

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE held in the Authority Rooms, Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Nissan Way, Barmston Mere, Washington on MONDAY, 18 JANUARY 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Councillor Charlton in the Chair

Councillors Clark, Jordan, Renton, Scaplehorn and T. Wright.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bell and N. Forbes.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

18. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 12 October 2009 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

The Government's Response to Sir Michael Pitt's Review of the Summer 2007 Floods

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer (CEPO) submitted a report (copy circulated) on Government progress on implementing some of the key recommendations arising from "Sir Michael Pitt's Review of the Summer 2007 Floods".

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The recent major flooding in Cumbria and the heavy rainfall elsewhere in the country had underlined the importance of Sir Michael's recommendations. The response to those events by the emergency services, agencies and many others had shown that lessons had been learnt. Nonetheless the impact on families and communities had been keenly felt and the process of recovery would take many months.

The Government's progress report had shown that significant progress had been made in meeting Sir Michael Pitt's recommendations, which were important in attempting to reduce the likelihood of flooding, and to mitigate the impact of any flooding that did occur. Sir Michael stressed that Authorities must continue to develop the culture of partnership and co-operation which was evident during recent events.

An additional paper outlining the Flood Forecasting Centre maps of the forecast inundation area of the recent flooding in Cumbria was tabled at the meeting. During the Cumbrian floods the Flood Forecasting Centre maps had played an important role and the system had worked well.

In reply to a question from Councillor Clark, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that the flood forecasting map could provide emergency responders with early guidance on the rainfall forecast as well as expert advice on the risks and whether the situation had worsened. The Flood Forecasting Centre maps were available to emergency responders managing the impact of an incident.

19. RESOLVED that the progress report be noted and further updates be received when they were published.

Reservoir Inundation Planning

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report (copy circulated) on the current issues relating to Reservoir Inundation Planning.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported on the following:-

- There were 35 reservoir sites in the Northumbria LRF area awaiting prioritisation from the National Risk Assessment Team.
- The implications for the Tyne and Wear Council's, when the Flood and Water Management Bill was enacted had yet to be determined.
- Generic and Specific off-site plans were to be produced by Local Authorities. There was an implied deadline for a generic plan to be prepared by summer 2010.
- The Public Warning and Informing programme would be a Local Authority responsibility. Reservoir Inundation (Planning training and exercising, and Warning and informing) was likely to be a long term budgetary commitment for local authorities.

- Following adoption of the Flood and Water Management Bill, reservoir regulation might be extended to apply to all raised reservoirs less than 10,000m³ which would further increase the workload on emergency planners.

The key points arising in this report had been reported to the Northumbria LRF.

20. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the CEPO's contribution in establishing national cost recovery principles for this new burden be noted;
- (iii) further reports be received on this issue as appropriate.

Recommendations of the Buncefield Major Incident Investigation Board (MIIB): Review of Progress

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report (copy circulated) on the progress to date in implementing the recommendations of the Buncefield Major Incident Investigation Board (MIIB).

Only one site in Northumbria, the Shell UK Oil Products Ltd, Jarrow had similar characteristics to the Buncefield site in that it distributed petroleum fuels, although the scale of this site was significantly less than the Buncefield Depot.

A Review of Progress for Northumbria LRF was tabled at the meeting.

In August 2009 TWEPU commenced an exercise to establish the progress made locally in implementing the recommendations of the MIIB.

The exercise provided an assessment of the progress made by various organisations in meeting the recommendations of the MIIB at a national, regional and local level. Analysis showed that satisfactory progress was being made by the relevant organisations and that there were no significant outstanding issues to report.

21. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Control of Major Accidents Hazards Regulations 1999, COMAH Site Exercises and COMAH Regime Update

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer on current and future developments in relation to the COMAH regime, and two COMAH Control of Major Accidents Hazards Regulations 1999 (as amended) site exercises carried out at Shell UK Oil Products Ltd, Jarrow on 23-24 June 2009, and Rohm and Haas (UK) Ltd, Jarrow on 14-15 July 2009.

The industrial sites were of considerable socioeconomic importance and in some cases might affect regional strategic assets. In addition the competent authority had asked the EPU to consider a number of matters in the following three categories:-

- 1) Developments in emergency planning.
- 2) Enhancements in practice.
- 3) Public Information.

Evaluation reports of the Osprey Exercise held on 24 June 2009 and Exercise and Peregrine Phase 2 held on 15 July 2009 were tabled at the meeting.

The aim of the exercises was to test and validate the Offsite Emergency Plans which included the testing of a multi agency response and the integration of agency plans into the offsite planning process.

The exercises were planned, co-ordinated and facilitated by the EPU and relevant partner organisations. Both exercises were held over two days. The first day was attended by representatives from the emergency services and the company, this day looked at the discovery of the incident and initiation of the on site response including the emergency services. The second day was attended by representatives from the Local Authority, the police, health agencies and the company and focused on the impacts and response once the incident had involved the surrounding area and community.

