

EDINBURGH FIRES 19 DECEMBER 2008

Three major fires in Edinburgh on Friday 19 December 2008 caused problems for Lothian and Borders Fire & Rescue Service.

Hundreds of people had to be evacuated when a major fire broke out at an Indian restaurant on Victoria Street in the Grassmarket area of the city.

Crews also tackled a blaze at a hairdressers on Frederick Street and a sheltered housing complex in Liberton.

There were no injuries and joint

investigations into the fires were conducted by the fire service and Lothian and Borders Police.

An eye witness reported that:



"The flames were lighting up the sky"

The alarm was raised at Kushi's restaurant in Victoria Street about 2010 hours on Friday 19 December 2008.

Victoria Street was cordoned off while fire crews brought the restaurant blaze under

control.

Just under an hour after the incident, fire crews attended the second fire in the basement of a hairdressers in Frederick Street. Residents were evacuated from a nearby B&B.

Elsewhere, 14 fire-fighters tackled a blaze at a sheltered housing complex on Moredun Park Street. It was thought to have been caused by a chip pan. A 65-year-old woman was rescued from the property.

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Scottish Borders Council leads the way in Business Continuity

Scottish Borders Council is the first local authority in the whole of the UK to achieve the new British Standard for business continuity management.

Achieving the Standard required the Council to prove that it has robust plans in place to continue its essential operations in the event of any eventuality from a minor incident to a major disaster.

The Standard (BS 25999) is awarded by the British Standards Institution (BSI). The Council achieved this on 18 November following a rigorous four-day audit.



Exercise Hutton: Torness Power Station

British Energy conducted their annual Counter Terrorist Exercise at Torness Power Station on Wednesday 12th November 2008.



The protestors then locked themselves onto the gate, blocking access and egress to Torness.

Exercise Hutton was designed to demonstrate to the Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS) that the power station is operating in compliance with its site security plan as required under the Nuclear Industries Security Regulation 2003 (NISR 2003).

British Energy led the exercise which involved security and other staff from the power station as well as the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) and Lothian and Borders Police.

The exercise commenced at approximately 0915 hrs (on-site) and lasted over 3 hours.

The exercise consisted of a number of protestors approaching the main entrance to Torness.

The protestors then locked themselves onto the gate and each other, blocking access and egress to Torness.

The protestors at the main gate were acting as a decoy, and as Lothian and Borders Police dealt with the 'lock on', 2 other persons scaled the perimeter fence and entered the grounds of the Power Station.

The exercise took place in very cold, but dry, weather and the demonstrators can be praised for their part in the exercise!

The following benefits were gained as a result of the exercise:

Communications between the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) and Lothian and Borders Police (LBP) are now improved.

A better understanding now exists regarding the protocol between the CNC and LBP, especially in relation to command and control and dealing with firearms incidents.

British Energy fully tested their Site Security plan and can now make the necessary amendments to it, based on the debrief.

Rest Centre Software Project

The Lothian and Borders pilot project to test the Frontworks Emergency Rest Centre management system has resulted in agreement from the Scottish Government to provide funding for two years to allow the system to be made available throughout Scotland from April 2009.

The Frontworks ERC system was developed initially through close cooperation between Scottish Borders Council and Edinburgh based company Frontworks. It was then tested and developed further following a two year training and exercising programme organised by the Lothian and Borders SCG Rest Centre Working Group. All five local authorities and the police contributed to delivering a successful outcome to this programme.

The system was demonstrated to all Scottish local authorities during the pilot project period when it became clear that there was overwhelming support for it to be adopted nationally. The Scottish Government has now agreed to assist with funding for the next 2 years.



FAILURE OF MAINS GAS SUPPLY TO KELSO 1 DECEMBER 2008

A telephone call reporting the failure of gas supply to a school in Kelso was the first indication of a widespread failure of the mains gas supply to 3000 customers.

Contact with Scotia Gas Networks (SGN), quickly confirmed the incident but it took some hours to clarify the extent and implications of the disruption.

The prevailing winter weather conditions were snow and sub zero temperatures and most Council staff were on public holiday.

The initial response by emergency planning was to alert colleagues within Social Work and NHS Borders with a view to activating established procedures to ensure that vulnerable people in the community would be supported.

