

Safer – Creating safe & secure communities



Community Resilience Planning

A Scrutiny Review looking at how elected councillors (as community leaders) can support local communities to help themselves at times of emergency.

April 2010

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Community Resilience Planning

1. Foreword

The Safer and Stronger Advisory Board highlighted the subject of community resilience in their initial work plan. In October 2009 Scrutiny Board Members agreed to set up a time limited Task and Finish group.

So, even before the November floods, the Safer and Stronger Advisory Board had felt that Councillors as community leaders would be expected to take a significant role in any emergency situation. This report is an attempt to both define that role and give some guidelines to assist councillors to understand their role and how they can help the local community prepare for a possible emergency. Since we started this work we have had floods, snow and ice, and gas outages, all of which have put people at risk.

Any Emergency Plan by its nature must be community led so the role of the Councillor is to encourage the groups that already exist in the area to create their own plan and have in place volunteers who know their tasks should an emergency happen.

What this report is not, is a template for an *emergency plan. The CC Emergency Planning Unit provides such a template which has already been used in some areas. We have been supported throughout this investigation by Emergency Planning which has enabled them to validate and refine their document.

**Cumbria County Council, Resilience Unit –A Guide to Developing a Community Emergency Plan (Draft), January 2010*

This report seems to be timely in several respects, locally it is clearly needed but at National level there is an awareness of the importance of community resilience. The revised Civil Contingencies Act 2004 recognises the key role local authorities can play in supporting people and communities in the delivery of a Local Emergency Plan or Community Resilience Plan. We note in Paragraph 4.4 that this may become a statutory responsibility; this report should address many of the requirements.

The Government has recently launched a public consultation on Community Resilience guidance documents as part of a wider package on National Security. This includes a Draft Preparing for Emergencies - a guide for communities. We hope this piece of scrutiny work will help to respond to the consultation.

We hope that this report will show Councillors the need for all communities to be aware of their vulnerability and point the way to using their Parish Councils and voluntary groups to create Emergency Plans to provide resilience throughout Cumbria.

Cllr E Barraclough,
Chair, Safe, Stronger & Inclusive Communities Advisory Board.

May 2010

Members of the Scrutiny task group would like to thank the following people who have assisted in the development of this report.

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2. Recommendations

1. Elected Members at County, District and Parish levels throughout Cumbria should be encouraged to:-
 - promote the importance and benefits of community resilience planning and encourage the setting up of community-led resilience groups in their wards using the Resilience unit 'Guide to Developing a Community Emergency Plan'.
 - take a supportive and guiding role (as community leaders) at the three key phases of an emergency incident as an integral part of the County's Emergency Planning process.
 - provide a communications link role between primary responders and key community resilience representatives, particularly at the 'Acute' and 'Recovery Phases of a local emergency.
2. A joint protocol on information sharing between key responders and local resilience groups which can be used beyond the 'Acute' Phase, should be developed.
3. Local authority and partnership Leaders and Chief Executives should work in Partnership with the County Council's Resilience Unit to ensure a cross-county, strategic and co-ordinated approach is taken to community resilience planning.
4. Emergency Planning should be asked to suggest a means of creating and maintaining contact with isolated communities which become physically cut off from all services in an emergency.
5. The role of Area Support Managers (ASMs) in conjunction with the County Council's Community Unit should be further developed and promoted to encourage local communities to incorporate resilience planning into their Local Plans.
6. The broad principles of effective community resilience planning as developed by the Keswick Flood Action Group, should be explored by primary responders as a possible model which all communities can adapt to suit local needs and respond to any emergency situation.
7. Further opportunities to extend the information network on resilience planning preparedness for communities should be sought by all County Council directorates and partner agencies, working to a single, co-ordinated and managed programme led by the County Council's Resilience Unit.

3. Introduction and Methodology

“In an emergency, communities expect and deserve the minimisation of risk, an effective response and a swift return to normality. There can be no greater test of our public services than their response to such events.”

(LGA –towards a Civil Emergencies Strategy, Consultation document, December 2009)

- 3.1 In the event of an emergency, Cumbria County council works in partnership with key responder agencies to provide a co-ordinated and integrated approach to any emergency situation. Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, statutory duties are placed on ‘Category 1’ responders. These are:

Emergency Services

Police Forces, British Transport Police, Fire authorities, Ambulance services
Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Health Bodies

Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts, Foundation Trusts, Health Protection Agency

Government Agencies

Environment Agency

Local Authorities

All Principal Local Authorities
Port Health Authorities

- 3.2 As a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and as a principle local authority, Cumbria County Council is subject to a full set of statutory Civil Protection duties. The County Council is required to:
- a) Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use them to inform contingency planning;
 - b) Put in place emergency plans;
 - c) Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements;
 - d) Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
 - e) Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
 - f) Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and
 - g) Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

- 3.3 Following on from these duties and as a result of the many major events that have hit Cumbria in recent years, **the County Council has recognised the increasing need for a collaborative approach between local partners to**

build resilient communities. The authority's Resilience Unit has been leading the way to inform and advise citizens on how they can help themselves – to prepare for and minimise the effects of an emergency situation.

3.4 Such work however is staff intensive and too much for the County Council alone to oversee with the minimal resources it has at its disposal. Reaching all communities will be a huge task, one which ultimately requires the support and ownership of key players at a local level.

