

Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 4 April 2019
Portfolio: Cross-cutting
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework Yes
Public / Private Public

Title: Flood Recovery Lessons Learnt Report
Report of: Corporate Director of Economic Development
Report Number: ED 14/19

Purpose / Summary:

The purpose of this report is to summarise the lessons learnt from the Storm Desmond Flood Event 2015.

Recommendations:

- Panel are asked to note and comment on the report

Tracking

Executive:	N/A
Scrutiny:	B&TSP 28/3/19, H&WSP 4/4/19 , EGSP 11/4/19
Council:	N/A

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The impact of Storm Desmond in 2015 on Cumbria were of the highest strength and scale. The recovery challenges facing Cumbria were indeed unprecedented; Storm Desmond flooded over 5,500 homes and 1,000 businesses, damaged or destroyed 792 bridges and nearly 400 km of major road and affected public sector buildings the Civic Centre and 44 schools.
- 1.2 The Cumbria Local Resilience Forum's Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) led on the acute phase response, this has been thoroughly debriefed and the improvement plan continues to drive the wide work of this partnership. In parallel to the acute phase a Strategic Recovery Coordinating Group (SRCG) was initiated. The SCG finally stood down and handed over to the SRCG at 17:00hrs on Thursday 10th December 2015, marking the end of the acute phase.
- 1.3 A debrief on the acute phase was completed in April 2016, the Improvement Plan generated from the recommendations has been the focus of the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum's (CLRF) ongoing work. Progress on the Improvement Plan is reported to the CLRF's Programme Board on a quarterly cycle.
- 1.4 A countywide [Impact Assessment](#) was completed and then updated in July 2018, the report identifies and quantifies the impacts, district by district, on:
 - households,
 - community welfare,
 - infrastructure,
 - learning and schools,
 - environment, economy and business.
- 1.5 A recovery debrief report, titled '[A review of recovery processes following Storm Desmond's impacts on Cumbria \(5th/6th Dec 2015\)](#)' was completed in July 2018 and published on the County Council's website in December 2018.
- 1.6 The Chief Fire Officer, Steven Healey, Chair of the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum, explained that this report 'includes fifty-eight recommendations for further actions, many of which have been, or are being, actioned through the Cumbria Local Resilience Forum or by individual organisations. Other recommendations require consideration at national level or by central Government in a longer timescale.'
- 1.7 The Chair of the CLRF also noted that 'whilst the report offers many suggestions as to where improvements might be made it concludes that, given the scale and challenges of capacity involved, the recovery processes were managed effectively, and that the experience offers a number of examples of notable good practice.'
- 1.8 The CLRF has recently recruited a manager to continue the development of the partnership. This role will add more capacity to deliver on the existing Improvement Plan and the recommendations from the recovery debrief report.

2. LESSONS LEARNT BY SERVICE MANAGERS

2.1 Recovery and reinstatement projects have been reported to the panel over the last three work programmes. Links to associated reports, including national reviews is presented in appendix A.

2.2 Key service areas, **based on panel remits**, have been selected as a focus. In each case the service manager has been asked to respond to the following questions:

- Thinking about your service area, what lessons have you learnt from the recovery from the Storm Desmond Flood Event 2015?
- Thinking in terms of business continuity, what steps have you taken to ensure that a level of service can be maintained if a similar event was to happen again?
- Which, if any, parts of service recovery are still outstanding?

The responses from the service manager are summarised below, service by service.

2.3 Emergency Planning

Emergency Planning was audit in 2015/16 and given a 'reasonable assurance'. In addition, a rolling improvement plan is maintained by the Emergency Planning Working Group, an officer group that meets every three months to discuss Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

The panel received a report which covered the development of emergency planning and community emergency planning in 2018. The key lessons learnt from 2015 were:

- A clear, publicised '[Flood Plan](#)' that identifies the actions the Council will take in the event of flooding has been completed.
- Inclusion of smaller, more local Emergency Assistance Centres (EAC), also known as Reception Centres.
- Greater involvement of the voluntary and business sector in both response and recovery, this is now facilitated through improved partnership contact and engagement.
- In 2018 'Exercise Longbow', a test of multiple Emergency Assistance Centres across Carlisle, was completed successfully. The exercise delivered the following objectives:
 - a. Demonstrate the ability of the local authorities and supporting agencies to effectively establish and coordinate multiple concurrent Emergency Reception Centres which meets the needs of evacuees, in accordance with the Cumbria Emergency Assistance Centre Plan.
 - b. Demonstrate the ability and effectiveness of the Reception Centre registration process to capture, record and send evacuees' personal details to a given location in accordance with the Emergency Assistance Centre plan.

