

**EMERGENCY PLANNING ADVISORY PANEL
10 SEPTEMBER 1999**

Present: Councillors Flood (Chairman), Adams, Barnard, Mrs Pile and Veakins

Apologies for absence were received from:
Councillor Mrs Clifford

11 Substitute Members

The Advisory Panel noted the attendance of the following Substitute Member under Standing Order 38:

Councillor Veakins for Councillor Mrs Clifford.

12 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Panel held on 11 June 1999 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13 Emergency Planning Seminar

The Chairman thanked the Director of Public and Environmental Services and the Emergency Planning Officer for an extremely interesting Members' Seminar, which he thought should be presented again as soon as possible after the elections on 4 May 2000.

14 Exercise Golden Fleece (Item 1)

The Advisory Panel considered the report of the Director of Public and Environmental Services on Exercise Golden Fleece, the aim of which was to test the co-ordination and communication arrangements of key authorities, services and agencies operating in the Thames Valley area in preparation for millennium emergencies. The Director of Public and Environmental Services also tabled a report detailing the exercise which was carried out on Wednesday 8 September. The Panel noted that the exercise was carried out successfully although it did highlight some alterations which would be necessary.

Statistics available show that the operation was more successful in Bracknell Forest than in a neighbouring authority.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report, including the tabled report, and the work that has been carried out be noted; and
- (ii) in light of the modifications that could now be made, further testing be carried out at a time specified by the Advisory Panel.

COUNCILLOR MRS PILE IN THE CHAIR

15 Review of the Emergency Centre, Time Square (Item 3)

The Director of Public and Environmental Services reported on the review of the Emergency Centre in Time Square. The choice of location was determined solely around the relocation of the Emergency Communications Network (ECN) facility and the assurance by the Home Office that over the critical millennium date change period that piece of equipment would remain operational. A plan of the emergency room layout was tabled at the meeting.

The Panel expressed concerns about the alternative arrangements necessary if the emergency were to fall within an evacuation zone and noted that a standard 600 metre exclusion zone around the railway station would include Time Square, the Depot and all other Town Centre Council offices. The possible chaos on the roads following a major incident was also referred to. The Director of Public and Environmental Services gave assurances that if it were not possible to man an emergency centre within the Borough, unitary colleagues would provide the necessary cover until Bracknell staff reached the designated centre.

The Panel were informed that the Windsor Police call centre had been closed, 999 calls being routed to Kidlington or Milton Keynes, and that the BT automatic call location mapping system would not be online for around 2 years. The Panel were concerned about the lack of local knowledge at these centres.

Members referred to the location of Forestcare which has grown to become a frontline service for out-of-hours contact with the Council. The Director of Public and Environmental Services was requested to recommence discussions with the Director of Social Services and Housing regarding the links with Forestcare, and their possible relocation to the vicinity of the Emergency Centre.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report and the additional work that has been carried out be noted;
- (ii) until such time that better alternative premises are available, the location of the Emergency Centre at Time Square be supported;
- (iii) clarification and reassurance be sought from the Thames Valley Police Force regarding the problems caused by the lack of local knowledge of the police at the call area handling centre in Oxford; and
- (iv) the Chairman be asked to write to Councillor North in his capacity as Police Liaison Representative to express the concerns of the Panel.

COUNCILLOR FLOOD IN THE CHAIR

16 Special Partnership Focus – The Rail Industry (Item 2)

The Panel received a report highlighting the work that had been carried out since the previous meeting, focusing on the developing relationship between the emergency planning function of the Council and the rail industry. The Panel noted the recent attendance of the Emergency Planning Officer at exercise 'Vole' carried out by Railtrack in the Midlands zone.

Many of the issues raised in the exercise debrief were pertinent to all organisations with emergency planning responsibilities. Members particularly noted problems caused by traffic congestion and that without a "hands free" kit obtaining information by mobile phone en route was difficult .

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report and the work being carried out be noted;
- (ii) the lessons learned from Exercise Vole be applied within this Authority;
- (iii) the Director of Public and Environmental Services be asked to raise with the Director of Planning and Transportation and the Thames Valley Police ways of re-routing traffic when major incidents occur and to invite them to attend a meeting of the Advisory Panel to explain what current thinking is on this problem.
- (iv) the Director of Public and Environmental Services be requested to pursue the matter of issuing hands-free equipment to all staff and members currently issued with mobile phones to carry out Council business.

17 Practical Support to Kosovo (Item 5)

The Advisory Panel received the report of the Director of Public and Environmental Services which focused on the background work in which the Emergency Planning Officer has been engaged following the Leader of the Council's request that Bracknell Forest Borough Council respond to the situation in Kosovo in a practical way.

The Panel were of the view that any aid project should be on-going and not be set up solely for Kosovo and

RECOMMENDED to the Public and Environmental Services Committee that

- (i) A permanent Emergency Assistance Project Group chaired by the Borough Council should be rapidly established, membership to include public and private sectors of the local economy, community groups and local branches of charity organisations;
- (ii) A partnership link should be created with the charity "Children's Aid Direct";
- (iii) An area to be supported and with which to form a civic link be identified;

- (iv) Support be given to Children's Aid Direct to enable and to assist the charity to raise funds within the Borough;
- (v) Local businesses be targeted with the Kosovo "shopping list";
- (vi) Residents of Bracknell Forest be asked to provide practical resources for individual families;
- (vii) Resources be shipped out from Bracknell to Kosovo;
- (viii) Resources be made available on site to the partner charity;
- (ix) Regular progress bulletins be fed back into Bracknell Forest communities through Town and Country and the business forum; and
- (x) The LEA be asked to consider making a link with a partner school with a view to establishing a twinning/exchange arrangement with one of Bracknell Forest's schools

18 Electrical Storms (Item 4)

The Director of Public and Environmental Services informed the Advisory Panel that the effect of electrical storms on telecommunication equipment would be the subject of a report to the next meeting.

19 Date of Next Meeting

RESOLVED that the Director of Corporate Services be requested to arrange the next meeting, in consultation with the Chairman and the Director of Public and Environmental Services.

The meeting commenced at 3.45pm and concluded at 5.50pm.

CHAIRMAN