

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

26th November 2013

The meeting commenced at 10.00am at the Emergency Planning Unit,
Middlesbrough

Present:

Councillor: David Rose, Stockton Borough Council (In the Chair)

Councillors: Marjorie James, Hartlepool Borough Council
Charles Rooney, Middlesbrough Borough Council

Officers: Alastair Smith, Assistant Director, Neighbourhoods
Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Rachael Campbell, Principal Emergency Planning Officer
Chris Parkin, Group Accountant
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

27. Apologies for Absence

None.

28. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

29. Receipt of the minutes of the meeting held on 6th August 2013

Received.

30. Quarter 2 Revenue Financial Monitoring Report (*Chief Finance Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide details of progress against the Joint Committee's overall
revenue budget for 2013/2014.

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 £20,000. The variance primarily related to some income being received earlier than anticipated and salary costs being lower than budgeted. This variance would be transferred to reserves to support future service delivery in a climate of ongoing budget cuts.

Additionally the Enterprise Project budget was showing a favourable variance at outturn of £7,000 with the Training and Exercise budget showing a favourable variance at outturn of £6,000. It was proposed that both variances be transferred to their respective reserves at the end of the financial year.

Members queried whether it would be possible to purchase some mobile flood defence equipment using Central Government funding and possible match funding. This could be despatched for use by the Emergency Planning Unit as they deemed appropriate. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer suggested this matter be taken to the Flood and Adverse Weather Group for consideration. In terms of storage of such items the Assistant Director felt that Cleveland Fire Brigade premises were the obvious choice. Following further discussion members suggested that a flood emergency strategy was needed in order to identify if and what equipment was required. Only then would funding and storage issues come into play.

It was also noted that funding had been secured to fund the EA Community Resilience Project albeit without an initial inflationary increase in wages. However this could be rectified the following year. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer requested members' input on the new 3-year plan for the Community Resilience Project.

The Chair praised officers for their management of the Unit's finances at such a difficult economic time.

Decision

That the report be noted and the income generated on the Enterprise and Training & Exercise budgets be transferred to reserves at year's end.

31. Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit Action Plan Update *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the progress made against the action plan agreed at the meeting on 11th June 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

At the meeting held on the 11th June 2013 the Committee had agreed an action plan for the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU). This would sit along the Strategic Business Plan for 2011-2014 and interlink with the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum's (CLRF) action plan. The CEPU action plan consisted of 21 overarching actions and 78 sub-actions. 26 of these sub-actions had been completed with 36 ongoing and 16 yet to begin. It was anticipated that the vast majority of actions would be completed within the time scales with any exceptions due to the need for additional information from partner agencies or as a result of significant staff changes within partner agencies. A summary of the ongoing action plan highlighting the current status of all actions and sub-actions was appended to the report.

Decision

That the report be noted and a copy of the EPU strategic Risk Register be made available to Members of the Committee upon completion.

32. Competency Framework *(Principal Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide Members with an overview of the competency frameworks that have been developed for those officers and members in the Local Authorities who are identified to undertake a role in the event of an emergency.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Members were advised that a competency framework had been developed for each of the 10 key emergency roles. A copy was appended to the report. Each of the boroughs would embed the competency framework through their respective Emergency Response Teams and Incident Management Teams. Reviews and updates would be carried out by the Senior Emergency Planning Officer as required.

The Chair praised the new competency framework as a practical way to ensure all emergency planning personnel had the appropriate level of knowledge.

Decision

That the report be noted

33. Feedback from Elected Members' Training

Purpose

To allow Members to feedback on their experiences at Emergency Planning training.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Emergency Planning training for members of the Emergency Planning Committee and their substitutes had taken place on 29th October at the Emergency Planning Unit. Members were universal in their praise of this event, saying the content had been very good and had given them an insight into the speed of decision making. They praised the informal nature of the training and suggested that a future training event involving elected members and officers might be beneficial. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer referred to the Chair's previous request that members be invited to attend a future training exercise saying this might be an effective training tool for elected members by allowing them to observe the practical aspects of the work of the Emergency Planning Unit and ensure their expectations were being met. The Chair asked that officers consider whether training should be made available to a wider cohort of elected members.

Decision

That the feedback be noted and that dates of future training or exercises be forwarded to members when available.

During the following item Councillor Charles Rooney left the meeting, as a result the meeting was inquorate.

34. Feedback from the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Chairs and Secretariats Conference *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide Members with an overview of the key themes and issues in the resilience sphere that were identified in the LRF Chairs and Secretariats Conference held on 9th October 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer attended the LRF Chairs and Secretariats Conference in his role as Cleveland Local Resilience Forum Manager. A summary of the key points was appended to the report – these included a national risk assessment, community resilience and business continuity promotion.

The Chair queried whether there had been any discussion among the LRF Chairs regarding funding or emerging issues. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that concerns had been raised that there was felt to be too much repetition of processes across the country. It had been felt preferable to identify models of best practice used by the lead LRFs to be utilised by others. Members referred to emerging national policies around policing, the results of which could be to the benefit or detriment of local authority areas.

Decision

That the report be noted.

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

Purpose of report

To inform Members of the incidents reported and warning communications received and dealt with by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU) between 24th July 2013 and 8th November 2013.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Committee was advised that during the reporting period the Emergency Planning Unit received 35 alerts and 2 warnings relating to adverse weather conditions. 5 heat wave planning advice statements were also issued. 12 flood alerts were issued but there were no flood warnings.

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, 21 alert blue faxes were sent out.

Brief details of 9 incidents to note were appended to the report. The most significant of these was the surface water flooding which occurred on 6th September when 391 incidents had been reported including 71 incidences of internal flooding. The Assistant Director also referred to an incident on

15th October. Although this had turned out to be a false alarm it had raised questions as to when evacuation procedures should commence. Members felt the timing of releasing such information to the public was crucial.

With regards to the current industrial communications system and plans to transfer it from fax to email-based members felt such communiqués should also be sent to public groups and councillors, preferably digitally through mobile phones. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that the system was one of many channels that are being compiled into a communications strategy. He reported that several new channels were being developed Cleveland Police had recently launched a “Twitter Alert” service and that trials for mobile messaging were being undertaken as well as the use of social networking sites as platforms.

Decision

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11.20am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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