

Scrutiny Review: Emergency Planning

Review from the Improving Places Select
Commission Task & Finish Group

August 2017

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Executive Summary

The Improving Places Select Commission chose to undertake a review of the Emergency Plan in 2016/2017, due to the fact that the current Emergency Plan was dated September 2013, this along with the high turnover of both Members and Officers at RMBC in recent years, a review was urgently needed. Members were aware that not having an effective EP in place could potentially lead to the loss of life.

The aim of the review was to test the resilience of the EP operational from the perspective of internal governance, resilience arrangements within Directorates and also with external agencies. The anticipated outcome is to have a strong, resilient EP which is fit for purpose.

A cross party Task & Finish Group was established to undertake the review which involved a fact finding visit to Stockton-on-Tees to meet the relevant officers and Members involved in the EP process. In Rotherham interviews were held with Senior Officers, a Cabinet Member and various officers with a role to play in the operational EP.

The Legal Context covering the EP is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which provides a definition of an emergency, along with the responsibilities of all Category 1 responders, which Local Authorities are one of, to mitigate and manage emergencies. This work is carried out through the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (SYLRF) and its Sub Group Structure.

Joint Service Agreement with Sheffield (JSA)

This agreement was signed in 2011 between Rotherham and Sheffield, the principle driver being to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services. This agreement has been in place for six years.

The findings from the review identified

- Circulation of a controlled document
- Lack of joint meetings between Rotherham and Sheffield under the Joint Service Agreement.
- Overall management of the EP process due to changes in officers and members.
- Primary operations room is not exclusively used for EP purposes but also as a training facility.
- The secondary operations room at Clifton Park provides limited resources.
- Requirement to recruit and train more volunteers.
- Lack of a corporate exercise for the service.
- Lack of information sharing between partner organisations

- The need to provide training to Parish Councillors on the EP
- No dedicated 4x4 wheeled drive vehicle.
- Procurement staff, over time have been excluded from the EP process.
- When the EP is operational, the Council effectively becomes an emergency service, a fact to be made know to the Council's suppliers of goods and services.
- Corporate Risk Manager is employed by the Council and is available to provide a "critical friend" support to the EP Team when rewriting the plan.
- Attention is given to improving community resilience in the time of an emergency.
- Ward Councillors need to receive training on the EP and to understand their role in the process along with supporting the Cabinet Member.
- The types of risk in borough could change – e.g. having the Advanced Manufacturing Park within its boundaries, this could be seen as a target for terrorism
- All members of the Communications Team are proficient in dealing with all media types along with having access to all documents on a shared drive.
- All the Managers in the Communications Team have received training in the EP process
- A member of the Communications Team is on call at all times and when they work closely with the Borough Emergency Co-ordinator in when the EP is operational.
- The system currently in use in the Borough Emergency Operations Rooms (BEOR) are unsupported and further work needs to be done to establish the access codes for the system.
- Overall the IT systems relating to the EP need to be examined and ultimately systems need to be based in the Cloud, therefore eliminating the need for a BEOR.
- The IT systems are not part of the shared service agreement with Sheffield.

Conclusion

The decision to undertake this review has been justified by the findings it has identified, which need to be addressed in order to add strength to the revised Emergency Plan. The Group concluded that due to the importance of the EP, it should be reviewed on a regular basis.

Recommendations

1. That the Major Incident Plan is reviewed bi-annually by a group of Members from the IPSC and this work forms part of the work programme for that year, however the document is to be reviewed by officers on a continual basis.

2. Mandatory training is to be provided to all Members about the Major Incident Plan to increase their awareness and involvement in any major incident.
3. Training relating to the Major Incident Plan should be mandatory to ensure all staff who volunteered are confident in the role they play in the management of the incident.
4. An “out of hours” training exercise to take place once all volunteers have been trained. Full training exercises then take place on a regular basis.
5. A targeted approach to recruitment from employees who can be “job matched” to appropriate roles in the operation of the Major Incident Plan.
6. There are sufficient volunteers to staff the EP for at least two shift changes.
7. A protocol to be developed to ensure that the partner organisations in the Major Incident Plan are notified as a matter of course when significant incidents occur in the borough and through the Local Resilience Forum, ways are to be identified and carried out on building relationships between partner organisations involved in the Emergency Plan – in particular to the turnover in staff.
8. A facilitated meeting/away day involving the emergency services and RMBC major incident staff on the ground to promote team working.
9. An on-going programme of training sessions for Parish Council members should be arranged to ensure any new members receive training on the subject.
10. A representative from Procurement to be involved in the Borough Emergency Operations Room to facilitate timely ordering of goods/services and to provide information if the Belwin Fund becomes operational.
11. Through the Shared Service Agreement funding is secured for a Community Resilience Worker.
12. The Corporate Risk Manager is involved in the role of a “critical friend” any amendments of the Major Incident Plan
13. A flow chart to be designed detailing the Major Incident Process and highlighting how and when Members are to be involved in the process.

14. The Chief Executive / Leader of the Council to inform counterparts in Sheffield of their concerns over the lack of meetings in relation to the Joint Service Agreement.

15. The situation relating to the unsupported IT systems is rectified.

Why Members wanted to undertake this review.

The Select Commission for 'Improving Places' identified that a review of the corporate Emergency Plan (EP) was a priority for the year 2016 / 2017 because:

- The existing EP was out of date, the current version is dated September 2013 Amendment 35;
- of high turnover of staff in the authority at a senior level over a short timescale;
- of high number of new elected Members in the Council; and
- the number of staffing changes in other organisations linked with the EP

Concern was expressed over the strength, structure and the effectiveness of the plan in an emergency situation. The Select Commission Group was aware that lives could potentially be at risk in circumstances where the EP would be made operational and it would not be sufficiently robust.

The aim of the review was to

Test the resilience of the Emergency Plan operation including examining the:-

- Internal governance including meetings structure, attendance and terms of reference for all the groups involved.
- Resilience arrangements networked within Directorates.
(The existing group of Directorate representatives is no longer reflective of the current Council structure.)
- Resilience of arrangements with external agencies involved in the EP process

The anticipated outcome of the review was to have an improved Emergency Plan that was fit for purpose and would provide reassurance that the service was adequately resourced to meet potential disasters and significant incidents which could occur in the Rotherham Borough.

To confirm that the governance structures are robust, effective, efficient and provide senior leadership team with the reassurance they required.

The potential impact of not having a robust EP could ultimately result in loss of life.

The unknown risks surrounding the Borough Emergency Plan requires that a robust and resilient framework exists, which enables the organisations involved to be able to react to any emergency situation when needed. It was agreed that this would be developed and implemented at the earliest opportunity.

It is important to note that when this review commenced work, officers, were progressing work to update the corporate EP, which when published will be renamed as the 'Major Incident Plan'.

Both elements of work, to develop the framework and to revise the EP, have been run concurrently, with input to the review from Senior Officers.

Method

The preferred method to evaluate the current plan was to undertake an in depth review by a Task and Finish Group (referred to in this report as "Group") which consisted of the following representatives from the Improving Places Select Commission.

Cllr Brian Cutts (UKIP)

Cllr Ian Jones (Lab) Vice Chair

Cllr Rose McNeely (Lab)

Cllr Kath Reeder (UKIP)

Cllr David Sheppard (Lab)

Cllr Robert Taylor (Lab)

Cllrs Bob Walsh (Lab)

Cllr Ken Wyatt (Lab) Chair

Co-optee Members

Mr Pat Cahill

Mrs Lilian Shears

Mr Brian Walker

The activities undertaken included a fact finding visit to Stockton-On-Tees, which took place on 17th October 2016. The objective of this visit was to learn how the Emergency Plan is managed in the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit. Attendance on the visit included members of the Group along with the Senior Resilience Officer, now the Emergency & Safety Officer, and Claire Hanson.

During the visit Stuart Marshall, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and Local Resilience Forum Manager at the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit along with Cllr Marjorie James (Hartlepool Borough Council) the lead member for EP, provided an open and honest account of how their EP operates and shared their experiences with the T&F GP.

