

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

23 September 2010

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm at the Emergency Planning Unit at
Aurora Court, Riverside Park, 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
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

15 Apologies for absence

Councillor Dave McLuckie

16 Declarations of interest by members

None.

17 Receipt of the minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2010

Received.

18 The UK Central Response: Concept of Operations (CONOPS) (Chief Emergency Planning Officer)

Purpose of report

To inform members

- That the Cabinet Office on behalf of the Government have issued a new Concept of Operations setting out the arrangements for how Central Government will respond to a large scale emergency that requires co-ordinated central government action;
- That the main part of the document focuses on the response to no

notice or short notice emergencies requiring UK central government engagement whilst stressing that the approach can also be adapted to manage the response to other crises;

- That the original Concept of Operations document was issued in 2005 and the updated version reflects revised arrangements that have been adopted due to recent national emergencies and inquiries
- That in addition to the national Concept of Operations being issued the North East Regional Response plan (version 1) was issued in July 2010 and provides a regional view while the CONOPS document gives a national overview

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The 190 page CONOPS document details the Central Government arrangements for responding to and recovering from emergencies which require central government action, irrespective of cause or location. Eight guiding principles had been developed to direct the 3 phases of an emergency: preparation, response and recovery. CONOPS emphasises the principle of local decision making with support from Central Government where necessary. Three levels of emergency were identified as follows:

1. Significant – requires central government involvement or support but no actual or potential requirement for a collective central government response.
2. Serious – requires sustained central government support to be co-ordinated from Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) under the leadership of the lead government department and has or threatens a wide or prolonged impact.
3. Catastrophic – requires central government's direction or support. Has an exceptionally high or potentially widespread impact.

If the support of central government is needed, a designated lead government department will be responsible for overall management, usually through COBR. A pre-designated list of which departments cover which emergency is available through the Cabinet office website. When a local Strategic Co-ordinating Group has been established and COBR activated (at levels 2 or 3) a Government Liaison Officer would normally be dispatched immediately to attend. It recognises the need for national co-ordination of public information from the outset, the development of which would be co-ordinated by central government and the lead local responder.

Following the publication of CONOPS the revised North East Regional Response plan was issued. Feedback was given on this document to Government Officer North East (GONE). All emergency planners had been made aware of the 2 documents and the appropriate information would be incorporated into the Cleveland Major Incident Procedures Manual, currently

under review.

It was clarified that a level three emergency would be something such as a disaster on the scale of Chernobyl at the nuclear power station in Hartlepool.

Decision

Members noted:-

- The report
- The existence of the two concepts of operations and how and when regional resilience and central Government would become involved in an emergency either at the response or recovery stage, and by what means, e.g. Lead Government Department.

19 2012 London Olympics and Paralympic Games (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide members with an insight into the organisation of the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games along with an update into the present situation relating to matters which may impact upon the Cleveland area.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The report detailed the key facts in relation to the Olympic Games including numbers of expected attendees and venues. A number of Pre Games training camps in the North East had been identified and countries had been invited to submit an interest in these. Planning and security issues in relation to the Torch Relay were outlined. Details of planning teams set up to explore the impact of the games, particularly at a local level were outlined and how these would impact on other local events such as the Maritime Festival in Hartlepool and Stockton summer festival.

Decision

Members noted:-

- The report
- The actions being undertaken by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and the potential impact that the Games will have on the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) and the services it provides.

20 Post of Resilience Forum Assistant (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform Members that the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum agreed to fund the post of Resilience Forum Assistant within the Emergency Planning Unit for a further three years.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

This post had been created three years ago to assist the Chief Emergency Planning Officer as Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Manager and it was recommended that because of current workload, the funding be continued for a further three years by the LRF members.

A Member queried whether funding was guaranteed for the next three years for the post and it was clarified that the funding was spread across all members of the LRF so the contribution from each partner was not a large amount.

Decision

Members noted the report.

21 Lessons Learned from Exercise Plata *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide Members with details of the feedback and a summary of actions following Exercise Plata, held on 19 May 2010 and based upon a release from Hartlepool Power Station, and to provide details of how these actions would be taken forward.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

A level two nuclear exercise had been held on 19 May 2010 and was designed to test the onside and offsite response to a release of radioactive material to meet the requirements of the Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information Regulations (REPPiR). Local Authorities and the Police had been involved. A debrief note to the exercise had been produced by British Energy in conjunction with the agencies involved. A number of issues had been identified following the exercise and an action plan produced to address these issues.

A member queried whether the North East Ambulance Control Centre at Hebburn had come under scrutiny during the exercise and was informed that the Control Centre had been used satisfactorily although advance warning had been given of the exercise.

Decision

Members noted:-

- That Exercise Plata was a successful test of the current offsite plan produced by the Emergency Planning Unit in compliance with REPPIR
- The report
- The lessons learned and the action plan shown at appendix A and supported the officers tasked with taking these actions forward.
- That the REPPIR plan would be reviewed within the next 12 months to capture lessons learned and completed action points.
- Members agreed that the action plan was managed by the Principal Emergency Planning Officer as chair of the LRF Exercise Planning Group.

