

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, 25 OCTOBER 2010 at 10.30 a.m.

Present:

Councillor Bell in the Chair

Councillors Charlton, Clark, Mole, Renton, Trueman and Wright.

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jordan, Val Bowman and Tom Capeling.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Minutes

15. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 July 2010 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Emergency Planning Society Conference 2010

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer (CEPO) submitted a report (copy circulated) on the Emergency Planning Society Conference 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The conference focused on the key challenges in the field of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity and consisted of a series of presentations and workshops.

The delegates heard from a wide range of speakers including the opening address by Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and a snapshot on the Future of UK Resilience by Christina Scott, Director of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, Cabinet Office.

The conference covered the following themes:

- Keynote Address ‘Are We Ready for the Next Disaster’;
- Session One – ‘The Ghost of Futures Past’;
- Session Two – ‘Herding Cats? Cooperation and Coordination in Present Day Emergencies’;
- Session Three – ‘Critical National Infrastructure – How Resilient is our Future?’;
- Session Four ‘Watch This “Space” – The Power of Mother Nature’

The Conference also provided an excellent opportunity to network with representatives of other relevant agencies and organisations and the information gained would be used to inform the further development of plans and procedures in Tyne and Wear.

16. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

Report on the Response to the 2009 Influenza Pandemic

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer on the results of the review by Dame Deidre Hines of the United Kingdom’s strategic response to the 2009 influenza pandemic.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The purpose of the review was to review the appropriateness and effectiveness of the UK strategy for responding domestically to the H1N1 pandemic and to make recommendations to update and refine planning for any future influenza pandemic.

The review considered several key factors in determining the response to the pandemic. These were:-

- The central government response;
- Scientific Advice;
- The containment Phase;
- Treatment;
- Vaccine; and
- Communications.

The review concluded that the strategic response in the UK was 'highly satisfactory' and the key successes highlighted in the report were as follows:

- planning for a pandemic was well developed;
- the personnel involved were fully prepared;
- the scientific advice provided was expert;
- communication was excellent;
- the NHS and public health services right across the UK and their suppliers responded splendidly; and
- the public response was calm and collaborative.

The strategic central response provided local responders with up to date information which needed to be translated into planning and activity at local level. The LRF Pandemic Influenza Working Group, Chaired by Newcastle City Council and supported by the TWEPU, was able to adapt to changing planning assumptions and clinical data and was reactive and dynamic in its approach.

Councillor Bell asked if H1N1 was still a major threat. Lindsey Horwood stated that one of the characteristics of a pandemic was the second wave period and it was therefore sensible to include the vaccine alongside the seasonal flu vaccinations.

The Committee welcomed the report and noted the exceptional level of preparedness the UK had attained.

17. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be noted; and
- (ii) the Committee receive updated and related reports as necessary.

Major Hazard Exercise: Exercise Cornerstone (NGN Ltd)

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report (copy circulated) on a Major Accident Hazard Pipelines (MAHP) multi agency table top exercise carried out with Northern Gas Networks at West Denton Community Fire Station on 8 September 2010. The event was entitled "Exercise Cornerstone 2010".

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The testing of emergency plans was required to ensure that they were accurate, complete and practicable. "Exercise Cornerstone" had been developed as an important element of the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Training and Exercising programme 2010/2011.

Councillor Wright noted the success and value of such exercises and the statutory requirement to train and exercise on every plan. He referred to the review of the Emergency Planning Unit and asked who would instigate these exercises in the future. Joy Brindle stated that there would be an opportunity to explore these issues when the review of the Emergency Planning Unit was considered at the next Authority meeting.

Exercise Cornerstone was a successful and very useful exercise. Many lessons had been learnt to aid the development of The Major Accident Hazard Pipelines Plan. A further outcome of the exercise would be a revision of Standard Operating Procedures by Emergency Services and Partner Agencies.

18. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be noted; and
- (ii) the continued integrated emergency management of Major Accident Hazard Pipelines in Tyne and Wear be supported.

Business Plan 2010 and Performance Report

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer on the Business/Work Plan for 2010/11 and progress against targets for the first two quarters of the period (April to September 2010).