Additionally, a number of key personnel from Rotherham MBC, who have a role within the EP process, were interviewed, including:

Jo Abbot - Borough Emergency Co-ordinator

Cllr Saghir Alam – Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Budgeting (includes EP)

Helen Chambers - Senior Procurement Category Manager

Simon Dennis - Corporate Risk Manager

Claire Hanson – Emergency & Safety Manager

Karen Hanson - Assistant Director Community Safety & Street Scene

Leona Marshall - Communications and Marketing Manager

Jane Pearson - Forward Liaison Officer

Robert Parker - Forward Liaison Officer

Luke Sayers - Assistant Director Customer Information and Digital Services

Damien Wilson - Strategic Director for Regeneration & Environment.

Paul Woodcock - Borough Emergency Co-ordinator

Three members of the Group observed the exercise 'Golden Winter,' which was facilitated by officers from the Counter Terrorism Unit in Riverside House on 28th February 2017

To provide context to this review, previous Council papers have been referred to and are referenced at the end of this report.

Legal Context

The legal framework which governs civil emergency is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

What is an emergency?

An emergency is defined in section 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as:

1. An event or situation which threatens serious **damage to human welfare** in a place in the United Kingdom
2. An event or situation which threatens serious **damage to the environment** or a place in the United Kingdom
3. War or terrorism, which threatens serious **damage to the security** of the United Kingdom.

Emergency planning is the process by which unexpected incidents can be mitigated. In general terms, it is the work that the Government, local authorities, the emergency services, health services and partners all do in preparing plans and procedures for dealing with and recovering from any emergency or major incident that has an impact on the emergency services or the community.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 local authorities and other Category 1 responders, such as the emergency services and NHS bodies, have a statutory duty to:

- Assess the risk of emergencies or major incidents occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
- Put in place robust emergency plans and recovery arrangements.
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency or major incident.
- Share information and co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination, collaboration and efficiency.
- Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements. Local authorities must: 'maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to perform their functions in the event of an emergency or major incident, as far as is reasonably practicable'.
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about Business Continuity Management (local authorities only from May 2006).
- **(reference report – cabinet Sept 2010**
[mhttp://modgovapp/documents/g8466/Public%20reports%20pack%2022nd-Sep-2010%2010.30%20The%20former%20Cabinet%20-%202nd%20June%202004%20-%204th%20February%202015.pdf?T=10](http://modgovapp/documents/g8466/Public%20reports%20pack%2022nd-Sep-2010%2010.30%20The%20former%20Cabinet%20-%202nd%20June%202004%20-%204th%20February%202015.pdf?T=10)

South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (SYLRF) and Sub Group Structure

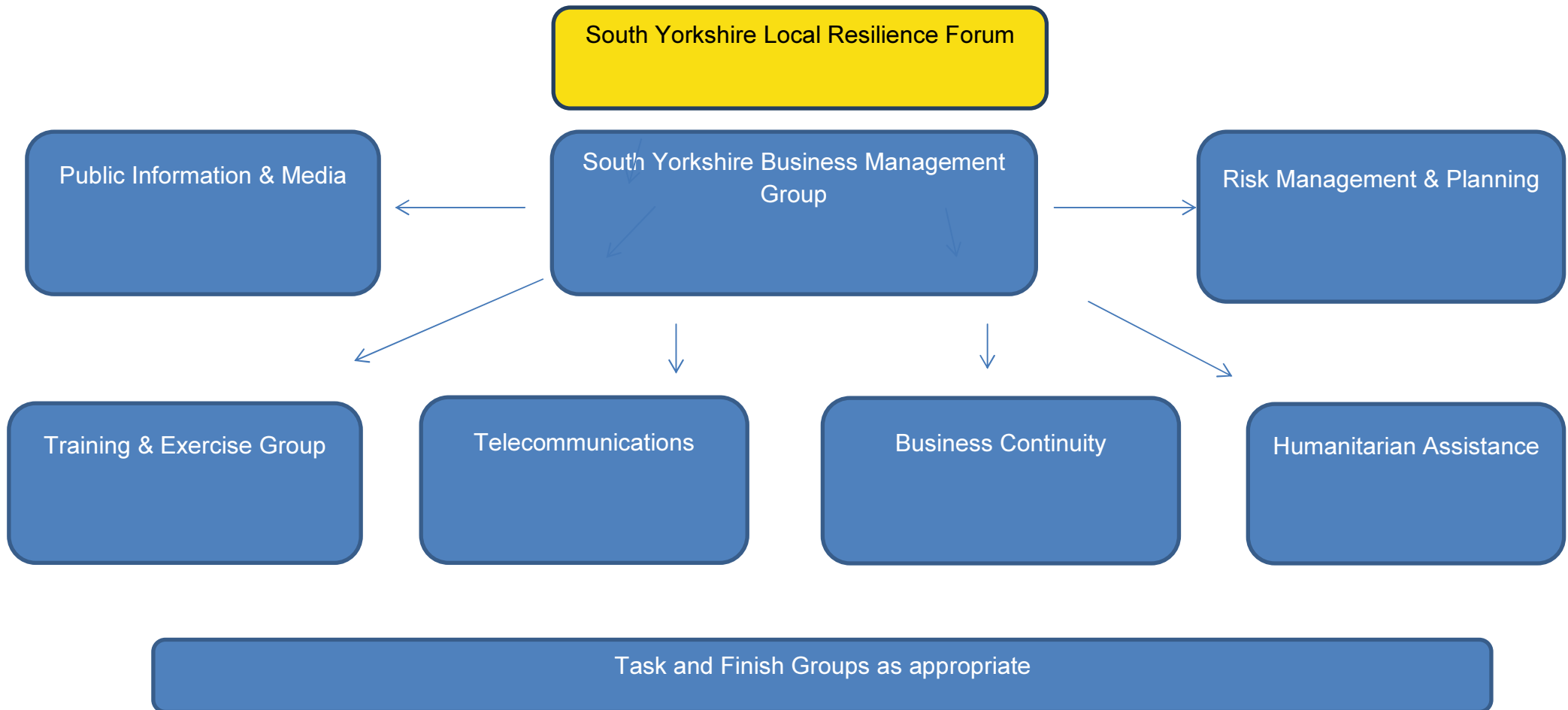
The SYLRF provides the governance structure to ensure that there is an adequate level of multi agency preparedness as required by the duties under the Civil Contingencies Act to enable an effective response to emergency incidents that may have a significant impact on the communities of South Yorkshire and its

neighbouring communities. The structure is highlighted in **Diagram 1** along with the Terms of Reference noted in **Appendix 1**

This group meets twice a year in May and November. The list shows dates of meetings of past and future meetings.

- 9th June 2015,
- 12th November 2015
- 26th May 2016
- 17th November 2016
- 11th May 2017
- 16th November 2017

Local Resilience Forum and Sub Group Structure



Joint Service Agreement with Sheffield. (JSA)

Within the SYLRF there is a separate service agreement between Rotherham and Sheffield

The background to this agreement is that in November 2009 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council was approached by the then Deputy Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council to explore arrangements for a Shared Service approach to be formed between the two areas.

The principal driver of this initiative was to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services to the communities and not primarily driven by budget savings. Under this option Rotherham MBC did see a reduction of cost in providing this service.

The signing of a legal agreement to formalise the new service arrangements was undertaken on 1st June 2011.

The legal agreement has been in place for six years and provides an overview of the obligations of both councils on aspects of commencement and terms of the agreement; representations on outside bodies; fraud and irregularity; withdrawal and termination.

The amount of funding available under the Joint Service Agreement is based allocated per head of the population so a 68/32 percentage split.

Diagram 2 shows the staffing structure agreed to deliver the shared service.

The formulation of the JSA has resulted in one team to provide an EP service for both areas. Individuals are based at one of the local authority offices, but there is no allegiance to one authority. The work is divided on a theme basis covering Rotherham and Sheffield however there are individual Major Incident Plans in place.

With the signing of the agreement came the formulation of the Emergency Planning Shared Service (Rotherham and Sheffield) Joint Committee and its role to oversee the implementation, development and operational performance of the service in accordance with the terms of the agreement. Part of the duties is to manage the budget for the service along with producing an Annual Report on activities during the year. The last Annual Report was produced in May 2016.

Appendix 2 provides the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee (JC).

The timescale for the JC to meet is on a half yearly basis and they have met on the dates shown below.

