

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

28th November 2019

The meeting commenced at 10.00am at the Emergency Planning Annex,
Stockton Police Station, Bishop Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1SY

Present:

Councillors: Marjorie James (Hartlepool Borough Council)
Mike Smith (Stockton Borough Council)

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 Councillor Antony High
(Middlesbrough Borough Council) was in attendance as substitute for
Councillor Dorothy Davison.

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

13. Appointment of Chair

In the absence of Councillor Barry Hunt (Redcar and Cleveland Borough
Council) Councillor Mike Smith was appointed Chair for this meeting.

14. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were submitted by Councillor Dorothy Davison (Middlesbrough
Borough Council)

15. Declarations of interest by Members

None

16. Minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2019

The minutes were received.

17. Financial Management Update Report (*Director of Finance and Policy & Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide details of the forecast outturn as at 31st October 2019 for the current financial year ending 31st March 2019.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

A summary of the outturn position at 31st October 2019 was provided as set out in the report. A favourable variance of £43,000 on the main Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) budget was forecast. This was due to a vacant post (which was due to be filled in January) and increased fee income from additional duties required under REPPIR legislation.

An additional £78,000 for 2019/20 (plus £38,000 in 2018/19) had also been allocated to the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) by the Government to assist in Brexit preparations. This grant was currently being maintained as a contingency with minor recharges for partner time spent supporting LRF arrangements. Should this not be required additional recharges would be made for CEPU staff time spent on Brexit preparations with any remaining grant expected to be distributed to LRF partners or used to support specific work-streams.

A member raised concerns that despite a number of requests and attempts the Chair of the LRF had so far been unable to meet with the Committee to discuss budget suggestions. They reiterated that any decisions regards allocations of funding should be made in conjunction with elected members as they would be held responsible and could not be expected to rubber stamp budget decisions without having all the facts and being able to give their input. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that he would endeavour to ensure that the Chair of the LRF could attend the next meeting. Members advised that they would be prepared to change the date and venue of the next meeting to accommodate her attendance.

Decision

That the latest financial forecast for 2019/20 be noted

18. CEPU Staffing Update (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To review the staffing establishment of the EPU in accordance with the budget provision approved by the 4 constituent authorities as per requirements outlined in the constitution.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer gave a brief update on current staffing within the CEPU. There were currently 9 members of staff including 1 Principal and 4 Senior Emergency Planning Officers, each local authority area has a designated emergency planning officer. A Business Support Officer was currently being recruited on a 12 month fixed term due to increases in workload. All officers had lead areas and the overall range of work was becoming more specialised, encompassing new areas such as cyber-resilience. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer outlined the benefit of development schemes and identified that for staff to progress through the development schemes and associated pay bands could only be done through the demonstration of competency in a range of areas.

A member queried whether there was capacity to take on an apprentice. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer advised that he would look into this however concerns had previously been raised that apprenticeships did not always lead to permanent jobs. Members identified the developmental benefits of an apprenticeship and recognised that any role would have to provide a meaningful contribution to the work of the Unit. Members felt that given the links the EPU had in terms of Local Authorities and private industry apprentices were in a unique position in terms of future employment even should such employment be unavailable within the Unit itself. They asked that an apprenticeship be sought within the next financial year provided there was a capacity for it.

Decision

That the report be noted and efforts made to recruit an apprentice for 2020/21.

19. Exercising and Training 2020-21 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide members with an overview of the proposed training and exercising calendar for 2020-21.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer gave a brief update on future training and exercise plans for the Unit and its partners. Every year LRF partners were asked to contribute to a training and exercising calendar via a “bidding” process. A draft calendar was then submitted to the LRF Tactical and Strategic Board for approval. This was based on the “bids” by the LRF partners along with the existing risk register, previous exercises, identified training needs and statutory duties specifically required by legislation. So far 58 training exercises had been requested for delivery including COMAH and REPPIR exercises. Efforts were made to minimise clashes in dates and ensure training was scheduled regionally rather than locally.

A member queried whether training on animals and farms incidents had taken place recently, particularly in terms of major incidents involving livestock either on farms or being moved to and from them. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that while training had been undertaken in terms of animal disease there had been no recent training on how non-disease related animal incidents would be managed. He would discuss potential future training needs and requirements with the LRF membership.

Decision

That the report be noted.

20. Activity Report (28th August – 15th November 2019) (Chief Emergency Planning Officer)

Purpose of report

To inform members of the activities undertaken by the CEPU and LRF between 28th August 2019 and 15th November 2019.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Details were given of the progress made during the period against the CEPU Action Plan and key LRF activities undertaken. 2 training events and 5 training exercises had taken place. Work was also being undertaken to make contact with local community groups. Following discussion on a recent workshop on derelict buildings a member commented that there should be rules in place to compel the owners of derelict sites to provide detailed information to the authorities to be used in the event of an incident.

Decision

That the report be noted.

21. Incident Report (28th August – 15th November 2019)
(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)

Purpose of report

To inform members of the incidents reported and warning communications received and dealt with by the CEPU between 28th August 2019 and 15th November 2019.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

Details were given of the communications received and incidents of note during the period. A member queried whether there was a mechanism to inform partners of planned flaring, training and similar exercises on industrial sites. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that such a system exists and is regularly utilised, the system is based on both email and voice calls and comprises of two levels (blue for information and red where action by the public is required). Red alerts are cascaded to the public via the local media (broadcast and social).

Decision

That the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 11:05am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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