

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

30th June 2010

The meeting commenced at 12 noon at Cleveland Police Authority,
Ladgate Lane, Middlesbrough

Present:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, Hartlepool Borough Council
Councillor Terry Laing, Stockton Borough Council
Councillor Julia Rostron, Middlesbrough Borough Council

Denis Hampson, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Alyson Carr, Assistant Chief Accountant
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

1. Appointment of Chair

That Councillor Terry Laing (Stockton Borough Council) be elected Chair of the Committee

Councillor Laing in the Chair

The Chair thanked the former member for Middlesbrough Borough Council, Barry Coppinger, for his work during the previous 3 years and Sarah Bird for her production of the minutes of meetings and overall administrative support.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were submitted from Councillor Dave McLuckie, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council

3. Declarations of interest by members

None

4. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 26th March 2010

Confirmed as a true record

5. CEPU Annual Plan 2010-2011 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To present to members of the Cleveland Emergency Joint Committee the Annual Plan for the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit for the year 2010-11

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

This plan was prepared to give the four Local Authorities an overview of the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU), its work-streams and priorities over the next 12 months, and how it would measure its performance against a number of performance indicators. There was an emphasis on ensuring the local authorities are as well prepared as possible to respond adequately to a major incident or emergency. 14 significant themes had been identified upon which the EPU would focus during the year. Highlighted in particular was planning around the forthcoming Tall Ships event in Hartlepool.

Members were further advised of a 3% increase in the EPU budget which would be used primarily for salary increments and increases through job evaluation. Costs associated with the planned move of the EPU to new offices would be met through increased financial management and efficiencies. Notable achievements during the year were reported including distribution of the "Prepare for Emergencies" public information leaflet. The complete annual plan was appended to the report.

The Chair referred to item 1.9 of the plan, annual auditing of the work of the EPU through the national assessment programme created through the 'Expectations and Indicators of Best Practice Set' introduced by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that the EPU were in the process of completing the required evidence, all of which was in place. Members queried what effect the election of the coalition government was expected to have on Emergency Planning. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer had been advised that there were no changes planned however all Government Departments would be expected to instigate spending cuts so there might be budgetary pressures in the future. This could lead to reductions in auditing, performance indicators and Health & Safety, all of which would have ramifications on the bigger picture. The Chair suggested that charging outside agencies and other Local Authorities for the advisory services of the EPU could be a source of revenue.

Decision

- I. That the report be noted.
- II. That the Annual Plan, including the performance indicators and budget provision, be endorsed.

6. Review of Performance Indicators 2009/10 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform the Joint Committee of the results and progress made on achieving the performance indicators set down in the 2009/10 Annual Plan of the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report detailed the progress made towards achieving the performance indicators previously set in order to monitor and review progress and performance.

There were a total of 21 performance indicators for 2009/10, all had been achieved in full or in part. Details were given of those targets which had not been fully achieved as follows:

- To enrol a Senior Elected Member on a course at the Emergency Planning College – while this had not happened many had received ‘in-house’ awareness training
- To hold 4 meetings with the voluntary agencies – 3 had been held
- To hold 2 meetings with Event Planning Teams – 1 had been held, however the main focus of Event Planning Teams becoming accustomed to establishing Safety Advisory Teams when planning large events had been achieved

Notable achievements were highlighted including the public distribution of the “Prepare for Emergencies” leaflet. It was also noted there had only been 66 days of sick leave taken by the Team throughout the year.

Members queried what contingencies were in place should the Chief Emergency Planning Officer take long-term sickness leave. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that there was enough capacity within the EPU to cover this eventuality however it would be a very steep learning curve and there would be little spare capacity. He acknowledged the need to train someone to take on his role and responsibilities for the future.

Decision

That the report be noted.

7. Freedom of Information Act – Emergency Planning Publication Scheme *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To present to members a draft Freedom of Information Publication Scheme that will be utilised in the future for both the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit and the Emergency Planning Joint Committee.

To seek approval from Members to adopt the draft publication scheme.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

A recent audit of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee (EPJC) considered the EPJC to be an outside body and as such it should be required to have its own publication scheme for the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2000. In order to comply with this the EPU website would be revamped to show the role of the EPJC, providing details of the constitution of the committee and terms of reference. Minutes of meetings would also be made available through the website as would details of the FOI publication scheme.

Decision

- I. That the report be noted
- II. That the draft Freedom of Information publication scheme for the Joint Committee and the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit be approved
- III. That the scheme be overseen by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer on behalf of the Joint Committee and administered within the Emergency Planning Unit.

