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Post-COVID recovery and renewal through whole-of-society resilience in cities

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\textbf{A B S T R A C T}

This paper explores and extends understanding of the role and significance of whole-of-society resilience programmes that support cities when dealing with complex crises, like the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlighting the complexity of whole-of-society resilience as different actors locally shape it, we ask the question: How can collaboration between formal and informal resilience practices help to enhance resilience across the ‘whole-of-society’? We answer this question by reviewing the importance of whole-of-society resilience and its complexity in a city’s governance of the COVID-19 crisis. We argue that the necessity of renewing approaches to building local resilience capabilities across the whole-of-society requires synchronisation across and between formal and informal approaches – that is, “bottom-up” and governmental initiatives – to meet the diverse needs of communities. Secondly, we detail two recent practice-orientated initiatives that have taken a renewal approach to building resilience through the involvement of whole-of-society in planning recovery from COVID-19 using international standard ISO/TS 22393; and a new initiative called the National Consortium for Societal Resilience [UK+]. Finally, we suggest a set of critical questions for whole-of-society resilience practice.

1. Introduction

COVID-19 has caused multiple, unforeseen, and cascading impacts that have severely affected societies worldwide. Addressing these impacts in the aftermath of such a complex crisis requires collaborative approaches where the whole-of-society works together to build and strengthen its resilience [1]. Governments at all levels have not had sufficient capacity to adapt and respond to the emergent challenges and opportunities from COVID-19 on their own, so they have sought to work with other stakeholders [2]. Therefore, a crucial part of the pandemic response, short-term recovery, and longer-term renewal involves public bodies working with communities, for example, through “bottom up”, informal efforts initiated by a range of non-governmental organisations [3]. Local governments have planned and resourced projects that were (co-)delivered by community groups, businesses, organisations (e.g., voluntary sector, other layers of government), and shared networks. “Mutual aid” initiatives independent of formal structures have also proliferated [4,5]. Rethinking “citizen-state relations” is among the challenges identified in enacting longer-term transformations that tackle the systemic weaknesses exposed by the crisis [6]. In this context, governments are considering what renewal of societal action looks like for post-COVID community resilience.

In this paper, we discuss whole-of-society resilience in the immediate context of COVID-19 and the urgent need for innovative approaches to recovery and renewal exposed by the pandemic. We first outline the importance of resilience thinking within crisis governance, underlining the need to renew approaches to building local resilience capabilities across the whole-of-society. Our focus then turns towards the experiences of communities during COVID-19, particularly the desirability of synchronisation across formal and informal approaches in meeting diverse needs. We then illustrate how a whole-of-society approach is being mobilized in practice through two recently launched initiatives: first, the development of an international standard ISO/TS22393 “Security and resilience – Community resilience – Guidelines for planning recovery and renewal”. Second, the creation of the National Consortium for Societal Resilience [UK+] (NCSR+) in the United Kingdom (UK). Both initiatives are presented in the concluding section, where we also discuss opportunities for collaboration across formal and informal re-
2. The centrality of resilience in crisis governance

How the concept of resilience is translated into practice by governments and other stakeholders is critical in the context of recovery. Resilience has gained prominence over the last two decades concerning how cities, communities, organizations, and other entities mitigate and prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises and disasters. Its global popularization is such that resilience interlinks with, and often eclipses, sustainability as a focal point and organizing concept within policy agendas [7,8]. Considering the challenges of COVID-19, for example, this is reflected in the high-level recovery strategies and political programmes of the United Nations and the European Union (e.g., Recovery and Resilience Facility). In the UK, the anticipated creation of a National Resilience Strategy in 2022 further underlines the imperative that the pandemic has brought to building a more resilient society and systems better able to adapt to the challenges of a changing world.

