safety Executive – The Event Safety Guide (HSG195)