

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **COUNCIL MEETING – 7 DECEMBER 2006**

#### **REPORT ON THE PROPOSED AYRSHIRE EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICE**

##### **Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Council on the continuing development of proposals to provide a Pan Ayrshire Emergency Planning Service.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 It was agreed at Policy and Resources Committee on the 30 May 2006 that Emergency Planning would be included in the list of functions to be part of the Integrated Service Delivery and Governance Modelling Project.
- 2.2 At a meeting of the three Ayrshire Council Leaders and Chief Executives' held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006 it was agreed to fast-track a Pan Ayrshire Emergency Planning Service due to staffing difficulties in North Ayrshire.
- 2.3 Since then a number of meetings have taken place involving relevant senior officers from each of the three Councils.
- 2.4 A detailed proposal has been developed to create a joint Service under the banner of "Preparing Ayrshire Together". This has been developed with the assistance of the Emergency Planning staff across the three Councils.

### **3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The concept developed is of an informal Collaborative Partnership Operating under the umbrella of the Strathclyde Emergencies Co-ordination Group (SEGC). It is understood at this point that this would be the first pan-authority and multi-agency team in Strathclyde.
- 3.2 The development of an Ayrshire Collaborative Partnership Approach fits the model currently being developed by the SEGC and would comply with UK-wide best practice.
- 3.3 The amalgamation of the Service across the three local authorities in Ayrshire is seen as the initial phase of a wider collaboration involving Strathclyde Police and NHS Ayrshire and Arran and potentially Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Scottish Ambulance and the Coastguard.

- 3.4 Initial informal discussions with NHS Ayrshire and Arran and Strathclyde Police have confirmed a desire to participate in this initiative, with NHS proposing to locate two officers and Strathclyde Police proposing to locate one officer within the team. The presence of these officers will promote opportunities for greater flexibility and adaptability within the combined team.
- 3.5 The proposed Vision for the Pan Ayrshire Service is considered to be the delivery of first class integrated emergency planning and preparedness support service for the local authorities, Emergencies Services, NHS and possibly others, such as SEPA in due course.
- 3.6 In order to maximise the benefits of this approach, it is considered essential that the relevant staff are physically co-located and that a combined staffing structure be developed and implemented.
- 3.7 The combined structure would be based on a model where all staff would be expected to divide their time between project working, using core skills and specialist areas where economy of effort and scale can be most productive.
- 3.8 The underlying key principles would be that a joint unit would immediately be able to deliver the equivalent level of service as at present and that within a reasonable time frame be capable of deliver an enhanced service based on the increased economies of scale and effort.
- 3.9 Members of the team would also be expected to participate in an Ayrshire-wide Duty Officer scheme.
- 3.10 In the meantime it is anticipated that each of the local authorities would remain responsible for their internal business continuity requirements with particular reference to the Civil Contingencies Act.
- 3.11 Senior Officers appreciate and recognise that Councils are not in a position to direct additional resources to the combined service at this time. It should be emphasised that the proposed shared service arrangement is not principally aimed at achieving cost savings, but is seen as a more efficient and effective use of existing resources, future cost avoidance where possible and the provision of a more cohesive and co-ordinated service across Ayrshire.
- 3.12 A number of practical issues have arisen and are in the process of being addressed. Firstly, a draft structure for the new team is being developed with emphasis on the reconfiguration and realignment of existing resources. Current budgeted expenditure for this function on the part of the three Councils have been identified, as far as possible, and will continue to be examined to ensure affordability of the proposals within these existing resources.

- 3.13 Potential accommodation for the new team has been identified within the new British Energy facility due to be established at Prestwick Airport. Discussions are ongoing in relation to the availability of that accommodation.
- 3.14 It should be emphasised that a phased approach is recommended in respect of the development of this shared service.
- 3.15 It is also recommended that a “virtual team” be established as soon as possible, moving towards the team being physically located together potentially early in 2007, subject to accommodation availability.
- 3.16 Strathclyde Police and NHS Ayrshire and Arran have confirmed their commitment to this shared service and it is anticipated that their staff would then join the team which would become fully operational from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2007.
- 3.17 It is also considered that it will be necessary to develop and agree a protocol to manage the relationship between the Ayrshire team and the statutory responsibilities of the constituent authorities, particularly from Chief Executives.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 It is anticipated that the formation of the Ayrshire Wide Emergency Planning Service would be budget neutral in the initial set up phase.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The proposal meets the Council’s stated position of participating in the integrated Services and Governance Modelling Project and working jointly with partners.

#### **6. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The proposal aim to produce more effective, efficient services supporting the aims and aspirations of the Community Plan and its themes.

#### **7. CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The Pan Ayrshire Group consisting of the Councils’ three Leaders and Chief Executives and representatives of NHS Ayrshire and Arran and of Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire concluded that further work should be undertaken to pursue the working arrangements within Emergency Planning as set out in this report should continue, building on the sound work already completed so far.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 It is recommended that Council

- (I) note the good progress made by senior officer working group
- (ii) approve the principle of an Ayrshire Joint Emergency Planning team as described within this report
- (iii) authorise relevant senior officers to progress implementation of the Ayrshire Joint Emergency Planning Team in line with the timescales set out within the report and
- (IV) otherwise note the contents of the report.

William Stafford  
Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

WS/JC

16 November 2006

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

Implementation Officer-william.stafford@east-ayrshire.gov.uk