

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

10 September 2025

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

Present:

Councillor: Karen Oliver (Hartlepool Borough Council) (In the Chair)

Councillor Theo Furness (Middlesbrough Borough Council)

Officers: Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Jon Hepworth, Group Accountant (Regeneration and Neighbourhoods)
Jo Stubbs, Principal Democratic Services and Legal Support Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Adam Brook (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council) and
Nigel Cooke (Stockton Borough Council)

2. Inquorate Meeting

The Chair noted that the meeting was inquorate. The items listed on the agenda would be considered given that they were “for information” items.

3. Declarations of interest by Members

The Chair declared an interest as a family member works at the Emergency Planning Unit.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th March 2025

Minutes received

5. Financial Management Update Report *(Director of Finance, IT and Digital and Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of the forecast outturn for the current financial year ending 31st March 2026

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant provided the forecast revenue outturn for the current financial year ending 31 March 2026. There was an adverse variance of £25,000 in the main emergency planning budget as at 31 August 2024 before the release of reserves. There was an adverse variance of £15,000 on employee costs and £10,000 on income due to reduced recharges for staffing to the LRF budget. This was owing to a revised schedule of activity to spend £178,000 of MHCLG grant from previous years to avoid grant clawback. The composition of this spend has since changed to include fewer staffing costs and a greater amount of non-staffing costs.

The revenue outturn for the Local Resilience Forum was also reported as a nil variance following the release of reserves. Government policy is now that all remaining LRF grant funding since 2021/22 must be spent in order to qualify for future grant funding. This has resulted in revised spending plans and includes the unbudgeted release of £178,000 reserves. Overall this has increased the planned level of non-employee expenditure by £98,000 with a reduced level of recharges required for EPU management and officer time.

The £178,000 MHCLG grant monies had been spent on items including staffing, training, community grants and commissioning of work programmes.

Decision

That the latest outturn forecast for 2025/26 be noted.

6. EPJC Introduction Paper (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

- I. To provide new members with an overview of the working arrangements and wider context of the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit
- II. To highlight useful resources for the Committee membership to assist in their role
- III. To outline a proposed reporting scheduled for 2025/26 to members for consideration.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer set out the role of the Committee and the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) for the new members of the Committee. He identified the legislation under which the service operated and how each local authority coordinated with the EPU.

He also highlighted the role of the Local Resilience Forum and how that operated in partnership with the EPU. Details of the proposed report schedule for the forthcoming year were included in the report and Members views were sought in terms of any particular areas they particularly wished to cover in the coming 12 months. The current Chair of the LRF had been asked to attend the January meeting to give members an overview of the work carried out by the LRF.

The Chair highlighted the essential nature of the meeting and the importance of participation and attendance.

Decision

- I. That the Emergency Planning Joint Committee terms of reference and LGA guidance for councillors be noted
- II. That members confirm the outlined reporting schedule and advised of any additions or specific areas of interest as required

7. HM Government Resilience Action Plan (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To advise members of the release of the HM Government Resilience Action Plan (RAP) in July 2025 and highlight the key themes to the membership.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The RAP gives details of how the UK government is investing to protect the nation, defining objectives and the actions that will be taken to become more resilient. Details were provided in the report of the objectives of the RAP, chronic risks, sharing of data, assurance, LRF and resilience across the public sector and whole of society.

It was noted that LRF funding models were under review including the partner contribution model. This would be informed by the findings of the Stronger LRF Trailblazer evaluations. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer was unable to provide a timeline for this.

Decision

- I. That members' familiarity with the RAP be noted and any areas requiring clarification be raised.
- II. That further updates are provided by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer when further information on the impact on the Cleveland area is available

- III. That alignment between the RAP and the CEPU and LRF action plans is ensured

8. Cleveland Multi-Agency Flood Plan (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To give members an oversight of the Multi-Agency Flood Plan produced by the Unit on behalf of the Local Resilience Forum.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Senior Emergency Planning Officer reported that the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum's (LRF) community risk register identifies several flood related risks including coastal, tidal, river and surface water flooding. As well as the initial impacts, secondary impacts can include utilities and transport further complicating responses. Common consequences include disruption to transport, normal services, and impacts on health, life and property risk. A number of tools have been made available to support responders including Hazard Manager and the National Severe Weather Warning Service. Resilience Advisors from the Met office also provided 24/7 live updates before and during periods of adverse weather.