15th July 2014

20th January 2015

3rd September 2015 – Cancelled (not quorate)

21st March 2016

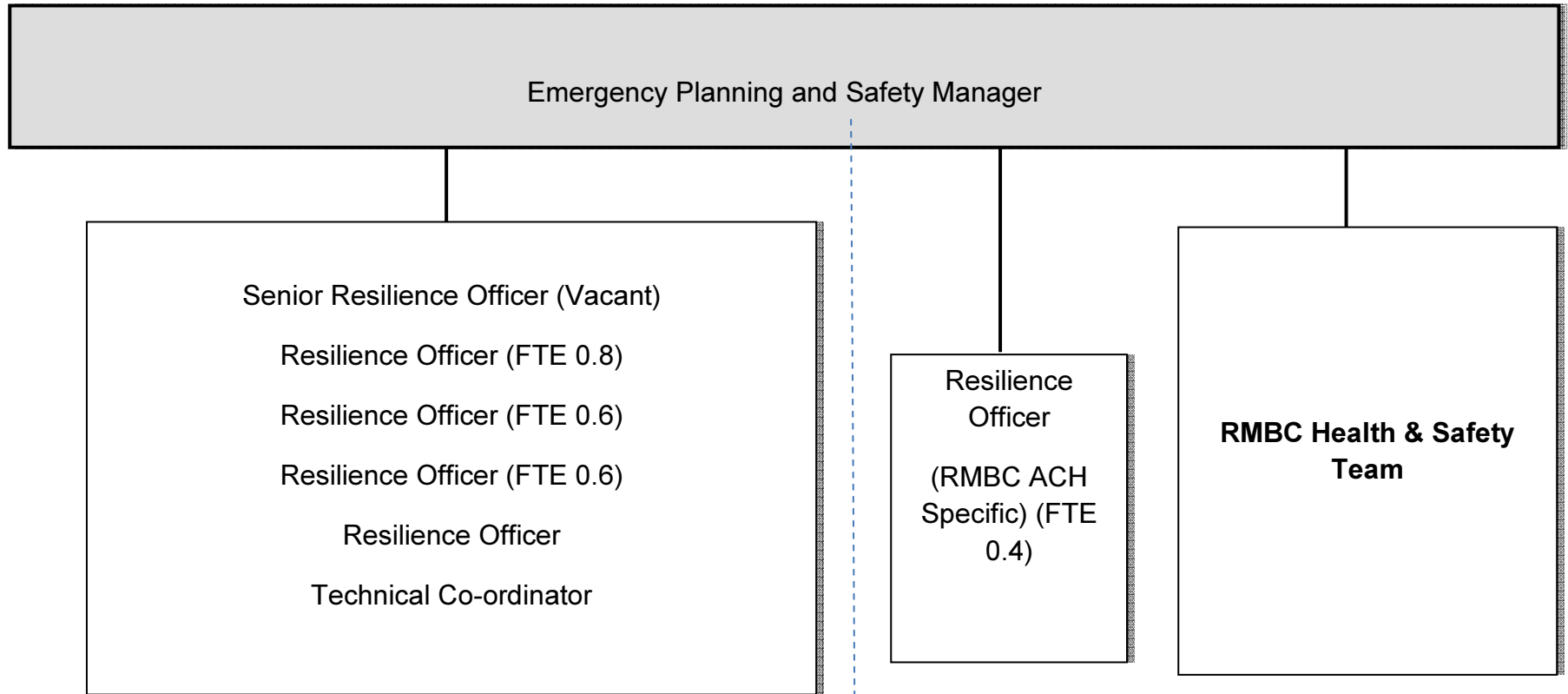
3rd November 2016 – Cancelled (not quorate)

Three people interviewed as part of the review raised concerns regarding the Joint Service Committee meetings with Sheffield which are not happening to the agreed timescale, due to lack of attendance from Sheffield. Alternative options to face to face meeting have been put forward such as teleconference calls to allow the meetings to take place. To date, no alternative solution has been implemented and consequently the occurrence of the meetings remains inconsistent.

It was also unclear from the Rotherham membership as to who the relevant councillors are from Sheffield on this committee.

The JSA will continue on an annual basis until one authority gives notice to end the agreement. Any necessary changes to the JSA are approved and noted as they arise.

Diagram 2 Emergency and Safety Team – Team Establishment



Emergency Planning Shared Service
(Rotherham MBC and Sheffield CC)

Rotherham MBC only

Emergency Plan

The current version of the Emergency Plan was published in September 2013 and is considered to be out of date. A refresh of the EP ran concurrently with this review and mutual support was provided by the Emergency & Safety Manager. The revised Emergency Plan will be renamed the Major Incident Plan.

One issue that came to light at the inception of the review is how the EP, as a controlled document, is being shared and managed. This was illustrated by the fact that the document had been issued to members of the Group without any registration of the fact neither did there appear to be a one-to-one exchange for the document (old for new). Therefore, a controlled document has now become uncontrolled. Hard copies of the EP are not widely issued as a matter of course. The copies were issued for information only for the review. A hard copy is provided to the newly trained Borough Emergency Co-ordinator (BEC) as part of their kit. From this point it is the responsibility of the BEC to keep the document up to date. It is practice that circulation of hard copies should be recorded. Hard copies are kept in the Primary Operations Room (Riverside) and other pertinent locations the Secondary Operations Room (Garden Room Clifton Park Museum) and the Emergency Operations Room in Sheffield. These copies are kept up to date by a member of the EP Team.

Copies of critical reference documents including, but not limited to plans, rotas, contact directory etc. are stored electronically on a shared W drive which is accessible by Borough Emergency Co-ordinators (BEC) and all other response staff. When the plans are updated all response staff are notified by email, requesting confirmation that the individual has received and accessed the document. Responsibility for storage and retention remains with the individual.

One point that was identified by several sources was that some focus surrounding the management and implementation of the EP has been lost following the departure of the previous the Emergency Planning Manager in February 2012. This has been compounded by the fact that there have been major changes in both the number of newly elected Members and Council Staff at all levels since 2014, providing the perception that the current EP is unfit for purpose in its current state.

Finance is not considered within the scope of this review, however the Group did mention the Belwin Fund which is a potential contribution from Central Government towards the cost of managing extreme situations. Further details can be found by the following link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bellwin-scheme-2013-to-2014-guidance>

One change outlined by the Emergency & Safety Manager (ESM) is that the Primary Operations Room, is not exclusively used for that purpose, but is available to other

services within the council and is used as a training facility /meeting room. The room is in constant use and therefore this is not a sterile environment when the EP is called into operation. The identified risk with this arrangement is that when the EP is called into operation there is a time delay in clearing the room and preparing the services for the operation. It is a condition in the room booking policy that the room is to be vacated immediately if it is to be used as the Borough Emergency Operations Room. If there is an issue with this request, the ESM will contact Facilities Services for them to have the room vacated whilst they concentrate on the task in hand. This is a protocol that the Group endorses.

A check of the equipment required for use, in the room, in the event of an emergency is carried out once a month by a member of staff which takes approximately 8 hours. It could be questioned if this is the most appropriate use of limited staff time.

The Secondary Operations Room at Clifton Park provides limited resources stored in a cupboard and staff are required to take their own equipment. If the situation arose that Riverside House was destroyed, from an IT perspective, there would be no EP systems available and it is unlikely that there should be sufficient connectivity at Clifton Park to provide a service. The non-availability of the Emergency Planning Incident Management System (EPIMS) would mean that the staff would default to a paper based system.

In the event of a joint emergency situation, there is a larger operations room in Sheffield which is sterile and can be brought into use if needed.

Volunteer Structure

There are 28 volunteers available to staff the operation of the EP, (excluding FLO and BEC), but there are no trained staff for the role of Response Co-ordinator. A recruitment drive took place at the end of December, beginning of January 2017 which resulted in the appointment of 2 Forward Liaison Officers and 1 Assistant Forward Liaison Officer. Training for these roles was provided immediately and the officers joined the EP rota in May 2017.

The table below shows the current volunteer structure available for the operation of the emergency plan.

