

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD – COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

Meeting date: 27th May 2022

From: Chief Fire Officer

Fire Service Performance

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report summarises the current approach to Learning Lessons within Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service and Cumbria County Council, detailing integrated processes that are in place to identify lessons and providing several examples of how lessons identified have been reflected on and developed into good practice within Cumbria.

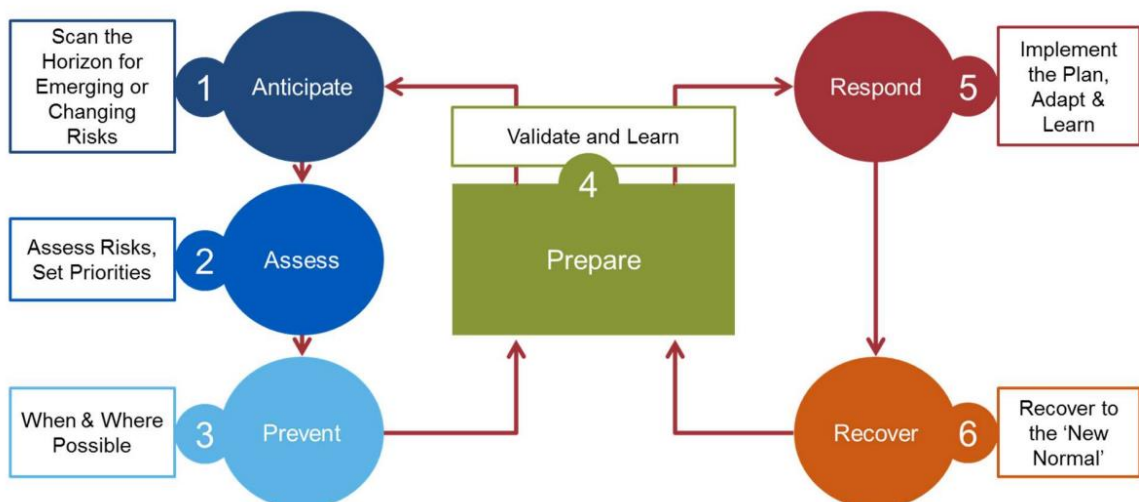
2.0 Issues for Scrutiny

2.1 Scrutiny are invited to comment on the approach to learning lessons presented and provide feedback on any particular areas they would like to consider going forward.

3.0 Background

3.1 Integrated Emergency Management (IEM) is the cornerstone of Emergency Response in the United Kingdom. Learning is at the heart of process as per step 4 in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Integrated Emergency Management (IEM) process from the Cabinet Office's Emergency Planning College



- 3.2 IEM is legislated for in the UK by a number of specific regulations such as COMAH (Control of major accident hazards regulations), the more general Civil Contingencies Act and a significant body of guidance such as the doctrine of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). Cumbria Fire and Rescue and Cumbria County Council discharge a number of non-derogable duties in an emergency arising from the legislation.
- 3.3 At the heart of the preparedness and daily response is the principle of continuous improvement that identifies learning through planning, training, exercising and real incidents.
- 3.4 There is a clear and defined process of reflecting to identify and learn these lessons that is best shown in orange box of the JESIP doctrine Joint Decision model, Figure 2. “Take action and review what happened” works over both short timescales for operational decision making and debriefing over much longer timescales.

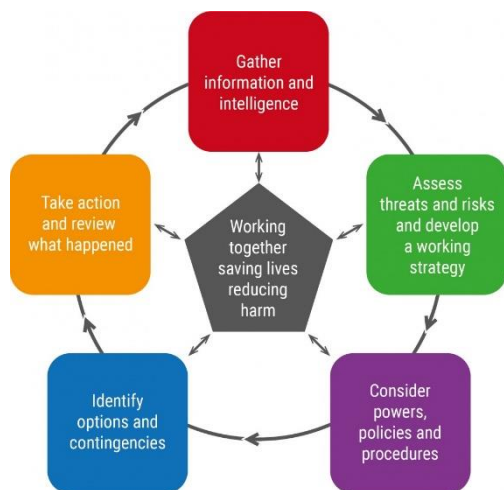


Figure 2 Joint Decision Model (JDM)

3.5 Cumbria Fire and Rescues have adopted the JESIP doctrine in all parts of the Service to assist in creating and maintaining a learning culture.