- c. Analyse and demonstrate the ability to establish communications, to receive and transmit key information from sources, to include Airwave and Resilience Direct, which provides members of the public with timely information about the incident.
 - d. Demonstrate the effective management and coordination of the Emergency Reception Centres through a reserve District Council Control Reception Centre.
 - e. Review how the Humanitarian Assistance response is integrated with the Welfare Support Team and the voluntary sector for both residential and transient populations.
 - f. Implement and analyse the role of a hospital clinical care lead and the relationship required with the Reception Centre Manager.
 - g. Examine the operation of Secondary Reception Centres as multi-agency Evacuee Reception Centres.
- The challenges of spontaneous volunteering and donations is dealt with in a separate section of the Cumbria Resilience Forum Welfare Plan.
 - In addition to the voluntary sector roles, 2 EAC Managers and 4 EAC Support roles are now retained.
 - The CLRF have identified additional improvement actions around the acute and recovery phases. We will continue to contribute time and resources to the CLRF and the County Council's Resilience Unit through a Service Level Agreement. We will play an active part in the improvement of the CLRF through its plans, exercises, sub groups and task and finish groups.
 - CLRF works in partnership to create a [Community Risk Register \(CRR\)](#) which lists possible risks, their probability of occurring and potential impact.
 - The CRR provides information on risks together with an assessment of how likely they are to happen and the potential impacts and is published on the County Council's website. The risks are presented in order of rating with the highest rating being coloured red, localised fluvial flooding and fluvial flooding remain amongst the highest rated risks.
 - The CLRF has critically appraised its capabilities against the CRR to understand its current strengths and weaknesses relating to the common consequences of these risks. For example, both 'localised fluvial (river) flooding' and a 'transport incident (fuel/explosion)' can lead to people being evacuated to a designated Reception Centre.

2.4 Community Emergency Planning

- We are working with Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT), Newground, Cumbria Voluntary Sector and Carlisle Flood Action Group to raise awareness of, and support, Community Emergency Planning and resilience.
- Community Emergency Plans can help to minimise the impact of an emergency and help communities to recover more quickly. Communities are being encouraged to plan for extreme weather events, and other types of emergencies, to:
 - Be better prepared for an emergency
 - Know what to do, before outside help and emergency services can arrive
 - Work with emergency services and other agencies effectively, using local knowledge
 - Recover more quickly and effectively after an emergency

2.5 Homelessness Service

The financial impacts have been reported to the Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel (28/3/19).

- It is critical that we mobilise staff to assist people as quickly as possible who require housing advice. A central base is required to see those in need efficiently.
- Provision must be made to enable the use of phones and IT equipment when the network goes down. An emergency plan in place for these risks.
- Access to emergency accommodation is critical and an emergency fund needs to be established to enable emergency accommodation, furnishings, supplies to assist rehousing.
- Service managers must be actively engaged in the project management in terms of the reinstatement of affected schemes.
- The time taken to reinstate the accommodation schemes must be given a higher priority.
- The financial impact on the service through loss of income and increase in refurbishment costs of alternative accommodation utilised must be factored in, where this is not recoverable through insurance cover.
- Delays in refurbishment work of dispersed properties utilised throughout 2018/19 has had a significant negative impact on income recovery within the service.

2.6 Neighbourhood Services

- We now have a 'flood clean-up and recovery plan' that draws on our experience of responding to the 2015 flooding and highlights the priorities and actions necessary in terms of supporting the clean-up activity and at the same time maintaining key services for other areas of Carlisle that was not directly affected by flooding. An anonymised version of this internal plan is available on request.
- The plan includes a list of key contacts, identifies their roles in leading the clean-up response and identifies a range of partners and contractors that we will work with to facilitate our coordinated response. This includes for example operators of heavy plant and vehicles to remove flood damaged property from the streets.
- The plan also outlines what worked well and not so well. In this regard, the overnight road closures and coordinated activity through the night was very effective.
- The over-reliance on skips then slowed the clean-up process down, delays in getting permission from home-owners to remove flood damaged property as many were awaiting approval from their insurance assessors. Therefore, piles of furniture then built up blocking pavements and spilling out on to the roads causing a hazard for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.
- Clean-up takes longer than expected and comes in waves, with the last wave largely due to the work of builders reinstating properties and where some were not managing the waste responsibly or indeed legally. Engagement with the insurance

companies and builders in this regard was important to avoid enforcement action for illegal dumping of waste.

- A key message would be for home-owners to photograph their items in their home, during or after the flood water has receded. It is more difficult for the assessors to determine value and confirm ownership once the material is outside of the property.
- Working with key partners and volunteers is key. We also need to know when it is appropriate to call on such support and when such support should be declined for the safety and protection of the volunteers.
- We also have a plan for the evacuation of key Council vehicles should our depots / operational bases be at risk. We lost some vehicles to flood damage previously parked in the Civic Centre and at our Bitts Park depot. No vehicles are now parked at Bitts Depot and the fleet evacuation plan now includes the relocation of vehicles parked at the Civic Centre. For example, the Mayor's official car and pool cars would be relocated should the flood risk be raised accordingly.
- We have developed a small store of equipment that can help with the clean-up effort. This will ensure that key council staff have access to certain tools and equipment to facilitate an earlier response.
- The flood clean-up and recovery plan will facilitate a return to business as usual as early as possible and at the same time ensure that services are maintained to those areas of Carlisle not affected by flooding.
- The plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of key staff in this regard under single coordination, feeding back into the centre and working closely with Communications to ensure key messages are given to residents about any disruption to services.
- We have increased our fleet capacity to respond to severe winter weather and flooding events. For example, in 2016, we replaced two vans with 4x4 pick-up vehicles with raised air intakes (snorkels) to improve their wading depth and capability for driving in flood water.

