

**EMERGENCY PLANNING SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE
(ROTHERHAM AND SHEFFIELD)
Monday 2 October 2023**

Present:- Councillors Alam (RMBC), Jones and Otten (SCC).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Lelliott (RMBC).

Also in attendance:- Emma Ellis - Head of Community Safety, Resilience and Emergency Planning (RMBC), Richard Eyre, Director of StreetScene and Regulation (SCC) and Claire Hanson, Emergency Resilience and Safety Manager (RMBC).

20. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Consideration was given to the position of Chair of the Emergency Planning Shared Services Joint Committee.

Agreed:- That Councillor Alam (RMBC) be appointed as Chair.

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2021

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30th September, 2021.

Agreed:- That the minutes of the meeting of the Emergency Planning Shared Services Joint Committee held on 30th September, 2021 be approved as a true record of proceedings.

22. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MINUTES

Reference was made to Minute No. 17 (Emergency Response Volunteer Update) and information was shared on the difficulties encountered in attracting and engaging volunteers.

Approval was currently being sought on a targeted approach and an amalgamated training package which should provide more flexibility and more directness in seeking and maintaining an adequate volunteer base.

Whilst it was noted certain volunteer roles were mandated, it was not possible for this to be created across the board.

Agreed:- That the update be received and the contents noted.

23. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Agreed:- That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt

information as defined in Paragraph 4 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to an individual).

24. EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICE - RESTRUCTURE PROPOSAL

Consideration was given to the report presented by the Emergency Resilience and Safety Manager which provided an introduction and background information on the current service, which had been operating with 0.6 FTE vacancy.

Details of the scope of the restructure review and the rationale for change were also provided along with a benchmarking exercise that had been carried out across South Yorkshire.

Discussion had taken place with each Authority's Human Resources and the details of the current and proposed structure establishment was referred to (as set out diagrammatically as part of the agenda papers).

Details of the on-call requirement and key expectations were detailed and would help advise and steer the initial response to an incident. This on call expectation would mirror the current on call Forward Liaison Officer role. Again discussions had taken place with Human Resources, Legal and Finance relating to expectations and growing capacity as part of the restructure. These services were comfortable with the process.

Whilst the challenges with the restructure were noted, market forces were such that recruitment to vacant posts following the pandemic had been difficult. The service was confident it could recruit to the key posts effectively as salaries were competitive with peer authorities.

The service needed to be ambitious and work through any difficulties that may arise. Whilst a relatively small team a well planned rota system should alleviate any potential problems. At the moment there were concerns about the single point of failure and there was a clear need for shared responsibility and capacity increased through the recruitment process.

Discussion ensued on succession planning and the process of recruiting volunteers for key functions. There was a clear need for a proper procedure with longevity to be in place to ensure the appropriate roles could be recruited should there be a need for them to be mobilised.

A number of growth opportunities now existed with progression and resilience through career pathways and apprenticeships.

Agreed:- (1) That report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the proposed structure as submitted be approved.

25. HUMAN ASPECTS FUNCTION - TRANSFER TO THE SHARED SERVICE

Consideration was given to the report which detailed the aspect of resilience work centred around activities conducted to address the human aspects both during and following an emergency or incident, an essential, important and integral aspect of any response to an emergency or incident in providing sufficient and appropriate support to those involved, responding and the wider communities affected.

At present, Rotherham MBC had a vacant post (0.6FTE Band J SCP 32 – 35) that was responsible for the development, training and exercising of humanitarian assistance plans and integration with partner arrangements. Equally, as a result of a review across the Adult Social Care function in Sheffield City Council funding for the equivalent 0.6FTE Grade 8 (SCP 32 - 35) was earmarked to fund a role to undertake the same functions.

It should be noted that the planning and preparation work was distinct from the actual response and deployment of assets in the event of an emergency or incident. The latter was delivered by the respective Councils directly and a collaboration of many different teams and services from across each Council. Mutual aid would be available should this be needed across partners.

Early 2023, this decision was revisited with a rapid review undertaken by responsible directors and senior leaders. It was, therefore, recommended to the Joint Committee that, in principle, the resources as set out in the report should transfer to the Shared Service to undertake the planning and resilience arrangements associated with the Humanitarian Assistance work on behalf of both Shared Service partners.

This was, of course, on the basis of achieving a true holistic emergency response capability across each council, removing any duplicated efforts and streamlining processes.

Subject to formal agreement a transfer date was yet to be agreed, but this should take place as soon as possible and be built into the timetable.

In terms of funding the proposed transfer each partner was to transfer the equivalent 0.6FTE Grade 8/Band J post into the Shared Service.

In accordance with the Joint Committee agreement, this equal additional contribution, would see the funding split again, marginally shift to approx. 62% (Sheffield CC) and 38% (Rotherham MBC) funded, subject to finance business partner confirmation based on the specific monetary contributions that were yet to be defined.

Discussion ensued on the need to ensure a holistic response from each Council on a locality based approach.

Agreed:- (1) That the transfer of resource into the Shared Service, in order to adopt and undertake the humanitarian assistance planning and resilience arrangements of each shared service partner be approved.

(2) That associated amendments to the substantive Shared Service legal agreement be made to confirm this transfer.

(3) That responsibility be delegated to respective Directors to collectively agree the specific financial terms of this transfer and any associated shift in Council percentage contributions the overall Shared Service

(4) That responsibility be delegated to respective Directors to agree a suitable timeline for delivery, notwithstanding risks associated with any further delays to permanent recruitment which may be encountered.

26. BUDGET POSITION

Consideration was given to the report submitted which provided the Joint Committee with details about the budget outturn position for 2022/23 and the current in year forecast for 23/24.

During 2022/23 the service was £19k overspent on its revenue budget. This was a conscious overspend due to a fixed term temporary post within the Shared Service, offset through the earmarked monies. Appropriate adjustments were to be made by Finance to finalise as a balanced budget.

The in year forecast for 2023/24 showed a balanced budget and adjustments would need to be made with regards to the pending restructure at an appropriate time.

The vacancy within the team would offset any costs incurred in Quarter 1.

Discussion ensued on the budget differences and how this would fund projections over the next few years.

Agreed:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That the carry forward, following the approval of the substantive team restructure, would be used to fund projections over the next five years.

27. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items of business to discuss.

28. DATE, TIME AND VENUE FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Agreed:- That the next meeting of the Joint Committee take place during March, 2024 (date to be confirmed).