8. 2009/10 Revenue Outturn Report *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of the revenue outturn for the Cleveland Emergency Planning Joint Committee for the year 2009/2010

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 require accounts to be approved by 30th June each year. At the end of each financial year an annual revenue outturn report is submitted to the committee, details of which are included in the Statement of Accounts. In 2009/10 the projected outturn variance was expected to be favourable by £19,424 with the final outturn position a favourable variance of £33,357. This underspend would be used to fund costs associated with the forthcoming premises move. The 2009/10 Statement of Accounts for the EPJC was appended to the report.

The Chair queried whether the reserves were too large and understood that the recommended limit was 3%. The Assistant Chief Accountant advised that this is the level recommended by the Audit Commission for the level of Local Authority Un earmarked General Fund Reserves, however, given the limited size of the organisation and the potential risks facing all Local Government funded services, the amount currently held was not thought to be unreasonable.

Decision

That the 2009/2010 Revenue Outturn Report and Statement of Accounts be approved.

9. 2009/2010 Annual Audit Return *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of the Annual Audit Return to the Audit Commission for the Cleveland Emergency Planning Joint Committee for the year 2009/2010.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 require all smaller relevant bodies in England to complete an annual return summarising their annual activities. This must be approved by 30th June, signed by the appropriate responsible officers and Members and sent to the Audit Commission for auditing. A copy of the return was appended to the report, covering accounting statements, an annual governance statement and an annual internal audit report.

The Chair queried why the amount quoted for staff costs in the Outturn Report did not agree to the figure on the Audit Return. The Assistant Chief Accountant advised that this was likely to be a presentation issue and that the specific requirements of the return would differ slightly from the way information was presented in the Management Accounts.

Decision

That the 2009/2010 Annual Audit Return be approved.

10 Expectations and Indicators of Good Practice – Maintaining Plans *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of further details of the new Civil Contingencies Act Expectations and Indicators of Good Practice document.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised Members of the requirements under Section 2B of the Civil Contingencies Act, namely:

- Section 2(1) (d) - To maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur the person or body is able to continue to perform his or her functions so far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of preventing the emergency, reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects and taking other action in connection with it
- Section 2 (1) (e) - To consider whether a risk assessment makes it necessary or expedient for the person or body to add to or modify emergency plans maintained under section 2 (1) (d)

A report showing evidence that the EPU were fulfilling these requirements had been compiled following consultation with emergency planning officers for the local authorities, emergency services and other category 1 responders. This was appended to the report. Evidence was being considered further by the Local Resilience Working Group to ensure all responders were contributing fully however it was felt that the evidence provided was more than sufficient to meet Government requirements.

Decision

That the evidence produced be endorsed as demonstrated that the indicators are being adequately met.

11 Site Clearance Plan (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform Members that new guidance has been issued by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat on the requirement for Local Authorities and other Category 1 responders to have in place a Site Clearance Capability.

To inform Members that this requirement will be subject to measurement through the National Capabilities Survey that will be carried out in early Summer 2010.

To inform Members that the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit, in consultation with partner agencies, has prepared a plan in accord with this guidance.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

A Site Clearance Plan had been produced in line with the significant risks as shown within the latest version of the Cleveland Community Risk Register. It

was clear that no single approach would be appropriate in all circumstances and the priorities would be scenario specific having regard to the normal functions of affected structures, their location, the extent of damage and the risks presented. Should a major incident occur necessitating a site clearance operation teams would be formed under the direction of the Recovery Working Group. This would be led by the Local Authority in whose area the incident occurred, to be Chaired by their Chief Executive. Details of the proposed Incident Management Structure were appended to the report. The plan would be reviewed annually and subject to test through either a table top exercise of multi-agency training day within the next 18 months.

Copies of the plan were available through the EPU. The Chair queried whether reports previously submitted to the committee were available via the EPU website. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer confirmed this.

Decision

That the report be noted

That the Site Clearance Plan be endorsed for use by the Local Authorities should the need arise.

12 Consultation on Draft Community Resilience Proposals *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform Members that four consultation documents have been issued by the Cabinet Office relating to the Governments' proposed future Community Resilience Programme.

