



TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT

Committee Report

Meeting : CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE : 05 JULY 2010

Subject : COMMUNITY RESILIENCE CONSULTATION

Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Civil Contingencies Secretariat has developed a package of documents about community resilience. The documents include guidance for individuals and communities on how to prepare for emergencies and a strategic national framework for community resilience, which sets out the Government's contribution to build and enhance community resilience across the UK.
- 1.2 The National Security Strategy 2008 defines community resilience as: *"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."*
- 1.3 In March 2010, the National Framework for Community Resilience was issued for consultation. The purpose of this report is to brief Members on the current status of the Community Resilience work area, as described by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS). Members are asked to consider this report, to identify appropriate feedback for the consultation process, and agree how, as a committee, they would wish to be engaged in the development and implementation of a future community resilience work stream

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following information describes how the Civil Contingencies Secretariat sees the development of community resilience within England and Wales. In summary the Draft Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience advises that:
- The drivers for community resilience are based on the findings of reviews undertaken in the period after communities have been affected by a major incident – specifically the Pitt review of 2007;

- The framework is intended to provide the national statement on how community resilience can work at national and local level;
- Scope, aims and timescales are suggested for phasing in proposals;
- The framework also proposes a future policy statement on community resilience.

2.2 The Scope of the framework clarifies that:

communities and individuals are free to decide what an emergency plan means to them

with communities being defined as people who are linked by a common bond whether that be geography, common interest, circumstances and or professional practice.

2.3 The objectives of the community resilience programme are to:

- increase individual and family resilience to threats or hazards
- support and enable community resilience to grow successful methods by example
- raise awareness of risk and capability
- evaluate benefits of community resilience plans
- develop a shared framework of activity

2.4 The Scope of the community resilience programme addresses the following issues:

- community resilience is driven by local circumstances therefore there is no single approach or outcome
- the development of resilience partnerships that are based on existing good practice
- an expectation that the programme will increase a communities understanding about what they can expect during an emergency

2.5 The Principles of community resilience are seen to be:

- using existing mechanisms to support, facilitate and co-operate on resilience issues
- the process being driven by the appetite of communities to become involved in plan development
- that this is not a duty on responders, but it is suggested that existing performance measures could be used to support co-operation

- 2.6 These will enable communities to move towards being a group of people who are able to use:

local skills, knowledge and resources to deal with the consequences of a major incident by complementing the work of emergency services

3 TIMESCALES

- 3.1 The community resilience process has three phases:

- Phase 1 Civil Contingencies Secretariat learning from those who are already engaged in community resilience activities and identifying good practice (Nov 08 to Feb 2010)
- Phase 2 development and consultation on key guidance (Feb 2010 to June 2010)
- Phase 3 enabling localities to use guidance documents to target existing community groups, organisations and networks, supporting and seeding local initiatives (June 2010 onwards)

- 3.2 Issues relating to funding have not been addressed since the change of government, but within the consultation document, CCS has described a situation where they could look to provide support to 3rd parties: however they also emphasise opportunities that are provided by existing funding initiatives. This suggests that no new resources will be made available

4 MEASURING SUCCESS

- 4.1 It is acknowledged within guidance that success in this area is difficult to measure. It has therefore been decided that each community will be encouraged to decide what community resilience will look like in their area and to develop a local vision covering "what success looks like."

- 4.2 There is a suggestion that this vision could be based on current responders' performance indicators, but this is not expanded upon. However, due to the recent retraction of National Indicator 37 (Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area) it would seem that the opportunities to use this option are now reduced.

5 IMPLICATIONS/ ACTIONS

- 5.1 The Framework states that Category 1 responders are asked to continue to fulfil the duties set out in the Civil Contingencies Act on warning and informing the public. They may also wish to consider involving members of the community in assessing risk and finding ways of building community resilience.
- 5.2 It appears that the local authority contribution to specific community resilience activities is voluntary, but given the generic description of public warning and informing duties used within Emergency Preparedness (see below), it is logical to see it as an enhancement of an existing duty rather than the development of a new one:

