



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT**

Committee Report

Meeting: CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE: 18th JANUARY 2010

Subject: GREAT NORTH RUN 2009

Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 2009 Great North Run (GNR) took place this year on Sunday, 20th October. The event, which is sponsored by BUPA, is now a fixture in the international sporting calendar, and has become part of the cultural heritage of the North East.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is inform Members of the detailed planning involved in preparing for the safety aspects of the event, and the involvement of Newcastle, Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils, and the Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit in the development and implementation of those arrangements.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Great North Run is the World's largest half marathon, and since its inception in 1981 over half a million runners have taken part, with runners from every postcode area in the UK being represented. This year there were 54,000 entrants, from around the world.
- 2.2 There are many diverse events taking 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 13.1 mile race held on the Sunday, which starts 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 the Coast Road, 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.
- 2.4 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.

3 SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

- 3.1 In accordance with the policy approved by the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum, a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) had been established to ensure the Event was organised and managed in a safe manner. The SAG includes representatives of; Northumbria Police, Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service, North East Ambulance Service, Nova International, the Emergency Planning Unit, Newcastle City Council, and Gateshead Council. It is chaired by a Senior Officer from South Tyneside Council.
- 3.2 The SAG met on a number of occasions prior to the event, to monitor the detailed preparations being undertaken in the various working groups, and oversee the safety procedures that were being developed. All of these procedures were incorporated into the comprehensive 'Event Safety Plan' which details the agreed operational procedures that have been put in place for the event, and to define the key roles and responsibilities in relation to the safe management of the Run.
- 3.3 The 6 SAG working groups are;

Event Control,	Start,	Course,
Contingency Plans,	Finish,	Medical.

The Event Safety Plan considers the subjects of traffic management, medical arrangements, course design, emergency management and contingency planning etc., all of which are covered by the work of the sub-groups.

- 3.4 The Event Safety Plan, which is written to ensure it 'dove-tails' with the Major Incident / Emergency response arrangements of the three participating local authorities, must be endorsed by all members of the SAG before the Run can proceed. It is a dynamic document, and had been fully reviewed following the 2008 Run, with potential improvements incorporated to enhance the arrangements for the 2009 event.

4 EVENT SAFETY CONTROL

- 4.1 The Event Safety Control was located in the Police 'Gold Command' Room, Southern Communications Centre at Mill Bank, South Shields, from where the safety aspects of the Run were monitored by the Police, the Event Safety Officer and representatives of the other relevant organisations.
- 4.2 The Event Safety Plan has a well structured 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. Within each Directorate are a number of subdivisions; including medical, highways and event suppliers, to name a few.

- 4.3 The emergency procedures are well rehearsed, and should an incident have occurred which necessitated a Major Incident response, then the Event Safety Control would have become the multi-agency 'Strategic Control'. Arrangements were also agreed 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 help manage the situation.

5 EVENT DE-BRIEF

- 5.1 The Safety Advisory Group met on the 24th November 2009, to consider what had 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.
- 5.2 Although the 2009 Run was another great success, and the detailed safety arrangements set out in the Event Safety Plan worked well, the SAG is constantly seeking to improve the safety, and will strive to improve these further for next year's event.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Due to detailed safety arrangements established prior to the event, the Great North Run was once again a great success, and the Event Safety Control was able to handle competently all of the incidents which occurred on the day.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Members are asked to note this Report and to approve involvement of the EPU in the preparations for the 2010 Great North Run.

Background Papers

The under-mentioned Background Papers relate to the subject matter of the above report and are held in the EPU office:-

- BUPA Great North Run 2009 – Event Safety Plan.
- Northumbria LRF - Event Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Executive – The Event Safety Guide (HSG195)

