

AGENDA ITEM 6

POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

4th DECEMBER 2012

REPORT OF HEAD OF REGULATORY SERVICES

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Committee of proposals for the provision of emergency Management responsibilities and to seek authority to join the 'Leicestershire Resilience Partnership'.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:-

- (i) the Committee notes the report
- (ii) the Committee authorises the participation in the Resilience Partnership in accordance with the terms set out in Appendix A.

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Members will recall that Emergency Management arrangements are delivered on a partnership basis with neighbouring Councils, in order to secure effective delivery of emergency planning responsibilities (the 'WOW Partnership'). This arrangement has operated since 2007 with a team comprising a Lead Emergency Planning Officer, an Emergency Planning Officer and administrative support (0.5FTE), based and hosted in Rutland County Council.

3.1.2 The staff serving the existing partnership have worked closely with those from other Authorities on a range of activity. Primarily, they are brought together to develop multi-agency response plans for a series of potential scenarios, along with staff from other agencies such as the police, EMAS, Health Agencies and LRFS which is co-ordinated by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). In addition, they have developed close working relationships in responding to specific events and incidents. Recent examples include:

- political demonstrations – co-ordinating the Council's role in the preparations for major demonstrations in Leicester.
- The Olympic Torch Relay – arranging the communication and control networks within and between the different agencies involved.
- Swine Flu outbreak 2009 – arranging 'vaccination centres' and the support staffing from Local Authorities.
- Operation Pennant 2011 – managing the Local Authorities contribution to the management of public disorder.

3.1.3 The partnership also fulfils the Council's responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to prepare the Council for a response to a major incident. In recent years this has comprised:

- Preparing and maintaining a series of local response plans for specific incidents (e.g. the Melton Major Incident Plan, Melton Flood Response Plan, Melton Emergency Centres Plan).
- Providing testing and review of the plans.
- Training and developing key Members of staff to ensure preparedness should an incident occur.
- Maintaining a group of staff volunteers who are able support the establishment of an Emergency Centre.

- Responding on behalf of the Council to Central government consultations, enquiries and returns.

3.2 Proposed Changes to the Partnership

- 3.2.1 The Partnership has been successful in providing a comprehensive and robust service to the partner Authorities and it is now proposed that it is reconstituted to provide the service for all of the Local Authorities in Leicestershire (including the City and County Councils). Leicestershire County Council has agreed to 'host' the Partnership as employer and staff would be based in LCC premises at Meridian, Leicester, but operate on an 'outreach' basis to each partner. These premises are also the home of the Resilience Forum, allowing direct co-ordination of activity between the two.
- 3.2.2. The proposed Partnership Agreement is attached as Appendix A. The activity of the team is directed and supervised by a Partnership Board comprising of the relevant senior manager from each of the Partnership Authorities. Emergency Planning duties fall within a variety of disciplines but at Melton are the remit of the Head of Regulatory Services, and Melton is represented on the Board accordingly. The Board meets monthly to specifically monitor the team's activity and progress, and to determine its future workplan and priorities.
- 3.2.3 The proposed staffing arrangements for the new Partnership are attached as appendix B. This maintains the current resource level dedicated to Melton (0.5 FTE) but is considered to have significant advantage in terms of the resilience generated from operating as a larger single team. Specifically, these are considered to comprise:
- The ability to maintain a 24/7 'on call' rota.
 - Management of staff to maximise use of their skills and experience.
 - Management of staff to permit continuity of cover during absence and vacancy.
 - Greater resource availability to assist with incident response.

4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed Partnership would effectively replace the existing arrangements but on the basis of a wider grouping of Authorities and a larger team of staff. Management input is provided through the Partnership Board and this is considered sufficient to ensure that local priorities are incorporated into the work programme of the combined team.
- 4.2 Outside of specific incident response, a significant proportion of Emergency Planning work derives from national pressures and tasks defined by the Local Resilience Forum and require implementation equally across Districts. The joint approach enables this work to be completed on an efficient basis with minimal duplication whilst retaining capacity for more 'local' issues and unforeseen demands.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are clear financial implications related to Emergency Incidents. However, fortunately they are a relatively infrequent occurrence and it is impossible to predict how often they will last and for how long they will remain active. Due to such unpredictability, no budget is set aside for responding to an emergency and the expectation would be that costs would be met from reserves. A major emergency may enable the Council to recover significant cost from Central Government under the 'Belwin scheme'. Emergency centre staffing costs would be one component of a wider response to an incident, and it is recommended that no specific annual budgetary provision is made.
- 5.2 The Leicestershire Resilience Partnership contribution has been based on apportioning 5% of the total costs of the Partnership. This results in a sum equivalent to the contribution the Council currently makes to the existing Partnership arrangements and as such has no direct impact on existing budget arrangements. The Partnership Agreement includes a mechanism to alter the level of contribution by consensus, and for the Management Board to consider the use of any 'in year' underspend.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The requirements for Emergency Management are set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It is considered that the Partnership approach presents a cost efficient and robust approach to fulfilling these duties for the reason set out at para. 3.2.3 above. The effect would be to create a contracted service whereby the Council retains full responsibility for fulfilling the duties assigned to it under the above Act, but they are implemented through the Partnership and its staff.

7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1 None of the activities have direct links to community safety, although many emergency plans and responses include safety aspect and, of course, the duties are founded upon community welfare.

8.0 EQUALITIES

8.1 There are no equalities issues arising from this report.

9.0 RISKS

9.1 Risks are considered to be as follows:

Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D				
Very Low E			1.	
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

Impact

Risk No.	Description
1.	Insufficient control over activity to address local priorities – addressed through full involvement ion the Partnership work programme

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change issues arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation has taken place with all partner Authorities

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 To varying degrees all wards are affected.

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Appendices: A: Partnership Agreement (MOU)
B: Proposed LRP staffing structure