County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum

Annual Report
2016-2017
Foreword by the Chair of County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum

At the end of my fifth year as chair of the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (LRF), I wanted to reflect on the progress that we have made in that time and the strength of the institutions and processes that we have put in place to protect the people who live and work in our disparate communities. We sometimes forget that the idea of an LRF is a comparatively recent one having been brought into being by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

We have a long track record of effective multiagency cooperation in County Durham and Darlington but the expectations within the 2004 legislation raised the bar considerably. Fundamental to our work has been a clear understanding of the risk posed by various contingencies as diverse as severe weather, public service industrial action and cyber terrorism. It is a tribute to the work of the LRF that our analysis and management of these issues has been so effective.

For obvious reasons, we have concentrated on areas that posed the most significant risks and an important feature of the year was Exercise Redstone which was based on a scenario involving a sustained cyber-attack on several LRF partners. This emphasis was borne out when the new National Risk Assessment was published in January 2017 and vividly highlighted the importance of this subject.

Other key developments over the course of the year are worthy of mention. Exercise Swan, for example, took us through a full-blown pandemic flu scenario and we have worked very hard to strengthen our collaborative arrangements with neighbouring LRFs to ensure that lessons learned from these events are shared and embedded.

As I hand over Chair of the LRF, I remain totally confident that it continues to be a hugely effective mechanism to plan for and mitigate the effects of emergencies in our area and that it will continue to receive the wholehearted support of all of its constituent partners.

Mike Barton, Chief Constable and Chair of the Local Resilience Forum
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Introduction

This document provides a summary of the achievements of the Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (LRF) during the last year and highlights some of the forthcoming challenges.

The work of the partnerships is taken forward by a mix of working groups and the priorities for these are also outlined in this report. The work shows the breadth of issues we face across the area which range from natural disasters like flooding, health emergencies such as flu pandemics through to man-made emergencies like cybercrime.

Each of the working groups are supported by a range of partners drawn from across the many organisations that make up the LRF. It is this joint working that has been key to the continued success of the LRF and has enabled it to grow and develop in order to remain resilient as the external risks we face change.

Thankfully within Durham and Darlington we haven’t faced some of the significant emergencies that have faced other areas of the country but we remain vigilant and continue to review our procedures and priorities to take on board any learning from these so we remain ready should we be called upon to respond if a major incident occurs.
The Work and Achievements of the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum during 2016-2017

The fifth edition of the County Durham and Darlington LRF Business Plan was published in April 2016 and set out 21 Business Priorities which incorporated 30 Key Deliverables. These were split across five Standing Groups and during the course of year three Task & Finish Groups were set up with additional objectives and key deliverables.

A brief overview of these groups’ achievements is attached at Appendix 1.

Each Business Priority underpinned the strategic objectives of the LRF and performance was scrutinised on a regular basis by the Tactical Business Group (TBG).

Progress against the Business Plan Priorities was excellent with 28 of the Key Deliverables achieved (i.e. 93%), one not achieved and one partially achieved.

Several of the objectives are carried over from year to year as set out below:

- To carry out a readiness assessment on the key risks for County Durham and Darlington;
- To carry out a strategic horizon scanning event;
- To refresh the LRF business plan;
- To focus on training to ensure competency within the LRF.

The above objectives incorporate 12 Key Deliverables.

There has also been a considerable amount of cross-border work carried out following the North East LRFs delivery workshop held in July 2016. A detailed action plan was developed after the event which included the following areas:

- Sharing and cooperation
- Risk Management
- Training and Exercising
- Warning and Informing
- Resilient Telecoms
- Community Resilience
- Business Continuity

This action plan has been monitored by the LRF Coordinators within Northumbria, County Durham & Darlington and Cleveland LRFs throughout the year. Whilst a large number of the actions have been achieved, others are still on-going and are being carried forward to 2017-18.
Incidents during 2016-2017

The incidents which LRF partners have responded to over the course of the year continue to be as varied and challenging as in previous years.