BEOR Role	Nov 2016	June 2017
Response Coordinator	2	0
Log keeper/PA	5	5 (plus 1 dual role)
Mapping officer	12	9 (3 have left the authority)
Report Writer	3	5

BEOR Manager	6	7
TOTAL	28	26+2 vol. to be trained= 28

The recruitment drive did not yield as many volunteers as expected so there will be a few more attempts to increase the numbers this year. There have always been sufficient volunteers to run the BEOR for at least at change over in shift.

The view provided by the Service is that In terms of staffing for shift rotas ideally one person should fill a 6 hour shift so requiring 4 staff for each role in a 24 hour period. There is little room for redundancy for example during school holidays, Christmas period where attendance levels may be lower due to high percentage of annual leave. The ultimate goal would be to have 12 volunteers per role. As an aside, there is a “call out test” every six months (approx.) and this has shown that on the volunteers available, there is sufficient response, at the time of an exercise. This has provided managers with some confidence in the organisations’ ability to respond, but it should be noted that the exercises have thus far been conducted “in office hours”.

Training of Volunteers

Since January the following training sessions have been completed:

- Borough Emergency Operations Room (BEOR) refresher and new starter training on January 25th, February 28th, March 7 and April 27th
- Mapping officer refresher training March 30th
- April 11th set up a small BEOR as part of the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Exercise Vitrex for new inexperienced volunteers only

Further BEOR refresher training courses in were held in May following which the planned BEOR training will build up the skill sets and experiences of BEOR volunteers.

At present the BEOR training program has been based around refreshing and training all volunteers in the basics and to ensure everyone receives the same course and a baseline of expertise exists. This will switch from refresher training to specialised role training and mini exercise experience over the period from May to August. Planned specialist training includes:

- Report writer training to be confirmed for June 13th or August 3rd pending feedback from the BEOR volunteers.
- Response coordinator training for June 13th / August 3rd
- Emergency Planning Information Management Systems (EPIMS) paper based training– Provisionally booked for August 29th

- “Mini-exercises” are scheduled for June 27th and July 27th to give further experience to all staff. These mini exercises will be for 1-2hrs to give as many BEOR volunteers as possible opportunity to practice.

The view from Members is that ideally a corporate exercise would be scheduled immediately after this training has taken place, potentially around September /October time (details pending ratification from our Directorate Management Team / Strategic Leadership Team,)

Emergency Planning training has been delivered to SLT.

- 20/09/2016 BEC Training
- 18/10/2016 Exercise Cygnus n- strategic representation at a multi-agency strategic meeting
- 25/11/2016 BEC Training
- 08/02/2017 SLT Gold Management Training
- 28/02/2017 Exercise Golden Winter – the Counter Terrorism exercise delivered to SLT and others by the local police Counter Terrorist Security advisors
- 19/03/2017 Exercise Historian

The Group supports a recommendation to be made by the Emergency & Safety Manager to the Strategic Leadership Team that a process of targeted recruitment take place, e.g. by targeting a particular skills set, those who use the Geographic Information System in their daily role become Mapping Assistants in an EP situation.

From a strategic staffing perspective on both the officer and Member side there is always the Chief Executive or Leader or their deputy in the borough to cover any emergency situation.

The Interviews were conducted with a Borough Emergency Co-ordinator (BEC) and a Forward Liaison Officer (FLO).

The group found that each of the officers had an excellent understanding of their respective roles

The main role of the BEC is to act on behalf of the Council in a major emergency situation and they decide when to commence the EP. They do not necessarily have to be on site to make this decision, as they act on intelligence provided by the Forward Liaison Officer and if the situations dictates, an Assistant Forward Liaison Officer, who are described as the “eyes and ears” of the Council at the site of an emergency.

Together they are the first point of contact for the Emergency Services along with gathering and recording of information in a log book about the emergency and they

also cover a Health & Safety role for other staff members on site. Being on site of an emergency provides the opportunity for FLO's to network with the members of the emergency services. It is important that other organisations know and understand the role the FLO plays in being the first point of contact for all incidents.

Neither the BEC or FLO are allowed to drink alcohol whilst on call and the FLO must be within 45minutes travel time from the centre of Rotherham.

Social media is used widely by the population in the case of an emergency and the group asked if the FLO used this as a tool whilst undertaking their duties. The response was that social media is not used by the FLO's but they rely on official reports from the EOR and that they are usually too busy dealing with the situation

Both BECs and the FLOs interviewed have a number of years of experience working in these emergency roles, but with this in mind, they thought it important to have continual assessments to maintain the level of skills required to do the role. The training sessions should be mandatory otherwise there is potential for the same volunteers to receive training and it is essential for everyone to know their role they have in the EP situation along with knowing their role in the wider team.

Any changes in the rota to accommodate leave and sickness cover are managed by the Emergency and Safety Officer, who issues a revised schedule to all FLOs and BECs so that everyone is aware of the changes.

EP Team and any "incidental changes" are co-ordinated by the FLOs with any changes being reported to the duty BEC.

One point the BEC/FLOs brought to the attention of the group was that on a few occasions, the latest one being before Christmas 2016, when there was a fire at the Rotherham Interchange, the EP team heard about this incident from the 'grapevine' and not from colleagues in the EP partner organisations.

The Group has learnt that SYPTE has their own Business Continuity Plan – which would have likely been called into action as a result of this incident, nevertheless it would have been prudent to notify other EP agencies of the event.

It could be said that this highlights the need to have a good understanding of the roles of the other organisation involved in the EP Process along with the need to have good channels of communication.

Training for all roles involved in the EP is carried out prior to being included on any rota for being on call. In previous years, training was carried out at the Emergency Planning College at Easingwold, York, however RMBC went on to develop its own package. Training exercises are provided with a multi-agency approach to situations along with a programme of desk top exercises which are facilitated by SYF&R at their HQ in Handsworth, Sheffield. Over the years, the type of training sessions required to be undertaken include the subjects of biological warfare and terrorism. In order to promote team working and promote a better understanding of the roles

required to make the EP operational, one suggestion was to have a facilitated meeting identifying individual roles and responsibilities.

Public Health 'has been part of local government since 2013. Since then there have been two BECs with this background in Rotherham. As noted public health issues tend to evolve and do not always present as an instant disaster e.g. flu pandemic.

The list of equipment kept in the personal grab bag and the communal grab bag can be seen in Appendix 3

The Group were assured through discussions with the competent and experienced FLO's that there were no issues identified relating to the handover of duties with their colleagues.

The BEC/FLO were asked what was their understanding of community resilience.

Community resilience is about the community preparing themselves for certain situations and providing an understanding of what they might have to deal with.

Once the EP is activated, this sets off links to the community through each of the Directorates. Actions and requests are cascaded down to the appropriate level to provide a response or service. The winter weather plan has community teams in place, but it was suggested that more localised plans should be developed to meet the needs of the residents in that area.

From the perspective of the T&F Group a great deal of expertise has been lost recently in a short period of time which could leave the organisation exposed. It was considered that the EP is always evolving but the test is, if it works once put into action.

It is necessary for the EP to provide guidelines around the co-ordination and management of volunteers, in an EP situation, to ensure they are connecting with other services/teams working on the emergency. In order to provide and improve community resilience then a co-ordinated approach with partner agencies, e.g. Area Plans and Parish Councils, needs to be applied.

Previously information relating to the EP had been shared with some Parish Councils but this had been on an ad hoc basis. The Group supported the provision of training sessions to be scheduled in the summer for Parish Council members.

How confident does the BEC/FLO feel on hand over from an EP situation to a recovery phase?

The activation of the EP initiates the control room activities and introduces a different team dynamic with the identified response staff.

Once the control room activities are complete and the function reverts to stand by there is a Corporate Framework for Recovery, which includes a Stand Down Section and hand over procedures. Also the FLO will check for any outstanding actions noted in the log book.

Other points raised during the interview included the fact that there is no specific 4x4 vehicle for the EP team as had been the case previously. In most cases the FLO needs to get to site which does not always warrant a 4x4 vehicle. What is important is that the EP team has immediate/priority access to this type of vehicle.

Overall the perception with the EP is that things are getting better. An increased awareness of EP is being paid to it and it is being brought to the forefront.

Most countries have a civil defence corps, except for the UK; this fact increases the importance of the Emergency Plan.

Procurement

One of the main issues experienced by the procurement team in relation to the EP is that there has been a significant turnover of staff in the service area, resulting in little or no experience of the EP and supporting processes.

