

EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE

MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD

23 JULY 2024

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

Present:

Councillor: Councillor Karen Oliver (Hartlepool Borough Council) (In the Chair)

Councillors:

Councillor Clare Besford (Stockton Borough Council)

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 Councillor Peter Gavigan was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Adam Brook

Officers:

Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer
Rachael Campbell, Principal Emergency Planning Officer
Tony Hanson, Executive Director of Development, Neighbourhoods and Regulatory Services
Sylvia Pinkney, Assistant Director, Regulatory Services
Chris Parkin, Head of Finance - Development, Neighbourhoods & Regulatory Services
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Theo Furness (Middlesbrough Borough Council)

2. Declarations of interest by Members

Councillor Oliver declared a personal interest (family member works in Emergency Planning Unit)

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2024

Received.

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

Purpose of report

To provide details of the outturn for the 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

The Head of Finance - Development, Neighbourhoods & Regulatory Services reported that the final outturn positions for the main Emergency Planning and LRF Budgets showed small favourable variances as at 31 March 2024 which were transferred to reserves.

In relation to the 2024/25 budget, the Head of Finance – Development, Neighbourhoods & Regulatory Services reported that the Emergency Planning Unit was self-financing and mainly determined by the Local Authority partners and income from fees and recharges. For the 2024/25 financial year the recommended Local Authority contributions were £347,000 which was a 5% increase compared to the previous year. Staffing budgets had been increased to reflect the higher than estimated current year pay award and an assumption had also been made for the 2024/25 pay award.

The proposed LRF budget was outlined in the report but it was highlighted that any future HM Government grant funding beyond 2024/25 was uncertain. Contributions from partners had been increased by 5%.

In response to clarification sought, the Committee was advised on the reserve arrangements.

Decision

1. That the 2023/24 outturn position be noted.
2. That the 2024/25 budgets for Emergency Planning including the 5% increase in the contribution from each Council be approved.
3. That the 2024/25 Local Resilience Forum (LRF) budget be approved.

4. Emergency Planning Joint Committee Introduction Paper *(Chief Emergency Planning Officer)*

Purpose of report

To provide the new members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee (EPJC) with an overview of the working arrangements and wider context of the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit to enable effective oversight of the CEPU and CLRF activities and to enable members to contribute to future direction and policy. For reference a copy of the EPJC constitution was appended to the report.

To highlight useful resources and offer training to the EPJC membership to assist in their role.

To outline a proposed reporting schedule for 2024-25 to the membership for consideration.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report setting out for the new Members of the Committee the role of the Committee and the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU). The report identified the legislation under which the service operated and how each local authority coordinated with the EPU.

The report also highlighted the role of the Local Resilience Forum and how that operated in partnership with the EPU. Details of the proposed report schedule for the forthcoming year were included in the report and Members views were sought in terms of any particular areas they particularly wished to cover in the coming 12 months.

The Chair placed emphasis upon the importance of whole of society resilience and commented on the benefits of involving the local communications team in this regard. The need to ensure future meetings were quorate going forward was also highlighted.

Decision

1. The Committee noted the Emergency Planning Joint Committee terms of reference and Local Government Association guidance for councillors.
2. The Committee requested that the Chief Emergency Planning Officer arrange introductory training from the Cabinet Office Emergency Planning College.

3. The Committee supported the reporting schedule, as outlined, and requested further information on any significant incidents and finance related issues.

5. Local Authority Emergency Management (*Chief 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.

In the discussion that followed Members commented on the importance of accurate information being available to the public in terms of what to do in an emergency situation. The various methods of communicating such information with the public was debated. The Chair commented that there was a role for Ward Members and local politicians in terms of disseminating information to constituents. The Assistant Director referred to the various links and networks currently in place which could be utilised.

The Executive Director updated Members on his role of Chair on the Local Resilience Forum in Cleveland and provided details of current and future priorities.

Decision

That the report be noted.

6. Community Risk Register (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To provide an update and seek views on the proposed Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Community Risk Register as per the report of 26 September 2023.

Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee

The Principal Emergency Planning Officer outlined the background and purpose of the Community Risk Register (CRR). The Cleveland CRR had now been drafted and provided to members. The Committee's feedback and views were sought in terms of content and thoughts on promotion.

Members discussed some of the issues around local risks affecting communities with flooding being raised as an areas of concern. A Member raised concern in terms of the difficulties experienced obtaining information in relation to a gas release incident, details of which were provided. The challenges around whole society resilience were discussed including the need to ensure accurate information was communicated to the public to alleviate any fears in terms of potential threats to public health and where whilst there may be no public threat there may be anxiety amongst the communities and a need for trusted sources of information. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer agreed to include this issue on the agenda at a future meeting of the LRF's Warn and Inform Group.

Decision

That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted and actioned as appropriate.

7. Activities Report 01/03/2024 – 09/07/2024 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To assist members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee 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 on progress made to date on the EPU's 2024/25 Action Plan and the 2024/25 LRF Action Plan. The report contained a number of examples of work completed, additional pieces of work by the CEPU relating to local authorities in the period not included in the annual plan as well as significant pieces of work undertaken as part of the Local Resilience Forum annual action plan.

Decision

That the update on the Emergency Planning Unit Action Plan be noted.

8. Incidents Report 01/03/2024 – 09/07/2024 (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

Purpose of report

To assist members of the Emergency Planning Joint Committee 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 that had been responded to by the Emergency Planning Unit during the reporting period. A number of these incidents had been followed up with multi-agency debriefs, the learning from which was shared with agencies and where appropriate actioned via the Local Resilience Forum / agencies internal procedures.

Members noted the incidents and discussed flooding issues, high fire risk waste sites and prevention measures. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer responded to issues raised arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to prevention measures and flood alleviation arrangements.

Decision

That the contents of the report and comments of Members be noted.

9. Date and Time of Next Meeting

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 24 September 2024 at 10.00 am. It was suggested that the option to hold future meetings at the municipal buildings in Stockton be explored.

The meeting concluded at 11.10 am.

H MARTIN

DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

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