

Minutes of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 11 April 2023

Present: Colin Greatorex (Chair)

Attendance

Mike Davies	Bernard Peters
Gill Heath (Vice-Chair (Scrutiny))	Samantha Thompson (Vice-Chair (Overview))
Kath Perry, MBE	Mike Worthington
Jeremy Pert	Nigel Yates

Also in attendance: Councillor Alan White.

Officers: Tracy Thorley and Chris Ebberley.

Apologies: Tina Clements, John Francis and Ian Parry (Cabinet Member).

PART ONE

59. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Pert and Perry declared an interest in agenda item 5 (Outside Bodies Update report) as representatives on outside bodies.

60. Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2023

Resolved: – That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

61. Civil Contingencies Update

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which outlined the partnership structure; the Local authorities' responsibilities; and the partnerships key priorities. A copy of the County Councils Civil Contingencies Policy (February 2023) was also considered.

The Committee was informed that several key multi agency exercises had taken place over recent months including potential wide scale flooding; national power outages; fuel disruption and energy shortages. The results of the exercises had been used to update and improve response procedures and plans for both the County Council and the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF).

The main issues discussed by members were:

- There were combined plans and tests through the SRF and individual partners had their own plans such as the County Councils Civil Contingencies Policy.
- The Civil Contingencies Act came into force in 2004. A recent government review had taken place, the results of which would be published soon.
- A communications plan was being developed, to enable better communications with elected members should an emergency happen. This would help members to know what was expected; their role; and how to communicate with the public and their communities.
- Members felt that cyber-attacks and contingencies for no or reduced technology needed to be considered. It was reported that an in-house exercise had recently taken place which considered this scenario. The results of this would be shared with the committee.
- Lack of funding and Multiple regression such as two events taking place at the same time needed to be considered. Officers agreed to raise this with partners at a future meeting. Concurrent exercises were arranged where 2 scenarios were run simultaneously during an exercise.
- Benchmarking was done whenever possible and learning was shared.
- Each local SRF was setup differently depending on local circumstances.
- The next piece of work for the CCU would be on the voluntary sector. A discussion took place on the need to encourage more volunteers of different ages, as all partners tend to pull on the same volunteer set. The Councils HR team were currently capturing staff skills in order to tap into this under used resource. Work was also taking place to train managers in flexible leadership so that resources could be released to help support projects/partners when needed.
- Exercises were carried out both live and some virtual, depending on need. A copy of the 3-year programme would be shared with the committee.
- Key priorities for the SRF partnership were outlined in the report.
- It was felt that Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) issues should have a standalone plan. A link to the current SRF plan will be shared with committee.
- Cyber security and backup systems was discussed. Mobile phone connectivity and if there was a relationship with satellite providers (e.g. Starlink) which would enable a short term move away from grounds based systems. Future exercises were being developed that would test telecommunications; supply chain failure and 'cloud' technology.
- Cross boundary working did take place when needed and staff were transferred as part of mutual aid requests when necessary to help neighbouring areas.
- There was a discussion on the need to review the plan on an annual basis as suggested in the report. Members felt that this would be best reviewed through the Audit and Standards Committee as it was part of

their assurance and compliance work. The Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee (Cllr Worthington) agreed to the suggestion and suggested that it be reviewed on a three yearly basis to fit in with the SRF review of plan/procedures/Policy.

- It was felt that an explanation of 'Gold' command and their responsibility and how this position was appointed, needed to be included in the policy along with a guide to how liaising with partners should work. This would help to reduce duplication of effort, through improved communication.
- It was felt it would be useful to hold Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Parish Councils for the requestion of their buildings if required during an emergency. It was recognised this would fall to District/Borough Councils and officers will flag to the SRF.

Resolved:

- a) That the review of the Civil Contingencies Policy be noted.
- b) That a list of legislation which covered Civil Contingences be shared with the Committee, for information.
- c) A copy of the current SRB plan and the 3-year programme would be shared with the committee.
- d) A link to the results of the recent Cyber attacks and contingencies exercise, be shared with the Committee.
- e) That the following be added to the Policy;
 - A reference to CBRN;
 - A definition of Gold command and how this is appointed;
 - Reference to MOUs and any agreed approach to the use of buildings/ resources etc to avoid duplication.
- f) That the Audit and Standards Committee be requested to include the Civil Contingencies Policy review of processes, in their work programme at an appropriate time (normally every three years).

62. Governance - Outside Bodies Update

The Leader of the Council and the Head of Member and Democratic Services, introduced the report which detailed the work undertaken to establish if the list of Outside Bodies, which the Council appointed members to, was still current and adding value to the work of the Authority. The report followed a previous report to the Committee in December 2022 which had considered a separate piece of work on the Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCos).

A discussion was held on the merit of appointed members, reporting back to the Leader, or providing reports to other members to share their knowledge. Generally, it was felt that this was unnecessary and that any significant issues could be raised with the most appropriate lead member. An example was shared of an issue with University Hospital Derby and Burton being shared with the Chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee rather than raising with the Leader. The Leader reminded members that he, or the Member and Democratic Services team were always available should a

representative on an outside body need support or have a concern relating to their appointment.

The following bodies were specifically discussed:

- Campions Wood Quarry Liaison Committee – Mrs Perry attended this meeting on a regular basis and was concerned that it was on the red list, as she felt it was still active.
- Bermersley Civic Amenities Site Management Committee – Councillor Yates felt that this body was still needed. It was reported that this had stopped operation some time ago.
- Poplars Landfill Site Liaison Committee – There seemed to be some confusion with the Committee organisers over Council representation, with the substitute member being invited in place of the formal member.

It was agreed that the above 3 Committees would be investigated further.

Resolved:

That the Leader of the Council be recommended to:

- a) All of the outside bodies highlighted in red on the list appended to the report be reviewed again to ensure that they are no longer needed and then if not required, be removed from the annual appointments list.
- b) That the outside bodies highlighted in amber on the list appended to the report be continually reviewed.
- c) That there is a review of Outside Bodies taking place in the first year after SCC elections which should include a survey to SCC elected members who are appointed to them. Each year thereafter a review takes place with the Outside Bodies themselves.
- d) That the list of outside bodies be published on the council's website for information.

63. Work Programme

The next meeting of the Committee would be held on 9th May 2023 at 2.30pm

Resolved: That the Work Programme be noted.

Chairman