In previous years there had been a procurement officer in the control room during an EP operation, to expedite any emergency purchasing.

Concerns were raised by the Group that the procurement services should not be marginalised from the EP process and an officer should be present in the Operations Room to ensure the timely acquisition of goods and services, whilst accurately monitoring expenditure, in order to provide evidence in relation to instigating the Belwin Scheme.

If at any time the procurement system is unavailable, the FLO can revert to a paper based system.

There are dedicated phone numbers for procurement in the EP.

Category Managers are currently working on obtaining a complete list of goods and services that contracted suppliers provide.

As part of the Business Continuity Plans for Procurement information is being requested from suppliers to state that in the event of an emergency they would still be able to provide a level of service.

The Group were assured that, it would be possible, if the need arose to open a community shelter in the middle of the night and supplies could be obtained from Education Catering Services as they hold two weeks supply of food.

On the list of suppliers there are a number of food vans who can be commissioned and then bill the Council direct. Local supermarkets have been very community spirited by providing supplies and donations, however this is a goodwill gesture and cannot always be relied on. The point to note here is that more supermarkets are open 24 hours and are accessible for provisions.

Another example of the work of procurement during an emergency relates to the ordering of skips and how this process might work. The Category managers have a list of suppliers, but in an emergency it may not be the Council's preferred supplier that is used but the supplier who can meet the requirements at that time, indeed, it may be many suppliers together is what is required to meet the need.

Having queried the impact of the outsourcing of services, the Group were advised that few services had been subject to outsourcing. Changes have occurred in the Public Contract Service, which is a staged application process. Central Government has ruled that the first stage of the application should only include basic information providing the opportunity to a wider range of suppliers to apply. The second stage is when further details are asked for which includes details of their Business Continuity Plans. RMBC and the Government have differing views on this process, in that RMBC would prefer the information on Business Continuity Plans to be included in stage one of the application process.

In effect, when the Emergency Plan is in operation, the Council effectively becomes an emergency service and wishes this fact to be made known to the Council's suppliers of goods and services. In an example of this during the bad winter of 2010 Wilmot Dixon was an exemplar when dealing with frozen boiler pipes in Council properties.

Corporate Risk Management

The role of the Corporate Risk Manager is to ensure that the Risk Policy and Guidance is kept up to date and applied consistently. Over the last six months, training has been provided to all M2 managers and above in the subject of Corporate Risk Management with officers from the EP Team being some of the recipients.

The EP is included on the Corporate Risk Register. Archive information included on earlier risk registers studied by the Corporate Risk Manager identifies that the EP is out of date and also that there are insufficient staff to run the EP service.

The service provided by the Corporate Risk Manager is available to all other sections in the Council to assist in writing their own Risk Register.

Cabinet Member for Emergency Planning.

Councillor Alam as Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance, which includes Emergency Planning, has a monthly meeting with the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment, Damien Wilson on the topic along with receiving weekly updates from the BEC and FLO.

Councillor Alam told the Group that Members needed to become more involved in the EP process, as Members know their localities and the residents there which would be valuable intelligence when overseeing the response to an emergency situation. The elected members also have a role to support the Cabinet Member.

Note. One good example which came to light regarding how local ward members and a colleague from another ward in the borough got involved in a major incident was seen on 8th May 2017 in Swinton/Kilnhurst. Ward members were on site shortly before the FLO and by using their local knowledge were very proactive in arranging a safe area for some residents along with providing much needed refreshments.

As part of this review, Members were issued the booklet compiled by the Local Government Association "A councillor's guide to civil emergencies", however no specific training is provided for Members on what their role is in a Rotherham context.

Councillor Alam thought the EP should be included in the Member induction programme when becoming a Cllr and this should include a process flow diagram of the EP processes, detailing how and when Members would be involved.

In order to prevent the EP becoming outdated then it should be seen as a living document and should be reviewed on a quarterly basis, with controlled reissues.

Another point worth noting is that from previous experience positive outcomes arise from inviting VIPs to the scene of a disaster.

As an example John Major and Tony Blair visited Dunblane and the result was that a new school was commissioned. It is important to emphasise that in the aftermath of a disaster the recognition/involvement by national government in response to the tragedy/disaster

In the floods of 2007 Prince Charles visited Rotherham and provided a much needed boost to morale to those affected by the disaster along with marking the occasion in the history books.

The type of risks also change, as can be considered by the operations of an Advance Manufacturing Park in the borough, this could be seen as a target for terrorism along with other local sites such as Meadowhall and the M1.

The option of providing the EP Service on a South Yorkshire basis was thought to be an option to be considered. After all there are other services provided on a regional basis (Joint Waste Authority)

Regarding communications during an EP operation Councillor Alam indicated that he preferred to keep people “in the loop” and promoted good communications between all parties involved.

The recent incident in the Transport Exchange just before Christmas provided an example of how a lack of communications can impact the EP communities.

Interview with Leona Marshall, Interim Head of Communications and Marketing

The Communications and Marketing Team are located near the EP Team and close to the Service Centres in Riverside House. There was a restructure of the team towards the end of 2015/2016 which created a group of mini teams one to support each of the Directorates. Each member of the team is proficient in dealing with all media types.

All members of the team have access to all documents on the shared computer drive.

Information provided by the Interim Head of Communications and Marketing confirmed that there was a member of the Communications Team on call at all times and that they work with the Duty BEC

All the managers who are part of the Communications Team have taken part in EP training. As part of the Communications Team role in the EP they have regular contact with other external agencies keeping up to date on current events and activities from the Home Office, Environment Agency, Weather Alerts (including flood warnings) and the South Yorkshire Resilience Forum.

Findings from Interview with Luke Sayers

One point to work towards in an emergency situation is to ensure people can continue to work remotely, which is achieved by using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) solution connecting to remotely hosted or ‘cloud’ based services.

EP Operations Room at Riverside is a concern. The systems currently in use are unsupported as they were written by an employee who has since left the authority and there is no access to either the design or to the design code of the software. Currently work is underway to rectify this it is hoped that eventually all EP systems will be based on more contemporary IT solutions which will be hosted in the Cloud.

Riverside is not the only base from where the EP can be controlled from as there is a secondary site located at Clifton Park. Note that Riverside was built with flood protection systems and the IT suite does have a back-up generator for power, which will maintain operation of the server infrastructure. However if Riverside suffered a catastrophic failure and systems became unavailable or inaccessible then the EP

systems would be rendered inoperable and it is recognised that there is currently insufficient connectivity at Clifton Park. Considering the longer term, RMBC needs to get to the position where the location of the EP room becomes irrelevant as the systems should be based in the Cloud, with effective network connectivity from all sites.

A conclusion drawn from talking to the Assistant Director (Customer, Information and Digital Services) was that the IT systems should be located in the Cloud. One of the first tasks for IT is to list all the current IT systems, conduct risk assessments, complete cost analysis and then prioritise their transition to Cloud based services or locally hosted upgrades. The EP systems are considered to be prime candidates for transition to the cloud.

Included in this is an element Business Continuity Plan (which sits beneath the EP) and in that emails form part of the communications element. In the event that Riverside House is unavailable, there is no backup solution for the current email system leaving the sector of the communications at risk.

One system that is already Cloud based is that relating to Social Care and Vulnerable Adults.

The group requested clarification on whether or not the IT systems were part of the shared service agreement with Sheffield and the Assistant Director was able to confirm that under the agreement each authority has its own IT systems.

However, there are links between the different authorities across SY relating to IT through an officer network, so the Assistant Director has contact with his counterparts across the regions.

This suggests that there is an option for Rotherham to share some of its systems, as the Data centre at Riverside was built with spare capacity and for a fee, RMBC are currently hosting systems for Sunderland Council and SY Police.

For cloud based systems the requirement for a hosting building is reduced and services could be accessed from multiple locations including people's homes, although it should be recognised that within the sphere of EP the distribution of staff could adversely affect the dynamics of a response team. However, the potential is worthy of note.

An Email system should be developed and used alongside the phone system to communicate during any emergency. This should be automated within a new EP system.

The Good App is being phased out during June 2017 and will be replaced by an email access system that is in the Cloud and can be accessed using personal or work phones. It is anticipated that the email system will be transitioned, during the

early part of 2018, to a cloud based service. This will mean that email will continue to work even if Riverside House or any other Council building is not available for use.

