

# EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

## MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

**28 APRIL 2023**

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am at the Emergency Planning Annex, Stockton Police Station, Bishop Street, Stockton-on-Tees.

### **Present:**

Councillor: Councillor Mike Smith (Stockton Borough Council) (In the Chair)

Councillors: Councillor Eric Polano (Middlesbrough Borough Council)  
Councillor Cliff Foggo (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)

Officers: Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer  
Jon Hepworth, Group Accountant (Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)  
David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team

### **20. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Tom Cassidy (Hartlepool Borough Council).

### **21. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

### **22. Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2022**

Received

### **23. Activity Report** (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

#### **Purpose of report**

To assist members of the EPJC in overseeing the performance and effectiveness of the Emergency Planning Unit and its value to the four unitary authorities.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported on progress against the EPU's action plan for 2022/23 highlighting the significant areas of work completed. It was highlighted that the 2023/24 work plan would include the training of Elected Members. Each borough undertakes this role differently

and following elections in May there would be a number of new members requiring familiarisation with Civil Contingencies.

Progress against the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) action plan was also reported with details of the key activities delivered to date. Work also continued on the recommendations from the National Preparedness Commission following the non-statutory review of the Civil Contingencies Act.

During his report the Chief Emergency Planning Officer highlighted the changing nature of industrial risks across the Cleveland area, many brought through the move towards green energies. Members referred to the proposed import of lithium ore at Tees Port and the changing electricity generation landscape. A Member asked if the EPU had been consulted on the proposals to build a 5000 seater entertainment arena in Redcar. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer identified that the Unit hadn't been consulted as yet, but are engaged with the planning process so are likely to be consulted if the venue was to go ahead. The Chief EPO also highlighted the incoming "Martyn's Law" which will require venues to ensure that they are prepared for and ready to respond in the event of an attack.

### **Decision**

That the Chief Emergency Planning Officer continues to develop the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit Annual Action Plan and the EPJC standard report to provide assurance to Emergency Planning Joint Committee members that the key considerations continue to be met and that members are updated at the quarterly meetings and that any amendments / additional actions are referenced.

## **24. Financial Management Update Report** (*Director of Resources and Development and Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

### **Purpose of report**

To provide details of the forecast outturn as at 31st January, 2023 for current financial year ending 31st March, 2023.

To propose the budget for 2023/24 and contributions to be requested from Councils.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Group Accountant reported on the outturn for the Emergency Planning Unit budget for 2023/24 stating that as predicted in the report, the projected net outturn was nil. There had been a favourable variance on staffing costs due to the redistribution of management costs linked to activity drivers and reflects the greater amount of time spent on LRF and the supervision of 4 new staff funded by the Pilot Grant. This is offset by reduced income from Service Level Agreement recharges to external bodies, i.e. the Cleveland Police and Environment Agency.

In relation to the Local Resilience Forum, the Group Accountant reported that the net position showed an underspend of £44,000 which was to be carried forward to 2023/23. The LRF budget included the Pilot Funding grant which was £202,000 and, therefore, £6,000 less than estimated at the time of setting the budget. This was a Section 31 non-ring-fenced grant awarded by the Government Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities.

The Group Accountant reported that 2023/24 would be the first year of a formal budget being set for the EPU and LRF in order to establish the necessary contributions from local authorities. The previous five-year agreement on funding had ended and the new budget allowed for a proper review of costs and income to allow contributions to be set accordingly.

For the 2023/24 the recommended Local Authority contributions were £321,000, which was a 5% increase compared to the previous year. The remainder of the budget would be met by income from fees and recharges. This had required a £21,000 release of reserves to balance the budget. Staffing costs had also been inflated to reflect the current year pay award exceeding the estimate in addition to an amount to allow for an assumed pay award from April, 2023.

Details of the proposed budgets were set out in the report.

### **Decision**

1. That the outturn forecast for 2022/23 be noted.
2. That the 2023/24 budgets for Emergency Planning including the 5% increase in the Contribution from each Council be approved.
3. That the 2023/24 Local Resilience Forum (LRF) budget be approved.

## **25. The UK Government Resilience Framework** (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

### **Purpose of report**

To highlight the publication of the UK Government Resilience Framework issued 19/12/2022 and to provide Emergency Planning Joint Committee members with an overview of the key future impacts on the Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported on the UK Government Resilience Framework is built on three core principles:

- 1 A shared understanding of the risks we face is foundational: it must underpin everything that we do to prepare for and recover from crises;
- 2 Prevention rather than cure wherever possible: resilience-building spans the whole risk cycle so we must focus effort across the cycle, particularly before crises happen;
- 3 Resilience is a 'whole of society' endeavour, so we must be more transparent and empower everyone to make a contribution.

