

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

19th May 2015

The meeting commenced at 10.00am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

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

Councillors: Charles Rooney (Middlesbrough Borough Council)

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

25. Apologies for Absence

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

26. Adjournment of meeting

As the meeting was inquorate Members agreed to adjourn the meeting to a later date.

The meeting adjourned at 10.30 am

The meeting reconvened at 10.00am on Wednesday 17 June 2015 at the Emergency Planning Annex, Stockton Police Station, Stockton

Present:

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

Councillors: David Rose, Stockton Borough Council

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 Councillor Julia Rostron substituted for Councillor Charles Rooney, Middlesbrough Borough Council

Officers: Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Rachael Campbell, Principal Emergency Planning Officer
Jonathan Hepworth, Group Accountant
Angela Armstrong, Principal Democratic Services Officer

27. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Charles Rooney.

28. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

29. Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2015 were received.

30. 2014/15 Revenue Outturn Report (*Chief Finance Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide details of the revenue outturn for Cleveland Emergency Planning Joint Committee for the year 2014/15.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant provided background information and made reference to the Statement of Accounts, as detailed at Appendix A. A summary of the outturn position was provided as set out in the report. A favourable variance of £27,000 on the main Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) budget had been achieved as a result of the higher than anticipated income generation from training and COMAH fees in the last quarter. In line with the previous principle adopted by the Joint Committee, it was proposed that the underspend be transferred to the main general reserve and that £15,000 of this reserve be utilised to fund the relocation of the Emergency Planning Unit to Stockton.

An addendum to the report was tabled which corrected the reference to the Environment Agency Grant within the report to Local Levy Fund.

A discussion ensued on the level of reserves and the administrative and support costs of the Unit. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that there were currently two vacant posts held within the Unit and in view of continuing budget pressures, there was the potential of a staffing restructure. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer informed the Committee that the level of income generation was increasing and further work was being undertaken in this regard with other partners and local schools.

In response to a question from a Member, the Group Accountant confirmed that given the budget reductions being faced, the level of reserves to be retained by the Emergency Planning Unit was a prudent course of action.

Decision

Members approved the 2014/15 revenue outturn and that the principle adopted at the Joint Committee meeting of 4 February 2014 continued and the underspend be transferred to reserves with £15,000 to be utilised to fund the relocation of the Emergency Planning Unit to Stockton.

31. 2014/15 Annual Audit Return *(Chief Finance Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of the Annual Audit Return to the Audit Commission for the Cleveland Emergency Planning Joint Committee for the year 2014/15.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant provided background information and made reference to the Audit Commission return, a copy of which was attached as an appendix to the report. The return included the Accounting Statements, Annual Governance Statement and Annual Internal Audit Report. A paper copy of the Audit Commission return was provided by the Group Accountant.

Decision

The 2014/15 Annual Audit Return was approved and signed by the Chair and Clerk to the meeting.

32. CEPU Action Plan 2014/15 and Proposed Action Plan/Priorities for 2015/16 *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide Members with 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 (appendix 1) and the proposed action plan/priorities for 2015/16.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the majority actions contained within the Action Plan had been delivered in addition to a range of unscheduled work that had been undertaken. The core actions had been completed in a number of authorities including reviewing and testing of major incident plans and the testing of emergency transport and accommodation in a joint exercise between Stockton and Middlesbrough Councils. There were some areas of work to be carried forward into 2015/16 and these were detailed in the report.

The 2015/16 core action plan would ensure that the key/statutory elements of emergency planning were covered and would be further developed based on a number of key themes which were listed in the report.

A discussion ensued on Operation Sandpiper which had recently been undertaken and the feedback which would be utilised to inform the plans to deal with incidents across Teesside.

The Principal Emergency Planning Officer informed the Committee that a lot of work had been previously been undertaken with local care homes in relation to supporting them in their business continuity planning and would confirm with Members direct the links to the Care Quality Commission's inspection regime undertaken in care homes.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that Members of the Committee will be invited to participate in future exercises where it was considered it would be of interest or added value to Members. The Chair added that there may be the potential for a funding contribution from individual Members' Local Authority Member training budgets to support this training as this would form part of the wider training and personal development programme for all Members. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated he would explore some ideas for further training for Members and contact the Chair and Assistant Director, Neighbourhood Services direct.

The Chair referred to the regional and local levy funding received for community resilience and how this could be utilised most effectively. It was

suggested that this particular issue be discussed in more detail at a future meeting of the Committee.

