

**Safest People, Safest Places**

**Combined Fire Authority**

**20 January 2025**

**Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Update Report**

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**Report of the Director of Emergency Response**

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### **Purpose of this Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with an overview of the purpose of Local Resilience Forums (LRF), and in particular the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (CDDLRF), which is hosted by the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS).
2. The report also outlines the structure and roles within CDDLRF, including key personnel, responsibilities and meetings that take place as well as highlighting CDDFRS relationship with CDDLRF and their involvement in training, exercises, and community resilience efforts.

### **Background**

3. Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA), local responders have a legal responsibility to cooperate with one another. Whilst the LRF is not a statutory body, within the CCA, (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005 and accompanying statutory guidance entitled "Preparing for Emergencies", it is seen as the principal mechanism for facilitating multi-agency cooperation, especially between Category 1 and Category 2 Responders.
4. Cabinet Office guidance stipulates that all Category 1 responders must attend meetings of the LRF Strategic Board and Category 2 responders have a right to invite and to attend.

### **Purpose of the LRF**

5. The purpose of all LRFs is to ensure effective delivery of those duties under within the CCA that need to be developed in a multi-agency environment and individually as a Category 1 or Category 2 responder.

6. The LRF's purpose is to plan for and respond to incidents requiring a multi-agency response, ensuring preparedness and effective emergency response for the communities the particular LRF is responsible for.
7. In particular the national LRF process should deliver:
  - a compilation of agreed risk profiles for their area, through a Community Risk Register (CRR)
  - a systematic, planned and coordinated approach to encourage Category 1 responders, according to their functions, to address all aspects of policy in relation to:
    - risk
    - planning for emergencies
    - planning for business continuity management
    - publishing information about risk assessments and plans
    - arrangements to warn and inform the public
    - other aspects of civil protection duty, including the promotion of business continuity management by local authorities
  - support for the preparation by all or some of its members of multi-agency plans and other documents, including protocols and agreements
  - coordination of multi-agency exercises and other training events

## **CDDLRF**

8. CDDLRF was formed in 2004 and is part of a wider UK network supporting resilience activities. The secretariat team operating from CDDFRS HQ consists of five members of staff.
9. CDDLRF supports the local communities of County Durham and Darlington to plan for and respond to any incidents that would require a multi-agency (two or more responder agencies e.g. fire, police, and local authority) response. This includes training and exercising for the agencies within the forum.
10. The overall purpose is to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness, within available resources, to enable an effective multi-agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on the communities of County Durham and Darlington.
11. Funding of CDDLRF is made up of core Central Government funding and contributions from six Category 1 responders as set out in the table below:

Organisation	Total contribution per annum
Durham Constabulary	£6,812
CDD FRS	£6,812
NEAS	£3,906
Integrated Care Board	£3,746
Durham County Council	£7,812
Darlington Borough Council	£6,812
<b>Total</b>	<b>£35,900</b>

12. On 21 December 2021, the LRF Chairs received verbal confirmation that the Secretary of State had agreed to provide funding for three years (from April 2022 - 2025) set at £186,851 per annum on a pilot basis.
13. Given this funding is to support LRFs to transition into a state capable of dealing with greater roles and responsibilities over the next few years the funding is now known as 'core funding'.
14. LRFs were expressly informed that this core funding should not replace or displace contributions from LRF partners, but rather it is in addition to the contributions already made.
15. The CDDLRF team work to an annual work programme overseen by the Tactical Business Group (TBG) including areas such as horizon scanning, strategic risk analysis, financial planning, coordinating and evaluating training and exercises.
16. Since 2019 the work undertaken by CDDLRF has been unprecedented in terms of responding to national events, pandemics and emergencies such as Brexit and Covid-19 with the multi-agency response for both based at CDDFRS Headquarters (HQ) for the duration. More recently Storm Arwen and Storm Babet both saw an influx in the number of community groups requesting assistance in the preparation of community emergency plans (CEPs).
17. CDDLRF, Community Resilience and Risk Officer based at CDDFRS HQ works closely with the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to assist community groups across County Durham & Darlington in preparing for such emergencies and boosting community resilience.
18. CDDLRF are also responsible for producing the Community Risk Register (CRR) which is a multi-agency publication highlighting risks across County Durham and Darlington that have the highest likelihood and potential to have significant impact, causing disruption to the communities. The CRR is derived from both the National Risk Register (NRR) and the National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA) although with the cognisance that not all national risks are relevant to our locality.

