

Resilience through innovation: Critical local transport and utility infrastructure

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A research team from the University of Birmingham is tackling the problem of resilience as it relates to critical local infrastructure, with future, innovative projects shining brightly on the horizon. The team draws from five major research groups at Birmingham, all of whom are addressing core themes of infrastructure and resilience. Professor Chris Rogers is leading the project with support from Dr David Chapman and Dr Ian Jefferson (Civil Engineering); Dr Austin Barber, Professor John Bryson, Dr Lee Chapman and Professor Jon Coaffee (GEES); and Professor Chris Baker and Dr Andrew Quinn (Centre for Railway Research and Education).

The physical infrastructure that facilitates the transport of people, freight, waste and utility services is under threat from numerous sources including: deterioration through ageing, adverse ground chemistry, severely increased demand, funding constraints, and severe natural hazards. This project is exploring the engineering and social dimensions of resilience towards radically different ways of conceptualising, designing, constructing, maintaining, managing, adapting and valuing local physical infrastructures to make them resilient no matter which threats are manifested or how the future develops.

The team is supported by the 'Practitioner Forum', a group of senior innovative thinkers, practitioners and policy makers drawn from the stakeholder community. The first meeting of the Forum took place at the Institution of Civil Engineers in April at which four small feasibility studies were scoped. The intention of these studies is to identify new projects that have the potential to create innovative products with commercial value.

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