

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/130/2006-7.
Date of meeting: 16 April 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Community Wellbeing.

Subject: Civil Contingencies Act 2004 - Emergency Planning Officer.

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

Recommendation:

(1) That, in order to fund a shortfall over the existing budget provision for the creation of a new full time post of Emergency Planning Officer, a CSB virement in the sum of £19,200 from the Legal, Administration and Estates budget to the Emergency Planning budget be approved.

(2) That Members be provided with regular updates and information on emergency planning issues, including awareness sessions on their role as Councillors, and other appropriate training opportunities.

Report:

1. The Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder reported to the Cabinet at its meeting on 4 September 2006 on the need to create a new full time post of Emergency Planning Officer to enable the Council to be able to satisfactorily discharge its new statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

2. The Cabinet resolved "*That, in order to fund the shortfall over existing budget provision for the creation of a new full time post of Emergency Planning Officer, a CSB growth bid in the sum of £19,200 for 2007/08 be made.*"

3. Although the Cabinet supported the bid going forward, this item did not receive sufficient priority for growth funding to be made available in the budget from 2007/08.

4. Officers have therefore investigated whether there is any other opportunity for finding the required additional funding from within existing budgets and have identified a saving within the salaries budget of the Legal, Administration and Estates Service where, to reflect changes in working patterns, the establishment had been reduced in a particular area.

5. Whilst the new post would be a corporate post, it would be within the Legal Administration and Estates Service structure reporting to the Assistant Head (Administration).

6. The proposed virement is above the amount delegated to a Head of Service or a Portfolio Holder to approve and would also be a virement from one Portfolio to another; hence, Cabinet approval is required.

7. One recent example of how the Council needs to comply with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is referred to in the Audit Commission's Use of Resources Assessment for the Council, recently considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. The auditors drew attention to key lines of enquiry (KLOE's) that will be introduced for the Council's next assessment in June 2007, and which the Council must have in order sustain or improve upon its current performance. One of these (KLOE 4.2) is that the Council must meet the criterion at Level Two in relation to business continuity plans as

required by the Civil Contingencies Act. This means that the Council will have to demonstrate and provide evidence that it has a business continuity plan in place, which is reviewed on a regular basis.

8. It is also important that members are kept informed on emergency planning issues and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. It is therefore proposed in future to provide regular updates, in addition to those already provided by the Portfolio Holder at full Council meetings, and develop suitable awareness sessions and other training opportunities, building on the first awareness session presented to Members in November 2006.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

9. The creation of this post has been agreed in principal by the Cabinet and proposals to fund the financial shortfall from within existing budget resources have now been made.

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

Other Options for Action:

11. To do nothing or maintain staff resources to the existing level. Neither of these options will be sufficient to enable the Council to fully meet its statutory obligations under the Act.

Consultation Undertaken:

12. There has been no external consultation.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: £19,200 virement from Legal Administration and Estates budget to Emergency Planning Budget from 2007/08.

Personnel: Creation of a new full time post.

Land: Nil.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: No specific reference.

Relevant statutory powers: The Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Background papers: None.

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

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.