

Planning to adapt to climate change (NI 188): Prioritised risk-based assessments and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

Contents:

Page 1 **Introduction**

Page 1 **Civil Contingencies Act 2004 & Community Risk Registers**

Page 2 **Community Risk Registers and Prioritised Risk-Based Assessments**

Page 3 **Business Continuity Plans**

Introduction

This paper looks at how the existing requirements under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004* (CCA) supports the actions required under NI 188 so that LAs/LSPs can avoid duplication of effort.

Impact assessments are required for LAAs to achieve a performance outcome at level 1 under NI 188. The LA/LSP should be able to demonstrate that it has undertaken an impact assessment including both impacts covered by existing risk management systems (e.g. flood risk plans, community risk registers etc) and the identification of new or emerging risks arising from projected climate change. These assessments will then inform the comprehensive risk-based assessments and implementation of prioritised action (level 2).

Civil Contingencies Act 2004 & Community Risk Registers

Under CCA all Category 1 (including local authorities) and Category 2 Responders have to undertake Local Risk Assessments taking a multi-agency approach, i.e. via the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). LRF boundaries are set at police constabulary level (in the SW this is Devon & Cornwall, Avon & Somerset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Dorset).

One of the initial outputs from these assessments is a Community Risk Register (CRR) and this informs the risk response planning process. CRRs are public documents (publication is a legal requirement); they are reviewed annually and are published on LRF websites.

CRRs look at a range of risk categories including several that are appropriate to climate change impacts:

#H17 Storms and Gales

#H48 Heat wave

#H50 Drought

#H19 Flooding: Major coastal and tidal flooding affecting more than two UK regions

#HL16 Local coastal/tidal flooding (affecting more than one region)

#HL17 Local coastal/tidal flooding (in one region)

#H21 Flooding: major fluvial flooding (affecting parts of more than two UK regions)
#HL18 Local/Urban flooding (fluvial or surface run-off)
#HL19 Local fluvial flooding
#HL20 Localised, extremely hazardous flash flooding

Other risk categories covered by CRRs may be an in-direct result of climate change impacts (e.g. building collapse, bridge collapse or failure of water infrastructure, technical failure of electricity supply, loss of telecommunications etc).

Community Risk Registers and Prioritised Risk-Based Assessments

LAs/LSPs will need to be able to identify those vulnerabilities that are significant to the LAA in order to prioritise its adaptation responses. The local climate impacts profile or equivalent process that each LAA will produce can draw on the evidence given in the CRR.

CRRs provide a useful and important element for the risk-based assessments of vulnerabilities required under NI 188 (as opposed to opportunities that also need to be assessed) and are key for informing the decision making process (see box below) in determining prioritised action.

Note

The guidance on Part 1 of the CCA 2004 from HM Government “*Emergency Preparedness*” (November 2005, ref: 267619/1105/D40P) suggests the following for risk assessment actions (on page 185):

- Review the capability challenges posed by the risks against existing capabilities, mitigation plans or known gaps.
- Set risk priorities.
- Evaluate proposed options for additional treatment of risks and agree risk treatment plan.
- Identify officer or organisation to be responsible for implementation of actions.
- Actions communicated to appropriate working groups.

The production of a CRR provides an existing multi-agency approach to risk management that has already been developed and can therefore usefully be utilised by LAs/LSPs to help inform the production of LAA prioritised risk-based assessments. It is important to note that CCRs already have buy-in from the key agencies involved in the local area, thus providing a purpose-made existing mechanism that can be used by LAs/LSPs for their risk-based assessments. This can save duplication of effort.

It is important to note that the CRR is not an end in itself, but serves as a means for ensuring a commonly agreed starting point for Responders in their approach to Integrated Emergency Management. The LRF will evaluate and prioritise risk reduction measures according to the size of the risk and gaps in

the capability required to respond to this risk. The Risk Treatment Plan is agreed by the LRF membership. This includes the nomination of a responsible person or organisation, and the timescale for implementation of any actions.

It is also important that medium-longer term risks (i.e. over 5 years) are not overlooked, e.g. the impact of rising temperatures, for the risk-based assessments of vulnerabilities.

Business Continuity Plans

The process of delivering Business Continuity Plans for LAs, which is also a key part of the CCA, should also cover climate change adaptation.

Completion of Business Continuity Plans will help LAs in their work towards reaching NI 188 performance level 2 (comprehensive risk-based assessment and prioritised action in some areas).

*CCA 2004 can be found at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/ukpga_20040036_en_1

**Government Office for the South West & SWCCIP
3 September 2008**