

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/038/2006-07.

Date of meeting: 4 September 2006.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Community Wellbeing.

Subject: Civil Contingencies Act 2004 - Emergency Planning Officer New Post.

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Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations:

(1) That a Continuing Service Budget growth bid in the sum of £19,200 for 2007/08 be made, in order to fund the shortfall over existing budget provision for the creation of a new full time post of Emergency Planning Officer; and

(2) That authority be given to fill the post in 2006/07 for which budget provision already exists.

Report:

1. Cabinet at their meeting on 15 November 2004 received a comprehensive report on the implications of the introduction of the Civil Contingencies Bill which would for the first time place a statutory responsibility on the District Council as a category 1 responder to carry out risk based contingency planning and incident response in seven prescribed areas in partnership with other category 1 agencies.
2. The report outlined options as to how the Council could manage this responsibility and Cabinet agreed that the preferred option of joint arrangements with Essex County Council and additional resource within the District Council should be adopted.
3. Continuing Service Budget growth from 2005/06 was approved, £30,000 for staff and £6,570 for training and equipment.
4. The report stated that every effort had been made to be as accurate as possible in terms of the increased resources requested for staff and operational expenditure. However if when the detailed guidance and regulations were published it was evident that more resources would be required it would be necessary to present a further report to Cabinet.
5. The Civil Contingencies Act was introduced on 1 April 2005 and the detailed guidance and regulations were published during 2005.
6. The joint arrangements with Essex County Council have been introduced whereby a Joint Emergency Planning Officer dedicates 50% of their time to work for the District Council at the Civic Offices. The District contributes £15,000 per annum to jointly fund this post.
7. Before the introduction of the Act the Council's role was largely one of responding to supporting the emergency services and providing humanitarian assistance in response to incidents within the District, maintaining an emergency plan and providing training for members of the Emergency Planning Team and staff volunteers.
8. The introduction of the Act has widened the remit of local authorities who now have to

participate not only in local planning but in wider arrangements affecting the County, the region and also in support of contingency planning in London.

9. Local Authorities also have an additional responsibility to provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations in relation to business continuity management.
10. Emergency Planning will be brought into the CPA process of performance measurement, which requires formal evidence based arrangements to be maintained to be able to demonstrate the Council's level of preparedness.
11. To achieve this level of activity will require an additional full time post of emergency Planning Officer reporting to the Assistant Head Administration/District Emergency Planning Officer.
12. Following evaluation of a detailed job description by the Job Evaluation Panel it is apparent that there is a budgetary shortfall of £19,200 over existing budget provision to fund this new post in a full year.
13. The detailed job description for this post is attached as an appendix to show the range of tasks to be undertaken by the proposed post.

Statement in support of recommended action:

14. This new post is required in order that the Council can properly discharge its statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Options for action:

15. Do nothing or limit extra staff resource to within existing budget provision. Neither of these options will be sufficient to enable the Council to fully meet its statutory obligations under the Act.

Consultation undertaken:

16. There has been no external consultation.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Existing budget provision of £15,000. Additional CSB growth of £19,200 required from 2007/08. Post details: Grade 8, Spinal point 36 £34,200 per annum inclusive of on costs.

Personnel: New full time post of Emergency Planning Officer.

Land: no implications.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: None.

Relevant statutory powers: The Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Background papers: Nil.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): Nil.