Critical Infrastructure

Final Report

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Members of the Select Committee

Nine County Councillors make up the **Critical Infrastructure select committee**:

- Yvonne Davidson (Chair)
- Andy Stewart (Vice Chair)
- Reg Adair
- John Carter
- John Clarke
- Stan Heptinstall
- Dave Shaw
- Mark Spencer
- Yvonne Woodhead

The Select Committee took evidence on:

- 27 October
- 24 November
- 15 December
- 26 February
- 23 February
- 23 March

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Summary

1. Threats to the critical infrastructure exist and organisations have made great efforts to make plans and put in place measures to mitigate the effect of severe events. It should be an ongoing exercise to continuously review these plans and measures so that we can all be sure that there are no gaps which might expose the critical infrastructure of this county to potential catastrophic failure.

Background

2. The issue of weaknesses in critical infrastructure was first highlighted by Sir Michael Pitt's review of flooding following the severe flooding event in the summer of 2007. In particular, the vulnerability to flooding of the Walham electricity sub-station in Gloucestershire - this was not a risk that anyone was aware of even though it could have meant power loss to hundreds of thousands of people. The purpose of this review is to ensure that Nottinghamshire's resilience to severe events is as robust as it can be.

NCC Emergency Planning Officers

- 3. The critical infrastructure is made up of the systems, networks and interrelated assets that allow society both to function day to day and to continue functioning in extreme circumstances.
- 4. The loss or failure of critical infrastructure can cause severe economic and social damage.
- 5. Severe events, for example major flooding or catastrophic fires, can reveal weaknesses in the critical infrastructure which result in unexpected or disproportionate negative effect on local people.

- 6. An example of a weakness in the critical infrastructure came to light during the summer 2007 floods in Gloucestershire. The Walham electricity sub-station was at severe risk of loss of power. This would have affected 450,000 people for a prolonged period during the recovery phase. The local authority and other agencies were unaware of this risk. It did not feature in specific flood contingency plans.
- 7. It is of crucial importance that relevant agencies in Nottinghamshire are aware of any potential "Achilles' Heels" within the county or outside the geographical county if they have the potential to impact on residents.

Recommendation 1

In association with the Local Resilience Forum, this Authority should conduct a systematic audit of possible weaknesses in the critical infrastructure of the county, and beyond the confines of the county where the weakness is likely to impact on the people of Nottinghamshire.

- 8. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 created "Category 1" responders (such as the County Council) have a duty to risk assess emergencies and also "Category 2" responders (for example utilities companies) who have a statutory duty to co-operate and share information.
- 9. Some Category 2 responders find attendance at large numbers of Local Resilience Forums onerous. There may be many Local Resilience Forums across the area covered by a utility company and little of relevance on the agendas. Naturally, the Local Resilience Forums should be ready to meet Category 2 responders half-way on this issue. Where possible they should be engaged with on a one-to-one basis and not invited to attend meetings where they are unlikely to be able to make a substantive contribution to the items on the agenda. Conversely, Category 2 responders should ensure that their resilience teams are sufficiently resourced to be able to attend and make a full contribution when it is necessary for them to do so.
- 10. The very important role of the Category 2 responder should be strengthened in legislation to ensure that the responsibility to co-operate is enhanced. When a severe event strikes there is no time to develop lines

of communication and relations; these must be put in place in advance. It is local relationships that solve problems in times of crisis. Better communication and engagement between Category 1 & 2 responders will also help to build awareness and manage expectations – for example in late 2008 there was a risk of potential loss of water supply in the south of Nottinghamshire and the expectation of Severn Trent Water that Nottinghamshire County Council would provide bottled water to all vulnerable people.

11. Some Category 2 responders hold lists of vulnerable people – for example Central Networks have a list of people who are supplied with oxygen. This Authority should develop appropriate information sharing protocols with other agencies and partners in order to have access to lists of this kind. Where there are gaps in information this Authority should consider commissioning such lists to ensure that the needs of vulnerable people are properly taken account of during emergency situations.

Recommendations 2 & 3

The Government introduce legislation bestowing a duty upon Category 2 responders to properly engage and co-operate with Local Resilience Forums.

This Authority should compile its own register of vulnerable people who would have special requirements during severe events (e.g. those requiring oxygen).

Severn Trent Water

logistics of the distribution of bottled water – such as might be used during a flood or contamination appear carefully worked out. The plans include detail on the most effective layout of a supermarket car park when it is to be used to distribute bottled water to residents.

