

CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

Report to:-

Chairman and Members of Policy & Resources Committee

Date of Meeting:-

30th August 2001

Agenda Item No:-

Public

Operational

Delegated: Yes

Accompanying Comments and Statements**Required****Included**

Environmental Impact Statement:

No

Corporate Management Team Comments:

No

City Treasurers Comments:

Yes

Yes

City Solicitor & Secretary Comments:

No

Head of Personnel Services Comments:

Yes

Yes

Title:-**REVIEW OF EMERGENCY PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS****Report of:-****TOWN CLERK AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE****Report reference:-****TC 174/01****Summary:-**

The report outlines for Members revised arrangements for Emergency Planning and seeks to formalise these to ensure that the City Council can respond effectively to major emergency situation affecting the City and its residents.

Recommendation

1. That the City Council notes the proposed emergency planning arrangements and agrees the additional increment for the posts identified in Section 5 (and consequent amendment to job descriptions) and the payment to Carlisle Works set out in Section 4.6 of the report to be funded from within the agreed enhanced emergency planning budget.

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: TC 09/01

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Following training and advice from the Home Office Emergency Planning College over the course of the last 12 months it has become clear that although the Authority has emergency arrangements in place it is unlikely that these would be deemed robust enough to satisfy current Home Office¹ requirements. An officer review of internal arrangements was commenced in autumn 2000 and resulted in an approved budget bid of £12,000 in the 2001/2002 budget, however implementation has been delayed due to officer involvement with the Foot & Mouth crises.

2. Local Authority Responsibilities

- 2.1. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster the principal concerns of local authorities are to provide support for the emergency services, continue normal support and care for the local and wider community, use resources to mitigate the effects of the emergency and co-ordinate the response by organisations other than the emergency services.
- 2.2. As time goes on, and the emphasis switches to recovery, the local authority will take a leading role to facilitate the rehabilitation of the community and restoration of the environment.
- 2.3. Even a relatively small disaster may overwhelm the resources of the local authority in whose area it occurs. Against this possibility plans need to be made which will, in appropriate circumstances, trigger arrangements for mutual aid from neighbouring authorities, delivering cross boundary assistance if required. Arrangements may range from simple agreements to offer whatever assistance is available in the event of an incident, to more formal arrangements for the shared use of resources which could include vehicles, equipment and people. (Payment arrangements may need to be included in any agreement.)
- 2.4. Emergency financial assistance from government may be available for affected local authorities under the Bellwin Scheme.
- 2.5. Locally the local authority responsibilities for Emergency Planning are split between the districts and the County Council. The County Council have a co-ordinating role producing and keeping up to date the plans for a variety of specific known risks (e.g. Sellafield) and the General Emergency Plan which provides a framework for dealing with all other risks. The County who have a full time team of 6 plus admin support are required to test the arrangements through regular exercises.

¹ Responsibility for emergency planning has recently transferred to the Cabinet Office.

- 2.6. The District Councils are responsible for a number of functions within these plans including providing and staffing a District Control Centre (DCC), reception and welfare centres, servicing and co-ordinating media and public information centres.

3. Current Arrangements

- 3.1. Current emergency planning arrangements are largely based upon goodwill and volunteers and with very few exceptions emergency planning does not appear in Job Descriptions (some of Carlisle Works staff have operational emergency response responsibilities within their job description).
- 3.2. The Head of Corporate Policy and Strategy has over 10 years prepared and managed the City Council's arrangements however this has become increasingly difficult as staff are unable or unwilling to voluntarily accept additional responsibilities for emergency planning.
- 3.3. Fortunately over the last ten years Carlisle has not been directly subjected to any major incidents requiring a full-scale implementation of the emergency planning arrangements. However, we did have a support role in the Lockerbie disaster which is clear local evidence of the impact such an incident can have. There have been a number of incidents where various aspects of the plan have been tested including reception/welfare requirements as a result of travellers being "trapped" in Carlisle due to adverse weather conditions, the setting up of a DCC as a precaution over the millennium holiday and the use of the DCC by MAFF during the early part of the foot & mouth crises.
- 3.4. Against this background of current arrangements and experience a number of other factors have emerged
- The publication by the Home Office of revised guidance "Dealing with Disaster"
 - Evidence from reviews, which have taken place in the wake of disasters in other parts of the Country.
 - A general acceptance that un-preparedness is not an acceptable "excuse".
 - The appointment of a new County Emergency Planning Officer
- 3.5. Together these issues have persuaded officers that a fundamental review of emergency planning arrangements was required.