3.5 There are three key separate phases in any emergency situation:

- **The Preparatory Phase** – where arrangements to be used in the actual emergency phase are agreed and prepared well in advance of any emergency.
- **The Acute Phase** – the duration of the actual emergency. This tends to be comparatively short in length – several days and rarely more than a week in length. In this phase, the Police will take the lead in coordinating the response which will be provided by those responders who have the correct training and equipment. Although there is no expectation that Community Volunteers will have a role in this phase, there is a possibility that some elements such as a Command and Control Room, may operate so as to liaise with the professional responders and coordinate the local response; and
- **The Recovery Phase** – where the aftermath of the emergency is dealt with and communities endeavour to return to normality. This phase can last weeks, months or possibly even years. In this phase, the overall lead is taken by the Local Authority (District or County Council).

3.6 The Recovery Phase is potentially the most important to local communities because it is here that potentially catastrophic economic and social effects have to be dealt with and put to rights. It is thus essential that a Community Emergency Plan reflect robust recovery arrangements. Excellent national guidance exists on this subject and a link is included in section 4 of this document.

3.7 In Cumbria, the County Council's Community Unit plays a key role in overseeing the recovery stage with local people at ground level.

3.8 In order to help raise awareness of the need for and benefits from local emergency planning, it has been recognised that elected members in their community leadership roles can play a vital part in their local resilience programme.

Aims of the Scrutiny Review

- To consider how elected members can encourage communities to form local resilience groups recognising that such groups must eventually be self supporting and sustainable.
- To identify potential roles for members at each of the three key phases of an emergency with a view to improving the levels of community preparedness in the event of an emergency situation.
- To ensure such work supports and complements the County Council's existing Emergency Planning and Resilience Unit's planning and partnership working arrangements.
- To identify and/or clarify the most effective range of mechanisms for implementation.
- To identify any gaps in resources and procedures. For example good sharing information on displaced and vulnerable people, beyond the Acute phase.

3.9 This scrutiny review has been established as a priority topic for inclusion in the County Council's single scrutiny work programme for 2009/10. It is not a response to the emergency situations arising from the severe flooding or adverse winter weather in late 2009, early 2010.

3.10 These events have however, served to remind everyone that at times of crisis, communities can help themselves to reduce the risk to life and property through local resilience planning.

Limitations of the Review Process

Issues arising from major emergency situations as experienced in Cumbria over the past 20 years have had a major impact on local communities, socially, environmentally and economically.

This scrutiny does not attempt to address the breadth of issues arising from particular emergency situations. It does however suggest a course of action within existing response arrangements, which will assist individual communities to prepare better for such eventualities.

Members have not liaised with all key responder agencies but nonetheless, recognise the excellent work of others – including the authority's Fire & Rescue Service

4. Findings

What is Community Resilience?

“Communities and individuals harnessing local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of the emergency services”

(The National Security Strategy – 2008)

- 4.1 Community Resilience Planning is important because emergencies happen and the county’s emergency services will always prioritise those in greatest need during an emergency, especially when life is in danger.
- 4.2 There may be times when the emergency services are not able or are too stretched to reach a particular community and on such occasions, individuals and communities may need to rely on their own resources to ensure they can respond to a given situation.
- 4.3 In his reports on the 2007 summer floods, Sir Michael Pitt acknowledged the benefits of community resilience and recommended that the Government *“...should establish a programme to support and encourage individuals and communities to be better prepared and more self reliant during emergencies, allowing the authorities to focus on those areas and people in greatest need.”*
- (Cabinet Office; July 2008 – The Pitt Review)*
- 4.4 The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004 is currently being revised and for the first time, there is likely to be a formal recognition of the role of local communities, as Category 3 responders assisting in the development and implementation of localised resilience planning. (Assuming this becomes active legislation should there be a new Government).
- 4.5 Some of Cumbria’s communities have developed their own local emergency plans, where local people spontaneously help each other. Experience has shown that where such planning and preparation has been undertaken, local communities are better able to cope and recover more quickly from national and local emergencies.
- (Cabinet Office; 2010 – Draft Strategic Framework on Community Resilience)*
- 4.6 The Government’s community resilience programme aims to:
- Increase individual, family and community resilience against all threats and hazards;
 - Support and enable existing community resilience, expand and grow these successful models of community resilience in other areas;
 - Support effective dialogue between the community and the practitioners supporting them;

- Raise the awareness and understanding of risk and local emergency response capability in order to motivate and sustain self resilience;
- Evaluate the success and articulate the benefits of community resilience; and
- Provide a shared framework to support cross sector, regional and local activity in a way that ensures sufficient flexibility to make community resilience relevant and workable in each local area/community.

(Cabinet Office; 2010 - UK Resilience)

- 4.7 Over the past five years Cumbria has experienced a variety of major emergency situations including storms and floods (2005, 2006 and 2009); Mine subsidence, Egremont (2005); Grayrigg Rail Crash (2007); M6 School coach crash (2008); Mountain Marathon emergency (2008); Loss of water supply, Carlisle (2009); Ambleside Gas Supply disruption 2010 etc.
- 4.8 Such emergency situations bring together various category 1 responders and agencies that work in partnership with Cumbria's local authorities. Under the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004, it is a duty of all key public service agencies (including local authorities) to have plans in place that cover all aspects of emergency and response. There is a plethora of guidance in support of this duty and a lot of time is spent by the County Council's Emergency Planning Unit assimilating all of this.
- 4.9 In preparing for an emergency situation, an extensive programme of information gathering, plan writing, consultation, training, exercising and validation is undertaken on a continuous cycle.

