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Introduction

Due to time constraints and ongoing concurrent events we have restricted responses to questions or parts of questions to highlight concerns or suggestions from the perspective of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) as follows:

1. What are the most significant extreme risks that the UK faces? Are these kinds of risks discrete, linked or systemic? What do you understand the term 'extreme risk' to mean?

Extreme risks can be defined as any event or combination of linked events which have the potential to cause large numbers of mass casualties or fatalities, significant damage to property wide-scale disruption to public order and may overwhelm Cat 1 responders.

The NSRA should be reviewed to ensure the risk categories are still current given the new threats and hazards that have emerged over the last few years and that an appropriate weighting is given to likelihood versus impact to inform planning priorities.

2. Are there types of risks to which the UK is particularly vulnerable or for which it is poorly prepared? What are the reasons for this?

- Reservoirs – High Risk to life and property from dam inundation and large numbers of high risks reservoirs with aging infrastructure in the country with no legal requirement for LAs to prepare off-site emergency plans as there is for COMAH Sites

- Risk of CT attacks once events and high-profile venues reopen.

- Human Infectious diseases – covid has shown that previous planning assumptions for human diseases which were focussed around an influenza pandemic although gave a base for planning needed to be reassessed so that accurate planning assumptions could be provided and updated regularly throughout the pandemic phase.

4. Given the range of possible national risks, and the need to achieve a balance between efficiency and resilience, what level of assurance should the Government be seeking on the UK's resilience to hazards? What would effective national risk management achieve, and how could its success be measured?

To avoid duplication of planning activity carried out by those not necessarily with a strong technical knowledge of the subject matter there should be a far greater emphasis on national risks being assessed and mitigated at the national level with experts in the field.

The planning assumptions should then be translated into a national plan that is then communicated to local responders so that they can assess if any other local mitigations can be made. This would also ensure that a consistent approach is taken across all Departments and LRFs which is particularly important where some Cat 1 responders cross multiple LRF areas. It would also give a level of assurance of the adequacy of planning arrangements in place.

Examples of such national risk are

- Black Start – national power outage
- High Impact Cyber attacks
- CBRN
- Brexits risks such as food and medicine shortages
- Reservoir (off-site dam inundation planning)

5. How can the Government ensure that it identifies and considers as wide a range of risks as possible? What risks does the inclusion criteria for the National Security Risk Assessment exclude and what effect does this have on long-term resilience?

There is a concern that the increase over the last few years in the number of hazards considered as a high risk could result in other lesser but still significant risks being pushed further down the priority order. This together with a lack of funding to local resilience forums in proportion to the risks they are carrying and limited national planning as above might result in a reduction in planning for those hazards previously considered as high risk.

8. How well are national contingency plans communicated to and understood by those at a local level, including emergency responders? What could be changed to increase the capability of local responders to effectively plan for and respond to emergencies?

National contingency plans are not generally communicated to the local level in our experience. LRF agencies should be considered trusted partners and national plans and planning assumptions shared more readily with local responders so that they are able to plan accordingly.

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