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 **Report on Resilience First Webinar**

 **in partnership with Atkins UK**

**2 June 2020**

 **‘Shaping our National Infrastructure’**

 ***Speaker:***

***Sir John Armitt CBE, Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission***

***Key Messages***

The speaker put into context the background to the NIC’s Resilience Study, titled ‘Anticipate, React, Recover: Resilient Infrastructure Systems’. The study was published on 28 May and can be found [here](https://www.nic.org.uk/our-work/resilience/). He outlined the vulnerabilities of infrastructure services, the major projects on the horizon, and the opportunities to create a more resilient UK.

He said that the study’s key conclusion was that a new framework for resilience was needed to ensure that the UK’s energy, water, digital, road and rail infrastructure could cope with shocks and stresses, now and in the future.

The study suggested that in order to deliver a resilient infrastructure a framework for resilience was required that:

* better anticipated future shocks and stresses by facing up to uncomfortable truths;
* valued resilience properly;
* improved actions to resist, absorb and recover from shocks and stresses by testing for vulnerabilities and addressing them;
* drove adaptation before it was too late.

The three recommendations of the study were:

* government should publish a full set of resilience standards every five years, following advice from regulators, alongside an assessment of any changes needed to deliver them;
* infrastructure operators should carry out regular and proportionate stress tests, overseen by regulators, to ensure their systems and services can meet government’s resilience standards, and take actions to address any vulnerabilities;
* infrastructure operators should develop and maintain long-term resilience strategies, and regulators should ensure that future price reviews are consistent with meeting resilience standards in the short and long term.

When describing these recommendations, the speaker made the following points:

* One ‘uncomfortable truth’ was that resilience didn’t necessarily come cheap and this needed to be acknowledged by government and the public alike. The speaker accepted that there were low-cost measures that could be applied in anticipation of disruption such as planning and exercising.
* Resilience standards provided clarity and transparency and it was the government’s responsibility to set standards to drive improvements. The standards should be informed by independent evidence and reviewed every five years. Competition in the private sector should drive achievement in the standards.
* Stress testing should be carried out regularly, be transparent and incentivise improvements. Tests that were relevant several years ago may not be relevant today. Operators should be responsible but regulators must guide the process.
* Affordable, long-term resilience strategies are needed to address issues proactively and manage interdependencies. Regulators and government must remove barriers and scrutinise strategies while accounting for the costs of resilience.

In conclusion, the speaker said:

* There was a need for standards, stress tests and strategies.
* We needed to face uncomfortable truths, and make decisions.
* We should value resilience properly.
* We needed to test and plan proactively.
* We needed to take opportunities to adapt.

The speaker answered a series of questions from the participating audience.

**The full audio recording can be found** [**here**](https://youtu.be/VdK0TgoT8_0) **and the presentation slides used are** [**here**](https://www.resiliencefirst.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/Resilience%20First%27s%20webinar%20Shaping%20our%20National%20Infrastructure%20with%20Sir%20John%20Armitt%20CBE.pdf)**.**

**Biography of Speaker**

**Sir John Armitt CBE**

Sir John Armitt is Chairman of the National Express Group, City & Guilds Group, and the National Infrastructure Commission. Sir John is also on the Board of the Berkeley Group and Expo 2020.

In September 2013 Sir John published an independent review on long term infrastructure planning in the UK. The recommendations in the Armitt Review received widespread support and in large part have now been adopted by the current government, resulting in the National Infrastructure Commission.

After leaving John Laing plc in 1993, where Sir John had been Chairman of Laing’s International and Civil Engineering divisions, he became Chief Executive of Union Railways. In 1997 he became Chief Executive of Costain, a position he held until 2001. Sir John was Chief Executive of Railtrack plc from 2001-2002, Chief Executive of Network Rail from 2002-2007, Chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority from 2007-2014, Chairman of the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council from 2007-2012, a member of the Airports Commission from 2012-2015, a member of the Board of Transport for London from 2012-2016 and a Board member and later Chairman of the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission from 2016-2018.

Sir John was President of the Institution of Civil Engineers from 2015-2016, he is a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering, Institution of Civil Engineers and City and Guilds of London Institute and has received honorary doctorates from the universities of Birmingham, Imperial College London, Portsmouth, Reading and Warwick.

Sir John was awarded the CBE in 1996 for his contribution to the rail industry and received a knighthood in 2012 for services to engineering and construction.