

County Durham and Darlington Prepared

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES



IN COUNTY DURHAM AND DARLINGTON

Local Resilience Forum Business Plan and Priorities 2022 - 2023



**Foreword by the Chair of County Durham and
Darlington Local Resilience Forum
Chief Fire Officer Stuart Errington**



The last few years have been unprecedented in terms of the work the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) has undertaken in response to EU Exit, Covid-19 and severe weather.

Throughout 2019 and 2021 the LRF held Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCG) and has been under a Major Incident declaration for the majority of that time. The response arrangements have involved an enormous effort from a great deal of the Category One and Two responders as well as other key partners. I'm extremely proud of the way the LRF has operated during this time.

The resilience landscape is also changing with the review of the National Resilience Strategy and the Civil Contingency Act both likely to significantly impact on the role and responsibilities of LRFs. The LRF has also received much needed central funding during this time and the recent commitment to further funding allocations over the next three years will help ensure the LRF has the resources it needs to meet these increased expectations.

It is fair to say that this Business Plan is therefore different from previous iterations, but its importance is not diminished in any way. This LRF will only be successful in serving its communities if there is a shared vision, a shared understanding of risk and a willingness to work together to improve the quality of service to the communities of County Durham and Darlington.

This plan, and associated business priorities, ensure we are focussed on being as well prepared as possible to meet the risks facing our communities and developing the LRF to meet future requirements. The business priorities are not only guided by the current national threats and risks described above but also by the local community risk register so that the LRF is able to respond to the challenges it may face.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "SERRINGTON".

Stuart Errington QFSM, Chief Fire Officer, County Durham and Darlington Fire & Rescue Service, Chair of the Local Resilience Forum

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SECTION 1



Our Area County Durham

Situated in the north east of the country, County Durham stretches from Peterlee and Seaham in the east, to Harwood and Killhope in the west and Burnopfield in the north to Barningham in the south. County Durham is a large and diverse area. It is home to over half a million people, making it in terms of population size the largest local authority in the North East and the sixth largest in England. It covers an area of 2,226 km squared (859 square miles) with 236,710 residential properties.

Commonly regarded as a predominantly rural area, the county varies in character from remote and sparsely populated areas in the west to former coalfield communities in the centre and east, where villages tend to accommodate thousands rather than hundreds. Around 93% of the population lives east of the A68 road, in approximately half of the county by area. County Durham has 12 major centres of population, each acting as a service centre for surrounding communities which provides employment, shopping and other services.

The 2017 Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-year estimate of population for County Durham was 523,662, a net increase of 1,519 people equivalent to a 0.3% increase since 2016. County Durham, along with other areas across the country, is experiencing an ever ageing population which is predicted to increase significantly over the next ten to twenty years.

Darlington

Darlington is a large market town in County Durham, in North East England and lies on the River Skerne, a tributary of the River Tees. The current population is estimated at 105,200 and by 2027, based on most recent trends, it is projected to increase to 107,600 (an extra 2,400).

Darlington is a key economic asset within the North East of England, with a sphere of influence that reaches into Tees Valley, the wider North East region and beyond. Sectoral strengths include the business and professional service sector, manufacturing, advanced engineering and construction, with emerging strengths in digital and media, subsea, telehealth and telecare.

As well as the large engineering sites based in the town, Darlington is also home to many businesses within the modern and developing industries including Information Technology.

SECTION 2

Some of the Risks We Face

Risks in County Durham and Darlington

The risks most likely to impact on the communities of County Durham and Darlington are presented in the Community Risk Register (CRR). This register is derived from the National Security Risk Assessment and extracts national risks to describe them in the way that they will impact on our local communities.

While certain risks are described it does not mean that they will definitely occur in the region. It means there is a possibility of them happening and therefore all agencies within the LRF have plans in place to respond to such incidents.

The CRR is the result of professional judgement from a range of contributors, historical evidence, scientific input and expert analysis in evaluating the key risks facing County Durham and Darlington. The risks described within the CRR reflect the risk landscape and the likelihood and impact of risk scenarios occurring within County Durham and Darlington. These risks include:

- Human disease - pandemic flu;
- Flooding (fluvial and surface water flooding);
- Failure of the electricity network;
- Cyber attacks;
- Malicious attacks;
- Adverse weather.

The LRF works towards mitigating the impact and responding effectively to our high risks to support community resilience for the people of County Durham and Darlington.



