

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

6 August 2013

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am at Aurora Court, Barton Road,
Riverside Park, Middlesbrough

Present: Councillor David Rose (Chair)

Councillor Marjorie James, Hartlepool Borough Council
Councillor Charles Rooney, Middlesbrough Borough Council

Officers: Alastair Smith, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Mel Sturgeon, Emergency Planning Officer
Chris Parkin, Group Accountant
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

15. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Steve Goldswain, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

16. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

17. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013

Received.

18. Matters Arising from the Minutes

In relation to Minute 13 – Elected Member Awareness Training, it was reported that the first Elected Member Awareness Training Session would be held on 29 October 2013.

In relation to Minute 8, the Group Accountant reported that the annual return had been audited with no matters arising as a result.

19. Quarter 1 Revenue Financial Monitoring Report *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of progress against the Joint Committee's overall revenue budget for 2013/14.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant outlined the performance and progress of the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) against the approved 2013/2014 revenue budget. There was currently a 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 £19,000. The variance primarily related to salary savings owing to vacant posts and some employees not yet reaching their maximum scale point.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that a restructure of the unit had recently been undertaken which included changes to the remit of the Principal Emergency Planning Officer. This role would no longer be a dedicated role but would require the post holder to combine their existing duties with the Principal's role. This would assist with cover arrangements in the absence of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer.

It was envisaged that an additional Emergency Planning Officer would be employed to facilitate income generation activities and reduce some of the increased workload upon the Principal Emergency Planning Officer.

In response to a query regarding the potential impact of this proposal on the future outturn, the Group Accountant indicated that whilst it was not anticipated the proposal would have a significant impact on the outturn position, the position would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the underspend be transferred to reserves to support future service delivery.

20. Presentation on the Inter-linkages between Risk and Emergency Planning (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer provided a detailed and comprehensive presentation in relation to the inter-linkages between risk and Emergency Planning and focussed on the following issues:-

- The Risks in Cleveland
- Risk Process
 - identify
 - assess
 - prioritise
- Risk Call-ins
- Prevention
- Embed/Consult
- Planning Assumptions

A Member referred to the impact of local authority budget decisions and the potential closure of community centres which may have been utilised as rest centres. In response, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that whilst the rest centres currently utilised were sustainable at the present time, this issue would be monitored. It was suggested that the requirement to utilise centres of this type for Emergency Planning purposes be built into any future asset transfer contractual agreements. The Committee discussed the wider impact of decisions of neighbouring authorities, particularly in relation to planning related issues and the need to integrate Emergency Planning activities with Planning decisions was acknowledged.

With regard to the Emergency Planning awareness training that was scheduled for 29 October 2013, the benefits of extending the invitation to Planning Members was considered. Following discussion in relation to the focus of the session and the inter-linkages between Emergency Planning and Planning related issues, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer suggested that a separate training session for Planning Members may be an appropriate way forward and agreed to follow this up with the responsible Assistant Director. The importance of working with neighbouring authorities, on a larger scale, (Darlington, Durham and Yorkshire) with a view to ensuring Emergency Plans were linked was discussed. The Chair requested that a report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee outlining the linkages between neighbouring authorities.

Decision

- (i) That the contents of the presentation and comments of Members

- be noted.
- (ii) That a report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee relating to the linkages of Emergency Plans with neighbouring authorities.
 - (iii) With regard to the inter-linkages with Emergency Planning and Planning related issues, that training provision for Planning Members be explored.

21. Learning from Incidents and Exercises *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee (EPJC) of the review undertaken into learning as a result of exercises and incidents, the subsequent actions identified and the process now implemented. Appendix A contained an outline of the process.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer provided background information relating to the review of the mechanisms for learning within the unit. During the study over 120 incidents had been reviewed and only 40% of the incidents had learning identified. Of these, a significant proportion was limited to observations without any recommended remediation actions or identification of how improvements could be made. A system had been implemented to ensure that learning was more targeted towards continuous improvement and action focussed. A flow chart had been developed, outlining the process was attached as an appendix to the report.

Decision

That the process in place to actively learn from incidents and exercises be noted.

22. Exercise Zambezi Lesson Learnt *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the lessons learnt from Exercise Zambezi and how identified issues would be taken forward.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer provided background information in relation to Exercise Zambezi and referred to the acknowledgment from the Office of Nuclear Regulations (ONR) identifying that the exercise was a valid test of the Off-site Plan.

The Committee was referred to a Local Action Plan which provided a summary of the key issues /recommendations identified by participants at Exercise Zambezi, attached at Appendix A to the report. The Local Action Plan would be monitored and updated through the Emergency Planning Consultative Committee and Cleveland Local Resilience Forum.