Clarification was sought on the level of support provided to people in rural areas, in particular to farmers. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that farmers had not been specifically targeted but that he would liaise with the Environment Agency to ascertain if there was any additional support/training that could be offered from the EPU to farmers in rural areas in the Tees Valley area.

Decision

- (1) The report was noted.
- (2) That clarification be provided to Members direct on the links between the emergency planning support, particularly in relation to business continuity, provided to local care homes and the Care Quality Commission's inspection regime.
- (3) That where practicable and of added value to Members, Members be invited to participate in emergency planning exercises.
- (4) That the potential for funding contributions from the Local Authorities Member Training budgets to be provided to support emergency planning training for Members be explored.
- (5) That the issue around community resilience funding, on a regional and local level, be discussed in more detail at a future meeting of the Committee.
- (6) That the provision of support and training to people living in rural areas, in particular those involved in farming, be explored further through liaison with the Environment Agency.

33. Move of Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide Members with an overview of the new accommodation at Stockton Police Annex and the impact of the move on the Unit's financial strategy.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the recent relocation of the Emergency Planning Unit. The costs associated with the relocation were detailed in the report and totalled £15,000. As agreed earlier in the meeting, the cost of the relocation would be funded through the Emergency Planning Unit reserves. It was noted that the relocation had initially provided a saving in ICT provision and had prompted a review of the ICT infrastructure which had resulted in additional savings.

The impact of the financial strategy was detailed in the report and included the additional benefit of reduced officer time required to spend on partner recharges, administration relating to the building and liaison with landlords. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer informed Members that there had been some interest from partner organisations in utilising some of the office space within the Unit and Members would be kept up to date on how this developed in the future.

Decision

The report was noted.

34. Cleveland Incident Recovery Plan (*Principal Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide Members with the assurance that the Cleveland Incident Recovery Plan had been reviewed.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the comprehensive review undertaken of the Cleveland Incident Recovery Plan and included a number of key messages which were identified as a result of the review. It was highlighted that an awareness session would be provided to outline the key processes within the Plan. In addition, the Plan will be tested as part of a table top exercise by the end of 2015 and will include Member involvement. It was noted that a testing matrix would be developed outlining the key elements of the Plan which will allow continual improvement of the plan and provide assurance to duty holders and assist in the identification of future training needs.

A discussion ensued in the participation and involvement of Members in the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum. It was suggested by the Chair that there needed to be democratic involvement and oversight of the operation and decision making of the Forum in view of the accountability of Elected Members for the expenditure of local authority budgets. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that a meeting with the Chair and relevant Officers to discuss this further would be arranged.

Decision

- 1) The information provided along with the role of Elected Members in the Plan was noted.

- 2) The Committee continued to support the training and exercising opportunities offered by the Cleveland LRF/Emergency Planning Unit.
- 3) That a meeting be arranged with the Chair of the Committee and relevant Officers to discuss the democratic accountability and Member involvement in the operation and decision making of the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum.

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

Purpose of report

To provide an update on the incidents reported and warning communications received and dealt with by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU). The report covered the period between 26 December 2014 and 7 May 2015.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The report provided the background to the collation of incidents and it was noted that between 26 December 2014 and 7 May 2015 there had been 38 warnings received from various agencies of which 21 were received out of hours. Further detail was provided of incidents in the following categories:

- National Severe Weather Warning Service;
- Environment Agency Flood Warnings;
- Industrial Communications System;
- Pollution Reports;
- Incidents of Note.

The Chair suggested that Members of the Committee should be emailed when significant incidents occurred as local communication did not always reach Members and it would be useful if they were made aware of any significant incidents at the time they actually happened.

Decision

- 1) The report was noted.
- 2) That the Chief Emergency Planning Officer ensure that information on significant incidents was emailed to Members of the Committee.

36. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business should be considered by the Committee as a matter of urgency in accordance with the

provisions of Section 100(B) (4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972 in order that the matter could be dealt with without delay.

37. Any Other Business – Future Meetings

It was suggested that future meetings be held at 1.00 pm to assist Members' attendance and that the meeting currently scheduled for 1 July 2015 be cancelled due to lack of business. In addition, the Chair requested pre-agenda meetings be scheduled for the Chair and be held at Hartlepool Civic Centre.

38. Any Other Business – Councillor David Rose

As this was Councillor David Rose's last meeting as a Member of the Committee due to Emergency Planning no longer being within the remit of his portfolio, the Chair thanked him for his contribution and hard work as a Member of the Committee for what was a significant amount of time.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 22 June 2015