

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

16 December 2010

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm at the Emergency Planning Unit at
Aurora Court, Riverside Park, Middlesbrough

Present:

Chair Councillor Terry Laing, Stockton Borough Council

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

Denis Hampson, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

29 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor David McLuckie of Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

Members highlighted the regular submission of apologies for Councillor McLuckie and queried whether an alternative nominee from Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council might be better able to attend meetings of the Committee. The Democratic Services Officer would contact Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council regarding this matter.

30 Declarations of interest by members

None

31 To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2010

Approved.

32 Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit – Priorities, Future Budget and Structure *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the proposed changes in the structure and budget of the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit for the forthcoming fiscal year 2011/12 and the proposed future priorities for 2011/12 onwards to fit the reduction in budget proposed and changes to the structure of the Emergency Planning Unit

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) provide a shared service to the four local authorities in the former Cleveland County area, ensuring that they meet their statutory requirements under primary legislation. It is part of a joint arrangement with Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade and North East Ambulance Service to share accommodation, enabling information sharing and co-operation. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer manages the EPU and the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum while the Emergency Planning Joint Committee oversee the EPU.

The EPU budget is made up from the financial provision of all 4 Local Authorities based on population size. Hartlepool Borough Council act as the host authority, providing core services to the EPU while receiving costs associated with these services. To meet the potential reductions in local authority finances in 2011/12 it was proposed, following consultation with the 4 local authorities, to implement a 10% reduction in budget provision (£47,600 across the 4 councils). This would be achieved by the deletion of an Emergency Planning Officer post, the reduction of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer post to a pay band 15, the cessation of essential car user allowance and its replacement with casual user rate and other administrative efficiencies. A further 5% budget cut would be made 2012/13 through reductions in external training, cleaning services, further administrative efficiencies and use of the EPU reserves.

In terms of personnel it was anticipated that the loss of an Emergency Planning Officer was likely to occur through compulsory redundancy as no staff had expressed an interest in voluntary redundancy. It was the intention of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer to request early retirement as of 31st May 2011, at which time the post would be re-graded to a band 15. Given the importance of the post it was proposed that the selection process would commence in early January 2011 and that the new appointee be in place at least 1 month prior to the retirement of the current Chief Emergency Planning Officer. It was also proposed that the interview panel to select the new incumbent would include the Chair of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee, the HBC Director for Regeneration and Neighbourhoods and the Deputy Chief Constable.

Members queried whether any of the current Emergency Planning Officers would be capable of taking on the more senior role. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that one staff member potentially had the necessary abilities but they had already indicated that they were not interested in pursuing the role. Members asked whether a month would be sufficient time for the Chief Emergency Planning Officer to train his replacement. He indicated that given the timescales involved 6 weeks was the absolute maximum that any candidate could be in place prior to his proposed retirement date of 31st May 2011 and that even the 4 week overlap could be subject to change depending on individual notice period requirements. Members felt that if the employee came from a local authority they might be happy to consider early release. Members requested information as to the change in salary with the re-grading of the post. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that this would equate to a saving of approximately £10,000 per annum. The duties of the post would not change but there would be some alteration to the line management structure.

Members also noted the recommendation to initially advertise internally among the 4 local authorities covered by the Emergency Planning Unit. They queried whether this internal recruitment could be extended to include the emergency services, all of which were facing similar public sector cuts. It was felt that this could provide a larger internal pool from which to recruit prior to external advertisement and potentially save an employee from being made redundant in the future. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that the Committee had executive powers to open up the recruitment field.

Members reluctantly expressed their support for the proposed efficiencies. They wished the Chief Emergency Planning Officer well in the future.