Although resilience is subject to multiple interpretations and a space of scholarly debate [9], its usefulness partially stems from its capacity to function as a “bridging concept” [10,11]. The widespread adoption of resilience thinking across policy, practice, and academic domains supports the coalescing of diverse interests around a shared term; whose meaning and operationalization require negotiation of the inherent trade-offs and policy implications [12]. Concerning the latter, as Davoudi et al. [10] discuss, a “discourse of bounce-back-ability” rooted in an engineering view of resilience commonly infuses the rhetoric around disaster recovery, which tends to emphasize a return to “normal”. Such framing of recovery shaping interventions does not address the rebalancing of pre-existing inequalities experienced by affected communities nor the enthusiasm to make progress afforded by the crisis. Thus, for resilience to be a progressive practice, as well as a bridging concept, it must accommodate initiatives delivering social equity [7].

Recognition of the need for transformative change post-pandemic (and in relation to major emergencies, disasters, or crises more generally) informs our focus on renewal. This represents “a longer-term perspective of recovery” that seeks to enhance resilience following a crisis through strategic, ambitious initiatives aimed at tackling systemic impacts and the “chronic societal issues that the crisis has exposed” [13].

Critically, the long-term political nature of renewal processes, demanding significant multi-level, multi-sectoral partnership working and resourcing [14], among other things, indicates the need for a practice-oriented resilience concept that can encompass such ambitious endeavours. To this end, we stress the growing need to renew approaches to resilience towards practice-based initiatives that build local resilience capabilities across the whole-of-society.

First, in parallel with the popularisation of the term resilience in crisis preparedness and governance over the last two decades, community-centred strategies gained prominence [15]. Due to a lack of governments’ capacity and resources – partly caused by neo-liberal policy agendas and austerity funding cuts faced by local authorities in the UK [16] – communities have come to the foreground of governmental efforts in crisis management, with more actors and groups involved. Second, the renewed emphasis on communities has led to a new operational dynamic of crisis governance within resilience approaches, resulting in a new effort to integrate the whole-of-society into resilience thinking.

3. Communities, resilience, and COVID-19

In this section, we outline how communities mobilised through both formal and informal approaches during COVID-19 to help mitigate its local impacts and meet the diverse needs generated by the pandemic. Further, we explore how collaborative efforts across and between these two approaches are vital to building whole-of-society resilience longer term.

3.1. Community and meeting diverse needs

COVID-19 swiftly developed into a global health and socio-economic crisis with initial difficulties experienced in tracing the infectious spread of the disease. In the light of its complex and cascading impacts, centralised forms of governance proved difficult in controlling the situation across all levels of society [17]. Community groups became a vehicle through which to identify and address the diverse needs that the pandemic generated locally, which in some instances enabled government response strategies to meet the needs of communities more effectively [18]. For instance, new needs emerged in relation to those shielded from the virus in their homes who required access to food and medicines through home delivery. Some service provision also transitioned from face-to-face to online [19]. As reviewed by Mao et al. [20] in the context of the UK, volunteers and community groups likewise adopted online tools to complement offline activities aimed at combating social isolation.

Community groups were active in organising people and mobilising them as participants in the response strategies in a direct, effective, and timely manner [21]. Community groups and hyper-local voluntary organisations were often able to provide informal and immediate support whereas some larger voluntary organisations struggled and were less agile in their response. Moreover, communities found innovative ways through which to support local governments, including providing information and intelligence about the impacts of the crisis, particularly on vulnerable people (e.g., the elderly, children, homeless or refugees) and service providers as they struggled to satisfy demand. Their close proximity to those in need meant that they could directly feed this information into official channels to inform the response – of course, dependent on those channels working.

The focus on community during the pandemic has therefore proven vital for addressing people’s needs in diverse ways and to help mitigate the local impacts of the pandemic. This is especially the case in those places lacking or with poor public infrastructure and service provision.