4. The Review

- 4.1. It became clear that there were 2 fundamental aspects of emergency planning that required addressing.
- Advice and support from the County Emergency Planning Unit
 - Clarification/formalisation of roles and responsibilities within the City Council's arrangements.
- 4.2. To assist with the process the Home Office Emergency Planning College were commissioned to provide guidance to the Authority in fulfilling its emergency planning responsibilities. This resulted in a visit from a senior officer from the college, Rob Ellet, who studied existing documentation, spoke to staff including the Chief Executive, The Head of Corporate Policy & Strategy and the County Emergency Planning Officer. Mr. Ellet reported his findings in early February this year and work was in progress to bring a report to Members, however the foot & mouth crises intervened (and indeed tested some of our emergency planning procedures). A full copy of the Emergency Planning College report is available in the Members room and the main findings are attached as appendix 1.
- 4.3. It became evident early on in the review process that some resources would be required to ensure that the City Council's responsibilities could be fulfilled and a recurring budget of £12,000 was approved as part of the City Council's 2001/2002 budget.
- 4.4. Discussions have already taken place with the County Emergency Planning Officer who was initially reluctant to agree specific arrangements with Carlisle as these may pre-empt discussions and arrangements with other Districts in Cumbria. However the County Emergency Planning Officer was able to support recommendation 1 of the Emergency Planning College report with the identification of a dedicated Emergency Planning Officer for Carlisle who will work with and support City Council staff to ensure that the Authority maintains an appropriate level of readiness.
- 4.5. The County Emergency Planning Officer also supports the team-based approach recommended by Mr Ellet. And the City Council needs to give urgent consideration as how this can be formalised.
- 4.6. A key element in the team based approach is the administrative burden, which includes keeping up to date contact lists, training plans (including keeping records of training), ensuring that emergency plans are kept up to date and that training and exercising take place on a regular basis. This administrative role has been included in the job description of the Council's new Health & Safety Officer (in Carlisle Works) and £3,000 has been

agreed as a contribution from the enhanced Emergency Planning budget to fulfil these roles on the basis of ½ a day per week.

4.7. In seeking to provide an appropriate response to the recommendations of the Emergency Planning College two criteria have to be met;

- Ensuring the Council's emergency planning responsibilities are adequately covered
- limited resources are maximised.

4.8. A key concern of staff who have been associated with emergency planning is the lack of formalisation and non-inclusion within job descriptions (this is also a requirement of Home Office standards). This has been especially evident when staff leave and are replaced with new staff who have then to be convinced of the need to accept the emergency planning responsibilities without them being included in job descriptions.

4.9. In the past a relatively large number of officers have been identified with specific individual responsibilities and this has proved a difficult system to keep track of and maintain for a number of reasons.

- Relatively low priority amongst staff
- Lack of training
- No recognition

5. A Proposal

5.1. Taking these issues into account together with the Emergency Planning College proposals for a team based approach the following structure for dealing with emergency planning is proposed. A small core team of officers would be responsible for the key emergency planning functions. Individually their responsibilities would be to fulfil specific functions (outlined below) whilst together they would provide the initial response team during the first phase of an emergency situation. It is important to appreciate that it is not the case of officers being called out to carry out their usual duties out of hours. Rather these officers will be expected to fulfil a different and very demanding role in unusual circumstances. These officers will all be working for the DCC collectively (i.e. all participating agencies) and managing resources accordingly not solely City Council input. To cover all the necessary functions it is proposed that the team should comprise of the following posts

- **Emergency Planning Lead Officer**

Main Duties

- First point of contact for emergency services and County Emergency Planning Unit.
- Initiate the set up and opening and of the District Control Centre (DCC) where required or other appropriate response by the Authority
- Contact/call out other team members as required
- This will be a 365 days 24 hour service. (To ensure that this can be achieved as far as possible within available resources it is proposed that 3 staff are allocated responsibility which should ensure that there is cover for most situations. However it should be stressed that officers are not part of a rota and their availability is not guaranteed. It may be possible to arrange rota cover during specific periods of heightened risk e.g. severe weather). Identified Posts - **Head of Corporate Policy & Strategy/Policy & Research Officer/Director of Environment & Development.** (The Director of Environment & Development already has emergency response duties in his Job Description)
- In addition to the above it is proposed that the Head of Corporate Policy & Strategy would have the responsibilities of District Liaison Officer (as set out below) formalised within his job description.

District Liaison Officer

Main Duties

- Manage the emergency planning function and responsibilities
- Emergency planning budget holder
- Liaison with the County Emergency Planning Officer, other agencies and district councils
- Co-ordinate exercises to test emergency plans

Admin Manager – Head of Committee Services

Main Duties

- Provide security, reception, secretarial and support staff including specialist roles of briefing officers and log system operators as well as appropriate administrative support and equipment for the DCC.

Information Communications & Technology (ICT) – IT Team Manager

Main Duties

- Manage and maintain ICT requirements including the Emergency Communications Network and Mobile Phones.
- Maintain a liaison with the police communications Manager.
- Liase with the National Communication Networks as appropriate.
- Ensure that adequate internal ICT requirements are available within the DCC as required.

Personnel Officer – Senior Personnel Officer

Main Duties

- Maintain a pool of suitable personnel to provide admin support including telephone operators for the emergency communications network and public enquiry points.
- Arrange counselling services as required.
- Organise staffing rotas and arrange emergency terms and conditions.

