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Suzie Cave

Building Resilience: Flooding in Northern Ireland National Flood Forum Workshop Summary Report.

The following paper gives a summary of the *Building Resilience: Flooding in Northern Ireland National Flood Forum Workshop and Discussion* 29 June 2016 hosted by the National Flood Forum and Watertight to discuss both local and national responses to flooding in Northern Ireland.

The purpose of the event was to bring together people who have been affected by flooding, as well as a range of organisations who have an interest in the area, to share experience and expertise. It featured contributions from different organisations including community groups, as well as the National Flood Forum, who gave an overview of how they have been effective in England, Wales and Scotland, and to potentially develop a similar network in Northern Ireland.

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1 Chair's Opening Remarks: Quintin Oliver

- Introduction: Quintin Oliver, Stratagem, also Northern Ireland Adviser to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF).
- Context of event taking place in the aftermath of “Brexit” vote; uncertainty of future arrangements and relationship with the EU – relevant given strong role EU has played in policy around flooding in Northern Ireland.
- Statutory sector can't work without people: local communities need government framework of public services/regulation/funding.
- Private sector has a role to play in developing new products, innovating and coming up with new ideas – they also need people and statutory framework within which to operate.
- Health service, which accounts for around 50% of public spending, relies heavily on cross-sectoral working, with co-design and co-production a key part of how it operates.

2 Watertight Overview: Chris Keir and Gareth Boyd

- Watertight work extensively in the UK with communities affected by flooding, mainly through the Environment Agency and local government.
- Local company looking at best practice across UK and globally, as well as exporting skills that are world-leading.
- Watertight are working to develop new products, including telemetry with Kingspan Environmental and Dublin City University.
- Watertight as a leading provider of Property Level Protection (PLP), working with local authorities and councils in England to protect individuals against flooding.
- Examples of their work can be seen in Horncastle Council, Dorset County Council, Devon and Budley, and their work includes working with listed buildings.
- PLP was initially about products, however it is becoming much more focused around people, and this is the approach that Watertight have adopted: people, not products.
- Very easy to patronise, but also easy to listen: learning in working with communities. Key is ensuring community take ownership of issues, actions and solutions.
- Resilience as key in responding to and mitigating risk of flooding; general acceptance that water will breach defences, and so it is about minimising damage.
- Importance of understanding the ability and capacity of the individual property owner.

- Watertight work with the community in understanding what products will help them, as well as the capacity of the individual to deploy these when flooding occurs/is at risk of occurring.
- Includes accounting for planned maintenance and annual inspections – about a process and not just one-off installation.
- Need for communities to have a strong voice, and persevere in finding a solution to flooding.

3 Paul Cobbing: National Flood Forum

See PowerPoint slides Appendix 1

- Flooding is not just an environmental issue, it is about people and the impacts on their lives, it is about contingency planning, health and economy.
- NFF is a national charity with 13 employees. Works throughout England and Wales
- NFF supports flood risk communities by helping people prepare and recover from flooding.
- Aims to put flood issues at centre of policy making and operational delivery
- Supports communities to work with partners to find solutions
- Therefore gives communities the control
- Provides and Advice Line and Property ProtectionTool-however this is not being utilised in NI
- E.g. of community led flood action group supported by NFF:
- Calderdale Flood Commission- created own plan from previous flood experience – often local community is first on the scene before national services arrive.
- Adur Floodwatch Group- independently engaged with landowner to start putting provisions in to prevent flooding further down river
- Brompton – by passed national Agencies as they couldn't respond quickly enough. Applied for loan from bank, employed a hydrologist, spoke to local land owners and now getting planning for new measures.
- Local communities develop action plans which they practice annually- NFF is invited along to contribute.
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation work paramount in getting insurance for high risk areas in England.

4 Paddy McLaughlin, Cushendall Resilience Group

See PowerPoint slides Appendix 2

- Does not rely on emergency services- drew up own local plan after last floods and relies on local services.
- Store sand bags on site- learnt that waiting for DOE is too slow- flooding comes too quickly.
- Local plan not just about flooding- collating local resources and expertise to provide as many services as possible e.g. first aid as nearest hospital 55mins away, local search and rescue, aid during heavy snowfall of 2012.
- Works in partnership with Fire, Police, RNLI, Mountail Rescue, Red Cross, Health Trust, Coastguard, local Doctors, Rivers Agency etc.
- It developed coordinated emergency plan, logged all risks and opportunities, identified all key assets in area, identified suitable building to use as emergency centre, developed plan with key stakeholders, new generator and safety equipment in place, received £10,000 in lottery funding which helped towards new sandbag storage facility.

