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The Comptroller and Auditor General calls for action in ensuring the resilience of the Island's energy infrastructure

Comptroller and Auditor General issues her report on Critical Infrastructure Resilience - Energy

Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Lynn Pamment CBE, has today, 3 June 2024, published her report into **Critical Infrastructure Resilience - Energy**.

Jersey's critical infrastructure can be described as those physical facilities, supply chains, information technologies and communication networks which, if destroyed, degraded or rendered unavailable for an extended period, would significantly impact the social or economic wellbeing of Jersey or affect Jersey's ability to ensure national security.

The review has evaluated whether the Government has an effective approach to critical infrastructure resilience for the energy sector that encompasses supporting and requiring asset owners and operators to implement high standards of resilience.

Lynn Pamment, CBE found that:

There is no definition of critical national infrastructure in the Island and no cross-cutting infrastructure policy.

The Government of Jersey's approach to understanding and securing the resilience of the Island's infrastructure has been severely tested by critical incidents over recent years. These include the COVID-19 pandemic, the tragic incident at Haut du Mont, the January 2023 floods, the October 2023 gas outage and the impact of storm Ciarán in November 2023.

There has been learning from each of the key incidents. The Government has carried out six de-brief exercises but there remains a great deal to do to bring that learning into effect.

Work is now in hand to establish a Jersey Resilience Law that is intended to be introduced in a phased way, starting before the end of 2025. The proposed new Resilience Law includes a focus on both anticipating and resisting critical incidents. A significant

mechanism intended to provide assurance in these areas as part of the new legislation is the introduction of Resilience Standards. These Resilience Standards are thorough and represent best practice but are yet to be adequately consulted on and tailored.

Capacity in the Government to manage resilience is currently very limited and arrangements intended to underpin effective resilience are not yet adequate. Government arrangements to assure the resilience of energy supply as both a community leader and as a key customer are weak. Arrangements for ensuring the monitoring, reporting and scrutinising of resilience information by the operators and owners of critical infrastructure for energy are not established.

Overall, there is a lack of a coherent, joined up approach across Government. This mitigates against surety of resilience in the energy sector. Roles and responsibilities are not clear enough. There is no single person, team or department responsible for co-ordinating energy matters and there is no requirement or clear expectation for the teams in various departments to work effectively together.

The Carbon Neutral Roadmap and, before that, Pathway 2050, set a vision for Jersey's future energy provision in order to meet the challenges of the net zero transition. However, from a resilience perspective, there are significant decisions to be made.

Lynn Pamment, CBE said:

“Significant public funds can be spent responding to emergencies relating to critical infrastructure. It is important for Jersey to have in place an effective resilience framework supported by effective resilience plans and procedures across the States, asset owners and operators.

“A framework and documentation have been put in place to manage critical incidents and promote resilience. A new Resilience Law is proposed, based on good practice in other jurisdictions. These developments have potential to enhance controls, manage risk, provide assurance and promote resilience.

“However, urgent action is required to put in place a robust Community Risk Register including energy infrastructure risks owned and managed by the Government and individual suppliers. Effective relationships must be built between the Government and all energy providers to enable the Jersey Resilience Forum to function effectively in respect of energy infrastructure risks.

“Critical incidents in recent years should be the catalyst for the Government and its partners to address weaknesses in managing energy resilience. There is work to be undertaken by Government to enable it, as community leader, to provide Islanders with assurance on energy supply, fuel storage and distribution. Clear, resourced action plans should be developed to demonstrate how capacity is to be enhanced in an integrated way which balances short- and medium-term risk management and the needs and opportunities of future energy policy.”

The report **Critical Infrastructure Resilience - Energy** can be found at:

<https://www.jerseyauditoffice.je>

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- The remit of the C&AG includes the audit of financial statements, corporate governance, internal control and wider consideration of public funds, often expressed as 'value for money'
- The 2024-27 Audit Plan can be found at: www.jerseyauditoffice.je
- Lynn Pamment CBE took up the Office of C&AG on 1 January 2020 for a fixed term of seven years. Following the introduction of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Jersey) Law 2014 the term of office is fixed at seven years and is non-renewable.
- The Office of Comptroller and Auditor General is known as the 'Jersey Audit Office'.
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