Media Officer – Head of Communications

Main Duties

- Manage Authority's input to media management in the DCC
- Support/lead media management for the DCC and multi-agency response
- Liase with the media representatives of all attending agencies including the police
- Establish a team to monitor media coverage

Sands Facilities Officer – Head of Leisure Contracts

Main Duties

- To establish and maintain media briefing facilities
- To staff the media briefing facility
- To provide a Reception Centre as required

Reception and Welfare Officer – Elderly Services Manager

Main Duties

- To establish and manage a Reception Centre(s)
- To arrange emergency accommodation
- To provide welfare input to the DCC/County Welfare Team

Environmental Health Officer – Head of Environmental Services

Main Duties

- Environmental Health advice and support to the DCC.
- Liase with the relevant agencies to monitor environmental hazards
- Liase with the relevant emergency services in the provision of emergency mortuary facilities.

5.2. All of the above officers would also be responsible for nominating support staff and identifying their training needs. They would be required to detail emergency planning arrangements in their service plans and to participate in training and exercise programmes. They would be required to respond to an emergency situation if available.

5.3. In recognition that these responsibilities are formalised within job descriptions it is proposed that affected posts be given an additional increment. The full cost of an additional increment for the 9 proposed posts (including on costs) can be met from the

remaining budget enhancement of £9,000. This proposed increment would specifically relate to these emergency planning duties and would be removed if the duties were reassigned in any review of these arrangements. The full budget allocation will not be required in the current year and this will allow for some equipment upgrading in support of these new arrangements.

- 5.4. These managers will call upon their own, and other staff, in an emergency situation. The usual call-out terms will apply to staff who are actually called out (i.e. they will be entitled to the council's standard call out fee, plus 1.5 x their hourly rate (min 2 hours); 2 x hourly rate on Sundays). The call out fee will not be paid to staff in receipt of the proposed increment but they like other staff will be entitled to overtime payment.

6. LSVT and Leisuretime externalisation

- 6.1. Appropriate contractual arrangements are to be included in these potential transfers where emergency duties or responsible staff are externalised. Any future changes to Carlisle Works would need to be taken account of.

7. Head of Personnel Services Comments

- 7.1. The Head of Personnel Services has been consulted and his comments incorporated into the report.
- 7.2. The individual members of staff referred to in the report have been consulted and are in agreement with the proposals. The report has been passed to Unions and their comments will be reported at the meeting.

8. City Treasurer's Comments

- 8.1. The City Treasurer confirms that a recurring budget of £12,000 was approved as part of the current year's budget. The proposals set out in this report will absorb £3,000 pa in respect of the payment to be made to the DSO and £7,600 pa in respect of the additional increment to the identified post holders, inclusive of employers overheads, giving a total of £10,600

9. Conclusions

- 9.1. If the City Council is to accept its emergency planning responsibilities there needs to be a formalisation of its arrangements and procedures as a first step to agreeing this the key roles and functions need to be assigned to individual posts.

Recommendation

1. That the City Council notes the proposed emergency planning arrangements and agrees the additional increment for the posts identified in Section 5 (and consequent amendment to job descriptions) and the payment to Carlisle Works set out in Section 4.6 of the report to be funded from within the agreed enhanced emergency planning budget.

Peter Stebelski

Town Clerk & Chief Executive

Contact Officer - John Mallinson 7010

Home Office Emergency Planning College

Recommendations

- I. Urgent consideration should be given to the allocation of a "dedicated" Emergency Planning Officer for Carlisle District Council. They should work alongside the District Liaison Officer, giving guidance to those who have responsibility for elements of the District Plan. Respective Chief Executives should have regard to Section V, Statutory Framework. (para 5), page 8. This will begin to establish a rapport and understanding of the needs of both levels of planning. It is not intended that the County EPO will "write" the District Plan,
- II. Ideally, this should be a permanent EPO responsibility, integrating with other references held by the EPO. Specialist knowledge held by an individual EPO should be used as and when applicable across all Districts. This is common practice for most "two-tier" authorities. A further benefit of this will be to ensure that all District plans are written in the same "style format".
- III. Consideration should be given to formalising emergency planning responsibilities within job descriptions.
- IV. A team-based approach should be developed and documented at both service unit level and within the City Councils "guidance" document.
- V. Select or design courses of initial training for key personnel involved in each aspect of the planning requirements. (i.e. Rest Centres, Media Management & Control Centres). This training can be given, initially, by existing EPO's, sought from external providers or a mixture of both. Ongoing refresher training should then be programmed.
- VI. Regarding the telephone failure on the 9th, 10th & 11th December 2000, urgent contact should be made with BT for them to visit detail the services they can provide in the circumstance of such a failure. (A contact name is included at the base of this report).
- VII. An exercise regime should be established whereby different elements of the Plan are tested on each occasion, where possible, choosing the sections to coincide with major "expected" events. This exercise should also be aimed at testing the robustness of arrangements over a protracted period.
- VIII. Awareness sessions held. This will give some support and familiarisation to the members of staff who will work within the designated areas of responsibilities. They will then be aware of the expectations on them and not enter the work "cold".