5 Q & A

Joanne McKenna, British Red Cross: *What is the added value that the NFF can bring to NI, given there is already a multi-agency approach to flooding in place?*

Paul Cobbing, NFF:

- Role of statutory agencies is very important, however programmes are most effective when engagement comes first, rather than “top-down” solutions that people participate in rather than “own”.

Michael Patterson, Belfast City Council: *How do we ensure community resilience is included in the Programme for Government?*

Quintin Oliver, Stratagem:

- Need to respond to the consultation by 22 July, making the case for how this aligns with the overall focus on outcomes and wellbeing.

Terry Hoey, Palmerstown Residents Association: *Is the Cushendall Resilience Group independent from the RNLI and what insurance do you have to cover*

use of equipment including defibrillators?

Paddy McLaughlin, Cushendall Resilience Group:

- Resilience Group is independent from the RNLI but RNLI lends resource to the group – useful network to locate people who are “do-ers”.
- Work with Ambulance Service to ensure people are trained to use equipment and this is regularly maintained by the Ambulance Service.

Quintin Oliver, Stratagem: *How do Watertight engage with communities?*

Chris Kerr, Watertight:

- We would prefer to engage with communities much earlier but due to tender and procurement processes, the groups are already formed.
- Best results come from early engagement as communities have the local knowledge which can inform Watertight what solutions are most appropriate for their particular problems.

Leigh Gould, Clarawood Residents Association: *Local area has been flooded six times in the last 10 years, and personal experience has not been of bottomup, statutory sector ignored (his) voice in identifying source of flooding, and only activity occurred when flooding, so reactive rather than preventative.*

6 Claire Hanna MLA: Political Perspective

- Praised work of statutory agencies, and hoped for further positive developments under new Department for Infrastructure.
- As MLA, and previously as Councillor for Balmoral ward in South Belfast, Claire spoke of significant experience in helping constituents in relation to flooding.
- Cited example of Sicily Park, which has flooded several times since 2012; whilst some resilience measures are in place, significant problems with infrastructure – sewer system is 100 years old.
- Flooding disrupts lives and has huge impact on quality of life – always conscious of heavy rain.
- Insurance as big issue for many, some have been “cleaned out” from previous flooding events.
- Different reasons for flooding, but for constituents, issue is to prevent water from entering their home.
- Gap in legislation to underpin multi-agency approach – lack of clarity in the different roles of NI Water, Rivers Agency and Transport NI (formerly Roads Service).

- Looked at Civil Contingencies Act in operation in UK and how it only applies to a limited number of organisations in NI delivering non transferred functions e.g. PSNI, Coastguard and telecommunications.
- Issue of Floodline needs to be addressed – acknowledged that some work has been done on this – essential that people-centred approach is adopted, e.g.: callers being asked to identify the source of flooding/MLA cannot ring on behalf of constituents.
- Issue with the Hardship Fund being one off fund of £1000 – individuals can only get it once no matter how many times property floods.
- Need ring-fenced resilience funding
- Need to plan long term for flooding – and infrastructure needs to match changing weather.
- Agencies and communities are willing to engage – but need to have support in the form of legislation and resources.

7 Workshop feedback

The following questions were put for consideration by the groups:

1. What are the three highlights you have heard so far?
2. What are you three top priorities for action now?

These are summarised in the table below:

Highlights	Top priorities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need for Community-led approach – identify people to talk to. Community planning is essential. 2. Communication aimed at all sections of community –no one size fits all 3. Legislation and funding –lack of legislation means no dedicated funding- £300 set up for groups is not enough. Lack of funding for Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG). 4. Reactive approach taken- need more preventative action. Early warning essential. All hazards approach is needed similar to Cushendall. 5. Potential for widening the remit of resilience in other areas e.g. security, RNLi and partnerships with sports clubs, use of catchments and “upstream” partnerships. 6. Need forum for resilience groups to access advice on best practice models and funding opportunities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education key in informing and empowering people with good examples such as Cushendall. Need bottom up approach. 2. Resilience awareness should be included in school curriculums 3. Community engagement - Need development of a toolkit and analysing effective ways of engaging. Ensure community empowerment. 4. Need for specific legislation to deal with flooding in NI with a lead department. NI falls behind other parts of the UK in terms of Civil Contingencies legislation. 5. Should also look at climate change legislation e.g. Welsh model. Consider Brexit issues and make reference to sustainable development within legislation development. 6. Lack of funding - Legislation needed to ensure agencies have the necessary resource to fund resilience groups.