An indication of the variety of incidents which have arisen over the year is given in the figure below which shows the call-outs for the Durham County Council Civil Contingencies Unit. These are not all multi-agency incidents but those which have involved the local authorities.
The Year Ahead

We start this year with Chief Fire Officer Stuart Errington taking over as the new chair of the LRF with Chief Constable Mike Barton standing down after five successful years in the role. Whilst a new chair will bring new ideas and expectations to the partnership, the issues that it faces in terms of responding to and recovering from major incidents remain as challenging as ever.

The incidents the partnership respond to remain as varied and complex as ever. The threat from terrorism remains high with three attacks in London and one in Manchester in the first six months of 2017 and many other attacks across Europe and the world. The number of incidents of cyber-attacks has continued to grow with a significant disruption to the NHS earlier this year that affected many people when they were at their most vulnerable. The Grenfell Tower fire in London provided an illustration, if one was ever needed, about how important the recovery phase of a major incident is and how the draw on the resources of some of the LRF partners can continue for months after the emergency phase is over.

Our plans this year, as ever, are focussed on ensuring we are as well prepared as we can be for incidents such as those described above and the publication this year of the updated multi agency incident procedures will be a key part of that preparation. The Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) are now more embedded in the way we respond to major incidents and these are also incorporated into the updated document.

The regional collaboration work that began in 2016 will be developed further this year to ensure that the commitment and intent that was agreed at the first north east LRF delivery group workshop is translated into tangible outcomes. With skills, experience and best practice shared to develop regional plans, where applicable, and reduce duplication the LRF’s will continue to deliver despite the challenges from reducing resources.

In April 2017 the LRF published its 2017/18 Business Plan that contains 16 business priorities of which seven are new, these being:

- Assess the outcomes of the Resilience Capability Survey 2017 and produce an action plan to address identified gaps;
- Publish an updated Multi Agency Incident Procedure;
- Agree arrangements within the LRF to maintain normal business during fuel shortages;
- Review and revise the key policy documents of the LRF;
- Implement lessons learned from the cyber-attack exercise;
- Ensure excess deaths planning is fit for purpose;
- Agree and formalise how voluntary organisations link into a TCG/SCG.

From the existing and new business priorities there are 34 key deliverables that have been assigned action owners and allocated to one of the LRF standing working groups. Progress against these will be monitored by the Tactical Business Group (TBG) and reported through to the LRF Strategic Board.
Conclusion

As we mentioned in our introduction, thankfully we have not faced a major incident this year but the work continues on making sure we remain as prepared as we can be, to be able to respond effectively to such an event.

The learning from the emergencies we have faced, together with the testing we undertake and our risk based approach to prioritising our work ensures we remain focussed on what is important to Durham and Darlington and our LRF remains nationally recognised as one of the most effective across the country.
Appendix 1

Standing Groups and Task & Finish Groups

The LRF Strategic Board delegates the routine management of issues to the Tactical Business Group (TBG). This Group, which comprises Category 1 and Category 2 responders, is chaired by Colin Bage (County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service) and oversees the work of the Standing Groups and Task & Finish Groups.

Below is a summary of the work completed by each Group during the year:

**Community Resilience Group, Chaired by Bill Westland, Darlington Borough Council**

The group has enjoyed another successful year in 2016/17.

The key deliverable set for the year was to prepare three Community Resilience Plans and with support from the Training and Exercise Group to train and exercise no less than two Community Resilience Plans.

Highlights of the year were:

- Community resilience plans completed for Chester-Le-Street, Newfield, Wolsingham and Pelton.
- Engagement with uniformed youth groups culminated in Exercise Levantine in July 2016 and 120 young people receiving a community safety award.
- Community engagement extended into caravan parks where staff from Durham County Council’s Civil Contingencies Unit promoted business resilience in all such parks located in flood zones.
- A junior school education programme was carried out involving over 30 schools
- A Climart programme was carried out with six secondary schools
- Durham County Council’s Civil Contingencies Unit was shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle community involvement award (“An Altogether Better Approach To Flooding”)

Next year (2017/18) should also be productive as the Community Engagement Officers employed by the Environment Agency start to have an impact and links are developed with neighbouring LRFs so that we learn and benefit from each other.
Health and Social Care Sub Group, Chaired by Andy Summerbell, NHS England

