

# **EMERGENCY PLANNING JOINT COMMITTEE**

## **MINUTES AND DECISION RECORD**

**24 SEPTEMBER 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)

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2 Councillor Norma Stephenson was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Clare Besford

Officers: Stuart Marshall, Chief Emergency Planning Officer  
Jon Hepworth, Group Accountant  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

### **10. Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Clare Besford (Stockton Borough Council)

### **11. Inquorate Meeting**

The Chair raised concerns that the meeting was inquorate. The Chair requested that the appointed representatives be reminded of the importance of participation and attendance and the implications as a result. The Members present agreed that the items listed on the agenda could be considered given that they were “for information” items.

### **12. Declarations of interest by Members**

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

### **13. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2024**

Received.

**14. Finance 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 financial year ending 31st March, 2025.

To provide an update on the current level of reserves.

**Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Group Accountant provided the forecast revenue outturn for the current financial year ending 31 March 2025. There was a favourable variance of £9,000 in the main emergency planning budget as at 31 August 2024. There was a favourable variance of £25,000 on employee costs as a result of a vacant post and pensions savings, which was partly offset by an adverse variance of £15,000 on non –staffing costs, details of which were set out in the report.

The revenue outturn for the Local Resilience Forum was also reported with the Group Accountant explaining that the latest forecast was a nil variance.

The report also included an update on the latest position in relation to reserves. It was highlighted that information regarding future grant funding was awaited.

In the discussion that followed presentation of the report Members discussed the financial position, savings and the uncertainty around grant funding. In response to a query raised clarification was provided in relation to reserve arrangements including the process in relation to surplus funding.

**Decision**

That the latest outturn forecast for 2024/25 be noted.

**15. Industrial Emergency Planning** (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

**Purpose of report**

To provide Members with an awareness and understanding of the duties placed on Local Authorities under a range of legislation, the relevance to the Cleveland area and how these duties are met by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU).

To inform Members of the work undertaken by the CEPU in connection with the statutory requirements relating to industrial emergency planning.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer indicated that the report provided Members with an outline of the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015 (COMAH) and the Pipeline Safety Regulations (1996) that were in place to prevent and mitigate the effects of major accidents that could occur at industrial sites across the Cleveland area.

The Committee was advised that the Cleveland area currently had 26 Upper Tier COMAH sites accounting for approximately 9% of the UK total. In addition to the COMAH establishments there were also 58 major accident pipelines, details of which were provided. It was noted that a number of additional sites had been proposed within the Cleveland area.

In the discussion that followed the Chair highlighted that she had been unable to access the HSE webpage via the link included within the report. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer agreed to explore this issue following the meeting. The Chair commented on the importance of all members of this Committee obtaining an awareness of high risk sites including new sites proposed, given the significant risk implications to public safety, health and the environment, and a site visit to observe emergency exercises was suggested which the Chief Emergency Planning Officer agreed to action.

### **Decision**

1. That the contents of the report and controls in place to minimise the likelihood of a major accident be noted.
2. That the difficulties around accessing the HSE link be explored following the meeting.
3. That a site visit to observe an emergency exercise and obtain an awareness of COMAH sites be arranged following the meeting.

## **16. Training and Exercising** (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

### **Purpose of report**

To provide EPJC members with an overview of the processes in place to discharge the expectations on the Local Authorities and wider LRF agencies to train and exercise and CEPU's role in facilitating this.

### **Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the Cleveland LRF Training and Exercising Group (TEG) was a multi-agency co-ordinating group which is responsible for determining the annual exercise and training calendar and providing advice and guidance in respect of all forms of multi-agency training and exercising. This was carried out in conjunction with the

North East Training and Exercising Group and the other TEG's in the region.

The TEG was not responsible for the planning and delivery of each exercise / event unless specifically agreed at the outset. This responsibility lies with the sponsoring LRF Group, agency or planning team established for this purpose. The group reports to and is overseen by the LRF's Tactical Business Group. Every year the TEG facilitates a training needs analysis across all partner agencies. This process enables the coordination of training and exercising, ensuring value for money, reduced duplication and coherence in the training programme that agencies access.

It was highlighted that in the previous financial year: -

- Over 38 training events and courses were undertaken supporting a range of subject areas including Rope Rescue, Met Office Training, Safety Advisory Group, Public Festival Involvement, Multi-Agency Gold Incident Commander Training, Exercise Planning and Delivery Workshop, COMAH Multi-Agency Training Day, Strategic Emergency Management Course, CBRN Training Day, Log Keeping
- Over 20 multi-agency exercises were held including themes such as: Mass Facilities, CBRN, Tall Ships, Water Displacement, REPPIR Shift Exercises, Recovery Exercise, MTA Exercise and multiple COMAH exercises.

Members were advised that the Cleveland LRF TEG had developed a number of innovations including the Training Needs Analysis and exercise bidding process now undertaken on a regional basis. The ability to analyse common patterns across multiple exercises was proving beneficial as was the use of technology to increase the access of LRF agencies staff to online briefings and virtual observation of exercises.