In the discussion that followed the Chief Emergency Planning Officer responded to issues raised by Members in relation to the recommendations. Clarification was provided regarding the potential reasons for criticism from agencies in relation to the Strategic Major Advice Cell (SMAC) as well as details of the facilities at the Strategic Co-ordination Centre. The impact of out of date IT equipment and compatibility issues were also debated. Members were advised that new software (Next Generation National Resilience Extranet) was being developed by the Cabinet Office which would assist all agencies with exercises and incidents of this type. Further information was awaited as to when this software would be available and how this would be funded which would be presented to Members in due course. In order to fully appreciate the feedback from the exercise Members were of the view that a site visit to the power station would be of benefit to Members. It was suggested that this be arranged around the next meeting.

Decision

- (i) Members noted the role of CEPU in developing and testing arrangements on behalf of Hartlepool Borough Council.
- (ii) Members noted that the plans prepared under the REPPiR Regulations have been tested to the satisfaction of the Office for Nuclear Regulation.
- (iii) It was noted that where issues with plans had been identified, be it at a national or a local level, action plans were being produced and responsibilities allocated for the resolution of the identified issues.
- (iv) That a site visit to the Power Station for Elected Members be arranged.

23. Update on the Risk of East Coast Inundation (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To inform the Joint Committee of the work being undertaken regarding the nationally recognised risk of East Coast Inundation.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer presented the report which provided background information relating to the nationally recognised risk of East Coast Inundation. Recent studies had identified that the risk of an East Coast Inundation scenario and the potential impact on the Cleveland Area. Whilst the likelihood was not particularly high compared to other risks the impact identified was significant both locally and nationally impacting on more than two government regions. The CEPU had established a task and finish group which had raised a number of queries with DEFRA and Environment Agency to seek clarification and develop an agreed approach to managing risk prior to undertaking specific planning activities. Once planning assumptions had been agreed between partners the task and finish group would cross reference the assumptions against existing capacities and capabilities.

With regard to old mining works under the north sea, some concerns were raised as to the impact on the Hartlepool area if the mines were to collapse underneath the sea bed and a query was raised in relation to whether this issue had been considered. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that whilst he was not aware of any specific risks of mine inundation there was an opportunity to raise cross boundary issues at quarterly meetings with neighbouring authorities and would follow this up.

Decision

That the contents of the report, be noted.

24. Update on the Community Resilience Activity (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To update Members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee of the work undertaken on the Environment Agency funded community resilience

project.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

It was reported that community resilience was about communities using local resources and knowledge to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complimented the local emergency services. In terms of flooding, this may include a range of actions such as checking on vulnerable neighbours, signing up for flood warnings direct, adapting properties at risk to become more resilient, starting a community group or starting community plans.

Since March 2011 the Environment Agency had provided funding for a community resilience project based in Cleveland. This funding had enabled an officer to be allocated full time on the project and a range of events/awareness raising activities had been held which included door to door leaflet drops, drop in sessions, home safety visits, attendance at community events and development of programmes to relay key messages to children and adults. Appendix A provided details of activities undertaken and proposed.

The Chair thanked the Emergency Planning Officer for the excellent work to date on this project.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

25. Reported Incidents and Warnings Received *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee of the incidents reported and warning communications received and dealt with by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit. The report covers the period between 21 May 2013 and 24 July 2013 (8 weeks).

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Committee was advised that during the reporting period the Emergency Planning Unit received no warnings and no weather alerts from the Met Office relating to adverse weather conditions. During the period 17 heat wave planning advice statements were issued and 10 heat wave action/warnings were issued. Two flood warnings had been issued by the Environment Agency over this period together with 5 flood alerts.

With regard to the industrial communications system used to alert responders and members of the public in the event of an incident on an industrial site and, if required, request action from services / members of the public in the event of an incident off-site, two levels of information were issued; 1) blue – for information only and 2) red - where action was required. Red communications were broadcast on BBC Tees. During the period whilst no red faxes were issued, 14 blue faxes were issued.

Brief details of incidents to note were outlined, as set out at Appendix A.

Decision

That the contents of the report be noted.

26. Confirmation Schedule of Future Meetings Dates 2013/14 - Emergency Planning Joint Committee *(Democratic Services Officer)*

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The proposed dates for future Emergency Planning Joint Committee meetings were provided for information purposes following confirmation of the schedule of dates at the last meeting. The Chair requested that the dates be included in the minutes and circulated to substitute Members:-

- 10.00 am Tuesday 11 June 2013
- 10.00 am Tuesday 6 August 2013
- 10.00 am Tuesday 26 November 2013
- 10.00 am Tuesday 4 February 2014
- 10.00 am Tuesday 6 May 2014
- 10.00 am Tuesday 10 June 2014

Decision

That the confirmed meeting schedule be noted and circulated to substitute Members for information purposes.

The meeting concluded at 11.25 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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