The membership of this group comprises of emergency planning and resilience leads from within the local health and social care providers. The remit of the group is to seek assurance that plans are in place to manage the consequences of incidents leading to casualties occurring within County Durham and Darlington. The group continues to focus upon those very high and high risks that present across County Durham and Darlington, members engaging in the testing and exercising of plans to enable the plans to be tested and staff familiarised with key roles and responsibilities. Overseen by the North East Local Health Resilience Partnership the group has in the last 12 months:

- Revised the Mass Casualty framework incorporating the lessons identified as an outcome of the terror attacks in the UK and Europe.
- Finalised the Pandemic Influenza framework following a North East testing and exercise programme
- Developed plans for managing cyber-attacks informed by the learning identified in Exercise Redstone
- Developed plans and processes for the identification of vulnerable persons in the community who may be at risk during an incident and therefore require prioritised support

In the coming year the group is to undertake a comprehensive review of the risk planning assumptions and consequence management plans in order to identify any gaps in the provision of health and social care support in response to incidents.

Risk Assessment Group, Chaired by Robin Turnbull, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service


New and existing risks are assessed to evaluate their impact on the communities of County Durham and Darlington and national level planning assumptions are contextualised to identify a capability gap analysis at a local level. The gap analysis between the localised planning assumptions and the current capabilities enables action plans to be created that strengthen both single and multi-agency resilience.
The work of the LRF Risk Assessment Working Group follows the recognised model for managing risk and identifying gaps in capabilities, as shown:

Over the coming year the Risk Assessment Working Group will continue to manage local risks and collaborate with other neighbouring LRFs to develop a consistent approach to managing regional risks that are not limited to geographic boundaries.

The Risk Assessment Working Group informs the work of the Training and Exercising group through the identification of new and reviewed risks whose impact is mitigated through effective training and exercising. This ensures that multi agency training events and exercises are aligned to the most significant risks facing the communities of County Durham and Darlington.

The Risk Assessment Working Group also collaborates with the LRF Public Information and Media Group to inform the communities of County Durham and Darlington of the key risks and associated planning advice. This is delivered through the publication of the Community Risk Register and is available at this link: https://www.durham.police.uk/Information-and-advice/Pages/Local-Resilience-Forum.aspx
Training and Exercising Group (TEG), Chaired by Dominic Brown, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service

The work of this group has been guided by a number of complementary themes over the course of the year:

a) Risk levels – very high and high-level risks have continued to receive significant attention by the group with work conducted over the course of the year in areas such as extreme weather, cyber-attacks and pandemic influenza.

b) Cross border – the regional group of TEG leads is now well established and ensures that training and exercising activities are well targeted, avoid duplication and unnecessary work for regional and national partners and that working practises are consistent and effective.

c) Learning and not just recognising – the TEG Audit Board is now becoming well established and ensures that lessons learned in operational incidents and training exercises are embedded within operational practice.

d) Value for money – the LRF is moving towards working arrangements where value for money has become ever more important and has been successful in a number of initiatives to hold down the cost of learning events, for example, by using in-house rather than bought-in resources.

As a whole, the group continues to be well attended and supported by partners from across the LRF.

Warning and Informing Group, Chaired by Roger Goodes, Durham County Council

The Warning and Informing Group was previously known as the Public Information and Media Group and brings together media and communications experts from across the organisation within the LRF.
The group continues to review the best way to communicate with residents in preparing for and during an emergency. The group has also started to work with similar groups within the Northumbria and Cleveland LRFs to share best practice and seek to collaborate to improve the effectiveness of how to respond in the event of a major incident that affects the whole of the North East region.

The group also continues to support the other work of the LRF ensuring its information is available to the public in an easy to read format.

Fuel Task and Finish Group, Chaired by Graeme Lynn, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service

The group was established to make recommendations on fuel resilience in the light of the publication of the updated National Fuel Emergency Plan which was made public early in 2017. Taking into account the emphasis in the national plan on sharing resources and mutual aid between LRF partners, the group prepared a memorandum of understanding on the subject which is now awaiting approval by the LRF Strategic Board.

Multi Agency Incident Procedures Task and Finish Group, Chaired by Catherine James, Durham Constabulary

The group met to review the existing Multi Agency Incident Procedures and has produced revised documents which are clearer and more concise. These documents have been circulated to the group and amended accordingly and are now in their final approved version.

