

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

22 JANUARY 2013

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present: Councillor Steve Goldswain, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council
Councillor David Rose, Stockton Borough Council

Officers: Alistair Smith, Assistant Director, Transportation and Engineering
Andy Summerbell, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Chris Parkin, Group Accountant
David Cosgrove, Principal Democratic Services Officer

17. Apologies for Absence

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

18. Declarations of interest by members

None.

19. Inquorate Meeting

It was noted by the Members present that in accordance with the agreed constitution and terms of reference for the joint committee, the meeting was inquorate. The Members present agreed to proceed to consider the agenda items making recommendations to be endorsed by the local authorities in accordance with their own procedures.

20. Membership of the Joint Committee

It was noted that Middlesbrough Borough Council's representative was now Councillor Charles Rooney following changes to the Cabinet appointments at the Council. Unfortunately due to the short timescales, Councillor Rooney was unable to attend this meeting.

As this was the second meeting in a row that the Joint Committee had been unable to proceed with decision making due to the lack of a quorum, the Members present discussed potential alternatives that should be considered by the constituent authorities to ensure meetings could proceed in future with a quorum.

The potential reduction of the quorum from three members to two members was discounted as it was considered to make decision making impossible if there was a disagreement between the two Members on any particular action. The Members suggested that each authority consider appointing two Members to the Joint Committee. Both Members would be invited to meetings and would both have the ability to vote on behalf of their authority but each authority would only retain the right to one vote at each meeting. It was considered that there would be a greater chance of a quorum being present from three authorities at each meeting through this method. This method was considered a better option than each member having an appointed substitute as the principal member may often be asking their substitute to attend on their behalf at very short notice.

The Principal Democratic Services Officer indicated that Members comments would be put to the constituent authorities.

21. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2012 and 23rd October 2012

Minutes received.

22. Revenue Financial Monitoring Report to end December 2012 *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of progress against the Joint Committee's overall revenue budget for 2012/2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant outlined the performance and progress of the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) against the approved 2012/2013 revenue budget. There was currently a slight favourable variance on the main Emergency Planning budget. It was anticipated that the majority of the budget would be spent by the end of the financial year leaving a small favourable variance of £18,000. The variance primarily related to salary costs. Following Job Evaluation employees were budgeted at the top of their pay scale. However, some employees had not yet reached their maximum scale point, resulting in an underspend against the pay budget. In addition the EPU received a contribution of £5,000 from the NHS for accommodation that had not been anticipated.

It was proposed that in line with the Joint Committees decision on the 8th November 2011, the underspend is transferred to reserves to support service delivery in future years, in anticipation of resources becoming increasingly constrained. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that he anticipated that the final favourable variance may be slightly lower than the £18,000 now reported by the end of the financial year but not significantly so.

Recommendation

That the report be noted and approve that any underspend at year end be transferred to reserves to support service delivery in future years, in anticipated of resources becoming increasingly constrained.

23. Cleveland Local Resilience Forum - Funding (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the review of the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum (CLRF), in particular the review of partner funding for the management and secretariat functions.

To inform members of the increased income from the Local Resilience Forum commencing April 1st 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the CLRF commissioned a review of the Forum and its constituent groups in late 2011. This was undertaken by a small number of partners who made a series of recommendations to the May 2012 CLRF Chief Officer Group meeting. Having agreed the recommendations a group was established to take forward the recommendation to review the funding of the CLRF.

In 2006 CLRF agreed to a funding proposal to the CEPU of £25,000 pa. However, this only ever realised contributions of £21,000. The CLRF agreed in 2006 to the creation of the post of Secretariat (18hr/wk) managed by CEPU. Also in 2008 the Chief Emergency Planning Officer was appointed as CLRF Manager, a post without remuneration from the LRF. The management and secretariat provision by the CEPU continues although the service delivered now exceeds that which was funded in 2006, this despite a 20% reduction in funding to the CEPU by April 1st 2013.

The report went on to compare the funding of the Cleveland LRF with that of other areas in the North East. This showed that based on significantly higher contributions from constituent partners these LRF's were funded to in excess of £40,000 each year at least half of which went to fund full time support for the LRF.

