

# **EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

The meeting commenced at 1.00pm at the Emergency Planning Annex,  
Stockton Police Station, Bishop Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1SY

**Present:**

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

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

Officers: Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer  
Rachael Campbell, Principal Emergency Planning Officer  
Jon Hepworth, Group Accountant (Regeneration and  
Neighbourhoods)  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **31. Apologies for Absence**

None

### **32. Declarations of interest by Members**

None

### **33. Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

Minutes received

### **34. Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017**

Minutes received

### **35. CEPU Internal Audit Report** (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

#### **Purpose of report**

To bring members' attention to the recently published internal audit of the CEPU undertaken by Hartlepool Borough Council.

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

Following an audit in December 2016 the CEPU had been shown to provide 'satisfactory assurance that the risks are well controlled' – the highest rating possible under Hartlepool's audit scheme. A number of areas for future development had been identified, details of these were appended to the report.

Members were advised that the Chair of the Local Resilience Forum was unfortunately unable to attend today's meeting.

The Chair welcomed the proposals in place to address the findings of the audit and the commitment from the Chair of the LRF to develop relationships with the Group and attend future meetings of this Committee twice yearly to ensure increased transparency of the LRF, the benefits of which were outlined.

#### **Decision**

- (i) That progress on the actions identified within the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit's activity report be reported to future meetings of this Committee.
- (ii) That a similar report and action plan be produced following the forthcoming audits to be undertaken at Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough Councils.

### **36. Financial Management Report – as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016** (*Chief Finance Officer and Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

#### **Purpose of report**

To provide details of progress against the Joint Committee's overall revenue budget for 2016/2017

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

An overall picture of the performance and progress of the EPU against the

approved 2016/20/17 revenue budget was provided. A favourable variance of £32,000 on the main Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) budget had been achieved due to staffing savings. The Local Levy Fund was also under spent by £15,000. It was recommended that these savings be transferred to the main Emergency Planning Reserve, the Local Levy Fund reserve and the LRF reserve.

Members were reminded of the ongoing budget pressure being faced by all 4 local authorities and the obvious impact this would have on funding the Unit. An agreement had previously been made to reduce the contribution for each Local Authority by 5% per year until March 2018. In addition the Local Levy Fund arrangements were due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017. A service review was looking at future options for the EPU such as ceasing non-statutory activities, ending the 5% reduction to local authority contributions and using reserves to balance the budget.

The Chair referred to the budgetary impact as a result of the Environment Agency's proposals to directly employ a resilience worker.

The Group Accountant responded to issues raised by Members in relation to the report. Clarification was provided regarding the potential redistribution levels for each local authority in terms of reserves. To assist with ongoing budget pressures, the Chair questioned the feasibility of each local authority acquiring their share of reserves as a one-off cash lump sum and highlighted that this was a matter for discussion and agreement between Elected Members of the respective 4 Cleveland authorities. The Group Accountant advised on predicted shortfalls for future financial years.

Following further discussion in relation to predicted shortfalls and estimated reserve levels and, given that redistribution levels would be clearer in the coming months, it was suggested that the potential for reserves to be redistributed to local authorities, as a cash lump sum, be explored and a report be provided for consideration at the next meeting.

## **Decision**

- (i) That the report be noted and any underspend be transferred to reserves to support future service delivery.
- (ii) That the potential for reserves to be redistributed to local authorities as a cash lump sum be explored and a report be provided for consideration at the next meeting of this Committee.

### **37. Function and Operation of Cleveland LRF** *(Cleveland LRF Chair)*

#### **Purpose of report**

To provide members with background information on the structure and operation of Cleveland Local Resilience Forum

#### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

Following previous discussion by the Committee, it had been agreed that the Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum (CLRF) be invited to attend the Committee to update members on a twice-yearly basis. The report provided details of the purpose and structure of the CLRF, including the terms of reference, finances and inter-linkages to other resilience structures.

Given that apologies had been received from the Chair and Vice-Chair of the CLRF, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer responded to issues raised in relation to the report.

In response to clarification sought, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer outlined the contribution arrangements by agencies to the CLRF, the various categories of contributions as well as the benefits as a result. Emphasis was placed upon the need to establish, in future discussions with the Chair and Vice Chair of the CLRF, whether there was a fairer way of including more category 1 contributions and explore the feasibility of encouraging contributions from category 2 agencies.

#### **Decision**

That the contents of the report be noted and the Committee continue to seek assurance on the operation and effectiveness of the Local Resilience Forum from the CEPO/LRF Manager and LRF Chair.

### **38. Restructure of Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit** *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

#### **Purpose of report**

To provide an update on recent changes to the structure of Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

Members were given information as to recent structural changes to the CEPU. These included a review of the existing Senior Emergency Planning Officer post, the removal of the Community Resilience Post and the creation of an Assistant Emergency Planning Officer post on a 12-month fixed term contract.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the Committee continue to seek assurance on the operation and effectiveness of CEPU staffing and engage with staff.
- (ii) That Members be updated on income generation as part of the standard financial reporting and progression of officers through the development scheme as appropriate.

## **39. Activity and Incident Report – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017** *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

### **Purpose of report**

To inform members of the activities, incidents reported and warning communications received and dealt with by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit between 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

To provide oversight on 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**

It was reported that between 5<sup>th</sup> November 2016 – 6<sup>th</sup> January 2017 –

17 warning communications had been received  
2 incidents of note had taken place  
6 training exercises had been held

Information was also given regarding community resilience activities and LRF activities as well as a summary of progress carried out as part of the CEPU Action Plan. It was noted that no training events had been held due to the winter recess.

In relation to flooding, whilst it was acknowledged that measures were in place to deal with flood related incidents, a Member raised some concerns that there were insufficient measures in place in terms of flood prevention.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported on the role of the Emergency Planning Unit and the duty upon local authorities to investigate flood related incidents. A discussion followed during which the Chair updated Members on her role as a representative on the Flooding and Coastal Committee and the arrangements in place to address such issues. The importance of resilience work was highlighted as well as the need for Members who participate in these Forums to report any concerns of this type.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the areas of work undertaken as outlined in the report.

## **40. Activity and Incident Report – 7<sup>th</sup> January – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017** *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

### **Purpose of report**

To inform members of the activities, incidents reported and warning communications received and dealt with by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit between 7<sup>th</sup> January – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

To provide oversight on 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 7<sup>th</sup> January – 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017 –

- 19 warning communications had been received
- 2 incidents of note had taken place
- 7 training events had been held
- 2 training exercises had been held

Information was also given regarding community resilience activities and LRF activities as well as a summary of progress carried out as part of the CEPU Action Plan.

Some concerns were raised regarding the lack of take up of the recovery training and the need to reschedule from the initial date to May 2017. The potential reasons for the low take up were discussed. The Chair requested that details of the event be provided to all Members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee and suggested that the week of the Mayoral elections be avoided. In relation to the community risk register, the Chair

requested an electronic copy of the register and suggested that this also be made available in hard copy format.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer responded to queries raised in relation to tidal surge issues and flooding as a result of becks.

### **Decision**

The Committee noted the areas of work undertaken as outlined in the report.

## **41. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting would be confirmed in the new municipal year. The Chair thanked Members for their contribution and highlighted that Middlesbrough Borough Council would take over the role of Chair from the start of the next municipal year for a period of two years, and Redcar and Cleveland Vice-Chair, in accordance with the rotational arrangements set out in the constitution and terms of reference.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 pm.

**P J DEVLIN**

**CHIEF SOLICITOR**

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