

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

12 MARCH 2024

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am at the Stockton Baptist Church,
Bishop Street, Stockton-On-Tees.

Present:

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

Also present: Councillor Norma Stephenson (Stockton Borough Council) as substitute
for Councillor Clare Gamble.

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

31. Apologies for Absence

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

32. 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.

33. Declarations of interest by Members

None.

34. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2024

Confirmed.

The Chair asked of the issue of the smell of gas around Seaton Carew and Seal Sands had been resolved as she had not received any complaints from residents since Christmas. The Assistant Director, Regulatory

Services stated that there were still reports of the odour though it did not appear to be having the same impact.

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

Purpose of report

To provide details of the forecast outturn as at 31st December, 2023 for current financial year ending 31st March, 2024.

To propose the budget for 2024/25 and contributions to be requested from Councils.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

As the report required a decision of the Joint Committee in relation to the 2024/25 budget and the funding contributions from the partner local authorities, the Chair, in noting that the meeting was inquorate, reluctantly asked the Joint Committee to defer the report to the next meeting of the Committee, the date of which was yet to be confirmed but would be early in the new Municipal Year.

Decision

That consideration of the proposed budget for 2024/25 and contributions to be requested from Councils be deferred to the next meeting.

36. CEPU and CLRF Future Action Plan Priorities (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer / Senior 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 by outlining the priority areas and themes identified for inclusion in the 2024/25 and beyond action plans for the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU).

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that significant change was occurring within the resilience field partially as a result of the inquiries into recent incidents (Manchester Arena and Covid) and through an aspiration to increase resilience outlined within the HM Government UK Resilience Framework.

This had been evidenced through increased grant funding for LRFs and the HM Government's work to develop a pilot programme of stronger LRFs through increased transparency and accountability, with the introduction of

the role of Chief Resilience Officer. The working models of governance for those areas selected as pilots were yet to be released.

Rather than waiting for the outcome of the national pilot project Cleveland LRF has been undertaking a number of reviews with staff, Tactical Tier and Strategic Tiers and commissioned an independent peer review of the LRF. This review, combined with a review of training and exercising, lessons identified from incidents, performance against the non-statutory resilient standards and the statutory requirements provided the foundation for the LRF and CEPU future work programme.

From the independent peer review a number of significant proposals were made (set out in the report) which it was intended to build into a 36 month work plan subject to the LRF Strategic Board's agreement. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer gave an overview of the actions that had been listed as intermediate, short-term and long-term deliverables.

Once finalised and agreed by the strategic board the Chief Emergency Planning Officer would present the full itemised action plans for both the LRF and CEPU to the Joint Committee.

Members questioned the links with other LRFs and the Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that in terms of the areas north of Cleveland, they were very good with sharing of information and commonality issues. Relationships with the Yorkshire and Humberside LRF had started to develop along the same lines. A Member questioned the management of risks around Teesside International Airport and the recent SAF (Sustainable Airline Fuels) approvals at the Airport. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that for emergency planning the lead tended to lie with Durham and Darlington Civil Contingencies Unit due to the location of the main buildings. In terms of the SAF storage the CEPO identified that the site had not been notified as an upper tier COMAH site within the Cleveland area by the Competent Authority (Health and Safety Executive and Environment Agency).

The Chair referred to the Grenfell Inquiry and asked if there were any outstanding issues in our area relating to cladding on high-rise buildings. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that there had been a number of issues originally identified but now through the action of building owners and the Fire Brigade he was aware of only three sites where there was continued action / mitigation with reference to cladding.

Decision

That the report be noted and the Chief Emergency Planning Officer continues to develop the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit Annual Action Plan and the Joint Committee standard report to provide assurance to Elected members that the key considerations continue to be met and that members were updated at the quarterly EPJC meetings reference any amendments / additional actions.

37. Emergency Plans and Protocols *(Principal Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To assist members of the EPJC in oversight of Emergency Plans and procedures that the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit is author or custodian of and provide assurance reference the systems in place regarding emergency planning.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that as a category one responder as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 there was a duty on Local Authorities to “put in place emergency plans”. A non-statutory resilient standard Emergency Planning identified desired outcomes, legal duties, good practice and leading practice. In addition to the CCA 2004 there is other legislation for specific risks that are more prescriptive in both content and time scale of review. The main ones that fall into this category and require planning from a Local Authority are the Control of Major Accident Hazards (2015) (chemical sites with a threshold of dangerous substances) REPPiR (Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information 2019) and MAHP (Major accident Hazard pipelines 1996). In addition there are a number of other risk specific plans where a risk (identified on the risk register) specific plan would be beneficial (i.e. flooding, maritime pollution, etc.). A summary of the key emergency plans were set out in an appendix to the report.

All plans were kept both on the Hartlepool Borough Council internal server and Resilience Direct (a government web based portal that allowed storage up to official sensitive documents). In addition to this Major Incident Plans for the respective councils are kept on their own systems. Finally all-time critical plans have paper copies in Police HQ as well as paper copies being made available for council emergency control centres.

Decision

That the Chief Emergency Planning Officer continue to develop emergency plans and monitor these plans covering legislative duty, government guidance and best practise.

38. Overview of Recovery – Plans and Process *(Principal Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report was to provide an overview on recovery and outline the plans and processes Cleveland Local Resilience Forum has in place in relation to recovering from incidents.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the Civil Contingencies Act assigns a duty to warn and inform the public in the event of an emergency, but otherwise response and recovery activities are not duties under the CCA but effective response and recovery are its intended outcomes.

The CCA guidance identified six distinct phases of emergency management: anticipation, assessment, prevention, preparation, response, and recovery. This was known as the model for Integrated Emergency Management (IEM). While prevention and preparation focussed on minimizing the impact of emergencies, the recovery phase was crucial in restoring a new normality and rebuilding affected communities.

Cleveland Local Resilience Forum has in place a Recovery Framework which summarised the mechanisms that would be adopted in the event of an incident requiring a recovery phase. It was deliberately generic and flexible to facilitate application to a range of situations.

The Assistant Director, Regulatory Services indicated that the recovery framework had been utilised after the Marton Country Club fire, tidal flooding and the closure of the Iron Works. Some work was being undertaken with lead officers on familiarisation as this was an area that was difficult to 'exercise'. The main issues identified in relation to recovery had been around the initial stages of implementation, agreeing an exit strategy, managing public expectation and understanding the community impact.

Decision

That the report be noted.

39. Activities Report 04/11/2023 - 29/02/2024 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To assist members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee (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 Local Resilience Forum Action Plan for the Committee's information.

Decision

That the report be noted.

40. Incidents Report 04/11/2023 – 29/02/2024 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To assist members 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 4 November 2023 to 29 February 2024 for the Committee's information. It was noted that the monitoring of the gas odour around Seaton Carew and Seal Sands was ongoing. The fire at a waste site involving tyres was also noted with the Assistant Director, Regulatory Services, stating that there had been a very favourable wind direction minimising the effects of the dense smoke.

Decision

That the report be noted.

41. Any Other Items which the Chairman Considers are Urgent

None.

The Chair noted that it was the end of her year as Chair of the Joint Committee which had been very informative and she would continue her interest in the work of the Joint Committee in the future.

The meeting concluded at 11.10 am

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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