

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 21st October 2014 at Worksop Town Hall

Present:

Councillor J C Shephard (Chairman)

Councillors: D Challinor, D Foley, R Leigh, G A N Oxby, D Pidwell, D Potts, D R Pressley, J Sanger, T Taylor and R Wilde

Officers: G Blenkinsop, J Bowler (Agenda Item No. 11(a) only), S Brown, C Crossland, I Davies (Agenda Item No. 11(a) only), J Moran (Agenda Item No. 11(a) only) and S Wormald.

Also present: David Hoskins – Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Advisor, Environment Agency
Paul Lockhart – Area Flood Risk Manager, Environment Agency

(Meeting commenced at 6.30pm.)

(The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, read out the Fire Evacuation Procedure, and also enquired as to whether any member of the public wished to film/record the meeting or any part thereof; no members of the public were present).

50. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Freeman and J Ogle.

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

(a) Members

There were no Declarations of Interest by Members.

(b) Officers

There were no Declarations of Interest by officers.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH SEPTEMBER 2014

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2014 be approved.

53. MINUTES FOR ACTION AND IMPLEMENTATION

RESOLVED that the Minutes for Action and Implementation be received.

54. OUTSTANDING MINUTES LIST

RESOLVED that the Outstanding Minutes List be received.

55. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

Key Decisions

56. KEY DECISIONS OF CABINET – 7TH OCTOBER 2014

An elected Member commented on Minute No. 54, Friends of Bassetlaw Museum, he noted that the Friends Group is a good initiative and a good way of raising money for the Museum.

Other Decisions

57. REPORTING MINUTES

(a) Health and Public Services Sub-Committee – 6TH October 2014

RESOLVED that Minutes of the Health and Public Services Sub-Committee held on 6th October 2014 be received.

58. WAIVE OF CALL-IN/DECISION TAKEN WITHOUT SUFFICIENT NOTICE

None.

59. POSSIBLE CALL-IN OF DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET OR BY CABINET MEMBERS

60. REPORT(S) OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

(a) Review of Council's Approach to Local Resilience

The Safety and Resilience Manager gave a slide show presentation on the Council's approach to resilience, emergency planning and business continuity. He advised that the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Major Incident Response Plan provides a generic response to risks identified within Nottinghamshire.

The Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is the leading body and ensures a coordinated approach. The forum has created a Risk Advisory Group. He briefed Members on the LRF plans, the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Major Incident Response Plan, responsibilities of local authorities, Bassetlaw District Council's Emergency Plan and business continuity.

Members were given an overview of the Council's Emergency Plan:

- The Plan is activated by the Chief Executive or a Director
- The existing management structure is used for incident command and control.
- There are control room arrangements
- The Chief Executive or Director takes on the role of Incident Controller
- The Plan includes the responsibilities for Directors and Heads of Service. A Director or Head of Services knowledge and team would be called on for specific advice and information within that service
- The Incident Management System (AIMS) records information, the content of telephone calls and tasks to ensure that accurate documentation of an incident is kept. A paper recording system is available as a backup in the event of power loss.
- The Safety and Resilience Manager's role is to support and advise the Incident Controller
- The role of elected Members is to give strategic direction and scrutinise decisions
- It is important that recovery from an incident starts as soon as possible. Recovery is often longer and more costly than the response itself.
- The recovery strategy is to identify the impact on the community. The Council would need to work with its partners on the recovery plan and need local input on the process to ensure local needs are met.

In terms of the Councils approach to business continuity Members were advised that four main threats have been identified by the Corporate Management Team – loss of people, loss of Queen’s Buildings, interruption of fuel supplies and loss of utilities. 20 critical services have been identified that would need to be returned to normality as soon as possible. Strategies are in place to address each threat. Each Strategy has an owner and deputy and is reviewed every two years. The strategies evaluate the threat and look at what can be done to stop/ mitigate the threat.

Do you think that Bassetlaw is well prepared to respond to any emergency incident? Have all staff with emergency planning responsibilities been trained in the last 12-24 months?

The Safety and Resilience Manager explained that training has been provided for managers. Command training and recovery training has taken place as well as a number of exercises. The Council is prepared and has a number of policies in place. The Council has in the past had the cooperation of staff who go above and beyond their usual roles. The Council do not operate a call out system, out of hours calls are currently picked up by Directors.

How much input does the Council have on emergency planning by other organisations?

Members were advised that emergency plans by other organisations go through the LRF process and are part of a multi-organisation approach. The Council has a representative on the LRF, this is usually through a Newark and Sherwood District Council representative.

Bassetlaw District Council relies on its computer systems. What emergency plans are in place if the whole computer system went down?

The Head of Corporate Services advised that if the problem was at Queen’s Buildings there is the facility to set up to 40 computers at Retford. Officers are currently looking at what resources could be provided at Carlton Forest. If internet access can be acquired most computer systems can be accessed. The system has been tested in part however a full shutdown has not been carried out as operations have to be considered.

Are we confident as a local authority that we can fulfil our responsibilities in the event of a major incident?

The Safety and Resilience Manager replied that he is confident that the Council can deliver what is detailed in the Plan proportionate to the incident and resources available.

P Lockhart commented that Bassetlaw are one of its most vigorous partners with good knowledge and expertise. He added that he feels Bassetlaw is well placed for response.

How can information be communicated with Councillors and residents if there is no internet access?

J Moran advised that the Council has a media plan in place and mutual agreements with other organisations who could communicate information if they have not been affected by the same incident. There is also a possibility that partners could host information on their websites.

What are you doing to prepare the community for emergency incidents?

J Moran explained that a significant amount of work takes place within communities and with parish councils. The Council’s website signposts residents to sources of information.