(For copy report – see original minutes).

An annual work plan, for the financial year 2010/11, detailing agreed outputs and timescales had been developed at the direction of the Strategic Management Board (SMB).

Several changes in the business planning process were implemented in 2009/10. The key changes were introduced by SMB who 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 work to be carried out by the Tyne and Wear Resilience Operational Planners Group (TWROP) was also included in the plan for the first time. TWROP was made up of Resilience Officers from each of the five councils. The plan now reflected all of the work being carried out across the whole Tyne and Wear area.

Over the last few months, the resilience function within Tyne and Wear had been subject to review. This process had required a significant amount of work, by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and SMB members. This, along with restructuring and change within the local authorities had consequently resulted in the late publication of this year's TWEPU Work Plan. The work plan was attached to the report.

Some work areas from the 2009-10 Business Plan were not completed and were due to be carried forward into the 2010-11 Business Plan. Changing priorities meant that some of these work areas would now not be completed and had been put on hold. Some of the outstanding work had been added to the 2010/11 Business Plan.

In addition to work set out in the 2010/11 Work Plan, a significant resource had been provided by both TWEPU and SMB members on the ongoing review of resilience arrangements in Tyne and Wear. Officers from Councils and TWEPU had formed part of the Review Team which had worked to set out terms of reference for the review and conduct activity around developing alternative delivery models.

The dynamic and fluid approach to the work plan for 2010/11 had meant that new items were being automatically incorporated into the plan following review by SMB.

19. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the TWEPU Business/Work Plan for 2010-2011 be agreed;
- (ii) the progress against targets for Quarters 1 and 2 of 2010/11 be noted;
and
- (iii) other reports be received as necessary.

Local Resilience Forum (LRR) Review

The Chief Emergency Planning Officer submitted a report on the review of the Local Resilience Forum.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The revised structure of the Local Resilience Forum was shown schematically in the report and comprised of an Executive Board, a Business Management Group and a set of Theme Groups.

Theme Leads were scheduled to meet with the Chair of the Business Management Group (BMG) in the next few weeks to discuss proposals for the development of terms of reference for their respective groups, the development of action plans and the establishment of and/or rationalisation of working groups/task groups.

There was also a piece of work currently under consideration by a representative of South Tyneside Council which would produce proposals around how to engage elected members within the LRF process. Further reports would be brought to the committee when this had been considered further.

20. RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the report be noted;
- (ii) the role of TWEPU in leading this important review be acknowledged;
- (iii) further reports be received on the outcomes once the Review had concluded.

National Training Awards

The Committee considered a report by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer on the National Training Awards.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

The EPU and TWFRS had been awarded a Regional Training Award. The award nomination was submitted in conjunction with a number of partners including Northumbria Police and the North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust in recognition of the Guardian exercise series.

The National Training Awards was a scheme which recognised the impact that excellent training, learning and development had on achieving outstanding organisational and individual success and provided a benchmark for standards of excellence in training in the UK.

The Guardian Team submitted an entry in the Partnership and Collaboration category which aimed to acknowledge and celebrate the positive impact and success created through the use of a collaborative approach to learning. This category was aimed at two or more organisations combining resources to work together on the development and delivery of the training.

On Tuesday 21 September 2010, the annual NTA Regional Ceremony was held at the Discovery Museum, Newcastle.

The ceremony was attended by members from the Guardian Planning Team and their commitment and hard work was rewarded when the Exercise Guardian submission was awarded a Regional Award. The Judges identified the uniqueness of the submission and were particularly impressed by the excellent multi-agency working evident throughout the planning, preparation, delivery and review of the Guardian Series.

The recognition from a national panel of highly respected judges of the Guardian Series of exercises highlighted the improvements made in responder capabilities from both a single and multi-agency standpoint. It also underlined the position the area maintained nationally in CBRN preparedness and response.

The Committee welcomed the report and thanked all Officers involved for their contribution to gaining the award.

21. RESOLVED that the report be noted.

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

At the instance of the Chairman, it was:-

22. 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) J. BELL,
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.