8 Jonathan McKee, Rivers Agency

See PowerPoint slides Appendix 3

- Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG) established 2013
- Multi-disciplinary team to establish a regional, standardised method of engagement with communities to develop resilience.
- Jointly chaired by NILGA, membership includes: Councils, Emergency Planning Co-ordinating Officers, Belfast Resilience, PSNI, NI Fire and Rescue, NI Water, Met Office, Transport NI, Red Cross, Consumer Council, NI Electricity, Public Health Agency, Ministry of Defence.
- Develops Household Emergency Life-Saving Plan, Household Flood Plan, individual Community Emergency Plans.
- Delivered Pilot Project in 10 areas with focus on flooding (to be rolled out to other weather related emergencies)
- Pilot project based on concept of Community resilience -empowering communities, sharing flood warning and information e.g. sharing Met Office Alerts, pre-deployment of resources e.g. sandbags, delivery of new Individual Property Protection grant aid scheme Jan 2016.
- Review revealed 7/10 communities have developed a community emergency plan. It concluded that the Pilot was successful and should be continued in NI.

9 Chairs Closing Remarks

- Similarities between debates on resilience with fuel poverty a few years ago – people now understand the “buzz term” and recognise what it means.
- Contributions acknowledge the need for clear communications on a range of issues – education, access to funding, communicating positive work of RCRGs – and updating and refreshing information.
- Collective endorsement of people at heart of resilience, and appreciation of the social capital which comes from community confidence and cohesion.
- Recognising the need to develop relationships externally and develop new partnerships.
- Legislation and policy framework is key to enabling agencies etc. to be able to deliver on the ground – not enough to rely on “good will”.
- Positive relationship between agencies is key.
- Need for effective action; what can you do to improve flooding response in Northern Ireland?

Appendix 1: Paul Cobbing slides

The National Flood Forum

Paul Cobbing



What I am going to talk about

- 1. Impact of flooding
- 2. Introduction to the NFF
- 3. The benefits of this approach

It's about people, not stuff



Who are we?

- A national charity
- 12 employees
- Well in excess of 200 affiliated groups
- Projects across the country






Supporting and Representing Flood Risk Communities

What do we do?

- Help people to prepare for flooding
- Help them to recover their lives after flooding
- Work to put people's flood risk issues at the centre of policy making and operational delivery

Why are we different?

- Independence
- Abolition
- We help people and communities take control of their flood risk
- We support communities to engage positively with partners to find solutions
- We work in the spaces that others can't fill



Principles of our work?

- Client Control
- Delegated Power
- Partnership Construction
- Flexibility
- Consultation
- Informing
- Therapy
- Manipulation



Partnership



NFF services



Advice Line
02299 403055

National Flood Forum Website

Property Protection Advisory Tool



Keeping water out Property Level Protection PLP



Affiliation



United Kingdom

Calderdale Flood Commission



Benefits of community-led flood action groups



Flood risk management

Managing incidents

What can be achieved by communities leading



Charlton



Brompton



Incident planning and practice








Appendix 2: Paddy McLaughlin slides

Cushendall Community Resilience

- Community planned
- Community focused
- Community delivered

Cushendall Community Resilience Group

Cushendall situated in the Glens of Antrim, it is an area of outstanding natural beauty with a rugged coastline and stunning terrain. Due to its location and landscape it welcomes thousands of visitors every summer while in winter access can be restricted due to extreme weather cutting off roads and transport links to the area.

The people who live in Cushendall have come together to work on how they can deal with the challenges and opportunities their location and community brings them.

Situated where they are, an hour away from hospital and at least 45 minutes from an ambulance, the people of Cushendall have created a Community Resilience Plan.

This takes into account any and all emergencies that might occur, natural or otherwise and the community are an integral part of this.





The Glens of Antrim attracts a large number of people in summer months






Flooding in the centre of Cushendall




Cushendall Community




Extreme flooding & storm damage Cushendall



Cushendall 1998

Flooding is a risk in the local area.