Diagram 1 is an extract from the CRR and indicates some of the highest risks facing County Durham and Darlington. The CRR provides more detail and is available upon request, please contact the LRF Coordinator: devon.lawton@ddfir.gov.uk

Diagram 1 - County Durham and Darlington's Top Risks

	Impact				
	5		Malicious attacks		Pandemic influenza
	4			Fluvial Flooding National Electricity Transmission	Cold and snow
	3			Surface Water Flooding Emerging Infectious Diseases Fuel Tanker Drivers Flash Flooding	Heat Wave Public Disorder
	2				
	1				
Likelihood	1	2	3	4	5

Risk Descriptions

Risk	Description
Pandemic Influenza	A new virus, to which people have no immunity, emerges and starts spreading as easily as an existing virus e.g. influenza. As well as their potential to cause serious harm to human health, they threaten wider social and economic damage and disruption.
Severe Weather (cold and snow, heatwave)	This risk covers the extremes of weather and includes: for at least one week, multiple regions of the UK are subject to low temperatures and snow (falling and lying) coinciding with a daily mean temperature of below -3°C, and daily maximum temperature in excess of 28°C and minimum temperatures in excess of 15°C over most of a region for at least 5 consecutive days.
Fluvial Flooding	A massive river flood event or series of concurrent events across multiple regions following a sustained period of heavy rainfall extending over two weeks, possibly combined with snow melt and surface water flooding.
Surface Water Flooding	Surface water flooding caused by a warm unstable atmosphere, most likely to occur in summer due to the warmer atmosphere having a greater water holding capacity, causes a pattern of convective rainfall events.
National Electricity Transmission	Total blackout for up to 5 days due to loss of the National Electricity Transmission System with the potential for wide area power disruptions for up to 14 days.
Cyber attacks	Cyber space has become central to our economy and our society. Increasing our reliance on cyber space brings new opportunities but also new threats. While cyber space fosters open markets and open societies, this very openness can also make us more vulnerable to criminals, hackers, foreign intelligence services who want to harm us by compromising or damaging our critical data and systems.
Malicious attacks	This risk covers the broad range of malicious attacks that have been experienced in other parts of the United Kingdom, from a lone actor carrying out a specific targeted attack to a wider incident involving multiple persons with various attack methodologies.
Adverse weather	The weather in County Durham and Darlington is extremely varied and dynamic. Weather patterns around the Pennines in West Durham can bring torrential rain and extremely severe snow and ice (the highest road in the County is the A66 trans-Pennine route at Bowes Moor). The weather in Teesdale and Weardale can be idyllic at the same time as mountainous seas are battering the coast.

SECTION 3



Strategic Aim and Objectives

Aim

County Durham and Darlington LRF sits at the apex of County Durham and Darlington's local civil protection arrangements. Its 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.

Objectives

1. To maintain a robust governance structure for the LRF to ensure that it is responsive, accountable and able to fulfil its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 including promoting business continuity arrangements, whether that be in partnership or as individual organisations, so as to fulfil statutory obligations.
2. To use the additional funding provided from the Government to develop the capacity of the LRF to deliver successfully against the increased expectations brought about from the review of the National Resilience Strategy and the Civil Contingencies Act.
3. To approve and manage the CRR, raise awareness of new and emerging risks and ensure that the risk process provides a robust basis for future emergency planning.
4. To continually engage with and develop sustainable community resilience arrangements to ensure that the public understand the measures to take in the event of an emergency and to ensure that the resources of the Category 1 and 2 responders can be focused on the most vulnerable people in the community.

5. To provide a framework to develop the organisation and individual competencies of the LRF members to ensure effective emergency management exists.
6. To continually monitor the national risk and threat landscape, identifying the local context and ensuring that sufficient and realistic multi-agency plans and procedures exist to deal with the consequences when events occur, and any capability gaps are identified.
7. To develop and maintain an integrated, robust and “fit for purpose” communications strategy that enables internal communications between LRF members and also has appropriate mechanisms in place to warn and inform the public in the event of an emergency occurring and which is also adaptable to utilise technology and social media to provide warning and informing information to a wider audience.
8. To ensure that workable and resilient cross border arrangements with other LRFs are in place.
9. To embed best practice within the field of integrated emergency management across all aspects of the LRF and its partner organisations.
10. To help prevent or mitigate any negative or detrimental effects that may occur from the UK leaving the European Union without a suitable economic or political agreement in place.
11. Through a coordinated multi agency response and recovery it is the intention of CDDLRF to ‘Mitigate’ the impact of COVID-19 across the UK in order to protect our communities and return the community to a new normality.



