

## Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2010 County Emergency Planning

“An Emergency is an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the UK, the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK”

The seminar title may perhaps be a misnomer as who can plan an emergency, but Ian Good, Head of Emergency Management for Surrey County Council, soon put us right. To a packed room, he explained how we plan to manage an emergency.



Over a map of Surrey, he gradually added various overlays. First the hazardous sites, such as hazardous storage sites, then the railways, the rivers, the main roads, the pipelines and gas mains and, last but not least, the many air corridors over Surrey, even though neither Gatwick nor Heathrow are actually in the county.

While we were all then becoming nervous about ever again setting foot outside the front door, he advised that, apart from plane crashes and terrorism, there are many other

incidents handled by his team. Foot and mouth outbreaks, flooding, major road traffic incidents, fires and chemical spills are all an everyday risk. With larger aircraft and vehicles, and numbers increasing steadily, the risks and potential of substantial loss of life also increase.

Ian described the various categories and involvements of different authorities in each. The Police are always the lead authority, although the specific nature of each incident dictates the primary emergency service(s). It is the Local Authority who has the responsibility of ensuring all can return to normal, or as near normal as possible once the initial emergency is resolved, and that includes the management of temporary mortuaries, transport of people (alive or dead) and also the continuity of businesses and communities.

Far too much information to pack into a short report but suffice to say all delegates left with a totally different outlook than before. One point to note for all Highway Engineers of any discipline – while the highways are considered as hazard potentials, they are also essential to the resolution of any incident or emergency which may occur.

We owe considerable thanks to Ian Good for taking time out to give us this very interesting and useful presentation.