



meeting **Critical Infrastructure Select Committee**

date **23rd February 2009**

agenda item number

Report of the Chair of the Critical Infrastructure Select Committee

Work Programme

Purpose of the report

1. To introduce organisations providing evidence to the Select Committee and to indicate the current arrangements for the work programme.

Background

2. On 15 September 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned a Select Committee to examine issues associated with long term loss of services and utilities in Nottinghamshire linked to weaknesses in the critical infrastructure.
3. Further to this, on 27 October the Select Committee received a briefing from Emergency Planning Officers with a strong focus on the Civil Contingencies Act and the responsibilities of category 1 and 2 responders. In addition, the Select Committee met on 24th November to receive evidence from two utilities companies: Central Networks and Severn Trent Water; as well as meeting on 15th December to receive evidence from the Army's Joint Regional Liaison Officer (East Midlands), East Midlands Ambulance Service and the Fire and Rescue Service. On 26th January 2009, the Select Committee received briefings from Nottinghamshire Police, Lincolnshire County Council and the National Grid.
4. The focus of this scrutiny review is to ensure that all potential weaknesses in the critical infrastructure have been identified and mitigated in order to preserve community resilience when very severe events occur

Resilience – Government Office East Midlands

5. Government Office East Midlands (GOEM) works with central Government and local response organisations such as the police, fire, ambulance, and local authorities to promote and foster resilient communities.

6. In the event of an incident, a small team within the Government Office liaises with local responders and provides situation reports to government departments.
7. In the summer 2007 floods GOEM's resilience team played a critical role in supporting regional agencies and feeding back to Ministers to help in the co-ordination of the national response and also working with the Pitt Review team to ensure that lessons were learnt.
8. Relevant lines of questioning to Government Office East Midlands might include:
 - How can category 2 responders be better engaged with?
 - What plans are there to formalise mutual aid between local authorities in the East Midlands?
 - What is the most severe threat to the critical infrastructure of Nottinghamshire and has this been properly planned for?

Emergency Planning – NHS Nottinghamshire County

9. NHS Nottinghamshire County makes plans for major incidents in accordance with statutory duties outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the requirements of the NHS Emergency Planning Guidance 2005 and the Healthcare Commission Public Health Care Standard 24. Plans are based on the principles of risk assessment, co-operation with external agencies, sharing information and communicating with the public.
10. Relevant lines of questioning for NHS Nottinghamshire County might include:
 - What is the current state of preparedness for an avian influenza pandemic?
 - What are the plans in the event of an incident involving numbers of mass casualties sufficient to overwhelm the resources of hospitals in Nottinghamshire?
 - What analysis has been undertaken of the potential threat from severe events (e.g. flooding) to NHS assets and infrastructure in Nottinghamshire?

Emergency Planning - Highways Agency

11. Following its regionalisation, the role of Regional Emergency Planning Manager (REP) has been introduced to the Highways Agency. The Highways Agency is a Category 2 responder under the Civil

Contingencies Act 2004, and as such has a set of statutory duties for civil protection. The role of the REP is to ensure that the Highways Agency discharges its duties regionally under the Act.

12. The REP will act as manager and focal point for all the Highways Agency's regional resilience, emergency planning and security issues, attending Local Resilience Forums and their working groups. In doing this the REP helps to minimise the impact of a major incident or severe disruptive challenge on the local community and environment.
13. Relevant lines of questioning might include:
 - What have been the benefits of the appointment of a Regional Emergency Planning Manager?
 - What is the Highways Agency's role in responding to the mass stranding of motorists in extreme weather conditions (e.g. blizzards)?
 - What particular problems/challenges do you face as a Category 2 responder and how can these be addressed?

Work Programme

14. The final meeting of the Critical Infrastructure Select Committee will take place on 23 March 2009 at 10:00 a.m. when the final report will be discussed.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that

the Critical Infrastructure Select Committee consider the work programme, receive briefing and evidence, and initiate lines of questioning as necessary.

Councillor Yvonne Davidson
Chair of the Select Committee

Background papers: nil.