SECTION 4



How will County Durham and Darlington LRF achieve its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act?

This Business Plan brings together the LRF resilience priorities into one key strategic document. It both directs and underpins the planning process and enables the LRF to focus its delivery of civil protection activities, directing and prioritising its work based on the risks and threats to the area and communities of County Durham and Darlington.

It is a living document that will be reviewed annually by the Strategic Board and monitored constantly by the Tactical Business Group (TBG) and amended where required. Whilst providing guidance on short term objectives and priorities, the plan will also look forward to providing longer term strategic direction.

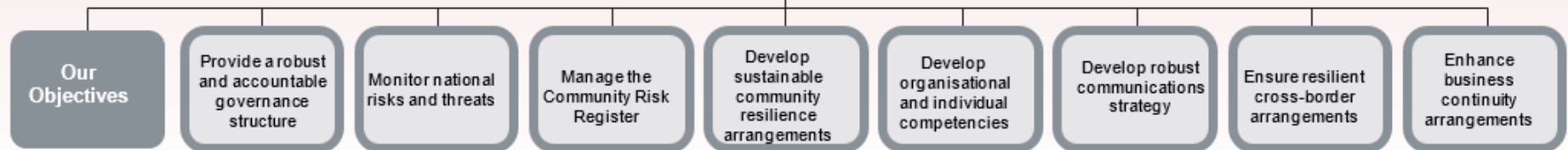
Section 5 of this document outlines the Business Priorities that underpin the strategic objectives of the LRF. Each objective is supported by key deliverables and assigned to an action owner. Start, milestone and finish dates are agreed as part of the business planning process and monitored through the TBG.

SECTION 5 Executive Summary

County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum Business Plan Executive Summary 2022-23

Our aim

To ensure 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.



What are our duties?

- Assessing risk
- Planning for emergencies
- Business Continuity Planning
- Responding to emergencies
- Training and exercising
- Sharing information and data
- Cooperation within and across border

How do we collaborate within the LRF?

- Pooling resources
- Sharing premises
- Training and exercising together
- Sharing information and data

How do we collaborate with our neighbours?

- Sharing information about cross border risks
- Collaborating over training and exercising, risk, cyber, business continuity and death management
- LRF coordination meetings

Governance

- To refresh the LRF Business Plan
- Achieving business priorities through the LRF meeting structure
- To promote business continuity
- LRF website

Managing risks and threats

- To carry out regular strategic horizon scanning
- To conduct readiness assessments on key risks and consequences

Focus for 2022/23

- Community Resilience
- COVID 19 recovery
- Cyber security and other threats to Business Continuity
- Regional working

How do we manage our performance?

- Each objective supported by key deliverables
- Achieving key milestones
- Close oversight by Tactical Business Group

Competence and Best Practice

- To produce and deliver on annual business priorities
- To ensure interoperability in business as usual and response
- To develop key policies e.g. data sharing
- To learn and embed lessons from incidents
- To maintain training and exercising timetable based on key risks and threats
- To embed community resilience within County Durham and Darlington
- To improve engagement across the voluntary sector
- To improve communication with the business sector

Communications

- To improve communication with the public and raise public awareness through the LRF website
- To promote resilient telecommunications



For further information contact the devon.lawton@ddfire.gov.uk

SECTION 6 Business Priorities

- To carry out a readiness assessment on the key risks and threats for County Durham and Darlington
- To action the Community Resilience Plan
- To carry out a strategic horizon scanning event
- To refresh the LRF business plan
- To develop resilient inter-agency media communication structures
- To improve communication with the public
- To focus on training to ensure competency within the LRF
- To ensure capabilities exist with the LRF to deal with a multi-agency incident involving mass fatalities
- To develop Resilience Direct for LRF Operational Response
- To promote cross border working (NE Plus Risk Chairs)
- To promote cross border working (NE LRFs Symposium)
- To enhance corporate resilience of LRF partners
- To ensure arrangements are in place for Operation London Bridge
- To ensure capabilities exist within the LRF to deal with multi-agency human aspects in an emergency
- To properly integrate VELG and it's members into the LRF structure