



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT**

Committee Report

Meeting : CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE : 12th OCTOBER 2009

Subject : EPU BUSINESS PLAN 2009-2010

Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit (TWEPU) Business Plan for 2009/10, explains changes to its preparation and format, and highlights the subsequent impacts that this will have on the format and style of future performance reports.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members are aware of the Agreement between Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Authority (TWFRA) and the Tyne and Wear constituent authorities relating to the provision of a civil contingencies service provided in accordance with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 and of the obligations on TWFRA, as discharged by TWEPU, to provide in conjunction with the Councils an annual business plan detailing agreed outputs and timescales.
- 2.2 This report outlines changes in the preparation of the TWEPU Business Plan that have occurred as a result of a review of preparedness across the whole of Tyne and Wear.

3. REVIEW OF PROCESS

- 3.1 In previous years, TWEPU has prepared a draft annual Business Plan for discussion and agreement with the Strategic Management Board (SMB) which comprises representatives of each Tyne and Wear council. The agreed plan was then subsequently reported to this committee: and since 2008, quarterly performance reports have also been submitted to members of this committee regarding TWEPU's progress against targets in order to supplement the annual performance report.
- 3.2 Following the Audit Commission review in 2006, which analysed how well local authorities, TWEPU and other key organisations across Tyne and Wear were progressing with the implementation of the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA), this became a three year business plan in order to align with

the Audit Commissions recommendation that the EPU should be funded on a three year (medium term) basis, instead of receiving year on year allocations.

- 3.3 A process of horizon scanning and analysis of current risks sits at the centre of the business planning process. In October 2007, by way of continuous improvement, the annual business planning workshop was introduced as a key means of:
- consulting councils on the proposed content of the draft plan
 - reviewing TWEPU progress and performance to date
 - discussing and considering future challenges
 - deciding priorities
 - agreeing the broad content of the plan for the following year.
- 3.4 Whilst the focus has historically been centred on the development and analysis of the TWEPU business plan and performance against targets, it was identified that the workshop could also provide an ideal format and opportunity to collectively review councils discharge of their responsibilities as outlined in the current T&W Service Level Agreement (SLA). This meant that a more holistic view of resilience preparations across Tyne and Wear would be required: and in order to achieve this vision, the SMB would need to review and develop its working practices to enable strategic priorities to be set, and work allocated accordingly.
- 3.5 At the SMB workshop in October 2008, activity therefore focussed on creating Terms of Reference for the SMB, which aimed to capture and formalise this approach. A copy of the TOR is contained in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.6 SMB also recognised that in order to take a holistic view of resilience across Tyne and Wear, it would now need to take responsibility for setting the business planning priorities, both for TWEPU and for councils (the latter to be predominantly addressed via TWROPS ie a council resilience officers working group known as the T&W Resilience Officers Group), and identify any issues which may of course require a collaborative multi-agency LRF approach.
- 3.7 A series of meetings was held to develop the work areas, which included a further SMB workshop which took place on 4th June 2009 to identify a series of strategic objectives in support of the work areas identified during discussions. The work culminated in the SMB finalising the TWEPU Business/Work Plan in July 2009. The 2009/10 EPU Business Plan is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.8 One consequence of these fundamental changes has of course been the late publication of this year's TWEPU Business Plan. The transitional period of development was protracted due to what has been the introduction of a fundamentally new way of working, and due to pressures on council resilience teams in dealing with ongoing issues, relating in particular to Pandemic Influenza.

- 3.9 It should be noted that as a consequence it may not be possible to complete all of the work areas before the end of financial year 2009/10, and that some work areas will necessarily roll over to the following year. The work plan will however be assessed and reviewed on an ongoing basis in order that priorities and key workstreams are progressed.

4. PERFORMANCE REPORTING - CHANGES

- 4.1 In accordance with the T&W Agency Agreement, there is a requirement to produce quarterly reports on the delivery outputs relating to the business plan commitments. These reports are discussed at the regular quarterly meetings between the Chief Emergency Planning Officer (CEPO) and the SMB. Reports are also submitted to this committee on a quarterly basis.
- 4.2 The new style of the Business Plan will necessitate a different style of performance reporting. This means the familiar standard format of reporting against hard targets will in future be largely replaced by a more narrative style of performance reporting, based on the outcomes of a particular activity. It is anticipated that, similar to the business plan setting process, a 'bedding in' period will be required, and adjustments will be made as necessary to fine tune the process.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The way in which the TWEPU business plan is set has fundamentally changed. The strategic priorities that underpin and inform the TWEPU Business/Work Plan are now set by the SMB which then enables supporting actions to be developed in order to populate the business plan. This should enable the plan to align more closely with the strategic priorities that the SMB has identified across Tyne and Wear, and should ensure that it aligns more closely with the business plans within each council and that of TWROPS.
- 5.2 This approach is intended to ensure a more effective use of resources both at Tyne and Wear and at individual council level, through co-ordinated tasking of TWEPU and TWROPS; which should also enable the identification of issues that need to be referred to the Local Resilience Forum for multi -agency treatment.
- 5.3 These changes have resulted in later publication than usual, which is mainly due to the fundamental improvements and changes made to the way that SMB works, which needs to set against a background of councils dealing with the Pandemic Influenza outbreak. It is usual to expect a period of transition with any new way of working, and it is anticipated that future business planning activity will be delivered within normal timescales. The learning from this years new process will be taken forward to inform the Business Plan from 2010 onwards.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Members are asked to:

- a) note the changes in the business plan setting process
- b) note the forthcoming changes to performance reporting
- c) agree the TWEPU Business/Work Plan for 2009-2010

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Working papers relating to the above are held in the offices of TWEPU.