The sub group established to review the funding of the CLRF proposed that funding should be agreed by the current main responder funders to the sum of £5,000 each to demonstrate equitable contribution. These contributions were predicated on the CEPU providing a continued and enhanced service to the value of £38,000 to £42,000 per annum. Recognition was given to the changing health landscape and loss of the Primary Care Trusts from April which would affect that funding stream. Continued dialogue was necessary with the co-chairs of the Local Health Resilience Partnership in its shadow form before April 2013, with regard to their funding position. Negotiation

would also be undertaken with the Foundation Trusts and PD Ports (Teesport) with regard to their current contributions.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer had raised the funding issue at a meeting with the Chief Constable and local authority Chief Executives at a meeting on the 28th June, 2012. At this meeting the Chief Constable stated her position to continue to provide £8,000 per annum funding, recognising that the additional £3,000 could be used to offset the need for continued partnership command training.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that subsequent to that meeting, representation had been made to reduce the proposed local authority funding contribution from £5,000 to £3,000 in recognition that the local authorities funded the CEPU already. While this view was understandable it was recommended that the funding of these two bodies be separated as were the CLRF to be managed and administered by another member authority, they would rightly expect commensurate funding to do so.

At their meeting on the 4th September 2012, the CLRF Chief Officer Group considered the funding paper and agreement was reached to increase partner contributions to £38,000 per annum from April 1st 2012, an increase of £19,000.

Members questioned what potential effect the mutualisation of Cleveland Fire Brigade could have on the work of the CEPU. The Assistant Director commented that there may be increased marketing of Fire Services and advice to companies and service providers around the area that may cross the services provided by CEPU. At this stage the full impact was not known and would be closely monitored.

The Assistant Director also indicated that the recent training undertaken by local authority officers at the CEPU had been very successful. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer had brought the training service provided by the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold to the CEPU making it significantly more cost effective for core officers to be trained.

Members noted the comments in relation to the funding of the CEPU and the CLRF by constituent local authorities. Members questioned the future health sector support for the CLRF. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer commented that from April health responsibilities would transfer from the PCT to Clinical Commissioning Groups in the Cleveland area. There was presently a shadow Health Resilience Forum in existence and the relationship between the two bodies would be explored further and formalised as the Health LRF developed.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

24. Update on EPU Performance Indicators 2012/13 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform the Joint Committee of the progress made on achieving the performance indicators set in the 2012/13 Annual Plan of the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU).

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported details of the progress made towards achieving the CEPU's performance indicators during the period 1st April 2012 to 30th September 2012. Appendix A to the report set out the detailed progress against each individual indicator.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer highlighted that 60 members of partner agencies had attended Strategic Command training sessions facilitated by the EPU. These were senior officers who would be required to perform in the Strategic Coordinating Group (Gold) or Tactical Coordinating Group (Silver). Refresher events were planned for January 2013.

It was notable that while Cleveland had 34 Top Tier Comah sites, some 11 percent of the country's total, all off site plans were up to date. This had been subject of recognition by the Competent Authority.

Since the presentation in October 2011 of the Dreamspace incident at Chester Le Street, officers of the EPU have worked with partner local authorities in establishing their Safety Advisory Groups, taking on board much of the good practice and processes of Stockton Borough Council. All chairs of the ISAGs had attended relevant training facilitated by the EPU.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that the EPU would be working towards a more consistent approach to emergency plans across all four borough councils. Presently each had a separate plan that differed in varying degrees from each other. It was considered that a more uniform corporate plan applied in each borough would not only reduce the workload in terms of preparation but also enable greater flexibility and speed when the need to share resources across boundaries arose.

Members welcomed the proposal and also considered that a similar approach to local control centres and the implementation of rest centres would also be of value, again particularly when incidents could extend beyond one borough area. The Assistant Director supported the comment indicating that processes within local control, and often Silver Control at Ladgate Lane, depended on who was the coordinator. There was a need for consistency and uniform plans would empower the coordinators to call upon input from neighbouring authorities when the need arose with the confidence that delivery would also be consistent.

Members commented on the potential involvement of Darlington in CEPU.

The Assistant Director indicated that there were some exercises that involved Darlington but they did have service level agreements with Durham Police and Fire Authorities. This did not preclude close working with the authority on the development of appropriate plans.

Recommendation

That the report be noted

25. 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 covers the period between 1st April and 1st October 2012.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer updated the Joint Committee on the weather and flood warnings during the period, the Industrial Communications Strategy and other incidents of note.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer highlighted the flooding incidents in Stockton during the 24-26 September 2012 and circulated a Flooding Recovery Group Debrief Report for Members information. The Assistant Director commented that two processes were currently running in parallel; recovery from the September event and resilience planning should there be a repeat of the flooding. As part of the resilience planning an event had been held at the CEPU with over forty local authority officers in attendance. It was intended to hold further such events.

Recommendation

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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