Details were provided of the LRF Flood and Adverse Weather Group. CEPU works closely with partners to raise awareness of flooding and the actions that can be taken at all levels. The Environment Agency operate a flood warning service to residents in affected areas which can be signed up for at no cost. There is an overarching LRF multi-agency flood plan. At last audit this was identified as good practice. The current plan was currently being audited.

Decision

- I. That the CEPU continues to be represented at the LRF Flood and Adverse Weather Group and ensure the multi-agency flood plan is reviewed as per protocol.
- II. That members advise should they require further information on the arrangements in place in terms of the emergency response to flooding and adverse weather.

9. Industrial Emergency Planning (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide members with an awareness and understanding of the duties placed on Local Authorities under a range of legislation, the relevance to the Cleveland area and how these duties are met by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU)

To inform members of the work undertaken by the CEPU in connection with the statutory requirements relating to industrial emergency planning.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided Members with an outline of the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH) and the Pipeline Safety Regulations (1996) that were in place to prevent and mitigate the effects of major accidents that could occur at industrial sites across the Cleveland area.

The Committee was advised that the Cleveland area currently had 26 Upper Tier COMAH sites accounting for approximately 8% of the UK total. In addition to the COMAH establishments there were also 57 major accident pipelines, details of which were provided.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that work was currently underway nationally mapping other pipelines which were located underground. He echoed the Chair's comments regards the website and its lack of user friendliness.

Decision

- I. That the type of business in the area and the legislative controls in place to minimise the likelihood of a major accident and mitigation of the impacts be noted
- II. That the elements of the CEPU plan that are undertaken to ensure compliance with the legislation be noted

10. Exercise Hera Overview (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To give members an oversight of the recent exercise HERA (a recent REPIR exercise) and the process for identifying and actioning learning.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Exercise HERA, held on 14 May 2025, was designed to test the offsite emergency response plan to an incident at Hartlepool Power Station. Prior to the main exercise a prepare exercise was held to check communications from the site to external services. This was demonstrated as being effective. The main exercise was then carried out involving a number of issues that required a range of agency partners including the operator,

emergency services, Hartlepool Council and the NHS Trusts. Debriefs were held following the exercise and shared with all relative partners. 39 recommendations were made and would be progressed in the coming months through the LRF and CEPU with regular updates to the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

In her role as Chair of Neighbourhood Services Committee the Chair questioned whether it might be beneficial to bring a report to that Committee regards Exercise Hera in order that bring community reassurance. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer confirmed he would be happy to provide a report and also noted that the operator has previously given presentations on these matters at public meetings. There was also discussion around the benefits of emergency alerts and how best these could be utilised.

Decisions

- I. That an update on core actions including the recovery exercise be brought to a future meeting.
- II. That members advise if they require further information on the arrangements in place should there be an incident at the Power Station.

11.

Activities Report 10/03/2025 – 23/08/25 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To assist members 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 submitted a summary of progress made against the Unit's 2025/26 action plan and the 2025/26 LRF Action Plan, details of which were included in the report. Members were advised that there was a current vacancy for a Local Resilience Forum Officer in the CEPU team. Officers came for a variety of backgrounds, something the Chief Emergency Planning Officer felt was its greatest strength.

The Chair welcomed the work undertaken by the Emergency Planning Unit particularly given the limited numbers of staff.

Decisions

That the continued development of the CEPU Annual Action Plan and the EPJC standard report be noted to ensure that key considerations continue to be met

That members be updated at the quarterly Committee meetings with details of any amendments or additional actions.

12. Incidents Report 10/03/2025 – 23/08/25 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To assist members in overseeing the performance and effectiveness of the Emergency Planning Unit and its value to the Four unitary authorities through provision of a list of incidents within the reporting period.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported on the incidents of note that had been responded to by the Emergency Planning Unit during the reporting period, details of which were set out in Appendix One.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer referred to an incident at Manor Community Academy in Hartlepool which had resulted in a large amount of misinformation on social media. Work was ongoing to address this in the future through a multi-agency group. He also noted concerns around wildfires which had occurred on the North York Moors. Large amounts were being invested in wild land fire fighting.

Decision

That the incidents listed be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11:05am.

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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