2.7 Environmental Health (Property Level Resilience Grants)

- The flood grant work required additional officer support, it dominated the work of the Housing Pollution Team, after the flood, preventing other important activities being progressed.
- Officer equipment has been improved to facilitate contact and working out of the office.
- The success of the Flood Case Worker Post supported by Foundations. A Foundations Report noted that the case worker used in Carlisle was an example of good practice.
- This work is also recognised in a Newground case study, titled '[Willow Park Community Flood Scheme - Video Case Study - Newground](#)', available on YouTube.

- The new phones and laptops will help with remote working and keeping in contact with officers to direct them.
- Web based information systems now enable access to Notices Procedures, we also provide carbonated Notice pads for Food Safety. A Case Management software has been procured for all grant work.
- We are still considering when and how to update Flare and Lalpac Systems which are used for Environmental Health and Licensing work. These systems provide access to digital databases for complaints / inspections.

2.8 Parks and leisure

- We have changed the way we work with our teams by not using Bitts Depot as a main depot for vehicles and machinery to reduce the risk of flood damage. The lack of vehicles caused issues in both normal business and flood recovery support.
- The natural environment stood up well to the floods and this did not cause us many issues in business continuity.
- The main issues within the Parks/Open Spaces and Play areas was the built environment such as The Lodge, toilet facilities and the play areas at Bitts Park. *(Property Services are providing a response on The Lodge and toilets refurbishment to Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel)*
- These buildings being out of action has had a knock-on effect on the level of service that we have been able to offer for users of Bitts Park resulting in numerous complaints and minor reputational damage to the authority.
- The play area was replaced by October 2016 which was positive for the parks users and has flood resilience built in should we get another flood.
- The Sands Centre only had minor disruption and was up and running fairly quickly.
- The Sheepmount was out of action for a considerable time and this caused severe business continuity with the athletics and football provided through the leisure contract. The Sheepmount has now been rebuilt with flood resilience built in.
- Stony Holme Golf Course was out of action with the main issue being the building and depot being unusable. Once again, the natural environment at the golf course recovered fairly quickly.

2.9 Land Drainage (operational)

- The key lesson learned about flooding is the need for all relevant organisations to cooperate and plan. It is inevitable that flooding will occur to various degrees in future, but the impact can be limited by ensuring that problem locations are known, and appropriate action is taken to limit the impact of flooding.

- The 'Making Space for Water Group' ensures regular coordination with all relevant parties (County Council, EA, City Council, UU, Eden Rivers Trust).
- This group is working well, any reported issues are inspected quickly, and action is taken to resolve them.

3. RISKS

- 3.1** The new [Risk Management and Assurance Framework](#) (RMAF) was scrutinised by Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel on 18 October 2019. The link to the Project Management Handbook (PHF) is made clear in the policy, this places the responsibility on the Project Manager to identify the risks associated with a project. The [Project Manager Handbook](#) was scrutinised by the Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel on 5 December 2017.
- 3.2** The risks to business continuity, through loss of access to assets, ICT or data, is dealt with through the Business Continuity Plan, with the detail contained in the Service Recovery Plans. This approach was audited in 2017/18 and an update on actions will be reported at the [Audit Committee](#), March 2019.
- 3.3** The risks relating to new projects are contained in the project's risk register, management is in accordance with the RMAF, the registers are maintained during the life-cycle of the project.

4 CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1** Panel are asked to note and comment on the report.

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**Appendices Links to associated reports
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL -

FINANCE –
EQUALITY –
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE –

Appendix: Links to reports

Report	Purpose
Debrief reports and impact assessment	
Acute Debrief Report (Accessible only on ResilienceDirect, secure extranet)	Debrief report on the acute phase of the major emergency
Recovery Debrief Report	Debrief report for the recovery phase of the major emergency
Impact Assessment	Wide-ranging impact assessment
National reviews and reports	
National Flood Resilience Review	Case study on Carlisle
Estimating the economic costs of the 2015 to 2016 winter floods	Assessment of the economic costs
Health & Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel reports	
Final Flood Update Report (January 2018)	This report is the final update report prepared for Overview and Scrutiny Committees on flood recovery activities and any future programmed work
Emergency Planning	The purpose of this report is to provide a summarised overview of Emergency Planning.