In reply to a question from Councillor Renton, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that, each plan was exercised in its entirety over a three year period as statutorily required, including a large scale table top exercise; Fire Service colleagues undertook quarterly visits to sites, and the COMAH plan was monitored every year to update communication and contact details.

In reply, to a question from Councillor Clark relating to voluntary sector assistance, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer noted that there was an LRF sub-group which worked with voluntary sector groups and how they supported a response in an emergency; and that voluntary groups, whilst not involved in the front line to an emergency, were key to supporting the overall response in an emergency.

22. RESOLVED that Members note that two exercises have been held to ensure that the FRA had discharged, in part, its statutory obligations under the COMAH regulations and successfully tested the validity of the two off site emergency plans.

EPU Performance Report – First and Second Quarters

The Committee considered a progress report on the analysis of performance against targets for the first two quarters of financial year 2009/2010 (April to September 2009) as detailed in the EPU Business Plan 2009/10.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

After due consideration, it was:-

23. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

ISO 9001:2000 Certification: TWEPU Renewal

The Committee considered a report on the ISO 9001:2000 Certification: TWEPU Renewal.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the Auditor recommended that the certification to ISO 9001:2000 should be continued.

The EPU continued to strive for excellence and to manage its corporate risks effectively by maintaining this standard.

24. RESOLVED that Members note the renewal of TWEPU's ISO 9001:2000 Standard.

Logistic Operations for Emergency Supplies

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report on the recently published guidance from the Cabinet Office on Logistic Operations for Emergency Supplies and the establishment of an LRF Working Group to consider how to improve critical supply procedures in emergency plans.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Northumbria Logistics Working Group had proposed the following as its initial objectives, drawn from the Cabinet Office guidelines:-

- To identify critical supply gaps in existing plans by a sample baseline survey related to the Community Risk Register.
- To produce plan writing guidance on how to incorporate Supply Logistics into existing plans to address the gaps identified.
- To advise the LRF on how to include Supply Logistics in LRF level emergency working procedures.

The Working Group would need to analyse the baseline survey findings and then determine how to develop guidelines for emergency planners and operational managers to ensure that supply logistic procedures in emergency plans were sufficient to provide ongoing supply of critical supplies during an emergency.

The findings of the Working Group would be reported through the LRF for discussion and agreement with all responders and agreement on the next steps.

Members noted that the Tyne and Wear jointly funded bedding store had been used during the flooding in Morpeth in September 2009.

25. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the initial work programme be approved; and
- (iii) further progress reports be received as appropriate.

Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Multi Agency Pandemic Influenza Plan Update

The Committee considered a report on the completion and publication of the LRF Multi Agency Pandemic Influenza Plan Update.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer reported that the main content of the plan described how responders would work together to:-

- respond effectively to each phase of a pandemic;
- support the health response to a pandemic;
- provide advice and assistance to the public and partners in a pandemic;
- make strategic decisions about the response and recovery phases of a pandemic;
- share information with each other in the response to a pandemic;
- share information consistently with communities in order for people to help themselves and others in a pandemic; and
- help to promote the need for public sector organisations to have business continuity plans in place.

The plan was designed to be a publicly accessible document and was hosted on the Government Office for the North East website (www.go-ne.gov.uk).

26. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Update of Northumbria LRF Community Risk Register

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report on the update of the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Community Risk Register (CRR).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The CRR was an important document produced following extensive work by partners within the LRF area. It provided a basis for local responders to consider which emergency plans were required and whether any existing plans should be modified in the light of continuing risk assessment. It was also used to determine priorities for the LRF annual training and exercising calendar.

The publication of the update of the Northumbria LRF CRR, developed by the RAWG, had been approved by the LRF and had been duly published. It provided the basis to determine priorities for the LRF annual training and exercising calendar for 2010.

Copies of Version 5 of the CRR were tabled at the meeting for information.

In reply to a question from Councillor Renton, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer stated that the recent severe weather conditions would be included in the risk assessment discussions.

27. RESOLVED that the publication of Version 5 of the Northumbria LRF Community Risk Register be noted.

Great North Run 2009

The Committee considered a report on the detailed planning of the safety aspects of the 2009 Great North Run, the involvement of Newcastle, Gateshead and South Tyneside Councils and the TWEPU in the development and implementation of these arrangements.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

28. RESOLVED that the report be noted and the involvement of the EPU in the preparations for the 2010 Great North Run be approved.

Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

29. RESOLVED that in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during consideration of the remaining business as it was considered to involve a disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) (Local Government Act 1972) Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, Schedule 12A, Part I, Paragraph 3).

(Signed) D. CHARLTON,
Chairman.

Note:-

The above minutes comprise only those relating to items during which the meeting was open to the public.

Additional minutes in respect of other items are included in Part II.