Operation Golden Winter

This training exercise happened on Tuesday 28th February 2017 in the operations room at Riverside House and was facilitated by officers from the Counter Terrorism Unit, with three representatives from The Group observing the session. All the officers from the Strategic Leadership Team, along with officers from Asset Management took part in the training. Not all of members of SLT stayed for the duration of the training session.

The outline of the training session was to bring out the pre-emptive thought process of an emerging terrorist threat which started overseas and through a series of events became a situation in the borough.

The main messages to come out of the session could be applied to any situation when the EP is called into operation.

- The level of threat / the incident is based on actual intelligence.
- Be aware of the potential for a terrorist attack
- Take control of the situation.
- Make use of intelligence of community engagement / intelligence
- Know your communities
- Involve Ward Members
- Provide reassurance to the community
- Adequate and appropriate communication feed
- Make sure all information logged by the note taker and decisions are recorded.
- Regular practice of activating the Emergency Plan.
- Know your part in the EP

Conclusion

There is a framework for dealing with various emergency situations as identified in Diagram 1 the South Yorkshire Resilience Forum and Sub Group Structure.

The decision to undertake this review was timely as the neglect of this service for a number of organisational issues had become apparent and focused attention was required to bring this service back to the status it commands as a category 1 responder under the CLA. Work had already started in rectifying the situation with the review of the Emergency Plan into the newly named Major Incident Plan,

The first concern identified was in relation to the lack of Joint Services meetings being held with Sheffield, with only 1 of the 2 meetings required each year taking place. Overall this shows lack of priority given to the shared service arrangements which could have implications on the delivery of the overall service.

Overtime dedicated resources available to the EP team have been reduced in so far as there is no longer a sterile room as an BEOR neither is there a dedicated 4x4 vehicle for use by the FLO's.

With regards to informing / training new officers and Members to the authority to date the training has been provided to the officers in the Strategic Leadership Team but as yet there is no specific training for Members

The number of volunteers available to run the BEOR total 28 with varying totals in role; overall this is insufficient to provide cover for a 24 hour period.

Training for everyone is being provided but is being delivered on a basic level around the BEOR with specific job training provided afterwards. A full exercise will not happen until everyone has been fully trained.

The BEC and FLO's interviewed were both experienced and confident in their roles and they could see positive changes in the structure of the EP

Community resilience is an area that needs to be developed as our findings from colleagues in the North East demonstrate that correct usage provides valuable capacity, from community resources, to support local needs.

As an organisation we are reliant on IT and need to be confident that it is accessible and useable. The critical systems currently in use are old and contain vulnerabilities. They need to be refreshed and ideally transferred to the Cloud.

The Group concluded that the Corporate Risk Manager has an important role to play in the re-writing of the EP in that an independent view can be applied to the document once a draft is available and through mitigating any risks that may be highlighted, the EP could be strengthened.

Recommendations

1. That the Major Incident Plan is reviewed bi-annually by a group of Members from the IPSC and this work forms part of the work programme for that year, however the document is to be reviewed by officers on a continual basis.
2. Mandatory training is to be provided to all Members about the Major Incident Plan to increase their awareness and involvement in any major incident.

3. Training relating to the Major Incident Plan should be mandatory to ensure all staff who volunteered are confident in the role they play in the management of the incident.
4. An “out of hours” training exercise to take place once all volunteers have been trained. Full training exercises then take place on a regular basis.
5. A targeted approach to recruitment from employees who can be “job matched” to appropriate roles in the operation of the Major Incident Plan.
6. There are sufficient volunteers to staff the EP for at least two shift changes.
7. A protocol to be developed to ensure that the partner organisations in the Major Incident Plan are notified as a matter of course when significant incidents occur in the borough and through the Local Resilience Forum, ways are to be identified and carried out on building relationships between partner organisations involved in the Emergency Plan – in particular to the turnover in staff.
8. A facilitated meeting/away day involving the emergency services and RMBC major incident staff on the ground to promote team working.
9. An on-going programme of training sessions for Parish Council members should be arranged to ensure any new members receive training on the subject.
10. A representative from Procurement to be involved in the Borough Emergency Operations Room to facilitate timely ordering of goods/services and to provide information if the Belwin Fund becomes operational.
11. Through the Shared Service Agreement funding is secured for a Community Resilience Worker.
12. The Corporate Risk Manager is involved in the role of a “critical friend” any amendments of the Major Incident Plan
13. A flow chart to be designed detailing the Major Incident Process and highlighting how and when Members are to be involved in the process.
14. The Chief Executive / Leader of the Council to inform counterparts in Sheffield of their concerns over the lack of meetings in relation to the Joint Service Agreement.
15. The situation relating to the unsupported IT systems is rectified.

Thanks

- Jo Abbot, Public Health Consultant, Health Protection / Borough Emergency Coordinator
- Cllr Saghir Alam, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Finance
- Helen Chambers (Milner), Senior Procurement Category Manager, Procurement
- Simon Dennis, Corporate Risk Manager, Policy, Improvement & Partnership
- Claire Hanson, Senior Resilience Officer, Community Safety & Street Scene
- Karen Hanson, Assistant Director, Community Safety & Street Scene
- Cllr Marjorie James (Hartlepool Council) the lead member for EP.
- Leona Marshall, Communications & Marketing Manager.
- Stuart Marshal, the Chief Emergency Planning Officer and Local Resilience Forum Manager at the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit
- James McLaughlin, Democratic Services Manager
- Jane Pearson Forward Liaison Officer.
- Robert Parker, Business Support Manager, Legal and Democratic Services/Forward Liaison Officer
- Luke Sayers, Assistant Director Customer Information and Digital Services
- Damien Wilson, Strategic Director, Regeneration & Environment
- Paul Woodcock, Director, Planning, Regeneration & Transportation / Borough Emergency Coordinator

Glossary

EP Emergency Plan(ning)

LRF Local Resilience Forum

BEP Borough Emergency Plan

BEOR Borough Emergency Ops Room

DMT Directorate Management Team

SLT Strategic Management Team

COMAH Control of Major Accidents Hazards

FLO Forward Liaison Officer

RVP Rendezvous Point

Local Resilience Forum – Terms of Reference

AIM

The aim of the LRF is to ensure that there is an adequate level of multi agency preparedness as required by the duties under the Civil Contingencies Act to enable an effective response to emergency incidents that may have a significant impact on the communities of South Yorkshire and its neighbouring communities.

OBJECTIVES

The Group exists to provide strategic direction to multi-agency emergency planning preparations. Specific objectives are to:

1. To determine and approve joint strategic policy decisions relating to South Yorkshire's preparedness and response arrangements.
2. To approve the Community Risk Register and ensure it provides a robust basis for planning.
3. To ensure that appropriate multi-agency plans, procedures, training and exercises that are necessary to address identified or foreseeable local and wider area hazards, are in place and outstanding gaps identified.
4. To approve the business plan of the South Yorkshire LRF Business management Group (BMG).
5. To receive and consider horizon scanning and security reports from the Regional Emergencies Division (RED) or the Civil Contingencies Secretariat on current threat levels, on any gaps in planning and progress on any actions tasked.
6. To ensure that appropriate resources are made available to the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum BMG to fulfil statutory responsibilities and the work programme.
7. To consider the strategic implications of legislation, national initiatives and the decisions and recommendations of central government and its subsidiaries.

MEMBERSHIP

Category 1 responders should attend and be represented by individuals who have the right combination of seniority and expertise to speak with authority. Category 2 responders may attend as a right or may be invited (if they are required to attend because of the subject matter to be discussed).

CHAIR AND DEPUTY

To be determined by the South Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The LRF will meet twice a year, normally in May and November.

Notes:

For efficient and effective functioning of the LRF, the following procedures should be followed:

- a. Set standard agenda, for example as follows:
 - i. Minutes / actions
 - ii. Forward look (horizon scanning / security)
 - iii. Legislation / policy changes
 - iv. Approval of business plan / Review of progress (one of, at each meeting)
 - v. Items presented by BMG (risk, contingency planning, training, events)
 - vi. Review of actions agreed
 - vii. AOB
- b. Each item on agenda to be supported by a short brief in a standard format.
- c. Unapproved record of meeting to be circulated quickly and include an action plan

Findings from the North East – Stockton-On-Tees visit.

