

report



meeting **Critical Infrastructure Select Committee**

date **26th January 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.
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

Nottinghamshire Police

5. Nottinghamshire Police fight crime, protect people and promote law and order in the county. The organisation polices an area of more than 800 square miles serving a diverse population of more than one million people.

6. Nottinghamshire Police are the lead organisation for the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum (the senior management group for the co-ordination of emergency planning within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire).
7. Relevant lines of questioning to Nottinghamshire Police might include:
 - How could the Local Resilience Forum be made more effective?
 - What events have the potential to take the command and control structure for emergency response to breaking point?
 - Is it worth planning for the “worst case scenario” when severe events are so unpredictable in nature?

Lincolnshire County Council

8. Lincolnshire County Council has commenced a pilot study in order to research the best way to guide and inform individuals in preparing for future emergency or disaster events such as the floods of 2007.
9. Since flooding is not the only severe event likely to be experienced by Lincolnshire there is a requirement for a generic community based action plan. The authority also emphasises the responsibility of individual residents to safeguard homes, families and neighbours. Lincolnshire also urges residents to undertake simple tasks in order to improve their resilience such as: getting together a kit of emergency supplies sufficient to last three days, making an emergency plan that includes all important documents and emergency contacts, keeping informed about the different types of emergency or disaster that could affect the local community.
10. Relevant lines of questioning for Lincolnshire County Council might include:
 - What was learnt from the pilot study?
 - To what extent have Lincolnshire residents taken up the advice to keep emergency kits etc?
 - What formal or informal arrangements are in place with neighbouring local authorities to provide assistance to Lincolnshire residents in the event of very severe coastal flooding?
 - What level of severity is it realistic to plan for in terms of coastal flooding and with that in mind what would be the likely effect on the wider resources for emergency response across the East Midlands.

National Grid

11. The National Grid is an international electricity and gas company and one of the largest investor-owned energy companies in the world. National Grid is dedicated to being the world's premier network utility, primarily focused on delivering energy safely, reliably and efficiently
12. National Grid owns the high-voltage electricity transmission system in England and Wales and operates the system across Great Britain. They also own and operate the high pressure gas transmission system in Britain, and have electricity transmission systems in the north-eastern US.
13. The local distribution networks deliver gas to around 11 million consumers in an area covering approximately a quarter of Great Britain. National Grid distributes electricity in the north eastern US to approximately 3.3 million customers and gas in upstate New York to around 565,000 customers.
14. Relevant lines of questioning might include:
 - Why is the National Grid currently setting up a resilience department? Who undertook this work previously?
 - Systems for the delivery of utilities are by their nature highly robust – what sort of severe events does the National Grid plan for and what resources are available to you to assist recovery?
 - What will your new resilience department be doing to develop relationships with local authorities and their Emergency Planning Teams?

Work Programme

15. The dates for future meetings are as follows: 23 February, and 23 March 2009. All meetings due to take place at 10:00 a.m.
16. At the meeting of 23rd February 2009 the Select Committee will receive information from the Highways Agency and NHS Nottinghamshire County.

Recommendation

17. 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.