- 13. Drinking water supplies can be contaminated by Cryptosporidium, which is a microscopic single celled parasite. When swallowed the organism causes gastro-intestinal illness. At risk are the very old, the very young and the very ill.
- 14. Recent outbreaks of Cryptosporidium have taken place in: North Wales in November 2005 and August 2008, North Walsham, Norfolk in June 2007, Dumfriesshire in August 2007 and Pitsford, Northamptonshire in June 2008.

Case Study: Pitsford, Northants

At 1:00 am on 25 June 2008, Anglian Water became aware of an outbreak of Cryptosporidium in Pitsford's water supply. Following this an outbreak control team was set up. Then, in association with the health protection unit, a decision was made to issue an immediate boil notice to 100,000 households: for food preparation, drinking, cleaning and icemaking. A letter drop was made to all affected and local radio messages were put out. 500,000 litres of bottled water was handed out. Twenty-two people were made ill by the contamination. The source of this outbreak was eventually found to be a small rabbit which had managed to enter the wash water tank. The swift installation of Ultra Violet based water disinfection systems assisted in bringing the outbreak under control.

- outbreak however, it would seem complacent to assume because of that there will never be an outbreak. Severn Trent Water should take steps to identify additional potential means of infection while undertaking a robust assessment of whether or nor its facilities are sufficiently vermin-proof. Severn Trent Water might also wish to consider the installation of Ultra Violet disinfection systems where these have not already been deployed.
- 16. During the summer 2007 floods, some bowsers were deliberately contaminated with bleach. Bowsers should be properly secured to avoid any recurrence of this.

Recommendation 4

When it is necessary for water bowsers to be utilised to provide drinking water to Nottinghamshire residents, this Authority and the police should be mindful of the risk of malicious contamination of bowsers and ensure that that are secured appropriately.

Central Networks

- 17. Central Networks is a Distribution Network Operator (DNO). DNOs take power from National Grid and reduce it to levels suitable for domestic use via local sub-stations. Central Networks region covers an area of 30,000 square kilometres which contains nearly 100,000 sub-stations.
- 18. Central Networks maintains a Network Emergency Plan that has been developed in line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It is routinely tested to ensure that everyone involved understands their roles and responsibilities during a network emergency.

Extreme Weather – the biggest threat

- 19. The storm force winds during the weekend of 1st and 2nd March 2008 resulted in the loss of power supply to over 60,000 homes during a 24 hour period more than in the Gloucester flooding event during the summer of 2007.
- 20. Most of the emergencies affecting Central Networks are weather-related. The major risks are wind, snow, ice and lightning. Flooding presents an additional risk to the resilience of the network and is considered alongside these other more frequent risks.
- 21. Sub-stations and other network equipment need to be installed close to customer demand. If development takes place in areas susceptible to flood risk then equipment is exposed to a similar risk.
- 22. The Port Ham Sub-station near Castle Meads is constructed on stilts to mitigate the flood risk.

- 23. Following the flooding of summer 2007 Central Networks topographically mapped sub-station sites across the region which may potentially be at risk of flooding on the basis of a 1 in 1000 year flood. Central Networks are currently seeking to quantify the potential depth of flooding at each of these sites in order to determine if there is any requirement for additional protection.
- 24. It is apparent that Central Networks take their responsibilities as a Category 2 responder very seriously, have heeded the lessons of the summer 2007 floods and operate a highly robust network. The wider lesson that can be learnt from DNOs is to plan for the "worst case scenario" in this case the recovery from the truly frightening scenario of a national shutdown of the electricity network (known as a "Black Start"). Planning for the very worst that can happen should never be considered a waste of time and resources.

National Grid

- 25. 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.
- 26. 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 "We have armed guard

electricity transmission systems in the northeastern US.

27. National Grid is a monopoly and answerable to the regulator, OFGEM.

"We have armed guards at strategic sites." David Phillips, UK Resilience Manager, National Grid

28. National Grid plans for pandemic flu, flooding and terror and works closely with the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI).

- 29. National Grid is keen to counter the myth that it does not like sharing information. Almost everything is shared and the infrastructure is mapped out. Secrecy is only maintained where it is critical to do so.
- 30. All National Grid sites have a flood plan and those at risk of a greater than a one in two hundred year flood have special protection.
- 31. If there was a very severe problem with electricity generation an analysis of demand would take place which might result in rota disconnections so that disconnections are shared out.
- 32. For a monopoly provider, National Grid maintains a surprisingly low profile.

 Many people are probably unaware of the international dimension to their business and their role as a gas supplier.