The new framework focuses on how resilience can be built across six key thematic areas: -

- Understanding risk
- Responsibilities and accountability
- Partnerships
- Communities
- Investment
- Skills

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer highlighted the two appendices to the report. Appendix 1 provided a summary of the specific actions built around these key thematic areas for delivery by 2030. The government highlighted that there is a desire to integrate resilience into a number of policies, not least Levelling Up. Appendix 2 provides further detail on the framework in relation to proposed future leadership and accountability of LRFs and place making policy. How this would apply to the Cleveland LRF area is uncertain at the current time.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the government was looking to identify eight pilot areas across the country to assess different models of improved accountability as the first steps in the process of some fundamental changes in resilience and accountability.

Members discussed some local issues around accountability and the legacy of past decisions such as the close proximity between industrial / petro-chemical sites and residential areas which originally housed the workers.

### **Decision**

1. That the key principles included in the UK Government Resilience Framework be noted.
2. That partner organisations consider and raise any concerns or opportunities based on the framework / proposed actions and advise on any action they feel is required.
3. That further guidance and Government direction is monitored and where appropriate the Joint Committee engages with the Local Resilience Forum and Councils with reference to any application / development / implementation etc.

## **26. Community Resilience Workshop 29th November 2022 and future direction of Community Resilience** (Chief Emergency Planning Officer)

### **Purpose of report**

To provide members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee with feedback following the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Community Resilience Workshop on 29th November 2022 at the Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough and to provide an outline of the future Community Resilience focus.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the LRF had, in line with a number of other LRFs, been running a quarterly Community Resilience Group. While there are a number of committed members it was clear from the recent very limited attendance that the group isn't fully meeting the needs of the LRF or communities. In recognition of this the LRF had sought assistance from two academics and the Middlesbrough Voluntary Development Agency (MVDA). Agreement was reached to run a workshop building on the research undertaken by Ed Rollason (Northumbria University) on behalf of the LRF.

A targeted and selective approach was implemented to ensure representation from groups not currently engaged with LRF and Community Resilience Group. Feedback from the event was mainly positive, and encouraging. The event was well received by attendees as it facilitated connection and discussions amongst attendees from several organisations. It was also encouraging to note, most attendees would like to see more of these events and requested follow up learning/report from this workshop.

Given the event feedback, and the evidence base of the value of building networks and engagement of partners, it was proposed that this style of workshop is offered by the LRF three times per year rotating between boroughs. Each session will have a key theme or focus.

Following the event, the following recommendations have been presented to the LRF:

Recommendation 1: Further Community Resilience workshops and events to be supported by the LRF to enable community groups, VCS and agencies to network and develop connections and ways of working together

Recommendation 2: As part of the workshops explore ways of proportionality sharing information of the role of LRF and its members and how/what support available to VCS/community groups.

Recommendation 3: The future of the LRF Community Resilience Group be considered, potentially becoming a steering group focused around the

development of the workshops rather than a standing group and recommendations made to Strategic Board.

Recommendation 4: Agencies wishing to get involved contact / establish links to the LRF Community Resilience Officer.

Members commented that they were aware of some of the feedback from the event from attendees, though it was noted that many of the more involved community representatives were 'of an age' and ensuring there were new younger representatives from the communities to follow them would be key to the success of future local emergency response.

### **Decision**

That the report be noted.

## **27. Incident Report (5th November 2022 – 1st March 2023) (Chief Emergency Planning Officer)**

### **Purpose of report**

To inform members of the EPJC of the incidents reported and responded to by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU).

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report outlining the incidents reported and responded to by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU). The report covered the period between from 5th November 2022 to 1st March 2023.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer highlighted the incidents at an industrial site in Hartlepool in November and the ammonia release at a tanker depot in Preston Farm Industrial Estate in Stockton. Both had led to 'unexpected' casualties presenting at the A&E department at North Tees Hospital. This could have been a significant issue, impacting on the provision of services within the hospital and a multi-agency debrief had been facilitated by the LRF. This has identified a number of possible improvements in the management of potentially contaminated persons applicable to both minor / isolated incidents and major incidents.

Members discussed issues around incidents where structural engineers were often called for as such roles were not now common in local authorities and required the calling of independent private sector engineers with no clarity over who was responsible for the costs. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that with privately owned buildings the owners insurers should be the first call for such structural advice, but where there was a threat to life / property action may be required which should then look to be recharged.

**Decision**

That the report be noted.

**28. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent**

None.

The meeting concluded at 11.05 am.

**H MARTIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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