

**Meeting:** City Regions Board

**Date:** 25 January 2023



## **Theme 3: Urban Resilience**

# **Urban Heat Resilience and the National Resilience Framework**

## **Purpose of report**

For direction

## **Summary**

This report provides background for a discussion with Lucy Vilarkin and Alex Minshull from Bristol City Council, who will be setting out the context for urban heat risks and presenting Bristol's Heat Vulnerability Index. It also provides information about the Government's recently published national resilience framework and asks members if they have any areas of concern or interest.

**Is this report confidential?** No

## **Recommendation/s**

That members hear from Lucy Vilarkin and Alex Minshull from Bristol City Council on Bristol's work on urban heat resilience.

That members comment on the contents of the Government's recently published national resilience framework and provide direction on any areas that they would like officers to explore in further detail.

Officers will use comments from this Board, as well as the Safer and Stronger Communities Board to engage with the Government on plans to take forward the proposals in the newly published national resilience framework.

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# Urban Heat Resilience and the National Resilience Framework



## Outcome and Purpose

1. City regions face an increasing variety of physical, political, economic and social risks. The Board's work on urban resilience aims to help leaders of urban areas understand the nature of these risks, what it means to be resilient and how our city regions can become resilient.
2. This work will also look at the implications of the Government's National Resilience Strategy for urban areas. The purpose of this strand of work is to influence Government's plans to take forward the proposals in the strategy, ensuring they are of relevance and value to urban areas.
3. This work has relevance for the LGA's Safer Stronger Communities and Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Boards. Officers will join up strands of work from across these three Boards and look to ensure that the work of these Boards reflects the challenges that urban areas face.

## Background

4. Urban resilience has been of interest to the Board for some time. In 2020, the Board commissioned WPI Economics to look at the drivers of urban cost pressures. This work included looking at how urban areas might be particularly vulnerable to changes and was a useful tool for understanding what might make urban areas financially resilient.
5. At the first urban summit in March 2021, attendees heard from Hope Not Hate about their [Building Back Resilient report](#), which looked at how communities at risk of social division were affected by the pandemic, and what steps needed to be taken in order to ensure that the economic impact of COVID-19 did not exacerbate tensions in communities. It recommended that building back from the pandemic – and plans to level up – should not only be focussed on infrastructure, jobs and growth, but on strengthening civic and social infrastructure.
6. At the Board meeting in September, members discussed options within the broad scope of urban resilience, with options including looking at a specific risk (such as extreme heat due to climate change), developing a risk matrix for urban areas, or looking at the management and interaction of response and recovery systems within urban areas.
7. Members indicated an interest in focussing on one area of resilience, and it was suggested that urban heat resilience would be the best option to take forward, especially given the extremes of temperature experienced in the summer of 2022.

## Proposal

8. Lucy Vilarkin and Alex Minshull from Bristol City Council have been invited to this Board meeting to present Bristol's work in developing an urban heat resilience plan. This involved the creation of a Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI), which gathered information about the multiple factors influencing heat risk in Bristol and analysed the impact that these factors had on overall temperature and resilience, and the development of a Heat Resilience Plan, drawing on the HVI. Lucy and Alex will provide context for urban heat risks and climate change, walk through the Keep Bristol Cool mapping tool, and provide an overview of HVI methodology. There will also be an opportunity for questions from members to draw out lessons for other areas when considering urban heat resilience.
9. In December the Government published its new [national resilience framework](#), delivering on a commitment in the 2021 integrated review to develop a new national resilience strategy. The strategy is based on three key principles; that a shared understanding of the risks we face is essential; that prevention is better than cure, and resilience building should focus effort across the whole risk cycle; and, that resilience is a whole of society endeavour which everyone should be empowered to make a contribution to.
10. The section on responsibility and accountability is likely to be of particular interest to councils, with proposals to pilot the creation of a full-time local resilience forum chair 'chief resilience officer' role, accountable to executive local democratic leaders. The Government will also consider the best ways of developing mechanisms for stronger assurance of Local Resilience Forums' collective delivery, including auditable frameworks and building assessment of resilience into inspection/adult regimes of individual responders.
11. A full summary of the contents of the framework can be found in Appendix A below. The LGA will be engaging with the Government on plans to take forward the proposals in the framework, and members are asked to comment on any aspects of this which they would like officers to feed back to Government on.

## Implications for Wales

12. There are not believed to be any specific implications for urban areas in Wales for urban heat resilience. However, on the wider issue of resilience, there may be specific issues relating to the configuration of local service responsibilities and the nature of devolved governance. For example, Wales had a distinct response to the coronavirus pandemic, with restrictions on household movement and other public health questions that differed to the rest of the UK.

## Financial Implications

13. Any financial commitments made as part of the actions identified in this report will be met from the Board's existing policy budget.

## **Equalities implications**

14. Disadvantaged or discriminated against groups are more likely to be affected by social, economic or environmental shocks, and deprived areas are also more likely to take longer to recover. For example, the LGA's A vision for Urban Growth and Recovery report found that during the pandemic, low income and Black and ethnic minority groups were more likely to work in occupations where the risk of virus transmission was higher, and that low earners were 2.4 times more likely to work in a shutdown sector. Any work to improve urban resilience must take into account these disparities and not assume that all communities have the same ability to absorb or recover from shocks.

## **Next steps**

15. Officers will use comments from this Board, as well as the Safer and Stronger Communities Board to engage with the Government on plans to take forward the proposals in the newly published national resilience framework.