Cushendall 2010

Three storms 2017

Violent coastal storms

Coastal storms cause major damage and is a risk to the community

Local resources - Fire Service, RNI and Government agencies

Body of pier death that recovered from sea

Double tragedy at Red Bay pier

RNI in dramatic double rescue off Torr Head

RNI plays key role in Community Resilience

What we do in (by) community


Providing first aid in the community
 trained hospital to receive with
 Ambulance station 3

Cushendall Resilience Group

a partnership with key partners
Fire, Police, RMI, Mountain Rescue, Red Cross, HealthTrust, Coastguard, Local Doctors, Rivers Agency and others

- ★ Developed coordinated emergency plan
- ★ Logged all the risks & opportunities
- ★ Identified all the key assets in the area
- ★ Identified suitable building to use as emergency centre and a secondary building
- ★ Through collaboration with key stakeholders we have a solid plan drafted in case of emergency
- ★ New generator and safety equipment in place
- ★ Clear lines of communication established
- ★ New sandbag storage facility now in place

Received £10,000 in lottery funding




Emergency Risk Centre Locations

Cushendall Parish Centre
Coast Road, Cushendall
Tel: 01794 9171
Fax: 01794 9172

St John's
Boat Club
Coast Road, Cushendall
Tel: 01794 9171
Fax: 01794 9172

St John's
Coast Road Club
Coast Road Cushendall
Tel: 01794 9171
Fax: 01794 9172



Co-ordinator Meeting Point for Community Emergency planning team is
Cushendall Parish Centre

Emergency Contact List

Strategic Contact: B&B 999
Fire/Roadside: Linn (FR) 4300 3300 100
FR: Customer Helpline: 03457 443 343
FR: Fire Emergency Line: 999-001-001
FR: Housing Executive Emergency Repairs: 43440 100 001
FR Water: 09457 443 300 (see FR to report flooding)
Rivers Agency: 019 5344 4100 (see FR to report flooding)
DRD Roads Services: 435 9021 3900 (see FR to report flooding)
Coastguard Coast & Glace: 019 5344 2225
Coast of Brest: 01904 107000
Coastguard on B&B: B&B 999

Community Emergency Group Flood Risking Agenda

1. What is the current situation? Location of the emergency is a river
2. A road?
3. A residential area?
4. A care home?
5. A school?
6. A hospital?
7. A business?
8. A public house?
9. A public house?
10. A public house?
11. A public house?
12. A public house?
13. A public house?
14. A public house?
15. A public house?
16. A public house?
17. A public house?
18. A public house?
19. A public house?
20. A public house?



Cushendall Community Severe Weather Plan

Local Risk Assessment

Local risk assessments: Residents village wardens with satellite equipment (Centago) with mobile phones and satellite phones available will organize distribution of information

Tractor and forklifts parked - 00502 (Alan Tompkins 07411 4134)

Nurses, doctors - 0194 of Antrim Health Centre 028 27774 000

Cushendall emergency planning team leads, members and others:

Gareth O'Connell - 094 2773 94
Kevin Mc Donnell - 079 51945
Tom Mc Laughlin - 071 930091
Niall Duffell 094 277198

ISSUES	IMPACT ON COMMUNITY	COMMUNITY SUPPORT
Flooding	Flooding in local areas	Starting damage repairs to improve flood defences
Food supply	Blocked access	Emergency plan
Services / Cuts	Emergency services	Alert residents
Service essential	Trucks ambulances	Prepares full or mobile materials
Bus Wave	Volunteer people	Alert residents
Major traffic blocked	Trucks ambulances	Full list of emergency centre



Launch of Cushendall Community Resilience with key partners



Community awareness day

New Risk clearly identified Sept 2015

- +Lack of Defibrillators and first responders
- +Cushendall and not fit for purpose responder systems in the area
- +Not enough trained first aiders in the area
- +Lack of awareness of how defibrillators can help in local community
- +Lack of communication systems
- +Ambulance cover very poor resulting in volunteers filling the void

What steps have the local community resilience group immediately taken?
Identified the risk and opportunity

Opportunity

- + Provide more distribution of strategic locations in the community
- + Aim to train up to 40 key people in the use of defibrillators and basic first aid
- + Awareness and education campaign (3-year plan)
- + Social campaign to get every house to display their house number to enable first responders to find addresses quickly
- + Provide WiFi in local area to enable first responders to communicate. Location maps, more specific knowledge.



Appendix 3: John McKee slides

"The Journey of the RCRG"

Regional Community Resilience Group

"Be Ready"

Regional Community Resilience Group (RCRG)

- Established in 2013.
- **Willingness** of a multi disciplinary team to come together to work out a **regional, standardised** method of engagement with communities to **support** and **empower** them to develop resilience.