Self Help

- 4.10 Community resilience is an element of community planning and community cohesion. Community cohesion is where people know their neighbours, build relationships and networks, use local knowledge and prepare for risks that are pertinent to their particular community.
- 4.11 In Cumbria the County Council's Community unit play a key role in supporting the community planning and cohesion process. Community resilience is seen as an important element of the Community Plan and Area Support Managers (ASMs) are ideally placed to extend their relationship and support to local members on this subject. In an emergency situation, ASMs take on an important role helping to oversee the Recovery stage at ground level.
- 4.12 Arguably cohesion can be easier to achieve in a rural community (where people have a tendency to look out for each other) than in a larger urban community which often has 'communities within a community'. Keswick and Appleby flood action groups have worked because they have managed to overcome this hurdle by bringing town's people together through a common sense of purpose (flooding). They had the local knowledge, awareness of risk, volunteer networks and have developed a very good working relationship with their local authority (at County, District and Parish levels) and emergency

services. They have also developed a plan which took account of local people, risks and circumstances.

- 4.13 In rural areas however, where there is a minimal Police presence there is more likely to be a major gap in the communications route between a resilience group (and the local member) and command and control during the Acute Phase. Whilst local support groups are helping to keep a community safe until the emergency services can get there, they, or their assisting County and District Councillors may not have any means of communicating with Category 1 responders other than dialling 999 or using already clogged help lines. For Members this situation risks creating a feeling of responsibility with accompanying helplessness which is at best unproductive and at worst dangerous.
- 4.14 The Police acknowledge this and in areas where there is a thin Police presence and an emergency can leave a community isolated – it is particularly important to ensure there are arrangements in place for effective communication links.
- 4.15 There needs to be a way for individuals in charge of designated resilience groups to be able to communicate the needs for outside assistance (in some cases on items such as drinking water, food or other essential supplies) through a dedicated channel which can be fed into gold or silver command or elsewhere as appropriate. There are likely to be resource implications here, but to leave a community resilience group in an isolated village with no better lines of communication than the general public – will be problematic.
- 4.16 In an emergency such as flooding or a power outage, which can hit many areas at once, each community, village, housing estate etc. needs to have a plan or be part of a larger plan which will enable them to help themselves until such times as key agencies/services are in place to help.
- 4.17 Local people will need to develop good working relationships with the emergency services, in order to understand what each side can do for the other in the event of an emergency. This will involve talking to each other as part of the planning process and where appropriate, engaging in training/exercising events. Local members can play a useful sign posting and support role here.
- 4.18 Engaging with other community groups such as voluntary agencies, sports groups, local contractors/suppliers, business people, self-help groups, farmers etc. will be key to developing a sustainable resilience network. This work should complement (not duplicate) the work of the emergency services and the local authority at all three recognised stages of an emergency situation.

Local Members

- 4.19 Locally elected Members at all levels of local government (including Parish/Town Councils), are seen as an important factor in the development of a local resilience planning programme. Experience from some early examples of community resilience planning however, has shown that where a scheme

has been strongly led by a local politician, that scheme can cease to maintain its momentum when the political situation changes.

- 4.20 It is clearly important however, to ensure that local Councillors (at all levels) are on board and supportive of their local emergency planning scheme. In Keswick for example, the Town Council are very supportive, providing facilities for meetings and strong Town Clerk support. The responsibility for the Resilience planning and implementation however, clearly lies with the Keswick Flood Action Group. (See *Appendix 1*)
- 4.21 As community leaders, local Members are well placed to know many of the key players including local voluntary groups and accordingly are an invaluable resource which should be used to help build partnerships and to link with key services such as the Police, Fire, Environment Agency, utility companies etc. This is particularly true for Members at County and District level who attend Parish Council meetings. Under the revised Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) Parish and Town Councils will be likely to have an obligation to engage and probably take ownership of the Plan as the legal responsibility could sit with them.
- 4.22 Elected Members can also play a vital role in communicating the benefits of community resilience to the wider community, helping to encourage and motivate others to get involved.
- 4.23 A key message here is that the people themselves are best placed to lead, manage and sustain their local resilience planning programme, in partnership with the various responder agencies and community groups. This is not the role of the local councils to provide. A proposed role for the County Councillor is set out later in this report.

Assessing Risk

- 4.24 Assessing risk is a crucial factor within the emergency planning process – this includes key industrial/commercial sites including chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear sites which have their own emergency plans. Road, rail, ferries and airports are factored in, as well as coastal and inland flooding, reservoir inundation, major hazard pipelines, coastal pollution and much more.
- 4.25 The Government is committed to publishing a National Risk Register (NRR) highlighting and prioritising the potential risks of civil emergencies and to updating it regularly. The main purpose of this register is to keep the general public informed of the risks of civil emergencies and as a public document, the NRR is widely consulted upon.
- 4.26 This supplements an extensive ¹Local Risk Register, compiled and maintained by Cumbria Local Resilience Forum, which appraises hazards particular to the County. This provides direction and focus for the training and exercising of limited resources that are available in Cumbria.

¹ Appendix 2

- 4.27 The National Framework on Community Resilience also recognises the need for those agencies responsible for risk communication at a local and regional level, to consider how they might raise people’s awareness and understanding of risk – a key factor in the emergency planning process.
- 4.28 Significantly, the revised ²Risk Register (2010) “now contains more information on the relationship between assessment of risk at the national, regional and local level and how the NRR should be considered alongside Community Risk Registers.”

Definitions of Community

- 4.29 The Cabinet Office consultation document; ³*Draft Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience*, identifies four definitions of ‘community’ and these definitions are set out in Chapter 3. Definitions, as follows:

- **Geographical Communities**
These are communities that may have recognised geographical boundaries such as parishes, wards or towns.
- **Communities of ‘Interest’**
These consist of groups of people who have affiliations which have grown as a result of their interaction with each other through a shared interest, such as sports clubs, parent groups, faith, web communities etc.
- **Communities of ‘Circumstance’**
These consist of groups of people who are affected by the same incident, such as a train crash or flooding and are not necessarily from the same geographical area. Although a sense of community may be temporary, some communities of circumstance grow and sustain in the long term following an emergency.
- **Communities of ‘Practitioners’**
This refers to the communities of professionals (paid and unpaid) who provide emergency response services including planning for and responding to emergencies. Such as: Police Officers, Firefighters, local authority Emergency Planning Officers, St John Ambulance, Salvation Army, British Red Cross etc. People providing these services are also necessarily members of a geographical community of some sort. Practitioners often live and work in the same area and therefore can be affected in the same way as the geographical communities, as well as being required to be involved in formal emergency response activity.

