

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOODS, INCLUSION, COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

4.00pm 9 OCTOBER 2017

THE BRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE, LUCRAFT ROAD, BN2 4PN

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Daniel (Chair), Councillor Moonan (Deputy Chair), A Norman (Opposition Spokesperson), West (Group Spokesperson), Bewick, Cattell, Knight, K Norman, Peltzer Dunn and Simson

Invitees: : Joanna Martindale (Hangleton & Knoll Project); Anusree Biswas Sassidharan (BME Brighton & Hove Police Engagement Group) and Chief Superintendent Lisa Bell (Sussex Police).

20 EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RESILIENCE - PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO EMERGENCIES

- 20.1 The Committee considered a report of the Executive Director, Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing detailing the emergency planning and resilience measures used by the council in preventing and responding to emergencies. The report had also sought to address the issues brought forward by Members in the Notice of Motion referred from Full Council and set out at item 19 above.
- 20.2 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, supporting regulations, and statutory guidance, had established a clear set of roles and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at a local level. This had included clearly defined duties and responsibilities for local authorities. The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an overview of the role and responsibilities of the local authority in relation to emergency planning and resilience and to report how the Council responded to incidents across the City and how it managed risk and maintained resilience.
- 20.3 It was noted that where possible, emergency planning should be able to prevent emergencies occurring, and when they did occur, good planning should reduce, control or mitigate the effects of the emergency. Emergency planning was an evolving, systematic and ongoing process responding to changes in circumstances, but also from 'lessons learnt' good practice became established. The legislation requires local authorities to have plans in place to not only prevent emergencies but plans to reduce, control or mitigate the effects of an emergency.

- 20.4 In answer to questions it was explained that the recommendations set out in the report had been devised by the Cross Party Working Group. Work was on-going and would form the subject of a further report to Committee in around six months time.
- 20.5 The Chair, Councillor Daniel, commended the report and the work that stood behind it stating that it was both sobering and reassuring. Councillors West and Simson concurred and were of the view however, that it was important to continue to review this work going forward in order to build on experience gained and feedback in order to ensure that systems were in place which were able to respond rapidly and effectively to developing situations. It was important to be robust but not complacent.
- 20.6 Councillor Simson stated that a lot of the work carried out related to housing tenants, it was important for that work to be communicated through the Housing and New Homes Committee. The Executive Director , Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing explained that this would be done as part of the process and that all relevant committees would receive information which was relevant to their areas of responsibility. Given the overarching responsibilities of this Committee it was appropriate that this report had come to this committee.
- 20.7 The Executive Director of Finance, explained that all of the measures in place would be audited with all of the necessary financial check-weights and counter balances were in place. The Environmental Health Manager, Annie Sparks, confirmed that measures were in place to ensure that the Comms Team would be fully briefed to ensure that the media were fully involved and proactively worked to convey information relating to the location of rest centres etc., if an event was to occur.
- 20.8 Councillor Moonan stated that the level of information provided in the report was useful, a measured and reasonable approach had been adopted which was encouraging as it reassured Members that a range of scenarios had been covered in so far as it had been practically able to do so.
- 20.9 Councillor Bewick also welcomed the report and the fact that further reports would be coming forward to future meetings of the Committee and was glad to note that there was Cross-Party agreement to the approach that had been adopted.
- 20.10 In answer to questions, the Executive Director explained that a staged approach was in place which would ensure that appropriate to the scale and nature of the emergency all Council staff could be utilised.
- 20.11 Councillor Cattell was pleased to note that the measures in place could be applied to a range of different emergency situations including flooding which had been experienced at a number of vulnerable locations around the city over the years. Councillor A Norman concurred in that view and was pleased to note that robust arrangements were in place in the event of severe weather conditions.

- 20.12 Councillor West sought confirmation that the monitoring process would continue following the current task and finish element of the work and it was confirmed that would be so. It was noted that continuing Member level support would be welcomed
- 20.13 The Chair, Councillor Daniel noted that important role which could be played by digital first and that this should be picked up carrying arrangements forward.
- 20.14 **RESOLVED** – (1) That committee notes the review of the council’s emergency planning services as set out in the report and the Internal Audit finding of ‘Substantial Assurance’ in June 2017 in relation to the Council’s emergency planning and business continuity controls;
- (2)The Committee instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government:
- i) asking the Secretary to provide information on the timescale for a review of part B of the Building Regulations (2010) that relate to Fire Safety;
 - ii) to request that, in the event that the outcome of the Grenfell Tower inquiry recommends new actions or measures, that the Government will endeavour to work with local Councils in order that any necessary additional funding can be identified;
 - iii) and, in light of the complaints of the Grenfell Tower tenants that their safety concerns were not appropriately acknowledged, to call on the Government to review the guidance and regulation of housing providers concerning tenant participation and scrutiny,
- (3) The Committee recommend a cross party working group is convened to oversee the changes and readiness of the council for emergencies;
- (4) That the Committee instructs officers to bring an annual report to the NICE committee updating on changes and readiness of the council for emergencies;
- (5) That committee instructs officers to bring a further report in 6 months with an update on arrangements being developed with communities and the community and voluntary sector as set out in section 5 of the report; and
- (6) That Committee notes the proposal to run workshop sessions for elected members to understand how we can best support their role in an emergency.

