

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

20th July 2016

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

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

Councillors: Alec Brown (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)
Mick Thompson (Middlesbrough Borough Council)

Officers: Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Jon Hepworth, Group Accountant (Regeneration and
Neighbourhoods)
Jo Stubbs, Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Mike Smith (Stockton Borough Council)

2. Declarations of interest by Members

None

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2016

Minutes received.

4. Financial Management Outturn Report 2015/16 *(Chief Finance Officer and Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of the revenue outturn for the Cleveland Emergency Planning Joint Committee for the year 2015/16.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant provided background information, noting that there was now no requirement for an annual return to be completed and formally approved by committee for external audit as this now formed part of the Hartlepool Borough Council's main accounts. A summary of the outturn position was provided as set out in the report. A favourable variance of £51,000 on the main Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) budget had been achieved due to staffing savings and reductions in general running costs. The Local Levy Fund was also under spent by £15,000 due to a vacant post while savings of £2,000 had been made on the Local Resilience Forum budget. It was recommended that these savings be transferred to the main Emergency Planning Reserve, the Local Levy Fund reserve and the LRF reserve.

Decision

That the report be noted and the following reserve transfers be approved:

- A net contribution to the main Emergency Planning Reserve of £35,000
- A transfer to the Local Levy Fund reserve of £15,000
- A transfer of £2,000 to the LRF reserve

5. CEPU Proposed Action Plan 2016-2017 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide the action plan of the Emergency Planning Unit and assist members in overseeing the performance and effectiveness of the Unit and its value to the four unitary authorities.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The proposed plan contained 100 actions/objectives and their associated indicators which would be progressed through the year. A summary overview of the areas which the actions fell under was also provided. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer asked members to contact him with any specific concerns relating to the plan, including the format. A member queried whether the functions of the unit were subject to audit by an external body. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that there was no specific audit in place although the unit were often asked to provide returns to Central Government on specific areas. The Unit also supports the returns by Category 1 responders National Capability Survey which are conducted every 2-3 years. The Chair noted that the format of the plan had

been amended in order to provide members with all the information they would need in order to be fully involved.

Decision

- a. That the Action Plan be approved
- b. That members seek involvement and clarification on the Action Plan where appropriate
- c. That the Chief Emergency Planning Officer continues to develop the Action Plan and that a standard report be submitted to the quarterly committee meetings to provide assurance to members that the key considerations continue to be met.

6. CEPU progress against the Action Plan 2015-2016 *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To report on the progress of the CEPU action plan 2015-16 and assist members in overseeing the performance and effectiveness of the EPU and its value to the four unitary authorities

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the majority of actions contained within the Action Plan had been delivered. There were some areas of work to be carried forward into 2016/17 and these were detailed in the report. The following issues were then discussed by members:

Training for Independent Safety Advisory Groups

It was noted that there had been no uptake on this training by local authorities in the year, the training had previously been provided in a number of boroughs to both staff and event organisers. The Chair queried whether this should be standalone training or could be done as part of an overall training package to be provided to members on a future date. Basic information should be shared with members to enable them to inform community groups on health and safety matters at events as the Council would ultimately be liable if there was an incident.

COMAH

A site which was officially designated as an upper tier COMAH site was overdue its 3 year statutory testing period as a result of transfer of ownership. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer outlined that whilst still

designated as an upper tier site, the operator had advised that products had been removed therefore there was no longer the potential for an offsite emergency impacting on the public. Discussions had been ongoing with the operator and the Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency and the intent was to carry out the minimum testing required in order to complete all statutory requirements.

Development of a sustainable community resilience model

The Chair made specific reference to the position of the LRF in relation to this, noting that despite all local authorities contributing to their budget there was no elected member representation on the Forum and they had never been provided with the minutes of their meetings, although retrospective reporting of the LRF's key activities to the EPJC was now undertaken. She was concerned that while elected members would be ultimately accountable they had no say in how the funding was spent. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that he could provide members with a projection of routine costs at the start of the year and a financial report at year end. He would also highlight the concerns of the members with the Chair of the LRF, with a view to meeting and resolving the concerns. The Chair clarified that the Committee would not necessarily want oversight of the LRF but in order to make that decision there needed to be more awareness of their role.

Elected members seminar

This had been delayed due to the local elections and the volume of work being undertaken by the Unit. The Chair advised she wished training to be offered to all elected members of the contributing authorities. She suggested that it be provided in one venue to members for all 4 authorities in order to avoid any localisation of issues. This needed to be a priority for the coming year. Following this it could be part of the induction process for all new Councillors.

Decision

- a. That the completion of a significant number of actions in the 2015/16 Action Plan be noted
- b. That those actions not completed be carried forward to the 2016/17 Action Plan
- c. That a meeting take place between the Chair of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee and the Chair of the LRF and details of this discussion be reported back to the next Committee meeting
- d. That a member's seminar on the work of the EPU involving elected members from the four local authorities be scheduled as a priority.

7. LGA Guidance for Councillors *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To bring to members' attention the recently published guidance for Councillors 'A Councillor's guide to civil emergencies' and its benefit in seeking assurance on the role of the Local Authority in Civil Emergencies.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

A copy of the guidance, issued in May 2016, was provided to members. It contained a number of case studies. The Chair suggested it might be used as part of elected member training, albeit utilising more local examples.

Decision

- a. That members familiarise themselves with the document and ensure fellow Councillors are aware of the guidance
- b. That members use the guidance to seek assurance and enter dialogue with the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and their respective authorities senior staff
- c. That the Chief Emergency Planning Officer continues to develop the CEPU annual action plan and associated report to provide assurance to elected members that the key considerations continue to be met

8. Activity and Incident Report *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

1. To assist members in overseeing the performance and effectiveness of the Emergency Planning Unit and its value to the four unitary authorities.
2. To inform members of the activities and incidents reported and warning communications received and dealt with by the Unit between 6th January and 24th July 2016.
3. To provide oversight to members of the actions undertaken under the community resilience project hosted at the unit and the actions

associated with the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Between 6th January and 24th July 2016 –

32 warning communications had been received
9 incidents of note had taken place
11 training events had been held
10 training exercises had been held

Information was also given regarding community resilience activities and LRF activities.

The Chair referred to the regular activity updates sent to members of the Cleveland Fire Authority. She suggested that members of the Committee contact the Cleveland Fire Authority and ask that they be included on the distribution list for this email.

Decision

That members note the report and seek further clarification as appropriate.

The meeting concluded at 2:40pm.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

PUBLICATION DATE: 27 July 2016