- 4.30 These definitions are intended to be used to think about groups who are already or could be involved in community resilience in the future. The Government’s framework does not use a single definition of community, but instead refers to these four conceptual ‘communities, relevant to this work.

²*Summary of the Main Changes to the National Risk Register, Cabinet Office; 2010*

³*Draft Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience, Cabinet Office; 2010*

Cumbria Constabulary

- 4.31 In an emergency situation the Police will take the lead in co-ordinating the action which will be provided by those responders who have the correct training and equipment.
- 4.32 Notwithstanding their role in overseeing Command and Control responsibilities at times of emergency, the Police also play a significant everyday role in community engagement. As such, the task group were particularly keen to explore the potential for expanding this very important communication channel and to identify potential roles for Members in the engagement process.
- 4.33 In consideration of an effective local emergency plan, it was suggested to members that the first priority would be to understand the definition of community in a given area before attempting to organise resilience activity. From this point it would be necessary to raise the community's awareness and preparedness for an emergency situation, including risk.
- 4.34 A big challenge will be addressing people's general apathy, and one solution to this for the Police has been the development of the 'Policing Pledge' which is underpinned by regular meetings with Police representatives and local people. At these meetings people are encouraged to discuss their local priorities and issues and a programme of action is agreed to deal with these. The Policing Pledge is a toolkit for community engagement and there are some parallels here with the ambitions of this scrutiny work. Given that scrutiny's work is about finding other routes into communities and local partnerships. Would there be opportunities for one side to complement the other?
- 4.35 What has been learnt from the Policing Pledge is the importance of getting to know how a local community is made up. "Knowing the people you are dealing with first is critical to the success of the Policing Plan Initiative - only then can an engagement plan be discussed" This is about a community being prepared for a given situation and deciding beforehand what people are going to do in the event that something happens.
- 4.36 The Police use information based on vulnerable communities and each community will have their different needs. Spending time in neighbourhoods and working with key people is regarded as key to effective community engagement. The Police use a wide range of communication methods and meeting venues to break down public apathy.
- 4.37 There are many opportunities to engage local people through a wide range of existing networks of people such as farming groups, sports clubs, young people, and voluntary groups etc. It was highlighted that there is a diversity dimension to be considered as part of the community which could include migrant workers, students, seasonal workers etc. These people need to be factored in.

- 4.38 A starting point to get all these to embed could be the Neighbourhood Police Teams (NPTs) and local members at all levels can play a role in supporting that process. At present there are 21 NPTs and within each team there is a requirement for local people to identify priorities/issues and agree a partnership approach on how to deal with these.
- 4.39 It was suggested that an index of key resilience contacts for a given Policing area could be incorporated with the appropriate NPT toolkit.

British Red Cross

- 4.40 The Operations Director, NE & Cumbria British Red Cross (BRC) provided members with a very useful insight into the work of the British Red Cross, now recognised by Government as the Primary Voluntary Agency during a major civil emergency.
- 4.41 Members received feedback on the Director's personal experiences and knowledge arising from the Doncaster and Hull floods as well as drawing on lessons learnt from the Cumbria floods 2005 and 2009.
- 4.42 It was acknowledged that keeping track of people directly affected by an emergency situation had caused significant challenges. Critical to getting that information at times of crisis is the speed of communications and in light of BRC's collective experiences, it was suggested that this requirement needs to be part of (and made aware in) any community resilience programme.
- 4.43 There is a need for those people who have had to move out of their homes (in the case of flooding) to register at an early stage. This is about developing individual awareness in the community. BRC doesn't have a perfect system, but recognises speed has to be taken in capturing names and addresses and some form of designated evacuation/community centre.
- 4.44 An information exchange protocol has been developed between Category 1 and Category 2 responders at the Acute Phase; however in the Director's experience there is some reticence to share this information after an emergency. Different agencies hold different data for different reasons and it is not always possible to share this. BRC's approach is to reduce the information down to minimum with four key questions which would make it easier to keep track of displaced people.
- 4.45 It is important to distinguish between the most vulnerable and not so vulnerable people in any community. Clearly the emergency services will look to help the most vulnerable first. Having a single point of contact within a community is particularly important but understanding who and where the most vulnerable are is not easy. Through their local knowledge elected Members can assist their local resilience group to identify some of the most vulnerable. This can include some people already considered as vulnerable such as drug-users, alcoholics, people in hostels as well as the elderly and seasonal/migrant workers.