Background

The Emergency Planning Joint Committee is an Executive Committee of the four constituent unitary Local Authorities in the former area of the County of Cleveland, namely Hartlepool Borough Council; Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council; Middlesbrough Borough Council and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.

The Emergency Planning Joint Committee (EPJC) oversees the work of the CEPU and comprises of representatives from each of the local authorities. The EPJC meets on a quarterly basis. All papers including the finance reports and annual work plans are publically available; at least 3 member authorities must be present to be quorate with the Chair rotating between Authorities.

The Unit is co-located in premises with planners from Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade. With Borough Officers generally hot desking within their host authorities.

Hartlepool Borough Council has been nominated as the “host / lead” authority for the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit (CEPU) and provides the following services and facilities for/to the CEPU:

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Democratic Services
- Legal Services
- Information Technology (IT)

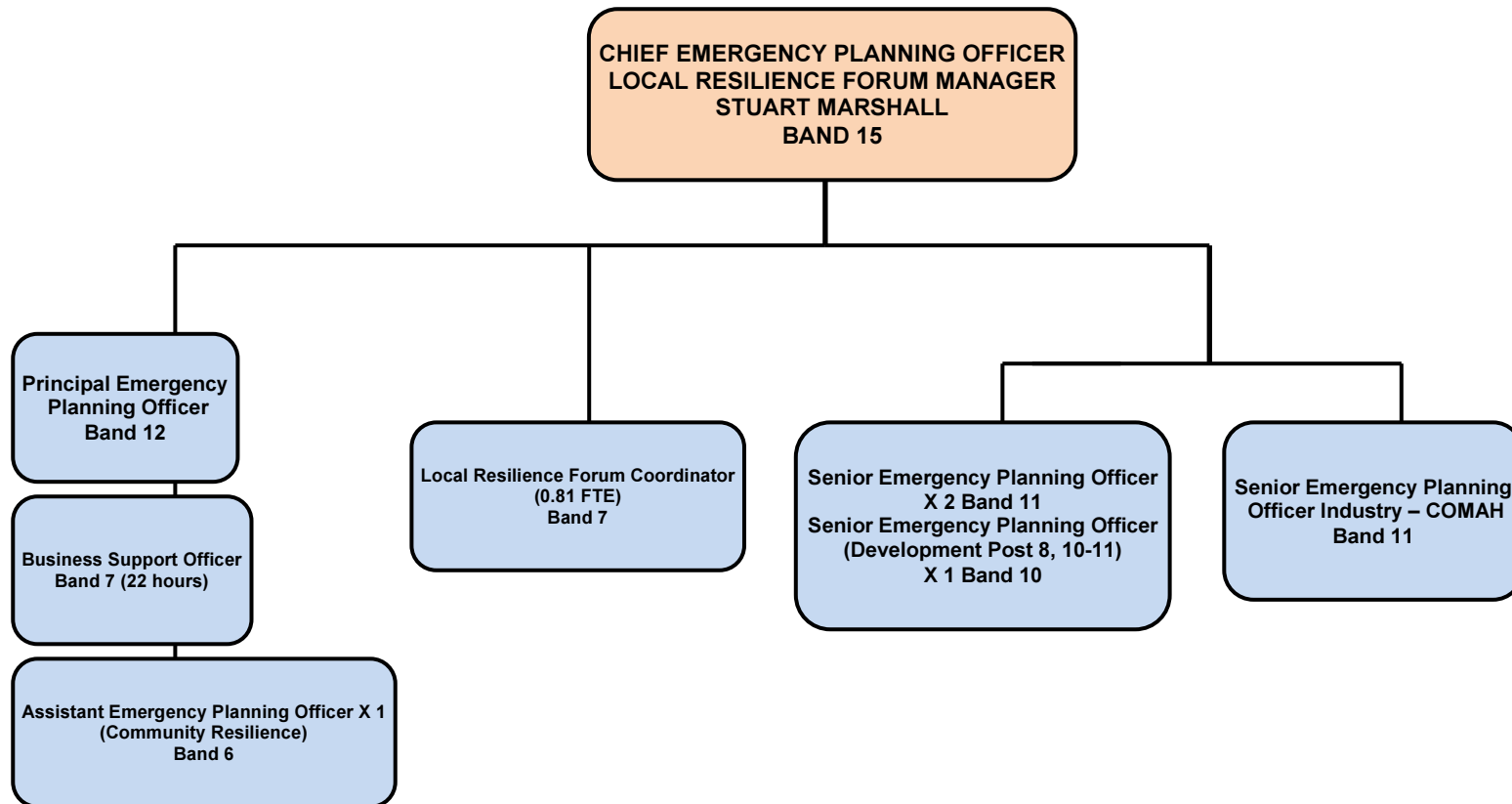
The legal position is that both the Emergency Planning Joint Committee and Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit are a public authority for the purposes of the Local Government Act and the Freedom of Information Act and are classed as an “outside body”.

The CEPU is a standalone unit and is managed by the Chief Emergency Planning Officer (CEPO), which is a non-political appointment. The CEPO is line managed by a Director within the lead Unitary Authority, with a number of reporting lines to the other authorities.

The Unit is structured as per the below outline, with an officer allocated to each of the four authorities, a specialist officer and business support. This officer has the lead for ensuring that the activities required by legislation and the CEPU workplan within their geographic area.

CLEVELAND EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT

6th March 2017



The arrangement relies on lead officers within the Unitary Authorities (normally a Director) to whom officers from CEPU report to. This is supported by Emergency Management Response Teams, established within each authority and comprising of representatives from service areas (e.g. Highways, Neighbourhoods, Social Care).

The teams EMRTs meet approximately quarterly to train, develop plans and review incidents. In the event of an incident the EMRT members provide the backbone of the authorities' response. The EMRT members are generally not on a formal call out arrangement, but have provided their contact details should a response by the authority be required out of normal hours.

During an incident the CEPU duty officer is acts as a tactical advisor, liaising between agencies and advising on courses of action. They generally cannot activate procedures / arrangements which impact on the authorities without the consent of the impacted authority.

Therefore during a response the CEPU Officer will contact a designated Borough Coordination Officer – this is generally a middle manage with the ability to activate council resources from any department of their authority out of hours. One point was highlighted in relation to cross departmental working and the need on occasion for staff to be able to take direction from staff in other departments and at lower grade.

A number of benefits were highlighted including:

- Economies of scale,
- The ability for officers to specialise in certain risks
- The ability to request mutual aid from agencies who have the same plans, training and procedures
- Provision of a 24/7 duty officer and additional resilience during protracted incidents.

The Local Resilience Forum

In addition to the Local Authority role the Chief EPO undertakes a role of Local Resilience Forum Manager, assisted by a Local Resilience Forum Coordinator.

This arrangement ensures that there is a point of contact for the LRF capable of both the routine work, as well as provision of advice and guidance to LRF members. New guidance coming from Central Government is received by the CEPO and circulated/delegated to officers in the Local Resilience Forum. Recently there has been a drive to coordinate the work of the LRF with neighbouring areas, for example the adoption of the same templates, joint working groups etc. reducing the demands on cross LRF organisations.

Cleveland Local Resilience Forum (CLRf) provides a structure to help agencies plan and prepare for major incidents and meet their statutory duties under law (the Civil

Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and accompanying statutory guidance entitled "Preparing for Emergencies).

Cleveland LRF

1. Is not a statutory body
2. Operates on the boundary of Cleveland Police Force
3. Comprises of a number of agencies from the emergency services, utilities, health and local government
4. Is Chaired by a Senior Fire Officer
5. Has a secretariat provided by the Cleveland Emergency Planning Unit
6. Establishes sub-groups as required to cover specific issues such as communications or flooding

Industrial Legislation

In addition to general emergency planning under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the CEPU is responsible for producing legally required documents under the Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations, Pipeline Safety Regulations and the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001.

The area has 29 Upper Tier Chemical (COMAH) sites and a significant pipeline network, due to the demands of the related legislation a specific officer undertakes the majority of planning and exercising of industrial emergency plans.