## Appendix A: Summary of UK Government Resilience Framework: December 2022

The framework delivers on the commitment in the 2021 integrated review for a new national resilience strategy and is built around three core principles:

- **A shared understanding of the risks we face is essential:** it must underpin everything that we do to prepare for and recover from crises.
- **Prevention rather than cure wherever possible:** resilience-building spans the whole risk cycle so we must focus effort across the cycle, particularly before crises happen.
- **Resilience is a ‘whole of society’ endeavour:** so we must be more transparent and empower everyone to make a contribution.

There are 6 themes:

- risk,
- responsibility and accountability,
- partnership,
- community,
- investment and
- skills.

The following notes summarise the key points for councils/LRFs in each theme.

### Risk

- Govt will develop measurement of socio-economic resilience, including how risks impact across communities and vulnerable groups, to guide and inform decision making on risk and resilience.
- By 2030, Govt will make communications on risks more relevant and easily accessible.
- The National Security Risk Assessment process will be revised. Govt will work towards sharing risk assessments with partners throughout the resilience system as a default, where possible, and work closely with LRFs in England as well as wider partners to ensure they can make full use of these new assessments.
- Government will clarify departmental ownership of risks in NSRA for complex risks.
- Annual statement to parliament on civil contingencies risks and performance on resilience.

### Responsibilities and Accountability

- There will be a new Resilience Directorate at the heart of UK Govt to drive the implementation of measures in the framework. Capacity of the crisis management function will be enhanced by crisis teams and resources composed of crisis professionals with time and resource to exercise and prepare.
- Govt will consider a range of options for improving data sharing with local responders and supporting action plan, including proposals for formalising duties on UKG depts, particularly re: working with LRFs and local responders.
- All govt depts to ensure appropriate mechanisms for working with local responders, and that guidance is up to date and effective.
- LRFs will continue to be central and have a role to support levelling up.

- Adopt standards-based approach to assurance and develop action plan to deliver this, setting out what organisations, partnerships and networks should do, should have and should be able to do in order to manage risks effectively. Expand use by 2025; may put standards on statutory footing.
- Use of trailblazers and pilot approaches by 2025/2030 to test out new plans across the three pillars.

## Strengthening LRFs

Three pillars to significantly strengthen LRFs and empower LRFs, local partners and leaders to consider, drive and improve resilience in their areas.

- Leadership
  - Pilots to consider FTE permanent LRF chair role occupied by qualified/experienced individual who will become chief resilience officer for each LRF area.
  - LRF CRO would be provided with resources, support, mandate and levers to bring together all partners to drive and enhance resilience.
  - UKG will set clear expectations of **CROs; they will be accountable to executive local democratic leaders, giving leaders a clear role in ensuring effective delivery of resilience activity.**
  - May need to change legislation and regs over time, though CCA04 fit for purpose.
- Accountability
  - Strengthen accountability and assurance across LRFs
  - **Clear mechanisms and expectations for accountability between CROs and executive local democratic leaders will make LRFs more accountable and provide mechanisms for local communities to hold local leaders to account for driving resilience.**
  - **Considering means of stronger assurance of LRF collective delivery, including auditable frameworks, and building assessment of resilience into inspection/audit regimes of individual responders.**
  - Clear mechanisms for the assurance of multi-agency activity at LRF level.
  - This will promote continuous improvement in emergency management and enable govt to consider where support is required.
- Integration of resilience into levelling up and growth mission/wider local policy and place making
  - Putting resilience at the heart of levelling up and place making to build solid foundation for resilient communities.
  - Empowering LRF CRO and local elected leaders to work across full range of local policy making/delivery to make building resilience central to wider place making including net zero and build back better.
  - **Resilience to be included as key aspects of devolution deals.**
  - **Where no devolution deals, integrate resilience into wider delivery, including, as appropriate, working with PFCCs to make resilience third strand of community safety**
  - **Consider making the case for making Combined Authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities category one responders under the CCA.**

- UKG to encourage and facilitate stronger collaboration between regions, and to strengthen LRF data, intel, analysis capability and capability.

## Partnerships

### Private sector

- Develop and promote non statutory standards; may consider these for sectors not already regulated.
- Better guidance for businesses and strengthened LRFs supported to work with local businesses.

## Communities

- Promote whole of society approach to resilience: everyone recognises their role in, takes responsibility for, and contributes to the UK's resilience.
- Ensure a cultural shift so everyone who can is prepared and ready to take action and support themselves during an emergency, so that those needing tailored support can be prioritised.
- Govt will continue to deepen and strengthen relationships with the VCS in England.
- Govt will provide LRFs with guidance and support on engaging with communities and community groups on risks, as well as on working with the VCS and communities to support vulnerable groups. Consider and deliver options for measuring and evaluating statutory responder engagement with VCS and wider communities.
- £1.5m to VCS Emergencies Partnership.

## Investment

- UKG will drive resilience building through targeted and evidenced prioritisation of investment in prevention and preparation. Resilience to be baked into wider govt projects and policies; departmental investment in resilience to be tracked.
- Models of funding for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) in England will be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate to the expectations placed upon them. Notes pre-announced £22m 3 year funding pilot from 2022/23 but emphasises LRFs shouldn't be funded by UKG alone - this must build on local responder contributions.
- UKG to provide improved guidance for businesses on risk and support the insurance sector to help protect against specific risks.
- Work with LRFs to offer new guidance to community organisations and households to help people make more informed decisions about investing in personal resilience and preparedness.

## Skills

- New civil service curriculum to include developing resilience and crisis management skills, knowledge and networks and create new UK Resilience Academy, part of network of UKG affiliated providers training those in the resilience system.
- Establish UK Resilience Lessons Digest to summarise lessons and share insights across UKG and partners.

- Reinvigorate national exercising programme to bring together partners to test plans, structures and skills
- Create new civil service crisis skills and resource through reservist pool of retired/current senior civil servants trained for crisis management who can be redeployed as necessary; options to be considered.