Military Aid to Civil Authorities

- 33. The Military provide aid to civil authorities as a last resort; when the civil authority lacks capability or the capability is on its knees. Any request must have approval from the Ministry of Defence at ministerial level.
- 24. Requests for assistance should be channelled through 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 response than recovery when commercial alternatives may be available.
- 35. Some assistance can be utilised for training purposes such as the distribution of bottled water in Gloucestershire during the summer 2007 floods.

"If you want us to stay...we have to be paid for."

Lieutenant Colonel Andy

McCombe, Joint Military

Liaison Officer

36. The sorts of services that might be accessed from the military include:

Maritime search, fishery protection, bomb disposal, geographic

mapping/imagery, use of helicopters, search and rescue, overflight (e.g. of
flooded areas) and nuclear accident response.

37. Military Aid is a commodity that should be used sparingly and only in the most extreme situations. Emergency planners should never rely on military aid since it cannot be guaranteed. No attempt should ever be made to undercut civilian contractors by utilising military resources. When local authorities are the recipients of military assistance they should very clearly define the tasks to be undertaken to avoid 'mission creep.'

Fire and Rescue Service

- 38. Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service covers an area of 834 square miles with a population of 1 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.
- 39. Under the New Dimension initiative the Fire and Rescue Service has received additional assets such as high volume pumps capable of pumping 8-9000 litres per minute. Another valuable asset is mass decontamination equipment which can decontaminate 4600 people per hour.
- 40. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) equipment is also available to the Fire and Rescue Service under this scheme and can be used to assist people who are trapped in collapsed buildings.
- 41. Hazardous Material Identification Equipment can be used in "white powder" incidents (i.e. substances suspected of being weaponised anthrax). Substances can now be identified within seconds.
- 42. The Fire and Rescue Service has no statutory duty to deal with flooding and hence no funding. This may change following the implementation of the recommendations of the Pitt review.

Case Study: Regional Flooding Exercise

On 12 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.

43. The New Dimension initiative and the agreement of regional operating procedures for flooding are to be welcomed and commended. However, it should be recognised that high volume pumps are not necessarily a panacea during severe flooding events since there has to be *somewhere* to pump the water to and this may be problematic when a whole locality has been flooded.

East Midlands Ambulance Service

44. 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, Nottinghamshire and Rutland.

"In a flu pandemic, our staff would be just as vulnerable as anyone else – we would have to look for mutual aid from other counties..." Geoff Alvis, East Midlands Ambulance

- 45. 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 for 2008/09.
- 46. EMAS has contingency plans in place for large scale incidents and major emergencies. Like the Fire Service, EMAS are also involved the New Dimension programme. EMAS has obtained equipment to allow the decontamination of casualties and from 1 April 2009 will have a Hazardous Area Response Team.
- 47. In the event of a flu pandemic, EMAS will also utilise retired nurses and doctors to augment depleted staff numbers. The majority of people would be treated "in the community" unless they had complications.

48. The idea of a register of former staff to be called on in times of emergency is a good one and could perhaps be used by local authorities, the Police and Fire Service if and when a flu pandemic strikes.

Recommendation 5

Local Authorities in Nottinghamshire should maintain a register of former and retired staff volunteers who could be called upon to assist in the delivery of services in the event of significant numbers of local government officers being incapacitated – for example in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak.

Nottinghamshire Police

- 49. 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.
- 50. The role of the Police is to co-ordinate the emergency response to severe incidents. The police can set up cordons and facilitate evacuation.

 However, the police have no power to compel evacuation except in the event of a terrorist incident.
- 51. During the summer 2007 floods, some people were reluctant to "self-evacuate" and expressed a preference to go to the local pub rather than rest centres. At one point there were 50 residents taking refuge in a Lowdham pub. In addition, the security of evacuated homes and the criminal investigations resulting from break-ins, could be a burden on police resources.
- 52. Nationally, the Police do not necessarily retain a sufficiently comprehensive record of dual-specialisms amongst officers (e.g. qualified firearms officer and search officer). This is an issue that is being addressed on a regional basis on the run-up to the London 2012 Olympics, but the numbers of "double-hatted" officers is comparatively small.

- 53. The police are developing multi-agency co-ordination centres and reviewing Local Resilience Forum processes including the accountability of work groups. In addition, there is also a group looking at communication resilience and the capability of the Air Wave radio system.
- 54. The Police also identified the issue of Category 2 responders not engaging at a local level.
- unwilling to take reasonable direction from the Police or other agencies during flooding events. Local democratic representatives at all levels should engage with vulnerable communities to ensure that they know what to expect and what to do when comparatively predictable events (e.g. flooding from a watercourse) occur.

