CABINET Pape No. Meeting date: 13 July 2010
From: Cabinet Member for Safety and Culture Corporate Director Safer and Stronger

# RESPONSE TO "COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLANNING"

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report responds to the recommendations made in the Community Resilience Planning document which was discussed, agreed and actioned following the October 2009 Safer, Stronger and Inclusive Communities Advisory Board meeting.

## 2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 In 2009 the Cabinet Office produced a draft strategic consultation Document titled National Framework on Community Resilience. The framework explores the roles and resilience of individuals and communities before, during and after an emergency. Coupled to this is the upcoming revision of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the potential of the addition of a category 3 responder. This category 3 responder will be the communities themselves. The County Council have been proactive in their awareness of these documents and future expectations, and have therefore commissioned a Task and Finish Group to identify how the Community Resilience agenda can be progressed in Cumbria.
- 2.2 This group's focus has been to realise the importance of how elected members can influence and support this work.

# 3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Cabinet is invited to accept the Scrutiny report and ask Officers to respond to the report's recommendations in the way outlined in this paper.
- 3.2 To establish the formation of a working group to start work on a Cumbria wide strategy for community resilience planning

Gary Strong, Cabinet member for Community Safety and Local Services

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Since 2005 both the Environment Agency and the County Emergency Planning Unit (now Resilience Unit) have encouraged community resilience through the introduction of community resilience groups and community emergency plans.
- 4.2 Although not statutory and thus unfunded, this work was seen as being essential to Community well-being in the County and since that time there has been a degree of "take-up" of the idea with notable successes in Appleby and Keswick throughout the November 2009 storms and floods.
- 4.3 Prior to that date there were 13 communities within the County with plans at various stages of development. Since that date there has been a surge of interest and Environment Agency now report 25 Communities taking an active part with a further 42 expressing interest. This number is likely to grow.
- 4.4 Since 2005 Central Government have also taken an active interest in the community resilience work being carried out in Cumbria and other parts of the country following severe weather events.
- 4.5 This has resulted in a number of national resilience campaigns, a national consultation on community resilience which is presently underway, and a stated intention to revise the Civil Contingencies Act in 2011 to introduce a "Category 3" responder being Parish and Town Councils with a statutory duty to promote community resilience.
- 4.6 Pursuant to all the above, a Cumbria County Council Scrutiny Advisory Board has recently conducted a review into community resilience planning to examine how elected councillors can best help their communities in times of crisis.
- 4.7 In the course of taking evidence for the review it became clear that although there are many agencies carrying out excellent work in communities throughout the county, little or no resource is directed towards resilience purposes and there is certainly no level of co-ordination to facilitate or direct this.
- 4.8 With growing demand and the likely introduction of appropriate legislation, the Environment Agency and the County Council Resilience Unit are simply not equipped or resourced to carry on this work in isolation.
- 4.9 It is thus recommended that a formal community resilience working group be established to take up this work.
- 4.10 The scrutiny paper makes a number of specific recommendations and this report responds specifically to each of these points.

#### 4.11 Recommendation 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.

This Recommendation is fully supported, elected members have the influence to continue to move the community resilience planning agenda along in their respective areas, however, it is felt that although members should fully engage and support, they should not be expected to be the lead person for coordinating the various workstreams involved in the production of the plan. The formation of a community resilience working Group needs to be considered to assist with this.

#### 4.12 Recommendation 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.

This Recommendation is supported, the recognition of a collaborative approach is fully supported. The Resilience Unit has been leading the way with this work and is fully committed to further developing the community plans through a multi agency and cross departmental approach. It is viewed that this is the only real way to fully commit to the community resilience working group across Cumbria.

#### 4.13 Recommendation 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.

This Recommendation is supported with the understanding that the County Council Resilience Unit has a significant part to play and will be a key partner with the development of community resilience plans. It is important for all agencies and partners to understand the respective part they have to play with the production of community plans. It is agreed the Resilience Unit should give the strategic direction for the production of the plans. However it must be realised the Unit has a finite resource in its staffing time and capacity but the development of a community resilience working group could assist with this.

#### 4.14 Recommendation 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.

This Recommendation is supported, this work will be further developed through continued multi agency working with all relevant agencies and partners across Cumbria. e.g. Communities Unit, Adult Social Care, Voluntary agencies but a community resilience working group needs to be considered to assist with this.

#### 4.15 Recommendation 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.

This Recommendation is vital for the success of being able to deliver a consistent longer term corporate approach to community planning and therefore is fully supported. It must be stressed that for the real success of the community plans to be compiled, it is beyond the capacity of one agency, partner or County Council Department and a community resilience working group needs to be considered to assist with this.

