



Report to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date – 26 February 2024

Key Decision – No

Public/Private – Public

Portfolio – Cllr Mark Fryer, Leader of the Council, and Cllr Denise Rollo, Executive Member - Sustainable, Resilient and Connected Places, Cumberland Council

Cllr Jonathan Brook, Leader of the Council, and Cllr Giles Archibald, Cabinet Member for Climate and Biodiversity, Westmorland and Furness Council

Directorate – Public Health and Communities, Cumberland Council/Assistant Chief Executive, Westmorland and Furness Council

Lead Officer – Colin Cox, Director of Public Health, Cumberland Council/Alison Hatcher, Assistant Chief Executive, Westmorland and Furness Council

Title – Stronger Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Pilot Programme

Summary:

Executive Summary

- 1.1 Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (Cumbria LRF) has been chosen as a Pilot to explore and test elements of the National Resilience Framework. This is being called the Stronger LRFs Pilot Programme.
- 1.2 The purpose of the pilot is for Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to identify good practice to implement the National Resilience Framework by 2030.
- 1.3 The Joint Emergency Management and Resilience team (JEMR) which hosts the Cumbria LRF Secretariat is hosted by Westmorland and Furness Council under the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) between Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland Councils.

- 1.4 It is proposed that the LRF Pilot will report to the Joint Executive Committee to provide democratic accountability of the activity, as JEMR is a hosted service under the IAA.
- 1.5 A delivery plan for the LRF pilot must be developed and agreed with DLUHC through a 'co-development' process. Discussions are underway between the LRF and DLUHC on the strands of activity to be undertaken through the LRF pilot programme. The pilots are to test out proposals for having a Chief Resilience Officer, stronger democratic links, and a more active approach to drive the delivery of the UK Government Resilience Framework

2 Recommendations:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the information contained within the report regarding the Stronger LRF Pilot in Cumbria is reviewed by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Cumbria LRF is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services. It is not a legal entity and does not have powers to direct its members, but the responders have a collective responsibility through the LRF to plan, prepare and communicate in a multi-agency environment. The LRF Secretariat is a support function serving that partnership and is hosted within the Joint Emergency Management and Resilience (JEMR) Team.
- 3.2 Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) are the arrangements through which the Councils demonstrate their duty to cooperate, by working together with partners as required by the Civil Contingencies Act. In the Act the boundary for LRF is directed as being co-terminus with that of the Police Authority.
- 3.3 Cumbria Local Resilience Forum (Cumbria LRF) is comprised of 40+ member organisations. The Secretariat function for the LRF is hosted by the local authority and majority funded by a pilot grant (2022 – 2025) from HM Government of £173k (2023/2024).
- 3.4 Westmorland & Furness Council hosts the Cumbria LRF Secretariat function as part of the Joint Emergency Management and Resilience (JEMR) Team which is hosted by Westmorland & Furness Council on behalf of both local authorities in Cumbria under the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA).

3.5 Cumbria LRF was selected as one of the Stronger LRF 8 pilot areas. The 8 LRF pilot areas announced in the Summer of 2023 are:

- Cumbria
- London
- Gloucestershire
- Greater Manchester
- Northumbria
- Suffolk
- Thames Valley
- West Mercia

3.6 The pilots are to test out proposals for having a Chief Resilience Officer, stronger democratic links, and a more active approach to drive the delivery of the UK Government Resilience Framework. The National Resilience Framework, published in 2022, is designed to assist our collective resilience.

3.7 This Framework is based on three principles:

- *A developed and shared understanding of the civil contingencies risks we face is fundamental;*
- *Prevention rather than cure wherever possible: a greater emphasis on preparation and prevention; and*
- *Resilience is a ‘whole of society’ endeavour, so we must be more transparent and empower everyone to make a contribution.*

3.8 It is these principles which form the basis of the LRF Pilots, designed to develop good practice to enable implementation by 2030. Where there is Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) the Chief Resilience Officer is likely to report directly to the Mayor. In areas without a MCA, alternative governance models will be required and DLUHC is looking to use the pilots to test a policy approach for strengthening LRFs across the country by 2030. The expectation from DLUHC is that a Chief Resilience Officer will be in post for each pilot area from 1st April 2024.