Decision

- I. That the future priorities for the Emergency Planning Unit be noted
- II. That the budget reduction for 2011/12 and the resultant changes to the structure of the Emergency Planning Unit be approved.
- III. That the selection process for the post of Chief Emergency Planning Officer and Local Resilience Forum Manager be approved as detailed within the report with the addition of employees of Cleveland Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance Service to the local authorities internal recruitment stage of the process

33 Cabinet Office paper – “The Role of Local Resilience Forums: A Reference Document” *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of the document produced by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat within the Cabinet Office on the role and functions of a Local Resilience Forum

For Members to consider the impact of this document on the roles and function of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and Emergency Planning Unit staff.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The document sets out the duties and function required of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) under legislation or by regulation, suggesting issues, processes, systems and activities it would need to consider in establishing effective mechanisms to deliver its work. Details were given of mandatory requirements, recommended elements and good practice indicators. In the case of recommended elements however it was noted that any review of LRF functions would expect these to have been completed therefore they were mandatory in all but name. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that the LRF already carried out the vast majority of actions they were required to and generally fulfilled the role required of them. A response to the consultation document had been submitted which was generally positive although identifying 2 anomalies within the document.

Members highlighted the requirement to involve the local utilities companies given the number of different providers, The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that they liaised with the primary providers such as Northern Gas, Northumbrian Water, Hartlepool Water and British Telecom. Mobile telephone operators tended to be more difficult to interact with.

Decision

- I. That the report be noted
- II. That the extent of commitment to the LRF by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and officers within the EPU be noted
- III. That the legislative requirements placed on both the LRF and Category 1 responders and in particular the 4 local authorities by the Civil Contingencies Act and associated regulations be noted

34 Revenue Financial Monitoring Report to end September 2010 *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of progress against the Joint Committee's overall revenue budget for 2010/2011.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer presented the report which provided an overall picture of performance and progress of the Emergency Planning Unit against the approved 2010/2011 revenue budget. There was currently an adverse variance on the main Emergency Planning budget however this was not unusual and the outturn was expected to be in line with the approved budget. Although there was currently a favourable variance in the Local Resilience Budget the projected outturn was expected to be in line with the approved budget.

Members queried how much longer the Beacon Status funding was expected to last. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that these monies would be all but gone by the end of the year.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

35 Progress on Performance Indicators 2010/11 *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of the progress being made to achieve the performance indicators set down in the 2010/11 Annual Plan of the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The report showed that all of the 24 performance indicators set for the Emergency Planning Unit during the period 1st April 2010 to 31st September 2010 were on target to be achieved by year end. Of a further 3 cross cutting indicators which compared points of the EPU with Hartlepool Borough Council's Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department 1 had been completed and progress was being made against the other 2.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer further highlighted the successful completion of the indicator in respect of the Tall Ships Races and the timely

completion of all staff appraisals and training reviews for 2010. Targets for staff training had been met and changes were being made to future provision of training whereby this would now take place at Aurora Court, something which would result in significant budgetary savings. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer also drew members' attention to partnership working and sharing of information, commenting that while this was on target to be achieved the agendas of the 3 principle forums were constantly being driven by EPU staff despite efforts to get other category 1 responders to bring items forward.

Decision

That the report be noted.

36 2012 London Olympic Planning (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

- I. To inform members of the formation of an Olympics sub group to ensure the effective delivery of emergency and contingency planning arrangements and duties that are developed in a multi-agency environment
- II. To update members on the present situation in respect of agencies involvement in the Olympics

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer informed Members that the inaugural meeting of the Olympics sub group had taken place on 9th November 2010, chaired by him. A copy of the group's terms of reference was appended for members' attention. Membership of the sub groups comprised those agencies which were likely to be involved with the planning or response to Olympic associated events including the emergency services, local authority event teams and the voluntary sector. It was anticipated that the Games would impact on the local area both in terms of local Olympic events and the need for possible loss of local emergency service vehicles and personnel to aid the efforts in the capital.

A main task for the Olympics sub group would be the production of a list of events relating to the Olympics and other events which would coincide with the Olympics such as the Stockton Riverside Festival. The group had also agreed to consider events surrounding the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in June 2012 which it was felt could provide a 'taster' for the Olympic events. They would monitor the situation in respect of the Olympic Torch relay and the situation regarding Pre Games Training Camps. Potential training camps in the area included Hartlepool Marina, Tees Barrage, Middlesbrough Football Club, Teesside University and the Queens Campus of Durham University in Stockton.