Emergency Preparedness - Chapter 7 - Communicating with the public

- *Category 1 responders' duties to communicate with the public under the Act are based on the belief that a well-informed public is better able to respond to an emergency and to minimise the impact of the emergency on the community (paragraph 7.4).*
- *The Act includes public awareness and warning and informing as two distinct legal duties for Category 1 responders – advising the public of risks before an emergency and warning and keeping it informed in the event of an emergency (paragraph 7.1).*
- *Arrangements for warning and informing the public must have regard to emergency planning arrangements (paragraph 7.21)*
- *In the same way that Category 1 responders must ensure that their emergency plans are appropriate to the scale and type of risks involved, communications arrangements should be appropriate to the message and the kind of audience (paragraph 7.82).*
- *Category 1 responders need both to plan their communications and to test that their communications arrangements are effective (paragraph 7.87).*

5.3 Specific reference is made to Elected Members within the consultation documents (para 5.13 inserted below), and again this builds on the current description of their role given in Annex G of the National Recovery Guidance – Recovery Plan Guidance Template (see Annex 1 following)

5.13. Elected members are chosen by their local communities to represent their interests. Elected members can play an important role in communicating with their constituents before, during and after an emergency and should consider what role they could play in facilitating and encouraging community resilience activity in their local areas. Good practice examples of elected members leading this work in their community exist in a number of places around the country.

6 Conclusion

6.3 This proposals developed by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat are a useful starting point to develop resilience at a community level. They recognise that people are able to develop local solutions to local risks and that these activities should be encouraged. It is essential that Members, as representatives within the area, are involved in this process.

7 Recommendation

6.1 Members are asked to consider this report and:

- i) identify feedback for CCS relating to the role of elected members in the community resilience process (extended deadline for feedback from members to CCS is 09th July 2010);
- ii) consider ways in which the FRA Civil Contingencies Committee could link into the community resilience work areas being developed within the Tyne and Wear councils

Background Papers

Copies of the following documents can be found at

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience/communityresilience.aspx

Strategic National Framework for Community Resilience

- A strategic overview of the Government's contribution to building and enhancing community resilience across the UK.

Revised Preparing for Emergencies leaflet

- An updated version of the Preparing for Emergencies booklet – aimed at encouraging individuals and households to become better prepared to deal with the impacts of emergencies.

Preparing for Emergencies - Guide for communities leaflet

- An introduction for communities who are new to emergency preparedness and want to help their community be better able to cope with emergencies.

Community Emergency Plan Guidance and template

- A practical guide and template to help communities create a Community Emergency Plan.

Draft Preparing for Emergencies leaflet

- Consultation response form [Word document]

Draft Preparing for Emergencies

- a guide for communities

Draft Community Emergency Plan Guidance and template

- Consultation response form

National Recovery Guidance - Recovery Plan Guidance Template

Annex G

Role of Elected Members

The Elected Members of the community affected have an important role to play in assisting with the recovery process. They have a duty as the community representatives to gather and make known the concerns of their community and feed them into the recovery process mainly through the Community Recovery Committee. They also have a very important role in disseminating credible information and advice back to the community.

As civic leaders, elected members are usually involved with many other aspects of community life through such things as School Governing bodies, local charities and various community groups. They can be a valuable source of help and specialist advice.

They have a role as:

- The focus for community concerns
- Identifying problems and vulnerabilities of their community that may require priority attention and feeding them back to the relevant recovery group
- The knowledge bank of local personalities and resources
- Encouragement and support to recovery teams working within their community
- Enhancing local community liaison
- Visiting people affected to be a listening ear and to give them reassurance
- Consider, at an early stage, recommendations from the RCG on the strategic choice between 'normalisation' and 'regeneration' of the affected area
- Assisting with the media in getting messages to the community (following established policy guidelines)
- Assisting with VIP visits
- Liaising with other elected representatives (MPs/MEPs/other LA's representatives, etc.)
- Assisting (and possibly chairing) debrief sessions with the community

Through their normal duties as committee members, elected members give the Authority strategic direction and decide policy. They will scrutinise decisions of

officers and other committees and suggest improvements. They will ultimately authorise actions affecting the Local Authority's functions, so they will need to be kept well informed with accurate and up to date information to enable them to make credible and well informed judgements.

Note: The normal political processes and structures will still apply in the recovery phase. Some Members may sit on both the Recovery Committee and their normal committees.

