



**meeting**      **Critical Infrastructure Select Committee**

**date**            **15<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

**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 24<sup>th</sup> November to receive evidence from two utilities companies: Central Networks and Severn Trent Water.
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

#### **Military Aid**

5. The armed forces have provided assistance to the civil authorities over the years. However, the government has stated that resilience planners must not assume that such support will be available in the future when developing capability programmes. Military support is provided on an “assistance basis” and a variety of factors means that it cannot be guaranteed.
6. The Armed Forces are not independent of Government and remain under Central Government Control at all times. Only Defence Ministers

can authorise their deployment for any purpose. In the first instance, guidance on requesting military aid for recovery situations should be sought from the Joint Regional Liaison Officer who is a key member of the Local Resilience Forum. The armed forces are more likely to be involved in the response to a crisis rather than recovery. Recovery is a local authority led phase where commercial alternatives may be available.

7. Relevant lines of questioning for the Joint Military Liaison Officer might include:
  - Examples of military aid previously provided within Nottinghamshire or the East Midlands
  - Issues around the funding of military aid by local authorities and the circumstances in which MOD Ministers might decide to waive costs
  - The risk to Armed Forces personnel overseas created by tying up military resources in the response to extreme events at home

## **Fire and Rescue Service**

8. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service covers an area of 834 square miles with a population of one million. The Fire and Rescue Service has a total of 25 fire stations (12 whole-time and 13 retained). The service encompasses both the traditionally recognised firefighters and the equally important rescue service, as well as education programmes.
9. On 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008, the five fire and rescue services across the East Midlands took part in a major regional exercise on flooding at the National Watersports Centre. The aim of the exercise was to enable a Standard Operating Procedure for flood response. Through this procedure fire and rescue services will be working to the same arrangements in order to provide a fast, efficient and co-ordinated response to widespread flooding.
10. Relevant lines of questioning for the Fire and Rescue Service might include:
  - Further information on the planned procedures for the mass evacuation from flooded areas and the resources likely to be available for rescue from water
  - The principles of planning for the response to extreme events e.g. catastrophic fires, air collision, massive motorway pile up
  - Susceptibility of Fire and Rescue Service assets e.g. communication systems to loss or failure during very severe events.

## **East Midlands Ambulance Service**

11. The East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) provides emergency and urgent care, patient transport, call handling and clinical triage services for 4.6 million people across the six counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland.
12. EMAS employs 3000 staff over 70 locations, including two control rooms at Nottingham and Lincoln, with the largest staff group being accident and emergency personnel. Their overall budget is £137 million this year.
13. Accident and Emergency crews respond to over 500,000 emergency calls every year.
14. Relevant lines of questioning might include:
  - Staff resourcing in the event of influenza pandemic
  - Planning for extreme events with mass casualties or fatalities that stretch existing services to the limit
  - Maintaining levels of service in Nottinghamshire when extreme events happen elsewhere in the region

## **Work Programme**

15. The dates for future meetings are as follows: 26 January, 23 February, and 23 March 2009. All meetings due to take place at 10:00 a.m.
16. The meeting of 26 January 2009 will be given over to the resilience experience of other local authorities – Lincolnshire County Council has already agreed to attend. Nottinghamshire Police have also agreed to attend on this meeting since they were not able to attend on 15 December.

## **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.