To seek the views of Members to allow the Chief Emergency Planning Officer to prepare a response to the documents on behalf of the Emergency Planning Unit and Joint Committee and send a reply to the Cabinet Office by the closing date of 1st July 2010.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer gave details of the following consultation documents relating to the Governments' proposed future Community Resilience Programme:

- a. Community Resilience Programme
- b. Draft Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience
- c. Draft Community Emergency Plan Guidance (and template)
- d. Draft Preparing for Emergencies – a guide for communities

The foremost aim of Community Resilience was to promote self help during

an emergency situation, both individually and also in a family or community setting. It was acknowledged however that this would not happen without help from the existing emergency planning community. It was envisaged that existing community groups, such as parish councils and residents associations, formulate emergency plans for their community. These plans would then be considered and amended by the Emergency Planners. This would clearly lead to more work for the EPU.

Copies of the consultation documents were appended to the report with a deadline for responses of 1st July 2010

The Government also intended to produce a “preparing for emergencies” booklet for distribution to every household in England and Wales. The content would be similar to the leaflet produced by the EPU. Previous consultation carried out by the EPU had shown that most people did not recall receiving previous government booklets and had not retained it whereas around 75% had retained the smaller leaflet distributed by the EPU.

The Chair acknowledged Community Resilience would lead to an increase in workload for the EPU. He suggested that existing channels be used to disseminate the information such as Parish Council, Neighbourhood Forum and Renaissance meetings

Decision

That the report be noted.

13 Critical Infrastructure Programme (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform Members of three documents produced by the Cabinet Office as part of the Governments Critical Infrastructure Resilience Programme.

To inform Members that the Cabinet Office expects these documents to inform Emergency Planners on behalf of Local Authorities of the need to encompass these documents within future planning arrangements, so that should a major incident or emergency occur, concerns over critical infrastructure should be a primary focus within any response or recovery phase.

To inform Members that although this report relates to the national programme and local critical infrastructure is not identified, it is still appropriate due to the dependencies and interdependencies within and between various economic and sub regional sectors. For example, a critical infrastructure affected in the Tyne and Wear area could have a ‘knock on effect’ to Cleveland.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Members were advised that the aim of the critical infrastructure programme was to improve the resilience of critical infrastructure and essential services to severe disruption from natural hazards. The national infrastructure was defined as those facilities, systems, sites and networks necessary for the functioning of the country and the delivery of essential services upon which daily life in the UK depends. The main goal was to identify and assess the risks from natural hazards, finding options to counter the risk. Infrastructure would be prioritised nationally then locally using a risk based approach. Flooding would be the first focus of the Programme as the highest climate risk in the Governments National Risk Register.

The National Hazards Team had produced the following documents to support the programme:

- a. The Strategic Framework and Policy Statement – to set out proposals for a cross-sector systematic programme to improve the resilience of critical infrastructure and essential services to severe disruption by natural hazards
- b. The Sector Resilience Plan for 2010 – to set out the priorities for improving resilience within each sector, reduce vulnerability and improve preparedness and business continuity. There were nine sectors, covering areas such as energy, water, communications, healthcare and transportation.
- c. The Interim Guidance to the Economic Regulated Sectors – to be issued to economic regulators encouraging resilience building by critical infrastructure operators

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that nowhere in the area covered by the EPU was at risk however work was underway to identify and protect sub-stations which might be at risk. The current flood plan would also be reviewed to include the national infrastructure and consideration be given to plans to protect the road infrastructure leading to PD Ports and the new Asda and Tesco distribution depots.

Decision

- I. That the report be noted
- II. That the documents issued under the Resilience of Critical Infrastructure Programme be taken into account by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer within any future emergency planning and response arrangements
- III. That the Cleveland EPU review the multi-agency Flood Plan to identify any assets which may be at risk in the Cleveland area
- IV. That the Cleveland EPU take into consideration any assets which may

be at risk when producing the Reservoir Inundation plans on behalf of the local authorities.

14 Reported Incidents / Cleveland Communications Strategy *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee of the incidents reported, severe weather and flood risk warnings received and communications strategy faxes received and dealt with by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit. The report covered the period between 1st March and 31st May 2010 (3 month period).

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

A total of 5 Met Office warnings of adverse weather conditions were received, mostly due to the extreme winter weather which continued into April 2010. Also linked into weather related incidents were the effects of the Icelandic volcanic ash cloud, resulting in 17 top line Government briefings. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer had provided briefings to senior management teams, including those at the University Hospital of North Tees, on the potential effects of business continuity. 30 blue information faxes had also been received.

There had been 6 incidents of note in the past 3 months involving the EPU, some of which had led to the deployment of staff to the scene or to incident command rooms. Details of these were appended to the report.

Decision

That the report be noted.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 8th July 2010