- 4.46 Free First Aid training can help to improve the resilience of a community. BRC talk first to Resilience via the local government structure and then to Neighbourhood Watch (who have a greater presence in the communities). By offering free First Aid training, the agency is promoting the notion of resilience “Communities have got to look after themselves”.
- 4.47 With regard to those areas that don’t have a particularly strong sense of community the challenge here would be to convince everyone of the need to assess the risks and to encourage everyone to work together with key agencies to develop a plan which is appropriate to local needs. Here again locally elected Members can play a critical role in stimulating local interest.
- 4.48 It was suggested to Members that they can play a particularly important role after the Acute phase and throughout the Recovery phase by “keeping a foot on the accelerator” Meaning people in the affected communities can feel they have been forgotten about and this brings different challenges for all those working together. There is a role here for members to ensure the momentum for recovery is not lost and to reassure people who have been badly affected, that they are being heard and supported.
- 4.49 Most importantly councillors at all levels can ensure that local people (with the appropriate knowledge and experience) are included in the structures to inform and look at how the recovery process is being led. In Morpeth, flood action group members played a key role in challenging everyone – they became an extension of the partnership (the synergy of working together); part of the recovery process. The outcome in Morpeth was a much stronger recovery
- 4.50 Members can also play a role in encouraging others who have come forward with offers of help – helping to co-ordinate with agencies on the ground, even if some of the offers were not practicable.
- 4.51 It was suggested that it would be useful for BRC to have a communications link into local councillors in Cumbria. This would be low level stuff by phone, but nonetheless a really valued contact for the organisation. There also needs to be a protocol for sharing information on displaced people beyond the Acute Phase of an emergency.
- 4.52 A broad principle for BRC is work from a wide community base (engaging with lots of volunteers) and to move upwards, working to very few people in a managed way. This is about getting people in communities to use their particular skills and abilities, perhaps to work with Local Community Development officers when someone needs to take over from at the Recovery phase.
- 4.53 The British Red Cross have also attended other emergency situations (eg. Gas outage/water supplies) and are able to bring many of the same principles of partnership help and support to the affected communities.

Environment Agency

- 4.54 The Environment Agency (EA) is a 'Category 1' responder and is heavily involved in resilience planning, particularly for flood-related emergencies. The Agency has a breadth of links for multi-agency flood planning and is geared up to dealing with flood risk. It provides a link between the community and other agencies including the Emergency Services, United Utilities, CCC Highways, Local Authorities etc. and is currently developing a wider incident management role.
- 4.55 The Agency has developed a new service to help local authorities provide localised flooding advice and surface water information to the public through its existing Floodline (telephone) service. In the future an improved Floodline service between the EA and local authorities throughout the Country will enable the public to use a single telephone number for all flooding advice – either before or during a flood.
- 4.56 People are encouraged to register for the flood warning service, particularly in the high risk areas and the Agency is very pro-active in circulating Family flood plan advice. Following the 2005 floods, the agency has actively been working with community groups on flood alleviation schemes as well as resilience programmes.
- 4.57 In Cumbria the EA has been very actively supporting and advising communities on resilience, both in terms of community preparedness and action and personal, home resilience measures that can reduce the overall affect of a flooding emergency. Appleby and Keswick are two examples of Flood Action schemes which have been closely supported by the EA.
- 4.58 In terms of member engagement the Agency work very closely with the County Council's Resilience Unit, providing awareness raising and support to Councillors on Civil Protection issues, exploring their role before, during and after a major emergency. The agency does see a role for elected members, attending joint County/District Member seminars which are organised by the County's Resilience Unit.
- 4.59 The Agency recognise that getting a community emergency plan set up is a time consuming operation, however they are confident that once volunteers have been identified as part of a community commitment and key local agencies have been identified, the basis of a local resilience plan can be adapted to meet any form of emergency (not only flooding).

5. The Role of Local Councillors

- 5.1 As community leaders, elected members can play an important role in helping local people to help themselves. They can first help to raise awareness of the value of local emergency planning and the benefits of developing a community resilience scheme which is appropriate to their area.
- 5.2 Elected Members are seen as community leaders and backed by their local knowledge and networking skills they can encourage people to think about their vulnerabilities and encourage them to be better prepared and more self-reliant. They can assist in breaking down a culture in which people see the local authority and ('blue light') emergency services as the only providers of help in an emergency situation.
- 5.3 They can assist to initiate the formation of a resilience group when no emergency is happening, but with a view to events that may have happened historically in a given area or where it is reasonably perceived that there is a strong risk of an emergency situation arising in the future. It is this group which should form and own the resilience plan steered by national and County Council-led emergency planning guidance.
- 5.4 Local authority Members at County District and Parish levels are well placed to know the key players locally who could drive and sustain an effective resilience model which is right for their area. Potential volunteers for the group are likely to comprise of organisations which may have formed as a result of previous problems, or from local groups as Rotary, Lions, WI, or sports clubs, businesses, suppliers etc.
- 5.5 The Recovery phase will be the longest phase, sometimes lasting months or even years after the event. Once the initial emergency has been dealt with by the 'blue light' responders, command and control is handed back to the local authorities. It is particularly important at this stage (and beyond) that people who have been badly affected by the emergency are able to feel reassured that recovery arrangements are in hand and agencies are taking a fully supportive position. **Elected Members can play a key part in the reassurance process.**
- 5.6 A task group member, who has had previous experience of several emergency situations, has seen the levels of peoples' anger rise after the first few days of a major emergency. *"This is where there is a need for cohesion of local knowledge and local services"*.
- 5.7 The availability and the use of sensitive information relating to individuals (particularly the vulnerable) has to be carefully handled and kept in line with Data Protection and privacy legislation, this function may need to be left in the hands of a recognised agency e.g. British Red Cross, but this should not prevent communities from assisting those people who are at particular risk. Here again Councillors can play a useful link-role between local people, and the various help agencies.