Recommendation 6

Elected Members at all levels should, through their local leadership role, ensure that vulnerable communities know what may happen in an emergency e.g. provision of rest centres and the plans for evacuation.

Lincolnshire County Council – Emergency Planning and Resilience

- 56. The flooding of the east coast is the number one corporate risk for Lincolnshire County Council. Since 30% of food consumed in this country is grown in Lincolnshire, east coast inundation would have a national impact.
- 57. Lincolnshire contains the highest concentration of caravans in Europe. This would be likely to slow traffic flow during a mass evacuation.
- 58. Lincolnshire County Council has engaged with the PCTs regarding the high instance of residents with respiratory conditions due to the large numbers of ex-miners in the locality.

As many as 50,000 people would need to

evacuees will be Nottinghamshire.

be evacuated. The destination for the

60. The message from Lincolnshire County is to "help yourself" in an emergency – but this is a difficult message to get across. People are being encouraged to put together home emergency packs using existing community engagement groups. "We need a one-way
system worked out for
evacuation – the reverse of
the holiday route
signs...but it's actually a
very poor road system."
David Powell, Head of
Emergency Planning,
Lincolnshire County Council

- 61. After a severe coastal flooding event,
 Lincolnshire would be almost wholly dependent on mutual aid. After seven
 days the systems and capability would "fall over" with staff and the
 command structure exhausted.
- 62. Proper planning for assistance to Lincolnshire in the event of catastrophic costal flooding is something that should be developed as a matter of urgency. Nottinghamshire must accept and embrace its role as a place of refuge for the people displaced by the potential flooding of the east coast.
- 63. Lincolnshire's idea of promoting domestic resilience is a good one the benefits of having a stock of bottled water food and other provisions should be promoted to Nottinghamshire residents.
- 64. However detailed the plans for coastal flooding, they will not mitigate the potential damage to the national food supply that could be caused by a disaster such as this. In the long term, a capital scheme to improve existing sea defences would have the dual effect of reinvigorating the local construction industry and preserving agricultural land and produce.

Recommendations 7 & 8

Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire County Councils should co-operate closely in order to produce a comprehensive joint planned response to

catastrophic coastal flooding codifying the levels of aid which might be required according to the severity of the flooding event.

This Authority should promote "domestic resilience" e.g. to ensure that people have in their homes a supply of bottled water in the event of a critical failure of the mains water supply a stock of tinned/preserved food in case of short/to medium term failure of gas and electric supplies or extreme weather conditions.

Government Office East Midlands

- 65. Government Office East Midlands (GOEM) works with central and local response organisations such as the police, fire, ambulance and local authorities to foster resilient communities.
- 66. In the event of an incident, a small team within the Government Office liaises with local responders and provides situations reports to government departments.
- 67. In the summer 2007 floods, GOEM's resilience team (which comprises five people) played a critical role in supporting

regional agencies and in feeding to the Governments emergency committee – COBRA (Cabinet Office Briefing Room A). COBRA sat on over 200 occasions during the summer 2007 floods.

68. GOEM were also involved in the Northamptonshire Cryptosporidium outbreak (see case study earlier in this report) and the Blue Tongue cattle disease outbreak.

- faced by Nottinghamshire is a loss of drinking water supply." Peter Ward, Regional Director Resilience, GOEM
- on mutual aid which GOEM will be encouraging partners to sign.

69. The Home Office had prepared a model agreement

70. Attendance by Category 2 responders at Local

Resilience Forums has been patchy. The Category 2 responders have indicated that they cannot attend every meeting. A regional resilience forum has been offered.

71. The development of Mutual aid should not be tied up legalistic red tape.

Recommendation 9

This Authority should develop appropriate mutual aid agreements with other authorities with a focus on workable solutions rather than legal minutiae.

NHS Nottinghamshire County

- 72. 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.
- 73. Plans are based on the principles of risk assessment, Co-operation with external agencies, sharing information and communicating with the public.
- 74. The PCT had emergency plans covering rest centres, mass casualties, flooding, fuel shortages, heat waves and pandemic flu.

Case Study - Mass Casualties

In the event of an incident involving massive numbers of casualties, the PCT would carry out the following:

- Implement the Major Incident Plan and review planning to create capacity to receive discharged patients from Acute Trusts
- Act as the Lead PCT and liaise with NHS East Midlands to ensure that all resource implications are fully investigated and request additional resources where appropriate
- Co-ordinate and command the NHS response within the county
- Ensure the activation of emergency Public Health measures

- Advise health professionals, other agencies and the public in monitoring long term effects of an incident.
- 75. The plan to direct the operational and strategic response to pandemic flu includes plans for antiviral collection.

