

## **Briefing Note – Power Outages included in Key Corporate Risk 12: Major Incidents**

1. At the first risk monitor of 2022/23 the following risk detail was added to KCR 12 – Major Incidents: *Potential for rolling commercial power outages over Winter*. Members of the Audit & Governance committee asked for a further explanatory note on this to be provided.
2. Since this request was made, no further updates have been made by the energy markets in respect of power outages, this is because there has been a winter heatwave across Europe and therefore European energy markets are not at risk of hitting worse case scenarios.
3. The risk of an unplanned, no notice national power outage is one of the highest assessed risks in the National Security Risk Assessment. A suggested loss of power for up to 7 days would be a major challenge and would cause loss of telecoms, water, gas, sewerage treatment, traffic lights, CCTV and electronic payments for goods.
4. The 'Reasonable Worst-Case Scenario' would involve a perfect storm requirement of factors combining:
  - Prolonged period of extreme cold weather
  - No wind
  - No gas
5. As previously mentioned, the weather this year would appear warmer across Europe. In the UK, so far, demand for gas is lower than predicted. There have been periods of wind and sunny bright days providing energy to wind and solar farms and no disruption to the gas pipeline.
6. It was anticipated the highest risk would be during February with the coldest weather usually around this time, although the forward look at the weather does not show any severe or prolonged events likely to cause such an issue.
7. There is also a series of plans in place for further assurance; the National Utility Outage Plan, a Regional (York and the Humber) plan and the LRF North Yorkshire plan, however, it may be worth noting the risk level would differ for a 'no notice loss' and a planned rota outage, which it could be argued would become a business continuity incident rather than major incident for many organisations, as the rota for outages would be programmed with advance notification given to affected postcodes, thus

allow time to alter work practices and allow for personal adaptations in lifestyle and behaviour to minimise the disruption.