BEFORE THE EVENT

Elected members can play an 'ambassadorial' role

- Raising local awareness and benefits of a community resilience scheme and reducing apathy in local people.
- Working alongside other key responder agencies such as the Police and Fire Services in their community engagement programmes.
- Helping to identify people who could run with a local emergency plan; encouraging and supporting them to forge a spirit of self help and resilience.
- Providing a community leadership role – encouraging Parish and Town Councillors to step up to the job. (Parish Clerks tend to be closer to the people but don't necessarily have the same connections with emergency agencies and partners as County and District Councillors).
- Helping to identify vulnerable people within the community through local knowledge and liaison with Social services and voluntary organisations.
- Helping to identify 'risk' in the community
- Sign-posting to particular funding schemes
- Providing credibility to pull in monies from other groups
- Facilitating access to training programmes
- Linking with their District and Parish colleagues
- Providing the *Guide to Developing a Community Emergency Plan*
- Providing a 'sign posting' service to key players/providers in the community at a time of emergency.
- Attending joint councillor Resilience Planning training seminars

ACUTE PHASE

- Members can talk with authority to get the message over
- Helping to let Category 1 and 2 responders do their job
- Maintaining effective communication links between Category 1&2 responders and key local activities on the ground.
- Taking on a media relations/communication role (*particularly important in more sparsely populated areas*)

RECOVERY PHASE (*this is where it gets particularly difficult*)

Once the 'Acute' phase moves to 'Recovery' the Police pass command and control to the local authority and in the case of a two-tier authority, the County Council is likely to take over responsibility for the recovery phase.

For Members this could include:

- Assisting in a timely and effective transition and hand-over from the Acute to Recovery phase.
- Helping to reassure those people who were most affected by the emergency, that recovery work is ongoing and everything is being done to return to normality. They have not been forgotten.

- Dealing with inertia, once the 'blue-light' responders have been stood down and handed responsibility back to the local authorities.
- Helping to break down traditional barriers between Town and District Councils, where it is easy for one side or the other to retreat into 'reputational defence mode'
- Strengthening established links with the District and Parish Councils.
- Using local influence and networking to the full to help maintain good communications between the Council and those people who have been affected by the emergency.

Here again, as community leaders, local councillors become a source of information to signpost people on – particularly with regard to local public services. There is a fine line to be drawn between keeping out of the way (leaving the right people to get on) whilst providing a source of information. A lot comes down to the individual.

Preventing apathy becomes particularly important following an emergency situation where a Police/Fire and Rescue presence has been required and then withdrawn.

In consideration of a template for what the County Councillor could do, the following points were raised by the Task Group:

- The 'Ambassadorial' role would be a good starting point
- Members will need more information on actual and potential funding opportunities that would encourage and sustain community participation.
- Members will need more information and access to community resilience training
- Members should know who the various key community groups are within their area.
- Dealing with the media – members can keep out of the way too much.
- Need to also consider the role of the District Councillor – they also have responsibilities and talking to them is something which can be incorporated into the first phase –getting that liaison with district councillors.
- Individual members will need a willingness to get involved.
- Help to break down relationship barriers with officers and members and with other authorities.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Keswick Flood Action Group model (Appendix 1), for community resilience could form the basis of any Community Contingency Plan and adapted to suit rural and urban requirements. The basic principles contained within this model could be expanded to grow successful models of community resilience against most threats and hazards.
- 6.2 All levels, County, District and Parish (Town) Councillors should be engaged in raising awareness and motivating those communities that are not currently involved in community emergency planning process. There is a strong likelihood in future that Parish and town Councils will be expected to participate in community resilience planning. (In terms of Town Councillors, these can be picked up through Parish Councils).
- 6.3 Overcoming people's apathy will be a real challenge to Members keen to see a community resilience plan developed in their area.
- 6.4 The County Council's '*A Guide to Developing a Community Emergency Plan*' which is currently being developed will need to have the 'buy-in' of District and Parish Councils as well as key agencies and partners.
- 6.5 Parish Clerks can play a vital role in supporting local emergency planning arrangements but particular care needs to be taken in identifying key people who will support and drive a local Emergency Plan but may live well outside that particular ward boundary. A Parish Clerk may be very embedded in their local community but may not necessarily live in the parish.
- 6.6 Police and Fire Service community engagement initiatives provide councillors with a ready-made communications channel, through which they can promote the need for effective resilience planning. These need to be explored further.
- 6.7 Key voluntary organisations, (eg. British Red Cross, AGE Concern etc.) working alongside the emergency services and local authorities can also provide a useful communication channel into local communities.
- 6.8 Keeping track of vulnerable and/or displaced persons throughout an emergency situation can be very difficult and risks creating a distraction to the objectives of 'blue light' responders.
- 6.9 A more open approach (protocol) to information sharing needs to be developed between partners/agencies in order that those people who are at most risk can be identified and accounted for at a time of emergency and through to the Recovery Phase.
- 6.10 Area Support Managers (ASMs) are ideally placed to encourage local communities to incorporate resilience planning into their Local Plans. ASMs already have a close working relationship with locally elected members and have a recognised key role to play, particularly at the 'Recovery' phase arising from an emergency situation.

- 6.11 ASMs and Community Units need to be encouraged to communicate their activities to the local population and member/s during the 'Recovery' phase to avoid duplication of effort and to help maintain people's spirits. Good communication and information flows can be enhanced at a time when the local Councillor is likely to be very active in the community. The degree to which Members are kept informed appears to vary from area to area. Whilst this is general importance it becomes critical in avoiding inertia and the duplication of effort in the 'Recovery Stage'
- 6.12 The role of the Community Unit can be regarded as a 'route in' to embedding resilience plans into communities.
- 6.13 Problems in urban communities and unparished areas need to be looked at – there can be different issues to those in rural communities. Police Neighbourhood Watch/ Farm Watch schemes can provide another route into a community
- 6.14 Finally, identify the community leaders willing and able to act, help them with the guide, and have a resilience party!