Councillor D Challinor commented as the Chairman of the Council's Health and Safety Committee that the Committee are kept well informed about the Council's approach to emergency planning and business continuity. He commented that he has taken part in a Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) exercise which was well planned and executed.

It is good to hear that Officers are well qualified. What succession planning is taking place to ensure that Bassetlaw continues to have this expertise?

J Bowler commented that this has been a concern for some time. At the moment there is little succession planning however Officers have been asked to pass on their concerns to management and provide a list of what their jobs entail.

J Bowler, Facilities Manager, gave a slide show presentation on flood mitigation. In 2006 over 600 properties in Bassetlaw were flooded internally; subsequently Bassetlaw District Council stated its commitment to reducing the risk of flooding in Bassetlaw where possible. Members were given an overview of actions taken by Bassetlaw District Council to address flooding from 2007 to date.

I Davies, Drainage Engineer, informed Members of the numerous improvements made across the District, current projects and future work.

What is the Council's responsibility in relation to flooding?

J Bowler explained that since the implementation of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Nottinghamshire County Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority. NCC are responsible for developing, maintaining and applying a strategy for local flood risk management in their area and for maintaining a register of flood risk assets. They also have lead responsibility for managing risk of flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.

District Councils are key partners in planning local flood risk management and can carry out flood risk management works on minor watercourses, working with the Lead Local Flood Authority (in our case NCC) and others. District Councils can also take decisions on development in their area which ensure that risks are effectively managed.

The Environment Agency is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion.

All organisation resources are reducing. What impact is this having on effective measures to prevent flooding?

J Bowler advised that the Council has had the same staffing in terms of flooding since 2007. Continuity is an issue; however officers are taking steps to store their knowledge. Information about schemes implemented and the history of situations are being inputted onto the Geographic Information System. The biggest part of an officer's ability is their local knowledge. The increase in the number of planning applications which require officer's comments is increasing the demand on resources.

A recent report has urged the Government to scale back on dredging watercourses and states that money would be better spent elsewhere. What are your thoughts on this?

P Lockhart commented that there is a place for dredging as part of a range of tools. The issue is in some instances that dredging can cause problems downstream and needs to be used in a carefully managed way to protect wildlife habitats.

Does the Council have cross border working?

P Lockhart advised that each local flood authority has a flood risk management strategy that has to take account of neighbouring authorities. At a local level the National Planning Policy Framework states that development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided and seek to reduce flood risk.

Do we have computer models to show previous flooding problems?

P Lockhart replied that the four main rivers and large schemes have models and the standard model is used.

P Lockhart gave a slide show presentation on the flood resilience. He outlined the Environment Agency's role and gave a strategic overview. Members were briefed on the flood warning service, alerts and warnings for Nottinghamshire and Bassetlaw, Bassetlaw preparedness, managing and reducing flood risk.

The flood warning service is a free service that provides alerts and warnings to enable residents to prepare for flooding and activate emergency plans. The Council could help raise awareness of the service by directing people to the website and mentioning the link on publications. The average take-up of the service is 43%; this is higher in villages and lower in town centre areas.

He commented that Bassetlaw is well prepared. In the event that all communications were lost a gold command would be set up and messages would be delivered by the emergency services, government services and local radio. Airwave and telecom facilities are also available.

In terms of managing flood risk the Environment Agency (EA) have a programme of work for maintaining water courses. Since 2010 the EA have been working more closely with local authorities and local leading flood authorities. The Internal Drainage Boards have been very productive over the last few years. Bassetlaw District Council have put forward high quality funding bids and seen good outcomes from schemes implemented.

The funding process has changed it used to be on an annual basis but now it is a six year Medium Term Plan. The plans are published and this provides more stability. By working with all interested parties and maximising funding partnerships, a small amount of funding from BDC, stimulates larger funding opportunities. This prevents flood risk and enhances the environment.

Does the Environment Agency have an adequate voice in the planning process?

P Lockhart commented that he feels that they do have an adequate voice. There are very few planning applications that get approval if the EA has objected. New development can also be an opportunity to improve the flooding situation for adjacent residents.

The Chairman thanked the officers and guests for their attendance and presentations.

Councillor J Sanger thanked J Bowler and I Davies for the work they do.

(Councillors R Leigh and D Pidwell joined the meeting during the discussion of this item)

RESOLVED that a feedback report containing any relevant actions points from the meeting be presented to the meeting in November.

(b) Overview and Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2013/14

Members were presented with an annual overview of the work programme of the Committee during 2013/14 and the key areas for review during 2014/15.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and referred to Council.

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Committee Programme 2014/15

Members were provided with an overview of the meeting programme for the Committee for 2014/15. Members were reminded that the Council Approach to Welfare Reform review is planned for the November meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

61. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RESOLVED that, in accordance with Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, and after considering the public interest test as set out by the officer in the body of the report, Members agreed that the following items of business involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3, and therefore, in accordance with Section 100A of the Act, the press and public be excluded from the meeting:

Agenda Item No. 12(a) – Key Decisions of Cabinet (Key Decision No. 460) – Paragraph 3

SECTION B – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION IN PRIVATE

Key Decisions

62. KEY DECISIONS OF CABINET – 7TH OCTOBER 2014

- (a) Proposed Removal of Restrictive Covenant from land at Chancery Lane, Retford (Key Decision No. 460)

RESOLVED that Minute No.58 (a) of the Cabinet Meeting held on 7th October 2014 be endorsed.

Other Decisions

63. WAIVE OF CALL IN/DECISION TAKEN WITHOUT SUFFICIENT NOTICE

None.

64. POSSIBLE CALL IN OF DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET OR BY CABINET MEMBERS

None.

65. ANY OTHER BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

As there was no other business to be discussed, the Chairman closed the meeting.

(Meeting closed at 8.25pm).