Finance

The Unit is financed by a number of routes including:

- Contributions from authorities based upon population
- Contributions from LRF members towards the secretariat function
- Recharges to industry in relation to legislative duties
- Income generation from training

The main overheads relate to the staffing of the Unit and accommodation. One issue faced by the EP partnership is dealing with austerity measures. Pressures include the ongoing austerity which has seen significant reductions in the contributions to the Unit and the risk of experienced and skilled staff leaving for positions within other sectors - the time required to develop officers being significant.

Duty Officer

Out of office hours there is one point of contact through the Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) who covers the 4 areas and who must be able to attend central locations within 30 minutes deployment time. The officer receives an allowance for periods of standby which are generally 7 days.

The Duty EPO has a kit bag, containing a laptop and paper copies of essential documents (maps, contact details of relevant people/organisations and procedures) as required. Each Officer is issued with personal protective equipment etc.

Community Resilience

Via the Local Levy Fund the area has had a Community Resilience Officer for a number of years working primarily on flooding. The scheme was funded via a local levy where each authority adds a levy on the council tax on all properties at band D and above. The total levied is paid to the Environment Agency to assist with flood alleviation and up until recently funded a Resilience Worker, who worked with young people, the community and businesses. This source of funding allows the EA to use contributions towards applying for grant income from various sources.

One of the main objectives of the project was to support the community to help it's self in certain situations. Examples included raising awareness of household products, encouraging sign up for warning systems, working with schools and industry to develop flood plans.

On this point the group put forward the idea of involving the Rotherham Area Assemblies in the community resilience angle of the EP along with the use of snow wardens and community champions in appropriate situations.

Stockton-On-Tees

The main findings from the visit to Stockton-On-Tees revolved around how the EP service is provided across the four unitary authorities and the group highlighted similarities between the service provision in the NE and how it could be applied in the region of South Yorkshire particularly as other emergencies services such as the Police and Fire Services already work regionally.

The group were interested in the structure of the EP Services with one non-political officer leading operations who worked in conjunction with the emergency services and local resilience forum.

The community resilience officer was also an initiative that caught the imagination of the group as they saw the opportunity that the community could be assisted in helping themselves, their families, property and the community in applying appropriate measures in the event of an emergency. Two key factors here is the funding of such a post and where would that come from and as highlighted by

colleagues in the NE the importance of getting the right person employed in the job, preferably someone with a passion for the role.

One of the first questions for the group was to understand what constitutes an emergency situation and so bringing the EP into operation. It was suggested that not everyone in the authority would have this knowledge so an option of publishing an information leaflet providing this information was put forward as a solution, along with the circulation of the booklet produced by the LGA "Councillors Role in an Emergency" which should be issued to all new members on as part of their induction to the Council.

FORWARD LIAISON OFFICER BAG

Contents:

Bags x 2	✓
Tablet includes sim card for remote connection (R51649) Docking Station (R51657) and charger/charging dock	✓
Instructions for using Tablet	✓
Sat Nav & Car Charger – FLOs stated not required at this time there is one stored in the Emergency Planning Team if and when required.	
2016 FLO Log Book	✓
Flood Incident and Action Plan	✓
A4 Weather Writer	✓
Borough Emergency Plan (now in 2 soft folders, Section 8 and the rest)	✓
Forward Liaison Officer Action Card x 2	✓
2015 South Yorkshire Street Map x 1	✓
Forward Liaison Officer Car Stickers	✓
Emergency Planning Handbook	✓
Action Cards for Key Plans	✓
Standard List of COMAH Contacts	✓
Multi-Agency Flood Response Plan (Section 7 only, flood addresses and maps, in a soft folder)	✓
Digital Voice Recorder	✓
Manual Order book and instruction	✓
Mobile Phone – 07748 760500	✓
Mobile Phone Charger	✓
Procedure for putting evacuees up in Hotels	✓
Emergency Response & Recovery Contact Details	✓
Handwash x 1	✓
Network Cable x 1	✓

Access to Emergency Plans can be accessed by all FLO's through the following link:
 W:\Community Safety and Emergencies\Plans - In Case of Emergency

Learning from the EP operation in Swinton / Kilnhurst on 8th May 2017

The following comments were made by officers who played an active part in the activation of the Major Incident Plan

Polly Hamilton

Assistant Director Culture, Sport and Tourism

BEC during the incident.

What Worked Well

- Empowering the BEC to lead: As a new BEC, the opportunity to shadow Paul, as an experienced BEC, was invaluable. It was great to observe initially, work with him on key decisions and communications with the CEO, SLT and Members, and then to fully take the lead from Day 2, with his support available if required. I would recommend that all new BECs have the opportunity to shadow an experienced BEC, ideally prior to being on the rota. Because of the professionalism of all the Council staff involved, the experience was a positive one: I really enjoyed it!
- Responsiveness of the Council Team: I was impressed by the speed in which the Emergency Ops Room was set up and the way the team came together to manage the emergency. Emergency Planning were central to this, but large numbers of officers from across the Council also contributed. People were entirely committed to making sure that the focus was on ensuring the safety and wellbeing of Council clients and local residents. People worked hard to consider all the issues and to advise on the best course of action. It was a privilege to see the team in action: people understood their roles, what was required of them and they worked at speed to meet key deadlines. People within my own team were also supportive, reorganising my diary, picking up key tasks or making alternative arrangements as required.
- Identifying Critical Comms Needs and Expectations Quickly: The need to brief Ward Members, Cabinet, SLT, schools and other stakeholders regularly with progress on the incident meant that we worked hard to identify our critical Comms needs early on. This ensured that we knew who we needed to communicate with, key messages and critical timescales – and we could be really clear with the Fire Service as the lead agency about our information needs.

What I Would Do Differently

- **Formal, early clarification of a Major Incident:** Formally establish who the lead agency is and whether they have declared a 'major incident'. Other agencies, such as Public Health England, may not prioritise the incident if it is not deemed to be 'major'. In our case, this meant that obtaining clear, up-to-date information about the toxicity of the smoke was difficult – which meant

that were not in a position to reassure the public as quickly as we would have liked. In this case, both the Fire Service and the Police Service claimed that each other had declared a 'major incident', when in fact, neither had done so.

- **Communications**

- **Multi-Agency Command Structures:** Establish communications early on with the command structures in emergency services partners, ensuring that we have up-to-date contact information in place and that if there are changes in personnel, that these are communicated to us. This is important in the event any issues need to be clarified quickly at a senior level or if any issue needs to be escalated.
- **Multi-Agency Communications Plan:** Ensure that there is a multi-agency Communications Plan in place very early on to clarify who will lead and to make sure that they understand their role and our information needs and expectations. For example, on Day 2, we spent several hours chasing key messages from the Fire Service in relation to advice for residents about when they could return home, what to do if they had health concerns and advice on cleaning, having identified these issues in the morning. We knew this was important because of intelligence from staff at the Resource Centre and the queries we were fielding via the Contact Centre. Obtaining this information from the Fire Service sooner would have enabled us to reassure people much earlier, or provide them with a timeframe for when more news would be available. This would have helped residents to plan their return to their homes earlier in the day, rather than respond after 9pm which was when the formal notification came through from the Fire Service.
- **Involve the Contact Centre early:** The Contact Centre Manager got involved later in the day once enquiries had been received and this enabled him to be added to the distribution list and attend update meetings. The Contact Centre could usefully be involved at the outset to ensure early identification of key messages for Contact Centre staff to use in dealing with enquiries.

Robert Parker

Business Support Manager

Forward Liaison Officer

My initial observations would be: -

1 – The FLO received a call from both South Yorkshire Police and South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue confirming the incident and requirement for support from the Local Authority

2 – I would say the calls were timely in as much that we were involved from the early stages.

3 – The FLO was supported by an Assistant FLO which was very useful for an incident of this nature.

4 – The initial Rendezvous point (RVP) was confirmed as the Community Centre, Glasshouse Lane however on arrival at the scene it had changed. I was able to quickly determine the new RVP as being the Resource Centre, Victoria Street and no delays were experienced.

5 – SYF&R took the lead as expected and regular updates were co-ordinated throughout the first day.

6 – Lines of communication with the Borough Operation Room were effective.

7 – Use of the Resource Centre facilities was appreciated and very useful and staff within the centre were very helpful and deserve a big thank you.