

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

26 SEPTEMBER 2023

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am at the Emergency Planning Annex,
Stockton Police Station, Bishop Street, Stockton-On-Tees.

Present:

Councillor: Sue Little (Hartlepool Borough Council) (In the Chair)

Councillor: Peter Gavigan (Middlesbrough Borough Council) as substitute for
Councillor Theo Furness.

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

9. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Theo Furness (Middlesbrough Borough Council);
Councillor Clare Gamble (Stockton Borough Council).

10. Inquorate Meeting

The Chair noted that the meeting was inquorate. The Members present agreed to hear the matters for information listed on the agenda though acknowledged that any recommendations requiring decision would need to be deferred to the next meeting.

11. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

12. Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023

Deferred.

13. Financial Management Update Report *(Director of Finance, IT and Digital and Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide details of the forecast outturn for the current financial year ending 31st March, 2024. To provide details of Reserves held as at 1st April, 2023 and proposed usage in the current year based on the forecast outturn.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Group Accountant provided the forecast revenue outturn as at 31 August 2023. There was an adverse variance of £8,000 in the income budget which was offset by a matching variance in the staffing budget. The annual budget was, however, being supported by reserves (£21,000) which was likely to continue for the medium term future.

The revenue outturn for the Local Resilience Forum was also reported with the Group Accountant explaining how the grant funding from central government for the LRF was being managed.

The report also included an update on reserves as requested at the previous meeting. The report showed how the General Reserve was being used to support the budget with a proposal that it continue to do so over the forthcoming years. The LRF Reserve budget included £220,000 of grant funding from the 'Government Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities' which would be used to extend the current scheme and additional staffing beyond 2024/25 when the annual funding ends. The remainder of the balance mainly relates to an underspend of Brexit grant which would be retained to support community resilience and a contingency for urgent local response requirements. It was noted that the recommendation in relation to the reserves use would be deferred to the next meeting.

Decision

That the report be noted and the recommendations in relation to the use of reserves be brought back to the next meeting.

14. Local Authority Emergency Management *(Principal Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide Members with a summary of the emergency management arrangements in place across the four Local Authorities.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that the report provided Members with an outline of the Emergency Planning work across the Cleveland area.

Decision

That the report be noted.

15. Community Risk Register (*Principal Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide an awareness of the Community Risk Register and the associated activities undertaken to strengthen resilience across Cleveland.

To outline the connection between the HM Government products and the information provided to local residents to aid preparedness for a range of civil emergencies.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer outlined the background to Community Risk Registers (CRR) and the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) produced by Central Government. The Cleveland CRR was currently under review and it was intended that the new document would be improved in terms of content, accessibility, usability and community engagement. As a means of informing the development of an effective CRR that adds value, officers had been reviewing practice from across Local Resilience Forums and seeking input from community groups.

Members discussed some of the issues around local risks, with scrap yards and waste recycling centres being raised as areas of concern. Planning for potential issues at Teesside International Airport was also discussed with the Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicating that because of the geographical location of the airport, the role was shared with Darlington BC. Members also briefly discussed some of the issues around weather incidents and wildfires that were likely to increase due to global warming.

Decision

That the report be noted.

16. Flooding and Adverse Weather (*Senior Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To give members of the EPJC an oversight of the risk of adverse weather in the Cleveland area and mitigations in place.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Senior Emergency Planning Officer reported that the Cleveland Local Resilience Forum's (LRF) community risk register identifies a number of risks relating to adverse weather and flooding including high temperatures and heatwave, low temperatures and snow, coastal, fluvial and surface water flooding and storms. As well as the initial impacts of adverse weather, secondary impacts often impact utilities and transport further complicating responses. Common consequences include disruption to transport, normal services, and impacts on health, life and property risk.

The officer highlighted that the number of agencies involved in flooding, for example, could be very high, from national bodies such as the Environment Agency, through to local authorities and local community groups. It was highlighted that while there had been significant investment in coastal and river protection over recent years, the more challenging issues related to pluvial flood risks (rainfall and surface water flooding) where some areas could be considered quite vulnerable. There were, however, multi-agency flood plans in place with local community information sheets that set out the immediate responses, such as road closures, infrastructure and available assistance.

The Chair indicated that in representing a coastal ward, she was particularly concerned at the flood risk posed by the forthcoming higher than normal spring tides and the potential for these to combine with a storm surge. Officers indicated that weather forecasting was still at a very early stage for the weekend and it was unlikely that the extent of any surge wouldn't be known until much closer to the time but that it was being closely monitored. There were though warning systems and response plans in place.

Decision

That the report be noted.

17. Local Resilience Forum Capacity and Capability Funding *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer / Local Resilience Forum Manager)*

Purpose of report

To provide members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee with an overview of the 2023 – 2024 LRF Capacity and Capability Funding from central government and how these funds were being utilised to aid the committee in their role of oversight.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that since 2021/22 the Government had been providing additional funding for Local Resilience Forums in recognition of the increased expectation on the Forums highlighted from the original conception in 2004. For the year 2023-24 Cleveland's allocation had been confirmed as £202,000. It was understood

that funding would be made available again in 2024-25, however, the figure for 2024-25 was unconfirmed and after this point no decision had been communicated reference future funding.

The Financial report earlier on the agenda also reported on how the grant money was being managed to provide the fullest support to the LRF. Staffing and overheads were the biggest cost allocated to the fund as reported in the finance report. In addition to the staffing, funding was being applied to a range of projects and the report updated the Committee on their progress.

Members questioned if a change in government would lead to a potential shift in the funding regime and policy direction. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that in his conversations with Civil Servants they were confident that any future Government would maintain resilience as a key priority, in terms of funding this could only be clarified at a later date when further updates would be submitted to the Committee.

Decision

That the report be noted and further updates on funding be provided in due course.

18. Activities Report 30/06/2023 - 14/09/2023 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To assist members of the Emergency planning Joint (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 submitted a summary of progress made against the Unit's 2023/24 action plan and the 2023/24 LRF Action Plan for the Committee's information. The involvement of the team in the successful Tall Ships event in Hartlepool was noted by Members.

Decision

That the report be noted.

19. Incidents Report 01/06/2023 – 31/08/2023 (*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 through provision of a list of incidents within the reporting period.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported on the incidents of note for the period 1 June to 31 August 2023 for the Committee's information. Members particularly noted the well reported failure of the 999 service in June due to technical issues.

Decision

That the report be noted.

20. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer highlighted that a major Local Resilience Forum event across the North East was to take place on 28 November, the date of the next meeting of the Committee, and requested Members approval to changing the date of the meeting. It was agreed that the meeting date be brought forward one week to 21 November 2023.

The meeting concluded at 12.00 noon.

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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