11.5.10

7. Appendices

1. Keswick Flood Action Group
2. Cumbria Risk Register - 2009
3. Cumbria County Council, Resilience Unit –A Guide to Developing a Community Emergency Plan (Draft), January 2010

1. Keswick Flood Action Group

1. The Keswick Flood Action Group (KFAG) was established as a self-help group in 2006/07 following the floods of 2005. The objective for this group was to mobilise volunteers (who are not liable to flooding) to help those at risk when flooding is potentially imminent and also in the aftermath.
2. In 2009, this became the start point for a Keswick Emergency Plan. This was developed with the support of the County Council's Emergency Planning/Resilience Officer, the Environment Agency, Town Clerk and Cumbria Fire Service.
3. A workshop had been held in October 2009 to widen this plan including other organisations and particularly to provide emergency accommodation. However, at the time of the November flood, this plan was in need of further development.
4. The Flood Action Group relied on volunteers and where it could, shared resources and equipment (including non-digital telephone equipment) with other local organisations/agencies. In the event of an emergency, the Town Hall would become the local command and control centre.
5. Building a database of local, vulnerable people who can be targeted for early help can be a sensitive and difficult process. Finding those people who are particularly vulnerable must be a priority. Are those people getting the information they need? This area is considered the 'Holy Grail' and at present, social services are not really embedded in the work of the flood action group.
6. Local buildings were identified as evacuation points or reception centres and Flood Action Group volunteers and other groups (i.e. Rotary/Lions and Churches Together etc) were allotted specific roles – particularly for the Preparatory and Recovery Phases.
7. Keswick Flood Action Group starts to take action on a flood watch being issued by the Environment Agency. Information is then closely monitored by all parties. Met Office updates are also fed to KFAG. Local water level information from key points is fed back to the EA as part of the two-way information flow between KFAG and the EA.
8. At agreed trigger points, volunteers are called into action – visiting those people who are the most vulnerable first. Each group of volunteers is in radio link with the KFAG control centre. They continue to provide initial help until such times as the emergency services have moved into the designated control and command centre in the Town Hall. A dedicated emergency phone line had been installed as part of the emergency procedures.
9. The 'live' experiences gained by KFAG in November 09 provided some very useful information on what worked well and not so well. Lessons from the Keswick floods will go forward to help inform future resilience preparations, particularly for the preparatory and recovery phases.

2. Cumbria Risk Register - 2009

No	Ref	Likelihood	Impact	Rating	Descriptor	Lead Agency
1	H23	4	5	VERY HIGH	Influenza type disease (pandemic).	Department of Health
2	H17	4	4	VERY HIGH	Storms and gales	Met Office
3=	HL16	3	4	VERY HIGH	Local coastal/tidal Flooding (affecting more than one Region)	Environment Agency / Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
	HL18	3	4	VERY HIGH	Local/Urban flooding (Pluvial or surface run-off)	Environment Agency / Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
4=	H14	5	3	HIGH	Major contamination incident with widespread implications for food chain, arising from: 1. Industrial accident (chemical, microbiological, nuclear) affecting food production areas e.g. Chernobyl, Sea Empress oil spill, animal disease. 2. Containment of animal feed e.g. dioxins, BSE. 3. Incidents arising from production processes, e.g. adulteration of chilli powder with Sudan 1 dye	Food Standards Agency
	H46	5	3	HIGH	Biological substance release during an unrelated work activity or industrial process (e.g. Legionella release due to improperly maintained building environmental control systems)	Health and Safety Executive
	HL10	5	3	HIGH	Local accident on motorways and trunk roads	Department for Transport
5=	H37	4	3	HIGH	International security incident resulting in influx of British Nationals who are not normally resident within the UK	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
	H40	4	3	HIGH	No notice loss of significant telecommunications infrastructure in a localised fire, flood or gas incident	Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
	HL4	4	3	HIGH	Major pollution of controlled waters	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
	HL17	4	3	HIGH	Local coastal / tidal flooding (in one Region)	Environment Agency / Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
	HL19	4	3	HIGH	Local fluvial flooding	Environment Agency / Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
	HL24	4	3	HIGH	Localised Legionella / Meningitis outbreak	Department of Health
	CL1	4	3	HIGH	Accident involving Shellfish Harvesters	Police Service
6=	H18	3	3	HIGH	Low temperatures and heavy snow	Met Office
	H24	3	3	HIGH	Emerging infectious diseases	Department of Health
	H31	3	3	HIGH	Significant or perceived significant constraint on the supply of fuel e.g. industrial action by contract drivers for fuel, or by effective fuel blockades	Department of Energy and Climate Change
	H43	3	3	HIGH	Telecommunication infrastructure – human error	Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
	H52	3	3	HIGH	Influx of British Nationals from abroad following an outbreak of an infectious disease	Civil Contingencies Secretariat
	HL20	3	3	HIGH	Localised, extremely hazardous flash flooding	Environment Agency / Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
	CL6	3	3	HIGH	An event which is not licensed under any regulatory process and/or has no identifiable promoter	Police Service