3.6 Debriefing policies for Cumbria Fire and Rescue and the multi-agency Cumbria Resilience Forum are published (see Appendix A) to ensure that all Major Incidents are debriefed.

3.7 The policy provides a menu of options for the most appropriate methods for debriefing incidents.

3.8 This policy has matured and improved by embedding communities in debriefing, ensuring that communities are central to the IEM learning process. The first local example of this kind in the UK was the Cumbrian debrief of the Recovery from Storm Desmond. This debrief was commissioned to be undertaken by an independent academic, who was subsequently asked to co-author the Kerslake Report into the Manchester Arena bombing.

- 3.9 During the Storm Desmond recovery debrief process the Rhegd Centre was used to host the emergency services, local authorities, voluntary groups and communities all working together to identify lessons.
- 3.10 The learning from that event and report has led to a complete re-write of the Cumbria Flood Plan, enhanced local intelligence, better use of technology for remote coordination, spontaneous volunteers, community emergency plans and information sharing.

4.0 Processes for identifying and learning lessons

4.1 The process for identifying lessons is built into the organisational structure of the Cumbria Fire and Rescue service to prioritise operational safety. Lessons are systematically drawn out from several key sources. In the Cumbria Fire and Rescue service the Operational Assurance process describes these and aligns with the overall IEM process in Figure 1.

4.1.1 Cumbria Fire and Rescue Operational Assurance Process

4.1.2 The sources for identifying lessons are collated into four strands in the Operational Assurance process for Cumbria Fire and Rescue. The four strands augmented with additional sources used by Cumbria County Council. These are:

- **Planning**

This is achieved through the application of the Station Management Framework. This includes the development of multi-agency plans alongside Cumbria County Council.

- **Preparation**

This achieved through delivery of core training and maintenance of skills through exercises, single and multi-agency courses and wider training events which are recorded through PDR Pro for Cumbria Fire and Rescue and the Emergency Communications Directory application for Cumbria County Council and other agencies. Additionally, maintenance of equipment and PPE, operational risk site visits, periodic inspections and testing of operational fire appliances and equipment provide systematic opportunities to identify lessons to be learnt. Some of these lessons are now addressed by online learning via Cumbria Fire and Rescue's Learnpro eLearning portal.

- **Response**

Operational assurance of operational incidents with debriefing at strategic and tactical levels is in place. For long duration incidents this can include reflective interim reviews and timeouts.

- **Review**

A variety of methods from peer review assessments to inspections from regulators are in place to provide verification of operational activities e.g. skills validations, hot and cold debriefs for exercises/incidents, policy adherence and through the application of station operational assurance audits and health and safety audits.

4.2 **Wider lessons**

4.3 To learn lessons that others have identified it has been critical to increase the scope to include lessons elsewhere in the UK and abroad.

4.4 Many nationally significant incidents have inquiries, such as the Grenfell inquiry or the Manchester Arena Inquiry that are closely followed and acted upon by Emergency Planners in both Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Fire and Rescue. Action plans associated with the recommendations from these inquiries are on Sharepoint and tracked at the Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service Programme Board. Incidents may have reports written to extract learning, such as the Weightman report on the Fukushima nuclear disaster, which was communicated and tracked via regulators and lead government departments. The learning from incidents can come through a number of additional mechanisms that both Cumbria Fire and Rescue and Cumbria County Council are plugged into including:

- The Cabinet Office's Joint Organisation Learning (JOL) process.
- Coroner's Regulation 28 Reports to prevent future deaths.
- Changes to legislation, such as Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations [REPPPIR] 2019. This is an example where Cumbria was asked to advise on learning and influenced via the Approved Code of Practice via the guidance steering group.
- National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) National Operational Learning (NOL)
- National specialist groups such as the Lessons Learnt Working Group (LLWG) and Local Authority Nuclear Working Group (LANWG), under the Nuclear Resilience Coordination Committee (NRCC).

4.5 Lessons can be sent directly to organisations. For example, Coroner's Regulation 28 reports go directly to Service Support team within Cumbria Fire and Rescue, where lessons are evaluated and tracked through to completion. Other lessons are identified and evaluated as part of collaborative working such as the NFCC and LAWNG.