19. CDDLRF utilise CDDFRS staff in the documents development and overarching communications plans that aim to draw together the CRR, the work of the Community Resilience and Warning and Informing Groups. This joint working ensures that information regarding emergency preparedness is targeted towards key audiences, is relevant and consistent and that all partners are working collaboratively and effectively. As a result of this work CEPs are now available to operational fire crews.
20. The CEPs are stored on the secure government platform, Resilience Direct (RD) and are uploaded onto Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) on all front line fire appliances. This ensures that when crews are responding to community emergencies, such as severe weather incidents they are aware of key community venues, community emergency coordinators and have access to valuable local intelligence that can assist with their emergency response, an recent example of which was severe flooding in the Lanchester area of Durham.
21. During the Flooding in Lanchester on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the Service responded to a challenging situation involving stranded, vulnerable residents as well as a number of businesses whose premises were affected by the floodwater. The crews and officers on scene worked in collaboration with the Lanchester Community Resilience Group who had activated the Lanchester CEP to identify the most vulnerable residents, source locations for them to relocate to and receive the care and support they needed.
22. Thanks to this well-organised community initiative, residents were able to find safety and comfort during a challenging situation, highlighting the importance of preparedness and collaboration in times of crisis.

### **CDDFRS relationship with the LRF**

23. CDDFRS are the custodians of the general LRF fund and senior officers chair both the strategic and tactical boards within CDDLRF.
24. The Strategic Board which is a multi-agency group responsible for setting the strategic direction for CDDLRF is chaired by CDDFRS, Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and the Tactical Business Group (TBG) which has responsibility for implementing the strategic direction set by the Strategic Board and is made up of wider stakeholders from across Category 1 and 2 responders is chaired by CDDFRS Director of Emergency Response (DER), *see appendix A*.
25. The CDDLRF secretariat team operating from CDDFRS HQ consists of five members of staff. Roles within the team include the LRF Manager who is directly line managed by CDDFRS DER and oversees officers responsible for Risk, Training and Exercise, Community Resilience and Business Support.
26. CDDFRS directly employ the LRF secretariat team and therefore provide support in such areas as Human Resources (HR), occupational health, payroll and location of work. The fact that the team are located at HQ also means that they work to CDDFRS policy and procedures including the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) Core Code of Ethics.

27. CDDFRS work really closely with all partners that make up the LRF, but none more so than with the CCU which forms part of Durham County Council (DCC) on both preventative and reactive response for major and multi-agency incidents and exercising. This close relationship ensures that as a Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) we maintain good arrangements to respond to incidents with partners from across the LRF whilst also being able to effectively anticipate and consider any reasonably foreseeable risks and threats we face.
28. The LRF secretariat coordinate the production of multi-agency incident plans including the Multi-agency Major Incident Plan (MAIP) on behalf of CDDLRf partners before being signed off by the TBG and approved by the LRF Board, both of which are chaired by strategic officers in CDDFRS.
29. As part of its incident planning and mitigation process, CDDFRS regularly takes part in multi-agency training events including internal and external debriefs with a view to continually developing its plans for responding to major and multi-agency incidents.
30. In the previous 12 months alone the Service have been involved in a number of strategic level exercises through the LRF. The most recent examples include Exercise Hydrant, which was a multi-agency, large scale major incident, led by CDDFRS, DER in their role as chair of the TBG and Exercise Nutwell with the focus being predominantly on Death Management.
31. Looking forward into 2025, CDDFRS will be heavily involved in Exercise Pegasus, a national Tier 1 Pandemic Preparedness Exercise, organised by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and coordinated through CDDLRf.

## **Meeting Structures**

32. CDDLRf's annual business cycle is based upon three LRF Strategic Board meetings and four TBG meetings held at CDDFRS HQ per year. The aim is that the two main groups precede one another to ensure that a two-way flow of information takes place, with recommendations from the TBG being fed into the Strategic Board.
33. There are also a total of six sub groups of which CDDFRS are involved with that report directly into the TBG which are chaired by tactical leads from several different agencies that make up the CDDLRf:
  - Warning and Informing Group
  - Tactical Exercise Group
  - Risk Assessment
  - Community Resilience
  - Voluntary Emergency Liaison
  - Death Management Group
34. There is also a requirement for various members of CDDLRf to attend the following regional meetings:

- Northeast (NE) LRF Chairs & TBG Chairs
- NE LRF Secretariats
- NE LRF Risk Group Chairs
- NE LRF TEG Chairs
- NE Business Continuity
- NE Death Management Group
- NE Cyber Group