No	Ref	Likelihood	Impact	Rating	Descriptor	Lead Agency	
7=	H26	2	4	HIGH	Zoonotic Notifiable Animal Diseases (e.g. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), Rabies and West Nile Virus)	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
	HL9	2	4	HIGH	Aviation accident	Department for Transport	
	H25	2	3	HIGH	Non-zoonotic notifiable animal diseases (e.g. FMD, Classical Swine Fever, Blue Tongue and Newcastle disease of birds)	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
8=	H38	2	3	HIGH	Technical failure of a critical upstream oil/gas facility, gas import pipeline terminal, or Liquefied natural Gas (LNG) import reception facility leading to a disruption in upstream oil and gas production	Department of Energy and Climate Change	
	H41	2	3	HIGH	Technical failure of electricity network. (Blackstart)	Department of Energy and Climate Change	
	H45	2	3	HIGH	Technical failure of electricity network	Department of Energy and Climate Change	
	H48	2	3	HIGH	Heat wave	Met Office	
	HL7	2	3	HIGH	Industrial explosions and major fires	Health and Safety Executive	
9	HL33	5	2	MEDIUM	Forest or moorland fire	Fire Service	
10=	H30	4	2	MEDIUM	Emergency Services: loss of emergency fire and rescue cover because of industrial action	Cabinet Office	
	H39	4	2	MEDIUM	Failure of water infrastructure or accidental contamination with a non-toxic contaminant	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
11=	HL42	3	2	MEDIUM	Loss of cover due to industrial action by workers providing a service critical to the preservation of life (such as emergency service workers)	Cabinet Office	
12=	H1	1	5	MEDIUM	Fire or explosion at a gas LPG terminal (or associated onshore feedstock pipeline) or flammable gas storage site	Health and Safety Executive	
	H2	1	5	MEDIUM	Fire or explosion at an onshore ethylene gas pipeline	Health and Safety Executive	
	H7	1	5	MEDIUM	Explosion at a high pressure natural gas pipeline	Health and Safety Executive	
	H10	1	5	MEDIUM	Radioactive substance release-from a nuclear reactor	Health and Safety Executive	
	H11	1	5	MEDIUM	Accidental release of radioactive material from incorrectly handled or disposed of sources	Health and Safety Executive	
	H15	1	5	MEDIUM	Maritime Pollution	Department for Transport	
	H42	1	5	MEDIUM	Rapid accidental sinking of passenger vessel in or close to UK waters	Department for Transport	
	H44	1	5	MEDIUM	Major reservoir dam failure / collapse	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
	HL1	1	5	MEDIUM	Fire or explosion at a gas terminal or involving a gas pipeline	Health and Safety Executive	
	HL8	1	5	MEDIUM	Fire, flooding, stranding or collision involving a passenger vessel in or close to UK waters or on inland waterways, leading to the ship's evacuation.	Department for Transport	
	HL12	1	5	MEDIUM	Local accident involving transport of hazardous chemicals	Department for Transport	
	HL25	1	5	MEDIUM	Fire or explosion at a gas terminal as well as LPG, LNG, and other gas onshore feedstock pipeline and flammable gas storage sites	Health and Safety Executive	
	HL31	1	5	MEDIUM	Limited radioactive substance release from a nuclear accident	Health and Safety Executive	
	HL34	1	5	MEDIUM	Fire, flooding, stranding or collision involving a passenger vessel in or close to UK waters leading to the ship's evacuation or partial evacuation at sea	Department for Transport	
	HL37	1	5	MEDIUM	Release of significant quantities of hazardous chemicals/materials as a result of major shipping accident	Department for Transport	
	13=	H4	1	4	MEDIUM	Fire or explosion at fuel distribution site or a site storing flammable and/or toxic liquids in atmospheric pressure storage tanks	Health and Safety Executive
		H16	1	4	MEDIUM	Aviation accident over a semi urban area	Department for Transport
H50		1	4	MEDIUM	Drought	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	
HL11		1	4	MEDIUM	Railway accident	Department for Transport	

No	Ref	Likelihood	Impact	Rating	Descriptor	Lead Agency
	HL14	1	4	MEDIUM	Local (road) accident involving transport of fuel / explosives	Fire Service
	HL26	1	4	MEDIUM	Localised fire or explosion at an onshore ethylene gas pipeline	Health and Safety Executive
	HL28	1	4	MEDIUM	Localised fire or explosion at a fuel distribution site or tank storage of flammable and/or toxic liquids	Health and Safety Executive
	HL30	1	4	MEDIUM	Localised explosion at a natural gas pipeline	Health and Safety Executive
14=	HL2	1	3	MEDIUM	Localised industrial accident involving large toxic release. (e.g. from a site storing large quantities of chlorine)	Health and Safety Executive
	HL3	1	3	MEDIUM	Localised industrial accident involving small toxic release	Health and Safety Executive
	H6	1	3	MEDIUM	Fire or explosion at an offshore oil/gas platform	Health and Safety Executive
	H12	1	3	MEDIUM	Biological substance release from facility where pathogens are handled deliberately (e.g. pathogen release from containment laboratory)	Health and Safety Executive
15	H33	5	1	LOW	Unofficial strike action by prison officers leading to a serious shortfall in the number of personnel available to operate and maintain control of prisons	Cabinet Office
16	H49	1	4	LOW	Loss of drinking water supplies due to a major accident affecting infrastructure	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
17=	H35	1	2	LOW	Industrial action by key rail or London Underground workers	Department for Transport
	HL13	1	2	LOW	Maritime accident or deliberate blockade resulting in blockage of access to key port, estuary, maritime route for more than one month	Department for Transport
	HL22	1	2	LOW	Building collapse	Fire Service
	HL23	1	2	LOW	Bridge collapse	Fire Service
18	HL21	1	1	LOW	Land movement (i.e. caused by tremors or landslides)	Fire Service
The following categories are excluded from the Cumbrian Community Risk Register by reason that individual hazard criteria cannot be met within the County						
	H3	0	0		Fire or explosion at an oil refinery	Health and Safety Executive
	HL27	0	0		Localised fire or explosion at oil refinery	Health and Safety Executive
	H5	0	0		Fire or explosion at an onshore fuel pipeline	Health and Safety Executive
	H8	0	0		Very large toxic chemical release	Health and Safety Executive
	H9	0	0		Large toxic chemical release	Health and Safety Executive
	H19	0	0		Flooding: Major coastal and tidal flooding affecting more than two UK regions	Environment Agency / Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
	H21	0	0		Flooding: Severe inland flooding affecting more than two UK regions	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