A joint co-ordination team held its first meeting later that day and, based on the information from SGN that indicated that customers could be off supply for several days, agreed to manage the incident on a multi-agency

basis.

Vulnerable people lists were collated and a joint team was established to contact those on the lists.

A Drop-in Centre was



The weather conditions were snow and sub zero temperatures

also established in Kelso for the supply of warmth and hot food to those without gas. This centre was supported by the Red Cross.

The Bordercare out of hours number was advertised for use by anyone requiring support and cases were referred to the Social Work Emergency Duty Team (EDT).

The task for SGN was to establish the cause of the failure and thereafter individually turn-off all 3000 customers before restoring the gas supply. To facilitate

the process SGN established a base in Kelso High School from where they managed their recovery operation and also co-ordinated the supply and delivery of electric heaters and cooking rings to those without gas. Engineers, managers and other staff from across Scotland were brought in to carry-out the restoration process. An SCN manager based at Kelso acted as a link with that operation while daily updates via teleconference were provided by an Operation Director based in Edinburgh

The joint SBC/NHS co-ordination team met again on Tuesday 2 December and, following an update from SGN and taking account of the Met Office forecast indicating minus 7 degrees, decided that the Drop-in Centre would operate overnight to ensure people had somewhere warm to go if required. This facility was widely advertised on the local radio stations. The joint team met at least twice daily throughout the event.

By Tuesday 2 December just under 50% of customers had their gas supplies restored leaving around 1600 facing a second night without heating. It was anticipated that a further 750 premises would be re-connected on Wednesday 3 December with the remainder completed the following day. In the event only a small number of customers were still without gas on Thursday 4 December. The operation was concluded by Friday 5 December 2008.

The fact that Scottish Borders Council had conducted an exercise in June 2007 to specifically test a response to this type of event proved of great value. The key players from Social Work and NHS Borders were able to work together effectively and take a pro-active approach to offering assistance to the vulnerable members of the community. The real event did however highlight some additional issues about system inter-operability and these need to be addressed.

Internal and multi-agency de-briefs are underway with a view to identifying 'Lessons Learned' and actions required for the future and these will be reported in due course.

EDINBURGH'S HOGMANAY 2008

The 16th Hogmanay, Edinburgh Street Party, was again voted a huge success as 100,000 partygoers helped to see in 2009.

Planning for the event spanned many months commencing in June 2008 and involved many agencies including; Lothian and Borders Police, City of Edinburgh Council, Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service, the Scottish Ambulance Service, British Red Cross, St Andrew's Ambulance Association, G4S Security, British Transport Police and the event organisers Unique Events.

This year's event saw the first ever use of laser beams and theatrical smoke along the full length of Princes Street and the Mound. As a result the Civil Aviation Authority were added to the many agencies involved, as they required to be consulted first!

A number of multi agency Events Planning Operations Group meetings were held throughout the year at various venues, with road closures time-lined, first aid capabilities examined, policing and stewarding ratified, all of which was done in consultation with the businesses and residents who found themselves within the event arena.

Table Top exercises were planned and hosted by the CEC, the SAS and L&B police, where contingencies for a variety of scenarios were discussed and debated.

On the afternoon of the 31st itself, staff from the majority of participating agencies gathered within the Joint Agency Control Centre (JACC), at Police HQ, from where command and control of the event was completed.

The event passed with only minor issues, which can largely be attributed to good communication, dedicated partnership working and detailed planning from an early date.

All the agencies involved can be proud that they assisted in once again making Edinburgh the focal point of Scotland's New Year celebrations, in an event that was transmitted round the world!



Exercise Straiton

On 19 November 2008 Midlothian Council held a table-top exercise to test the Straiton Caravan Park Subsidence Plan.

The Caravan Park is sited above old limestone mine workings and the plan was written as the result of a site survey conducted by civil engineers which indicated that there was a possibility of future subsidence at the site.

The exercise was attended by representatives from the Police, Fire Service and the Council.

The scenario saw two separate subsidences occurring at the site following a period of prolonged heavy rainfall.

It tested the notification process of the plan and the provision of a suitable Rest Center. It also highlighted some of the issues that could be expected to arise with an incident on this site such as emergency procedures at the site, site protection, medical care, insurance, re-housing, repair of site, re-occupation, care of pets, counselling and support for the residents.

Contact Information

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