*See appendix A/B for all meeting structures and attendees.*

## **Summary**

35. CDDLRF is funded through contributions from various Category 1 responders including CDDFRS as well as Central Government. The LRF is designed to facilitate multi-agency cooperation in emergency planning and response, as mandated by the CCA 2004.
36. CDDFRS hosts the CDDLRF and plays a significant role in its day to day operations. Senior officers from CDDFRS chair both the strategic and tactical boards within CDDLRF, setting the strategic direction and implementing it through the TBG.
37. CDDLRF secretariat team who are responsible for various functions, including risk management, training, exercises, and community resilience operate from CDDFRS HQ and consists of five members of staff, including roles such as the LRF Manager, who is directly line managed by the DER.
38. CDDFRS collaborates closely with all partners that form the LRF, particularly with the CCU, to ensure effective response to major and multi-agency incidents. This collaboration includes the production of multi-agency incident plans, participation in multi-agency training events, and involvement in strategic level exercises.

## **Recommendations**

39. Members are requested to:

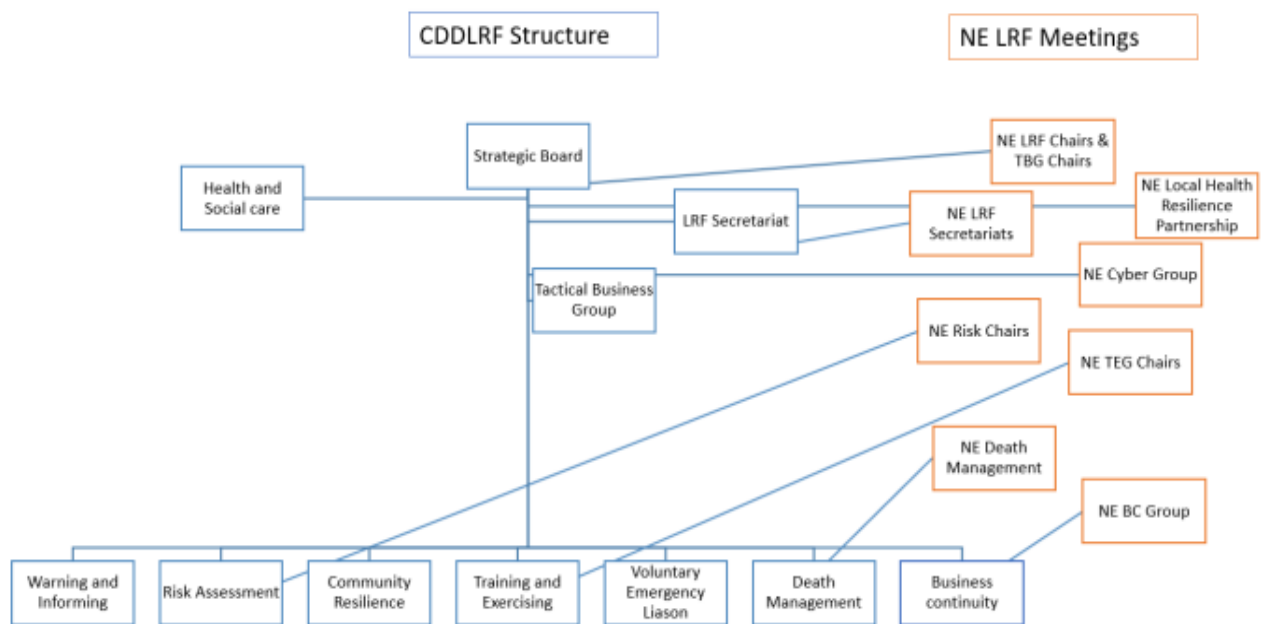
**Note** the content of the report.

**Rob Cherrie, Director of Emergency Response**

### CDDLRF Structure – June 2024



### CDDLRF plus Regional Structure – June 2024



**Breakdown of attendees of all CDDLRF Groups**

	Strategic Board	Tactical Business Group	Business Continuity Group	Community Resilience Group	Risk Assessment Working Group	Training and Exercising Group	Warning and Informing Group	Voluntary Emergency Liaison Group	Death Management Group
British Transport Police		X			X				
CDD NHS Foundation Trust		X	X		X	X			X
CDDFRS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Counter Terrorism Police					X				
Darlington Borough Council	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Durham Constabulary	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Durham County Council	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Environment Agency	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
HM Coastguard	X	X	X		X	X			
NEAS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
NHS ICB	X	X	X		X	X	X		X
UKHSA	X	X	X		X	X	X		