22 Influx of British Nationals Plan *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To outline the plan prepared by the Emergency Planning Unit to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which addresses the risk of the influx of British Nationals shown in both the national risk register and the Cleveland Community Risk Register

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The plan had been produced to meet the risk of a sudden influx of British nationals. Members were informed how the plan assisted in the identification and provision of humanitarian assistance required in the event of an influx of British Nationals covering from the initial influx through to resettlement and/or repatriation

Members were reminded that Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit in consultation with partners had prepared a plan to meet the various scenarios arising from the influx of British nationals into the Cleveland area by plane or other forms of transport.

Members queried where nationals were likely to be from and were informed that countries such as Spain and India had a large number of British nationals. The last influx of nationals had been when a volcano had erupted in Monserrat.

Decision

Members noted the report.

23 Hartlepool Tall Ships Race *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of the initial feedback of the Tall Ships Race event in Hartlepool, primarily in respect of the tasks and responsibilities undertaken by Emergency Planners, the Safety Advisory Group chaired by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and Event Control (command and control) and to provide members with details of the initial lessons learned encountered during the event.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The Tall Ships event had been held in Hartlepool during 6 – 10 August when 58 ships had arrived and there had been a varied entertainment programme with live music and firework displays. A multi agency Event Control had been established to control the 750,000 visitors to the event and an operational site control had also been established on the site. There had been a lot of positive feedback received and debriefs had been held by various agencies involved.

A number of plans and risk assessments had been produced prior to the event. An annex to the report outlined the lessons learned, both negative and positive.

Members confirmed that the event had been very successful and congratulated those involved in its planning and execution.

Decision

Members noted the report.

24 Severe Winter Weather and Council Winter Maintenance Programmes *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of the publication of the following reports:-

- 'Weathering the Storm – Improving UK Resilience to Severe Winter Weather' by the Local Government Association
- 'The Resilience of England's Transport System in Winter' – an interim report with the final version expected in the Autumn – by an Independent Review Panel established by the Department of Transport

and the recommendations contained therein.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The report outlined the responsibilities of the Local Authorities in relation to keeping the Highways clear during periods of snow and ice. For a number of years all the Councils have produced their Winter Maintenance Plans and published these on their websites. The severe weather of 2009/2010 had stretched these plans and the Government had introduced the 'Salt Cell' meetings to co-ordinate the distribution of salt throughout the country. The two reports produced subsequently highlighted the need to have adequate stocks of salt in preparedness for any severe weather and the need for future winter maintenance plans to dovetail with resilience and emergency response plans.

Members discussed the pros and cons of stockpiling large amounts of salt which may not be needed for some time including the cost implications of doing this. Members also discussed how other countries did not seem to suffer the same problems despite having more severe weather and that perhaps lessons could be learned from their approach.

Decision

The report was noted.

25 Management of the Mobile Telecommunications Privileged Access Scheme (MTPAS) and National Resilience Extranet (NRE) update *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of the progress on the Management of the Mobile Telecommunications Privileged Access Scheme (MTPAS) and National Resilience Extranet (NRE) scheme and the next steps with the roll out of these schemes.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The NRE is a secure web based browser tool that would enable responders to have access to key information up to and including 'restricted' level, for multi-agency working and communication. Once training had taken place, it was planned to roll out the system to other emergency responder agencies and organisations.

MTPAS allows privileged users priority access to cellular radio network systems which may otherwise become congested by non-essential users in

an emergency.

A member commented how Bluetooth technology could be used to convey personal safety messages.

Decision

Members noted:-

- the report
- the leading role that the EPU had in respect of ensuring these aspects of resilient communications were progressed

26 Town Centre Evacuation Planning *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of the resilience planning that is being undertaken in respect of the evacuation of the main town centres, specifically Middlesbrough and to assist businesses how they could plan and ensure business continuity.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

Middlesbrough Council were to have a booklet printed and circulated around properties in the town centre. The plans circulated by the Council would dovetail into other plans already in place at Cleveland EPU. The booklet had been approved by the LRF and would be rolled out to other towns across Cleveland.

Decision

Members noted the report and the Middlesbrough town centre evacuation booklet.

27 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 between 1 June and 10 September 2010.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

During this period a total of 16 warnings in relation to adverse weather

conditions had been received as well as 16 flood related warning messages.

During the same period the EPU had received and dealt with 22 blue faxes. There had also been 12 incidents of note and these were detailed in an appendix to the report. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer gave an overview of these incidents to Members.

Decision

Members noted the report.

The meeting concluded at 3.21 pm.

28 Tour of the New Accommodation with Chief Emergency Planning Officer

Members were then shown around the EPU premises in Aurora Court, Riverside Park, Middlesbrough.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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