3.9 It has been stated that;

*“DLUHC expect the eight pilots to test and develop evidence on the key issues of: strengthened **leadership** across all aspects of how a **place** is **driven** to become more **resilient**; strengthened **accountability** of those delivering **resilient places** to the **communities** that live and work there; and **strengthened integration** of resilience into wider **place-making policy**.”*

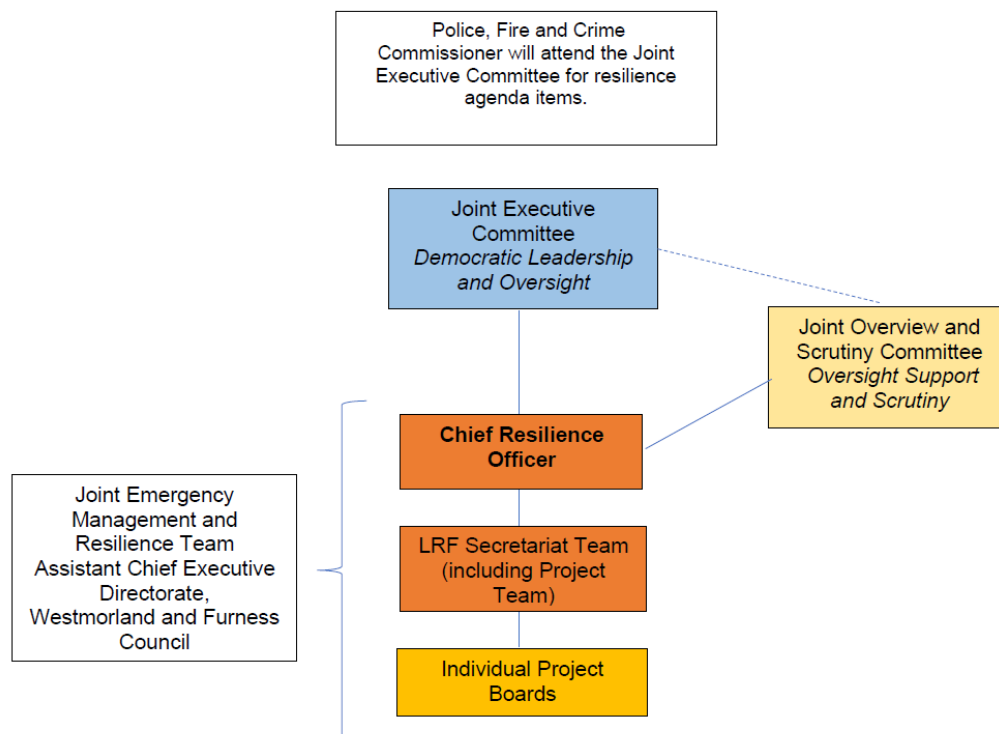
4 Proposals

4.1 The LRF proposal will be set out in the LRF Delivery Plan. It is understood that c. £800k is to be provided over a two-year period to fund the activity in the Delivery Plan. To inform Government on how the money will be spent the Pilot Delivery Plan has to be agreed with DLUHC. Discussions on the content of the delivery plan are currently underway between DLUHC and the Cumbria.

4.2 The emerging elements for inclusion in the Pilot Delivery Plan include:

- A Chief Resilience Officer
- Increased LRF Secretariat function capacity
- Development of a resilient communities' programme, including training and exercising
- Research into the better use of data, technology, and systems development.
- Dedicated engagement and communications resource with a focus on risk and consequence engagement with a wide range of audiences.

4.3 In addition to the above, a key part of the Pilot is the strengthening of political accountability. The diagram below illustrates the role of the LRF and the JEC in relation to the governance of the Pilot.



4.4 To ensure engagement of the Police and Fire Services, it is proposed that the Police and Fire Commissioner attends the JEC. Scrutiny of the Pilot programme is undertaken by the Joint Overview and Scrutiny (JOS) Committee to monitor and evaluate the pilot.

- 4.5 From a governance perspective, DLUHC is particularly keen to test how resilience planning can be embedded and integrated with the development of strategies and plans across Cumbria to increase the focus on prevention activity in line with the National Resilience Framework principles. In particular with the integration of LEPs into local authorities this creates the opportunity to test how resilience planning can sit alongside strategic economic planning.

5 Alternative options considered

- 5.1 Scrutiny has the option to discuss the contents of this report and to provide comments to inform the development of the Pilot Delivery Plan.

6 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations .

- 6.1 This pilot gives Cumbria the opportunity to try out an innovative approach to resilience and embedded the UK National Resilience Framework into a wide range of working areas, focusing on the community resilience and place-based resilience approach. Additional dedicated resource will work across both the Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Council areas to ensure resilience fits with other priorities to deliver both council plans.

7 Implications

7.1

- 7.2 Resources from the Local Resilience Forum Secretariat function are being used to develop the Pilot Project Delivery plan. The Delivery Plan will include appropriate resourcing and recruitment considerations.

8 Contribution to the Cumberland Plan Priorities

- 8.1 The Cumberland Council Plan vision is for Cumberland Council takes a fresh approach to the delivery of inclusive services that are shaped by our residents and communities. By enabling positive outcomes for health and wellbeing, prosperity, and the environment we will fulfil the potential of our people and our area. Improved health and wellbeing of those who live and visit Cumbria is a strong theme throughout both Council plans and aligns with developing the multi-agency preparedness and response to emergencies.

9 Contribution to the Westmorland and Furness Plan Priorities

- 9.1 The Council Plan vision is for Westmorland and Furness to be “a great place to live, work and thrive” with one of its priorities being “confident, empowered, resilient communities”. The enhancement and development of resilient communities is an aligned objective with the National Resilience Framework. Improved health and wellbeing of those who live and

visit Cumbria is a strong theme throughout both Council plans and aligns with developing the multi-agency preparedness and response to emergencies.

10 Relevant Risks

10.1 Not applicable, the report is for information.

11 Consultation / Engagement

11.1 Not applicable, the report is for information.

12 Legal –

12.1 The Cumbria LRF is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services. It is not a legal entity and does not have powers to direct its members, but the responders have a collective responsibility through the LRF to plan, prepare and communicate in a multi-agency environment. The LRF Secretariat is a support function serving that partnership and is hosted within the Joint Emergency Management and Resilience (JEMR) Team. The JEMR Team provides emergency planning and some response capability for both Cumberland and Westmorland & Furness Councils.

12.2 The team is hosted by Westmorland & Furness Council under the terms of the Inter Authority Agreement (IAA) entered into between the two Councils on 31 March 2023. The two authorities agreed to arrange for the discharge of the functions relating to the Hosted Services under the IAA by the Joint Executive Committee under section 101 Local Government Act 1972. Under the Terms of Reference of the Joint Executive Committee set out in the IAA the committee's role is to oversee the management of those functions and services which are provided on a Cumbria-wide basis on behalf of the Cumberland and Westmorland and Furness Councils to ensure effective delivery of such services and to provide strategic direction including overseeing the implementation of the Service Strategies and approving business cases for proposed changes and overseeing the progress of subsequent work. Changes to the terms of reference of the Joint Executive Committee which change the functions which have been delegated to the Joint Executive Committee can be made by the Cabinet of Westmorland and Furness Council and the Executive of Cumberland Council.

12.3 The Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established under the IAA to conduct the Authorities functions under section 9F and 9FA of the Local Government Act 2000 in respect of providing overview and scrutiny in respect of those functions exercised by the Joint Executive Committee. The Joint Executive Committee has the power under 2.5 of its Terms of Reference to delegate its functions to officers of either Authority under s101 Local Government Act 1972. Under clause 9.1 of the IAA the Host Authority in relation to

any service will not advertise new posts within a Hosted Service without prior agreement of the relevant Lead Officer from the Recipient Authority.

13 Finance

13.1 A grant will be awarded from DLUHC to Westmorland and Furness Council against forecast delivery costs of up to ~£400k plus potential support costs per year. This is expected to be in the region of £950k over the 2-year pilot project. It is not yet clear when the 2 years of funding will start. Confirmation of the grant and associated guidance is expected soon.

14 Information Governance

14.1 Not applicable, the report is for information.

15 Impact Assessments

15.1 Not applicable, the report is for information.

Contact details:

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Appendices attached to report:

None

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

The context of this report is that the Civil Contingencies Act completed its 5 yearly review in 2022, and after consultation and engagement it was concluded that the Act was still broadly fit for purpose and remained largely unchanged with only a couple of organisations being updated to be made Cat 2 status i.e. the Met Office.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076209/cca-pir-2022.pdf

In addition, HM Government published the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-britain-in-a-competitive-age-the-integrated-review-of-security-defence-development-and-foreign-policy>) in 2021 and followed this by publishing the supporting National Resilience Framework in 2022 designed to assist our collective resilience.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-government-resilience-framework>