The Chair welcomed the report and efficiency of the team acknowledging the benefits of the training needs analysis and also took the opportunity to place emphasis upon the importance of succession planning to ensure the relevant skills and experience were available going forward.

### **Decision**

1. That once confirmed by the strategic board, Committee members be issued with a copy of the Exercise Calendar for 2025-26 to enable them to have appropriate oversight.
2. That the Training and Exercising Group continue to monitor actions to ensure lessons arising from exercises and training events are completed by the most appropriate agency.
3. The Chief Emergency Planning Officer examines how future reporting to Members can incorporate the learning from exercises and incidents

as a means of assuring Members that active learning and embedding is being undertaken.

**17. Whole of Society Resilience, WOSR** (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

**Purpose of report**

To provide members with an overview of the National appetite to build Whole of Society Resilience (WOSR), outline what WOSR means within the Cleveland area and outline the activities undertaken and future planning.

**Issue(s) for consideration by the Committee**

The Emergency Planning Officer (Community Resilience) reported that within the UK Government's Resilience Framework, (UKGRF) released Dec 2022, there were 3 core principles for building resilience:-

- A developed and shared understanding of the civil contingencies risks we face is fundamental;
- Prevention rather than cure wherever possible: a greater emphasis on preparation and prevention;
- Resilience is a 'whole of society' endeavour, so we must be more transparent and empower everyone to make a contribution.

WOSR aimed to harness the strengths and infrastructure of existing structures e.g. organisations, assets, academia, and businesses in society to enhance their role within their communities and provide additional resources. The intention being that communities understand their needs, thereby allowing emergency responders to focus their efforts on those most in need and recognising the contribution that local communities play in managing their own resilience. The Government is already demonstrating far greater sharing of information with the public, the National Risk Register, for example, provides a level of detail that previously would not be in the public domain.

There were challenges, however, WOSR by definition can be too big / too broad and the boundary between the LRF and resilience focused work can become blurred. Therefore, as a LRF and community, it was necessary to focus in on what we wish to and can realistically achieve. A single LRF wide strategy was seen as enabling this through an agreed ambition. How this was being undertaken through areas of focus, Community Workshops and the development of future Community Resilience Work was set out in further detail in the report.

The LRF continued to work in the community resilience space engaging with wider partners and academics, continued to engage in pilot work and increase activities and build high level relations with a number of new stakeholders, examples of which were provided.

Discussion ensued in relation to the pressures and impact on the community and voluntary sectors as a result of the cuts in public services and the benefits of continuing support and contributions from the community were acknowledged. The Chair expressed an interest in participating in Whole of Society Resilience activities and commented on the role of Members to promote and support community resilience as well as the need to focus on community concerns. Reference was made to ongoing work in relation to conflict resolution, the need to explore this issue further and utilise the knowledge and work of Professor Ian Denton in this regard, the background of which was outlined.

The Chair thanked the Emergency Planning team for their hard work and contributions in terms of progressing this issue.

### **Decision**

1. That Members support the work on Whole of Society Resilience being undertaken within the Emergency Planning Unit and wider Local Resilience Forum in line with HM Governments resilience Framework.
2. That Members support the developing work around whole of society resilience both in terms of the strategy and how the role of elected members can be integrated and support the development of Whole of Society Resilience.

## **18. Activities Report 01/07/2024 - 31/08/2024** (*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 2024/25 action plan and the 2024/25 LRF Action Plan, details which were included in the report.

In the discussion that followed, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer responded to issues raised arising from the report. Clarification was provided in relation to engagement activities, the benefits of community support, recent staffing changes and potential impact as a result.

The Chair welcomed the work undertaken by the Emergency Planning Unit in terms of progress on actions to date.

### **Decision**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the Chief Emergency Planning Officer continue to develop the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit Annual Action Plan and the standard report to provide assurance to Members that the key considerations continue to be met and that Members are updated at the quarterly committee meetings in relation to any amendments or additional actions.

## **19. Incidents Report 10/07/2024 – 31/08/2024** (*Chief Emergency Planning Officer*)

### **Purpose of report**

To assist members of the 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 of note that had been responded to by the Emergency Planning Unit during the reporting period of 10 July to 31 August 2024, which included flooding, global outsource IT outages as well as issues of civil unrest, details of which were set out in Appendix 1.

Members noted the incidents during which concerns were raised in relation to civil unrest issues and the impact as a result. The Chair requested sight of any information in relation to conflict resolution which the Chief Emergency Planning Officer agreed to examine following the meeting.

### **Decision**

1. That the report be noted.
2. That any information in relation to conflict resolution be shared with all Members of this Committee following the meeting.

## **20. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

It was reported that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 7 January 2025 at 10.00 am and not Thursday 19 December 2025 as set out on the agenda. Members were advised that alternative venues had been explored for future meetings and meeting rooms were not available.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 am.

**H MARTIN**

**DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

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