The Chair was pleased to see the planning for such a major event had begun so far in advance.

Decision

That the report and the potential impact that the Games might have on the Cleveland area be noted.

37 Reservoir Inundation Plans *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

- I. To outline the plan prepared by the Emergency Planning Unit to meet requirements under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 addressing the national risk from reservoir inundation contained in the Cleveland Community Risk Register.
- II. To inform members how the plan assists in the identification of areas at risk from dam breaches in the Cleveland area
- III. To inform members that the plan had been produced by the Emergency Planning Unit in consultation with partner agencies, particularly the Local authorities, Environment Agency and Emergency Services, to meet the risk from reservoir inundation and the offsite consequences in the Cleveland area.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The Reservoir Inundation Plan had been produced to meet the guidance and plan template issued by Defra and supported by the Cabinet Office in respect of the risk of a dam breach and consequent reservoir inundation in the Cleveland area. There were 17 reservoirs across Cleveland and the plan addressed the off-site consequences of flooding at any of these as the result of a potential or actual dam breach at locations depicted in inundation maps within the plan. Actions were outlined based upon an assumed sufficient response time. None of the 17 reservoirs were classed as high priority although the area could be subject to flooding from a breach outside its boundaries. The outline reservoir inundation maps were available on the Environment Agency's "What's in Your Backyard" website although specific details of speed and depth were restricted.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer further highlighted that there was currently no single agency with responsibility for informing the public of a dam failure. The Emergency Planning Unit would currently action this under the normal communications strategy however there were ongoing discussions between central government and partner agencies regarding this.

Decision

That the report be noted.

38 Major Incident Procedures Manual (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform members of the Cleveland Major Incident Procedure Manual which has been reviewed by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit and updated accordingly

To inform members that the Manual will be uploaded to the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit website for viewing by the general public, emergency responder partners and other stakeholders.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

The Cleveland Major Procedures Manual was first produced in 2005 and in need of review following the Civil Contingencies Act and associated legislation and guidance. Details were given of the aims and objectives of the manual, including a generic overview of the roles and responsibilities of agencies, the management of those involved in an incident and media considerations. The procedure for requesting Military Aid was also outlined. All those agencies and organisations likely to be involved in a major incident had been consulted on the Manual and their comments taken into consideration. The final version would be uploaded to the Cleveland EPU website, with hard copies available from the EPU. Staff would review the plan every 2 years.

Decision

That the report be noted

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

Purpose of report

To inform members 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 1st September and 30th November 2010.

Issues for consideration by the Committee

There had been a total of 15 warnings relating to adverse weather conditions

during this period. It was noted that none of these warnings covered the current wintry conditions. In relation to the Communications Strategy, 12 blue faxes had been received and dealt with. An appendix to the report detailed a number of incidents which had affected the general public.

A member highlighted an incident on 6th September 2010 involving an explosion and fire in a disused farmhouse in Hartlepool, commenting that a neighbour had been unaware of the fire until he was told by a member of the public.

Decision

That the report be noted.

40 Any Other Business Agreed by the Chair

Members noted the cuts which had been made by the coalition government to Cleveland Fire Brigade's Budget and queried whether as a group they could take action. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that he had sent a letter of response on behalf of the EPU. In addition Stockton Borough Council had made a number of representations and the Mayor of Hartlepool had written to the government on this matter. It was felt therefore that all had been done which could be for the moment however members approved that the Chief Emergency Planning Officer be given permission to take any further action he felt necessary should this be required prior to the next meeting of the committee.

Decision

That approval be given to the Chief Emergency Planning Officer taking any action he felt appropriate regarding spending cuts in relation to Cleveland Fire Brigade as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

The meeting concluded at 3.15 pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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