#### 4.16 Recommendation 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.

This Recommendation is supported. This would be the obvious starting point for interested community groups who are at the beginning of their community planning process, and although the Keswick model is acknowledged to be successful, it is pleasing to see it is noted within the document that each community resilience plan will need to be developed for its own particular needs.

#### 4.17 Recommendation 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.

This Recommendation is supported, the County Council's Resilience Unit is a key stakeholder in the work required to develop community resilience planning. The

Resilience Unit will give the corporate guidance, overview and steer. Through close partnership working the Unit will assist in developing plans. The development of a community resilience working group needs to be considered to assist with this.

# 5.0 **OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Cabinet could decide to reject some or all of the responses to the recommendations outlined in this report.
- 5.2 In accepting the responses to the recommendations, to approve the formation of a Community Resilience Working group which is adequately resourced to commence the development of a county wide corporate approach to developing a community resilience planning strategy. (The Risk and Resilience manager has already carried out pre-meetings prior to this report being forwarded, to establish how this group would function and the agencies involved).
- 5.3 Cabinet agree members of the community resilience planning group should initially consist of staff from:-
  - Communities Unit Chair
  - Resilience Unit
  - Fire Service
  - Environment Agency (external to CCC)
  - Police (external to CCC)
  - Relevant District Council representative if required
  - Other (Cabinet recommendation)

## 6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The formation of a community resilience working group would be established from existing resources, pre meetings already carried out have identified key staff who would be involved. All staff fully understand this work is additional to their normal day job, however it is felt strongly that to not embrace this work early on will put the County Council in a worse position when the Civil Contingencies Act is reviewed and amended.
- 6.2 Initially no budget is required to establish the working group, however longer term there may be some small budgetary requirements to assist with the production of standardised community resilience plans for communities across Cumbria.

#### 7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 has placed statutory duties on local authorities and other agencies to work together to develop robust arrangements to plan, prepare respond to and recover from emergencies. It

has moved the emphasis away from relevant agencies simply planning to respond to an emergency to having plans in place to make the whole community more resilient before, during and after an emergency.

- 7.2 The Act places a series of duties on the County Council as a Category 1 responder and these are to form the basis of resilience planning. These are:-
  - 7.2.1 Co-operation and information sharing with other agencies to ensure that all agencies respond in an effective and co-ordinated manner before during and after an emergency
  - 7.2.2 Risk Assessments an assessment of the risks of an emergency occurring within the community is to be carried out and used to inform the County Council's emergency planning.
  - 7.2.3 Emergency Planning there is a requirement for the County Council to work with other agencies and the community to develop emergency plans to prepare, respond and recover from emergencies in accordance with the risks in the community.
  - 7.2.4 Business Continuity Management the County Council is required to have plans in place within the Council so that essential services can be continued to be provided in the event of an emergency or disruption occurring that might affect County Council's services and also in the event of an emergency occurring within the community so that the County Council can respond to the emergency and continue to provide County Council services.
  - 7.2.5 Communicating with the Public the County Council is required to have robust arrangements in place to warn and inform the public, before during and after an emergency to minimise the impact of an emergency in the community.
  - 7.2.6 Advice and Assistance to Business and Voluntary Organisations the County Council is required to provide advice and assistance to business and voluntary organisations about having business continuity plans in place to provide stability to the economy and the community in the event of an emergency.
- 7.3 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 ("the Regulations") the County Council is required to co-operate with other category 1 responders in a Local Resilience Forum in the performance of its duties (Regulation 4(1)(2)(3)). There must be a Local Resilience Forum meeting once every 6 months (Regulation 4(4)). BB
- 7.4 (All the above requirements above relating to the local authority statutory responsibilities under Civil Contingencies Act are in place within CCC and have proved to work well on numerous occasions. However it should be noted there is no statutory requirement within the Act at this time for the local authority to produce specific community resilience plans).

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The Document produced by the Task and Finish group provide a solid overview of the current position regarding community resilience planning across Cumbria. It has highlighted the importance of Elected Members involvement and the significant contributions they can make with this work. The report also acknowledges the importance of delivering a consistent strategy across Cumbria, and to do this a collaborative multi agency response will be required.

Dominic Harrison Corporate Director Safer and Stronger June 2010

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Community Resilience Report attached to iten	า 7(	(1	)
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Electoral Division(s): \*

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Executive Decision	Yes	
Key Decision	No*	
If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?		N/A*
Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?	No*	
If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?	Yes*	
Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below.	Yes*	]
Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?	No*	
Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?	No*	

#### **CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

This report responds to a scrutiny review

# **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Community Resilience Planning document April 2010

# **RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER**

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# **REPORT AUTHOR**

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