Resilience Direct Task and Finish Group, Chaired by Andy Hopkinson, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service

A key enabler for the effective management of multi-agency incidents is the timely and consistent exchange of information between responders and upward into government to form and maintain a Common Recognised Information Picture (CRIP).

To facilitate this, the Task & Finish group sought to develop and embed the capability of Category 1 responders to adopt best practice and utilise the secure Resilience Direct (RD) web-based platform as the primary multi-agency reporting tool, as a
minimum sharing situation reports and mapping, and specifically when major incidents are declared.

Having secured strategic buy-in for this initiative, bespoke training sessions were well attended by representatives from all Category 1 partners, identified as RD champions for their respective agency. The outcomes from these training sessions, along with engagement with other LRFs who utilise Resilience Direct, were used to inform the development of protocols and a user handbook that provides consistency across the 3 NE LRFs via the NE RD user group.

The training and protocols were successfully tested both via an online exercise amongst the RD champions and via Exercise Redstone, a full LRF multi-agency SCG exercise held in March 2017 to test the response of LRF partners to a ‘cyber-attack’. The learning from these exercises have been used to refine the protocols and inform future exercises planned for the autumn of 2017 to further embed the capability amongst partners.

**Voluntary Emergency Liaison Group (VELG), Chaired by Peter Bodo, Durham County Council Civil Contingencies**

Any incident can over stretch the resources of the Emergency Services or the Local Authority and the value of additional support from the Voluntary Sector has been demonstrated on numerous occasions. This group focuses on how to maximise the input of the voluntary support to achieve more efficient responses and successful recovery.

The Local Authority works in close partnership with VELG members to improve the resilience of County Durham and Darlington. Each of the voluntary organisations represented at VELG are committed to providing the best possible support to the people of County Durham and Darlington. This extends beyond incident response and fully encompasses recovery too. Members take part in joint training and participate in multi-agency exercises to improve the way in which they work together and with other agencies. Current members include:

- British Red Cross
- Durham Community Action
- North East Churches Acting Together
- RAYNET
- Salvation Army
- Samaritans
- St John Ambulance
- Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue
- UK Civil Air Patrol

A presentation on the role and capabilities of the VELG was very well received by the Tactical Business Group of the LRF in December 2016.
Training

The way in which the VELG operate has changed in 2016/17. Meeting every three months a greater emphasis has been placed on training and exercising, which has received welcome encouragement and positive response. This altered method of spending meeting time together has paid real dividends and cohesion and understanding within the group has improved.

Members of the group have participated in various forms of training. This includes improving our understanding and operational use of Resilience Direct. They have also participated in training from the Met Office involving the underlying principles of weather and climate prediction and how best to utilise the products offered by the Met Office.

On an LRF level, members attended the LRF perspectives on terrorism training and were also integral in the training of Local Authority Emergency Rest Centre staff, a role for which VELG members have extensive experience.

Exercising

VELG members have participated in Exercise Swan, a regional LRF Pandemic Flu exercise. There was also involvement in Exercise Prince Bishop in July 2016. The exercise was based on a Marchioness-type incident on the River Wear and VELG assistance was sought to search the river in and around Durham City.
# Appendix 2

## Membership of the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Strategic Board 2016-17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Representative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Durham Constabulary (Chair)</td>
<td>Chief Constable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham and Darlington Fire &amp; Rescue Service (Deputy Chair)</td>
<td>Chief Fire Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham Constabulary</td>
<td>Assistant Chief Constable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS Foundation Trust (North East Ambulance Service)</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NHS England</td>
<td>Director of Delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durham County Council</td>
<td>Director of Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham County Council</td>
<td>Assistant Chief Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darlington Borough Council</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health England</td>
<td>Consultant in Health Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Agency</td>
<td>North East Area Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>HM Coastguard</td>
<td>Divisional Commander</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resilience Emergency Division North</td>
<td>Resilience Adviser</td>
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<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Joint Regional Liaison Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voluntary Sector</td>
<td>Operations Director, NE &amp; Cumbria, British Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactical Business Group</td>
<td>Deputy Chief Fire Officer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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