

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

22 NOVEMBER 2022

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am at the Emergency Planning Annex,
Stockton Police Station.

Present:

Councillor: Councillor Mike Smith (Stockton Borough Council) (In the Chair)

Councillors: Councillor Eric Palano (Middlesbrough Borough Council)
Councillor Cliff Foggo (Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council)

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

10. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Tom Cassidy (Hartlepool Borough Council).

11. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

12. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2022

Received.

13. Financial Management Update Report (*Director of Resources and Development and Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide details of the forecast outturn for the financial year ending 31st March, 2023 based on the position as at 31st October' 2022.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant reported that on the main Emergency Planning Budget there was now an overspend of £5000 due mainly to the higher than anticipated pay award for 2022/23. This would be funded from reserves this year. The pay award pressure was indicative of the current high levels

of inflation, which increase the operating costs of the service and, therefore, the amount of income required to balance the budget. The report for next quarter would include a proposed budget for the next financial year and recommendations that address how these inflationary pressures may be funded.

In relation to the Local resilience Forum (LRF) there was a favourable variance of £52,000 anticipated. This was largely due to a combination of vacant posts and delays in appointing staff funded by central government grant. This expenditure would be re-phased to 2023/23 which would extend the lifetime of the scheme.

Decision

That the latest forecast outturn for 2022/23 be noted.

14. Activity Report (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

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

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported a summary of the progress made against the Unit's action plan highlighting some of the significant work completed over recent months. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer particularly highlighted the Team's involvement in: -

- Ongoing work in the delivery of external COMAH and REPPIR duties;
- The partner workshop held on community resilience engaging a range of agencies with a view to improving evidence against the resilient standards.
- Contribution to the recent NE Cyber innovation event held the Riverside Stadium in Middlesbrough.
- Development of scenarios for the FloodEx event on 22 November which would involve local authorities all along the east coast from Scotland to East Anglia.
- A review of four local authority websites emergency information for local residents.
- The holding of a REPPIR Level 2 Exercise and the subsequent Hydra Report.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that following the successful recruitment of four new staff, the Unit now had a full complement of 12 staff. This addition has only been possible as a result of grant funding from the Government.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer also reported activity around the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) which included: -

- The provision of a range of training opportunities for multi-agency responders from generic strategic response to specialist applications;
- A codified 'stand up' protocol for adverse weather incidents which would mean authorities and agencies being put on standby in amber weather warning situations and then only stood down should the weather not prove particularly troubling. This was a response to the lessons learned around Storm Arwen;
- Ensured linkages between key community resilience groups and the LRF;
- A Cyber awareness briefing from NE WARP, National Cyber Security Agency and North East Regional Organised Crime Unit.
- Provision of a training and exercise bid process for the North East, reducing duplication and increasing joint working.

The Chair questioned how the changes in senior officer positions in Councils had impacted upon emergency planning and the training requirements. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that there had been some increased demand for strategic command training. The key was to ensure the people designated as responders in a local authority were comfortable with the kinds of decision making emergency situations could require. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer added that there was additional training still ongoing through the LRF as things returned to normal after the Covid pandemic.

A Member referred to the two 2Excel Aviation aircraft now based at Teesside Airport which were operated by Oil Spill Response Limited. The two aircraft were designed to spray oil dispersant in the event of major oil spills. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that locally, we are well placed with PD Ports locally being a Tier 2 Responder (one of only 2 ports in the country with such accreditation). Any use of aircraft / dispersants would be considered by a number of agencies including the Marine Management Organisation and HM Coastguard. The two aircraft were more likely to respond to major spills out at sea anywhere around the world to assist in stopping oil spills reaching the shoreline.

Decision

That the report be noted.

15. LRF Pilot Projects Update (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

For information, awareness and assurance.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the government's funding of LRF's that aimed to increase capability and capacity was likely to have some longer term consequences in terms of the expectations placed on LRFs in major incidents as could be seen from the involvement of the local LRF Chair in the Manchester Bombing Inquiry.

As well as specific projects within the LRF to build capacity, there had also been increased capacity within the EPU as it provided support to the LRF. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer gave an update on the various projects being undertaken by the LRF. In regards to training it was indicated that a new online training platform was being explored for those involved in emergency situations, though this would be in addition to and not replace practical exercises.

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer also highlighted that officers were reviewing the establishment of a small grants scheme for community resilience building with local community groups from within the LRF grant funding.

Decision

That the pilot funding and proposed / ongoing activities be noted and that further reports on the utilisation of the funding be reported to future meetings.

16. Incident Report - (25th June 2022 – 4th November 2022) (Chief Emergency Planning Officer)

Purpose of report

For information and assurance.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report outlining the incidents reported and responded to by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU). The report covered the period between the 25th June and 4th November 2022.

Decision

That the report be noted.

17. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The meeting concluded at 11.00 am.

H MARTIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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