4.6 **Cumbrian incidents lessons**

4.6.1 Emergency planning, training and real incidents that happen in Cumbria are all used to develop learning. The recent training on Cyber Attacks and CBRNe feed into specific and generic Cumbrian Plans via Cumbria Resilience Forum subgroups. The Cumbria Resilience Forum debriefing policy is designed to be adaptable to the different natures, scale and duration of incidents. These lessons are collated and shared through the Cumbria Resilience Forum. They are disseminated and stored on the Resilience Direct system.

4.6.2 Covid has been a different incident. Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service had an independent review of its response and this augmented the multi-agency

approach in where Cumbria took a slightly different approach to the “endpoint” type of debrief that is normally applicable and appropriate. Cumbria has undertaken 2 interim reviews and a third has been commissioned. These Cumbrian reviews will complement the national inquiry learning when it is available but were designed to enable early learning to influence and improve the Cumbrian acute Covid response.

- 4.6.3 Most Major Incidents within Cumbria are not of the scale or duration of Covid and have smaller proportionate multi-agency debriefs. A recent example of this is the Lateral Flow Testing Programme debrief which was part of the Covid response and was held on the 24th May 2022. This was hosted on Microsoft Teams and will produce a written report with recommendations which will go to the County Council Corporate Management Team and the Cumbria Resilience Forum Programme Board for scrutiny and agreement.
- 4.6.4 In 2021 the Cumbria Fire and Rescue and Cumbria County Council contributed to the National Resilience strategy review and the review of the Civil Contingencies Act to ensure that lessons identified in Cumbria influence national policy and legislation.

5.0 Investing in learning lessons

5.1 Lessons for and from Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Fire and Rescue are collated and prioritised within the Cumbria Resilience Forum (CRF) by the Local Resilience Forum Manager, part of the County Council’s Resilience Unit within Cumbria Fire and Rescue.

5.2 The Local Resilience Forum Manager role was created (appointed 2019) by Cumbria Fire and Rescue to develop systems for progressing and tracking to completion the lessons that have been identified. Only when the implementation is completed are the lessons noted as having been learnt.



**Cumbria Resilience Forum
Work Programme
April 2022-April 2023**

5.3 All the sources and lessons are recorded on SharePoint, compiled and prioritised into the CRF Work Programme (Figure 3) which is held on the Resilience Direct system.

Figure 3 CRF Work programme for 2022-23

5.4 The development of robust processes and tracking lessons from being identified to learnt, is a significant improvement. Governance is provided by the Cumbria Resilience Executive, where Cumbria Fire and Rescue provide the Chair and Cumbria County Council are active participants.

5.5 Impact of Covid

5.5.1 It should be noted that the capacity to learn lessons both within Cumbria County Council and Cumbria Fire and Rescue, along with other partners of

the Cumbria Resilience Forum has been significantly impacted by the response to Covid. Although the identification of lessons has continued throughout the Covid response, the capability to develop actions and track them through to completed “lessons learnt” has necessarily slowed.

6.0 Assurance

6.1 Cumbria Fire and Rescue and Cumbria County Council have a number of independent mechanisms of assurance of learning lessons. These include inspections or testing from:

- Her Majesties Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).
- The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR).
- Health & Safety Executive (COMAH and separately Pipelines)
- Ministry of Defence Nuclear Safety Regulators (DNSR)

6.2 HMICFRS provide independent verification of Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service’s functional department delivering learning through operational fire service assurance.

6.3 Additionally, these independent bodies look at the processes for learning lessons from training, exercising and real incidents. The processes were found to be adequate. HMICFRS and ONR in particular review the governance of learning activity and expect their recommendations to have been acted upon by the next inspection or test.

6.4 Cumbria Fire and Rescue are currently preparing for the next HMICFRS inspection, which will conclude it’s next inspection by the 2nd August 2022, delivering a report by the end of the year.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Significant process and effort is undertaken to ensure that Cumbria Fire and Rescue and Cumbria County Council identify and learn lessons to protect those who both reside and visit Cumbria.

7.2 Assurance is provided by independent, external inspectors and regulators.

7.3 Continuous improvement remains at the heart of Cumbria Fire and Rescue, Cumbria County Council and the collective Cumbrian emergency preparedness culture.

John Beard
Chief Fire Officer
27th May 2022

Please ensure that every part of this section where there is an asterisk is completed in accordance with the instructions before sending the report to Legal and Democratic Services, (please delete this sentence, prior to release).*

Appendices

Appendix A Debriefing Policy and good practice

Previous Relevant Council or Executive Decisions

No previous relevant decisions

Background Papers

No additional background papers.

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