"Sufficient stocks of the Tamiflu anti-viral medicine are held for fifty percent of the population." Peter Ward, Resilience Director,

76. A very large programme of emergency planning and business continuity exercises are planned to take place. These include: For March 2009, Exercise Bendigo – a radiation contamination exercise and for April 2009,

table top evacuation exercises for Mansfield Community Hospital and Ashfield Health Village.

- 77. It is not possible to know with any certainty when, if ever, the avian flu pandemic will strike; it might be tomorrow or beyond the lifetime of anyone alive today. However, a flu pandemic has the potential to have a truly catastrophic effect on the general population the flu pandemic in 1919 killed more people than the First World War. Even with large stocks of anti-viral drugs available, organisations are planning for up to one third of staff to succumb to illness. The development of a vaccine for avian flu might take as long as six months.
- 78. The obvious conclusion is that the people who run critical services are themselves a vital component of the critical infrastructure. Organisations need to ask themselves: if a third of your staff were off sick, who would be providing the service?
- 79. Emergency Preparedness training is included in the PCT's mandatory training matrix. This is an example of good practice and should be replicated in other organisations, especially local authorities.

Recommendation 10

All organisations in Nottinghamshire – particularly local government and health services – should include business continuity on their mandatory

training schedules - this will allow staff no know what they should do and where should go when a severe event occurs.

Highways Agency

- 80. Following its regionalisation, the role of Regional Emergency Planning Manager 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 under the Act.
- 81. 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 community and the environment.
- **82.** REPs have already improved relationships especially around boundaries issues.
- 83. In Nottinghamshire, the Highways Agency covers the M1, A1, A46, A52 and A453.
- 84. In law, no one is responsible for the welfare of stranded motorists. In practice, the Highways Agency seeks to deliver basic welfare but is not capable of providing rest centres for the very substantial numbers of people involved. There can be as many as 1000 people per kilometre on motorways. Wherever possible the Highways Agency seeks to get people moving.
- 85. While recognising that it is preferable to keep roads moving rather than deliver welfare the responsibility for stranded motorists would most naturally rest with the Highways Agency, as has been suggested by the Pitt Review.

Recommendations

- In association with the Local Resilience Forum, this Authority should conduct a systematic audit of possible weaknesses in the critical infrastructure of the County, and beyond the confines of the County where the weakness is likely to impact on the people of Nottinghamshire.
- The Government introduce legislation bestowing a duty upon Category 2 responders to properly engage and co-operate with Local Resilience Forums.
- This Authority should compile its own register of vulnerable people who would have special requirements during severe events (e.g. those requiring oxygen).
- When it is necessary for water bowsers to be utilised to provide drinking water to Nottinghamshire residents, this Authority and the police should be mindful of the risk of malicious contamination of bowsers and ensure that that are secured appropriately.
- Local Authorities in Nottinghamshire should maintain a register of former and retired staff volunteers who could be called upon to assist in the delivery of services in the event of significant numbers of local government officers being incapacitated for example in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak.
- 6 Elected Members at all levels should, through their local leadership role, ensure that vulnerable communities know what may happen in an emergency e.g. provision of rest centres and the plans for evacuation.

Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire County Councils should co-operate closely in order to produce a comprehensive joint planned response to catastrophic coastal flooding codifying the levels of aid which might be required according to the severity of the flooding event.

This Authority should promote "domestic resilience" e.g. to ensure that people have in their homes a supply of bottled water in the event of a critical failure of the mains water supply a stock of tinned/preserved food in case of short/to medium term failure of gas and electric supplies or extreme weather conditions.

This Authority should develop appropriate mutual aid agreements with other authorities with a focus on workable solutions rather than legal minutiae.

All organisations in Nottinghamshire – particularly local government and health services – should include business continuity on their mandatory training schedules this will allow staff to know what they should do and where should go when a severe event occurs.

The Select Committee would like to thank the following individuals/organisations for their contributions to this review:

Rob Fisher and Jacqui Towndrow – Nottinghamshire County Council Emergency Planning Team

Jim Smith, Severn Trent Water
Russell E Brown, Central Networks
David Phillips, National Grid
Vic McMillen, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

Geoff Alvis, East Midlands Ambulance Service Inspector Terry McQuaid, Nottinghamshire Police David Powell, Lincolnshire County Council

Peter Ward, GOEM

Debbie Brown, NHS Nottinghamshire

Matthew Pates, Highways Agency

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