

CABINET MEETING – 16 FEBRUARY 2011

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I

Title of Report:

Review of Emergency Planning and Resilience in Tyne and Wear

Author(s):

Chief Executive

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of the Review of emergency planning and resilience in Tyne and Wear and to recommend to Cabinet that it supports the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group to implement the local authority based approach for the delivery of emergency planning and resilience within Tyne and Wear.

Description of Decision:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Note the outcome of the Review of emergency planning and resilience in Tyne and Wear;
- (ii) Approve the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group to implement the local authority based approach for the delivery of emergency planning and resilience within Tyne and Wear.

Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework? *Yes/Ne

If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework

Suggested reason(s) for Decision:

Each of the Tyne and Wear councils are required to approve the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group by taking a formal report through their Cabinet arrangements.

Therefore Cabinet is recommended to approve the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group to implement the proposed new model for emergency planning and resilience.

Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected:

As outlined above, though two further options have been considered in detail these have been ruled out after a thorough process of challenge and review.

No alternative options are suggested.

Is this a “Key Decision” as defined in the Constitution? Yes/Ne

Is it included in the Forward Plan? Yes/No

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee

**REVIEW OF EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESILIENCE
IN TYNE AND WEAR**

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the outcome of the Review of emergency planning and resilience in Tyne and Wear and to recommend to Cabinet that it supports the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group to implement the local authority based approach for the delivery of emergency planning and resilience within Tyne and Wear.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF DECISION

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

- (i) Note the outcome of the Review of emergency planning and resilience in Tyne and Wear;
- (ii) Approve the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group to implement the local authority based approach for the delivery of emergency planning and resilience within Tyne and Wear.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 In 1986 the five Tyne and Wear councils set up the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) in response to the demise of the County Council. They went on to campaign for the retention of the EPU following the introduction of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) in 2004 and the national introduction of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) approach to emergency planning and resilience.

3.2 In that time local events such as flooding have increased significantly and councils have developed resources to enable local communities to prepare for and recover from these events. The context within which appropriate agencies ensure a proportionate level of preparedness for a civil emergency continues to change.

3.3 A review of emergency planning and resilience across Tyne and Wear was started in September 2009 and formed part of a wider review of the Tyne and Wear joint services. The focus of this particular review has been the role of the Tyne and Wear EPU and the individual resilience functions within each of the five local authorities. The delivery of emergency planning and resilience services in Tyne and Wear are currently split between the EPU and the five Local Authorities.

4.0 LIMITATIONS OF CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 Current arrangements have provided a reasonable level of compliance with the statutory obligations placed on the sub region by the Civil Contingencies Act, including some aspects recognised as good practice. The limitations of these arrangements are:

- (i) The need for further development of Local Authority level planning and LRF planning with wider sub regional activity
- (ii) The demands placed upon the Local Authorities and the LRF by the expanding national agenda requires further improvements in working and the elimination of duplication.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

5.1 Three options were identified for the delivery of future emergency planning and resilience within Tyne and Wear, these are:

- (i) Option 1 - a fully centralised Tyne and Wear joint resilience service whereby Council and EPU officers are reorganised into a single team and all resilience planning, co-ordination, multi agency liaison, training and exercising will be discharged on behalf of the five councils
- (ii) Option 2 - Local Authority delivery model (defined as: a consolidation of resilience activities and resources with appropriate coordination of effort facilitated through the Northumbria LRF and its associated framework) and
- (iii) Option 3 - a hybrid Tyne and Wear joint resilience service (defined as: a refinement of existing arrangements, with some resource at Council and some joint unit/service underpinned by a new Service Level Agreement with revised governance, management and reporting arrangements).

5.2 The Tyne and Wear Chief Executives have expressed a preference for option 2, a local authority based approach - the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group has endorsed this.

5.3 Through option 2, the closure of the EPU would enable the LRF to be strengthened through improvements to the Tyne and Wear arrangements. Also the new approach would enable the strengths of the existing arrangements sitting within the EPU, Civil Contingencies Committee and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFR) to consolidate whilst tying these activities more closely to local communities and democracy.

5.4 The annual cost of emergency planning and resilience activity across Tyne and Wear has been estimated at approximately £1.2m. However, the direct costs have been estimated at approximately £890,489 (including an annual contribution of £513,877 for 2010/11 from the five local authorities towards the EPU and £376,612 within the local authorities). The local authority option is estimated to provide savings of £224,007 across Tyne and Wear, though the exact amount will be determined after further analysis that will be carried out as part of the transition and implementation process.

5.5 Any costs incurred in implementing any of the options, will need to be covered by the five local authorities collectively; however EPU balances currently stand at around £112k which could be factored in. Savings for 2011/12 will also depend on the timescales for implementation of any new arrangements.

5.6 The implementation of the new model will be led by Sunderland City Council under the direction of the Assistant Chief Executive, with close support from the Deputy Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development. This will be with regular liaison and engagement with the lead officer for the EPU.

There will also be the need for input from specialist support in terms of managing the release of the current accommodation (via the TWFRAs) and financial support.

- 5.7 In order to ensure a smooth transition to the new mode of operation it is proposed there is significant involvement and engagement with both the current employees within the Emergency Planning Unit, both as a group and as individuals. This will also be supported by their current employer, the TWFRAs, via the Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 5.8 A transition action plan is being compiled to ensure all activities are identified and changes are delivered in a joined up manner.

6.0 REASON FOR DECISION

- 6.1 Each of the Tyne and Wear councils are required to approve the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group by taking a formal report through their Cabinet arrangements.
- 6.2 Therefore Cabinet is recommended to approve the decision of the Tyne and Wear Leadership Group to implement the proposed new model for emergency planning and resilience.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1 As outlined above, though two further options have been considered in detail these have been ruled out after a thorough process of challenge and review.
- 7.2 No alternative options are suggested.

8.0 RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS/CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The review took into account high level independent benchmarking with a senior emergency planning and resilience officer in Greater Manchester which raised a number of points. Category 1 responders (Local Authorities, Emergency Services, Health & Government Agencies) across Tyne and Wear were also consulted during the review and the majority of those that responded are in favour of the local authority option.
- 8.2 Northumberland County Council has also indicated it wishes to work with Tyne and Wear on improving the performance of the Northumbria LRF with a focus on effectiveness and efficiency. Indications are that a consolidated Local Authority model approach within Tyne and Wear would be supported by Northumberland with co-ordination through the Northumbria LRF structures.