Regional Community Resilience Group

"Be Ready"

Membership of RCRG

- Jointly chaired by Local Government and Rivers Agency, RCRG membership includes:
 - Local Councils
 - Emergency Planning Co-ordinating Officers
 - Belfast Resilience
 - Police Service of Northern Ireland
 - Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service
 - NI Water
 - Met Office
 - Transport NI
 - Red Cross
 - Consumer Council
 - Northern Ireland Electricity
 - Public Health Agency
 - Ministry of Defence

Regional Community Resilience Group

"Be Ready"

RCRG Objectives

- Raise awareness of Community Resilience.
- Inform of Responder limitations.
- Help Communities to develop **Emergency Plan's**.
- Develop an effective **Household Emergency Pack**.
- Provide 'Alert' information.

Regional Community Resilience Group

"Be Ready"

Household Emergency Life-Saving Plan (HELP)

Regional Community Resilience Group

"Be Ready"

Household Flood Plan

Regional Community Resilience Group

"Be Ready"

Community Emergency Plan

Regional Community Resilience Group "Be Ready"

Pilot project

- **Initial focus on flooding.**
(Although Work of the Group will extend to other weather related emergencies)
- Communities selected using a standardised, regional scoring system.

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Pilot project

Some unique NI flood risk factors

1. Those at risk here compared to GB.
2. How we provide Flood Alleviation Schemes
3. Funding.
4. DFI- Lead Government Department.
- Decision making.
5. Accountability.

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Pilot project areas

- 10 No Pilot areas identified by RCRG:
 - (Belfast) Sicily Park and Sydenham
 - (North) Ahoghill and Broughshane
 - (South) Coalisland and Banbridge
 - (East) Cregagh and Braniel/Whineroft
 - (West) Fintona and Beragh

Regional Community Resilience Group "Be Ready"

Community Resilience (What is it in practice)

1. The concept:
 - a) Empower, Enable & Support communities to assist householders and each other if 'Government' response is over-stretched.

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Community Resilience (What is it in practice)

2. Sharing Flood 'Warning & Informing' information:
 - a) Met Office weather warnings can be accessed, explained and the potential community risk assessed.
 - b) River Level alerts provided via text message if appropriate.

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Met Office weather warning

NO SEVERE WEATHERS EXPECTED	BE AWARE	BE PREPARED	TAKE ACTION
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Some definitions of low, medium and high impacts is available at – <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/bulletins/severe-weather-advice>

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Examples of Warnings on Met Office Website

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Community Resilience (What is it in practice)

3. Pre-deployment of resources:

- Sandbag stores.
- Agreed pumping solutions with NIFRS.
- Individual Property Protection (IPP). A grant aided scheme for this was launched on 13 January 2016.

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Community Resilience (What is it in practice)

Examples of Local Sand-bag Stores

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Individual Property Protection - examples

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Review of Pilot

An independent review of this work concluded that most residents felt better prepared and informed about flood risk. Some notable points identified in the review include:-

- Seven out of ten communities have agreed a community emergency plan.
- All ten communities have designated community lead contacts.
- A flood warden scheme is being implemented.

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Review of Pilot

In addition:-

- 72 per cent of residents felt better prepared for flooding after this pilot project; and
- 74 per cent felt better informed about flood risk.

The review highlighted a number of considerations and these are being taken forward.

A fundamental conclusion is that this initiative has been extremely beneficial, suitable to the unique needs of Northern Ireland, and should be continued.



Regional Community Resilience Group "Be Ready"

Further Development

- Community contacts and pre deployment of resources have also been established at:
 - Cushendall
 - Annsborough
 - Aughnacloy



Regional Community Resilience Group

Further Development

- Red Cross Funded project (Community Resilience in Urban Areas - CRUA) developed to expand the work of the group. Work well under way in engaging with communities in:
 - Newry
 - Ballymena
 - Antrim (Riverside / Massareena; & Abbey View)
 - Finaghy Rd North, Belfast
 - Omagh



Regional Community Resilience Group

Further Development

- Another 14 Communities identified in the EU Floods Directive Flood Risk Management Plans!

Ref	Area	Project Name	Status	Completion
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14



Regional Community Resilience Group

Further Development

- Another 9 Communities identified locally

Ref	Area	Project Name	Status	Completion
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9



Regional Community Resilience Group

Further Development- other Emergency Management Risks

- Flooding has been one the most prominent emergency planning issues in recent years.
- However there are other Emergency Management issues.




Regional Community Resilience Group

Further Development- other Emergency Management Risks

- Rollout of community engagement to identified communities affected by snow/severe weather to begin in late 2016.
- Consideration how the work of the Group could integrate with Education Initiatives in Schools.

Regional Community Resilience Group

Thank You.

Regional Community Resilience Group "Be Ready"