

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

11th November 2014

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

Present:

Councillor: Marjorie James (Hartlepool Borough Council) (In the Chair)

Steve Goldswain (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Charles Rooney (Middlesbrough Borough Council)

Councillor Robert Cook (Stockton Borough Council) was in attendance as substitute
for Councillor David Rose

Officers: Alastair Smith, Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods)
Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Jon Hepworth, Group Accountant (Regeneration and
Neighbourhoods)
Rachael Campbell, Principal Emergency Planning Officer
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

8. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillor David Rose (Stockton Borough
Council)

9. Declarations of interest by Members

None

10. To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 5th August 2014

Noted

11. Quarter 2 Revenue Financial Monitoring Report 2014/2015 *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of the progress against the Joint Committee's overall revenue budget for 2014/2015.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant outlined the performance and progress of the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) against the approved 2014/2015 revenue budget. There was currently an adverse variance on the main Emergency Planning budget relating predominantly to additional service charges incurred as a result of a review by Mouchel who manage the building on behalf of Middlesbrough Borough Council. This would be offset by an additional charge to the police and higher income than originally budgeted for additional COMAH fees. A favourable variance of £18,000 was anticipated at year end, primarily related to salary savings owing to some employees not yet reaching their maximum scale point.

Significant savings were also expected to be made as a result of the anticipated sale of Aurora Court and proposed move of the Emergency Planning Unit to shared premises. Although reserves might need to be used to fund the initial costs associated with the move 50% savings on accommodation costs were expected to be made eventually.

Decision

That the report be noted

That it be noted that the underspend to be transferred to reserves to support future service delivery would be lower than previously forecast.

12. Update on CEPU Actions Quarter 2 2014 *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the progress of the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit and its achievement against the performance indicators identified in the 2014/15 Action Plan.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer provided an overview of progress made against the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit Action Plan set in April 2014. He was confident that the remaining actions in the 2014/15 plan would be achieved with the following exceptions:

- The updating and testing of the business continuity plan. It was felt that it would be more beneficial to wait until the move to alternative premises had been finalised before completing this objective.
- The reduction of the emergency planning liaison meetings with the power station from 4 to 2. This was suggested due to the initial focus of the meetings (of developing exercises) having been met.

Members were also advised that a training exercise would take place on 26th February at the Rainbow Leisure Centre in Middlesbrough to test rest centre and emergency accommodation protocols. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer also highlighted a number of other initiatives including the unit's involvement at the 4 local authority Independent Safety Advisory Groups (ISAG). The CEPU had developed and delivered training sessions to assist event organisers attending ISAG and the community resilience project. A member asked whether there was standardisation of the ISAG process across the 4 boroughs. Hartlepool Borough Council's Assistant Director confirmed that officers and emergency services had met with a view to standardising the ISAG process but that there would always be differences between authorities.

Decision

That the report be noted

13. 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 between 18th July 2014 and 10th October 2014.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Between 18th July and 10th October 2014 the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit received 1 weather warning, 7 flood alerts and 1 flood warning. 7 notification blue alerts were issued but no red alerts. Details of 6 incidents of note were appended to the report.

Decision

That the report be noted

14. Shale Gas Abstraction *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

At the previous meeting the Chair requested that a report be brought back relating to the risks to sub-sea degasification and hydraulic fracturing and how the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit would be engaged in any planning process.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer highlighted that the Emergency Planning Unit were not experts in this subject matter and would seek guidance from experts as to any risks associated with it. Shale gas abstraction was not included on the Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register however a number of the impacts which have been associated with gas abstraction such as land tremors and environmental damage were. The Department for Energy and Climate Change worked closely with regulatory partners to make sure exploration and development activity on the development of new energy resources was safe and sustainable. Public Health England had assessed the risk to human health of extracting shale gas as being low risk if operations were properly run and regulated. The Office of Unconventional Gas and Oil also provided a range of information on the risks and regulatory measures in place to safeguard the processes.

Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit were regularly consulted on planning applications within the Cleveland Area. For applications outside the Cleveland Area the primary consultee would be the respective authority's emergency planners albeit dialogue might be entered into between Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit and the respective planning department. If developments are planned which may have an impact on residents within the Cleveland area there is a duty under the Civil Contingency Act 2004 for information sharing and cooperation. Any such information would be assessed and incorporated into the Cleveland Community Risk Register as appropriate.

Members acknowledged the limits placed on the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit in terms of possible future shale gas abstraction in the area but were concerned at the possibility of inundation resulting from coal gasification off the coastline. Should this happen the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit would have to deal with the aftermath. Members identified that the creation of jobs would be welcomed but not at any price. It was suggested that European Legislation was more stringent than in the United States where shale gas abstraction was already being used and a team from

the Environment Agency was already looking into the issue. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that in the event of an application being submitted the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit would request independent advice and assess the interaction of risks before responding.

Decision

That the report be noted

15. Any Other Business Which the Chair Considers Urgent

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that new guidance “Local authorities’ preparedness for civil emergencies - A good practice guide to local authorities” had recently been issued by the Government. CEPU officers were working through the guidance in relation to the authorities with a view to using it as the foundation for next year’s workplan. Copies of the new guidance were given to members for information.

The meeting concluded at 10:40am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 14th November 2014