

**MEETING: 25 January 2010**

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**SUBJECT: TYNE AND WEAR REVIEW OF JOINT SERVICES:  
RESILIENCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER,  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, THE FINANCE  
OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In 2009 the Tyne and Wear Chief Executives Group and the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group commissioned a series of reviews in respect of the existing arrangements appertaining to the Joint Services within Tyne and Wear.
- 1.2 This work includes a review of the resilience arrangements within each of the five local authorities covering the Tyne and Wear area and the associated relationship between the individual local authority units and the Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit (EPU), which is currently hosted by the Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 1.3 This report provides information for Members on the current status of the joint service review involving the EPU.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The joint services came into existence following the abolition of the former Tyne and Wear Metropolitan County Council in 1986 and they covered those services that, at that time, were considered to be more effective as delivery units at a sub-regional rather than local level.
- 2.2 Currently there are nine such services in operation, namely; the Specialist Conservation Unit, the Archive and Museums Service, the Trading Standards and Metrology Laboratory, the Traffic Signals Unit, the Traffic Accident Data Unit, the Materials Testing Laboratory, the Research and Information Unit, the Policy Support Unit and the Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit.
- 2.3 Whilst some of these services have been the subject of individual reviews over the years, there has not been a single comprehensive examination of all of the joint services since their inception in 1986.
- 2.4 Accordingly, given the changing context for local government generally and the potential impacts on service provision in the North

East of England, together with an ever increasing requirement to provide and demonstrate value for money, the Leadership Group and the Chief Executives Group felt that a comprehensive review of all of the joint services was warranted.

2.5 Further to this, the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group also set out a framework for the reviews covering the following issues;

- potential efficiencies
- external policy context and challenges
- potential for more effective regional working
- sustainability
- governance arrangements

2.6 However, whilst a common review framework is being used each joint service is being reviewed individually.

2.7 In the case of resilience arrangements and the EPU, the review is looking for the most effective and efficient model for delivering resilience arrangements in Tyne and Wear, taking as a starting point the current arrangements whereby TWFRAs are commissioned via a Service Level Agreement (SLA) to deliver services on behalf of the Councils with a proportion of available funding (60%) paying for this arrangement with the remaining 40% remaining within Councils. The SLA expires in March 2010 with an option to extend.

### **3 TIMESCALES AND REVIEW TEAM**

3.1 The overall review of the joint services has been structured into three phases as follows:

- Phase 1: Commence March 2009
- Phase 2: Commence September 2009
- Phase 3: Commence January 2010

3.2 The review of Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit falls into Phase 2 and has thus commenced. A Review team has been established led by Paul Dowling, Programme Director, Chief Executive's Office Gateshead Council, supported by Linda Scott (Tyne and Wear Policy Manager) who is maintaining an overview of all of the reviews.

3.3 Both of these individuals are working with the Chief Executives Group on the reviews of the Tyne and Wear Joint Services and the broader efficiency and shared services agenda.

3.4 The review team also includes members of the EPU Strategic Management Board (SMB) comprising one representative from each of the five Tyne and Wear Councils; and also includes two representatives from this Authority i.e. the Assistant Chief Fire

Officer and the Chief Emergency Planning Officer. It is envisaged that the review will be completed in the first half of 2010.

### **4 PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 4.1 The review team has now met on three occasions and have also held a workshop session. The meetings to date have been positive and productive and some progress has been made.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that draft options for future working will emerge through the review over the next 2-3 months and this will identify options for future working relations in respect of the resilience agenda.
- 4.3 The outcome of the review and the associated options will be subject to consultation with the authority and other stakeholders/interested parties prior to any resolution of the matter.
- 4.4 Pending the outcome of the review and to allow service delivery to continue into 2010/11, the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group have agreed with the Head of the EPU a budget of £513,887 for the coming year which includes a 4% efficiency saving. This is proportionate with the settlements agreed for the other joint services.

### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 It not possible to state at this stage what the overall financial implications of the review will be and this will be covered in subsequent reports.

### **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Authority is recommended to:
    - a) Note this report
    - b) Receive further reports
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