3.2. Informal and formal approaches

Communities are vital to governmental efforts at building resilience longer term. However, the enactment of governmental practices at the community level is characterised by a tension between what might be referred to as formal and informal approaches to crisis governance. On the one hand, we use the term formal to address crisis governance practices that are legally sanctioned and economically subsidised by the state. On the other hand, informal approaches are not always directly supported by government and may be reliant instead on locally configured networks that have developed over time. Communities can function as intermediaries that enable forms of coordination and co-production between the government and parts of whole-of-society, e.g., Baxter [22]. An example of informal community-based resilience was present in Barcelona where a telephone service that had proven before to be effective during heatwaves, was reactivated as a form of support for the elderly during COVID-19 [23]. Such informal practices contrast with similar resilience practices that had already received government support such as the repurposing of existing community programmes, like community-based repair shops, which started before the COVID-19 outbreak in Denmark [24]. Despite the proliferation of both approaches throughout the world, synchronising ‘informal’ and ‘bottom-up’ initiatives with local government’s service provision have proven challenging in many places, often amplifying the tension between formal and informal efforts at everyday community resilience.

In some places, voluntary efforts arising informally within communities have been shaped and refined through governmental protocols and procedures. Civil protection agencies in Italy, for example, have created community training programmes that afford people with accreditation for the specialist skills necessary for specific parts of crisis response. Italian government officials have tailored standards created
at the European Union level and deliver resilience training via coordination between three different entities [25]. Volunteer Service Centres offer advice to prospective volunteers about the legislative framework of volunteering and the sectors in need of support. Such human resources are significant in preparing for future crises and are especially effective where systems are in place to support collaboration between formal and informal approaches.

3.3. Collaboration across formal and informal resilience approaches

The emphasis on community during COVID-19 has proven vital to addressing many vulnerable peoples’ needs that might otherwise have gone unmet. Further, the experience of the pandemic has also forced a reappraisal and deeper thinking about the heterogeneity of interests and abilities that exist within communities, their capacity and capability to identify local vulnerabilities, needs and priorities, and proactively tackle local risk. Communities can underpin and facilitate non-state actors’ enrolment as active agents within crisis governance practices, enabling synchronisation between formal government sanctioned and funded approaches with those existing amongst local groups beyond the state.

Focusing our attention on the dimensions of community resilience alone is insufficient to ensure successful recovery and the progression of transformative renewal efforts post-disaster. Resilience building cannot only be ‘bottom-up’, because then those individuals, community groups, businesses and organisations lacking in social capital can be further left behind. A more wide-ranging and encompassing whole-of-society approach involving state-citizen alliances is needed in dealing with the “dynamic complexities” of our interconnected and ever-changing world [6]. Instead of the more elusive and unclear conceptualisations of “community” in community resilience that can be understood differently by different actors (in academia, policy, and practice), a whole-of-society approach prospectively offers a more nuanced view of creating different sorts of relationships and partnerships with the different sorts of actors that make up whole-of-society resilience.

Whole-of-society resilience is characterised by a broader, integrated and more strategic approach to building resilience, one which combines top-down and bottom-up collaboration and involves the co-production of local resilience capabilities with actors from the whole-of-society [1]. Two emerging practice examples oriented towards building whole-of-society resilience are explored in the next section.

4. Practice-based initiatives taking a renewed approach to building resilience

We detail two recent initiatives that demonstrate how a whole-of-society resilience approach is being mobilized in practice. Case study one details the development of an international standard in ‘Security and resilience – Community resilience – Guidelines for planning recovery and renewal’, which charts a process through which recovery plans can be co-produced with whole-of-society so that they address the multidimensional impacts of crisis and disasters. The second case study describes the National Consortium for Societal Resilience [UK+] (NCSR+) which is a collaborative initiative established to pursue the ambition of whole-of-society resilience in the UK.

4.1. Case study 1: ISO/TS 22393 - Guidelines for planning recovery and renewal

4.1.1. About ISO/TS 22393

The International Standard Organization’s Technical Specification ‘ISO/TS 22393 - Guidelines for planning recovery and renewal’ provides a framework for how to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on city communities, and address these by planning transactional recovery activities and transformational renewal initiatives. This case study describes the background of the international standard and an insight to its contents.

ISO/TS 22393 can identify the impacts and needs of whole-of-society created by the crisis and be used to structure the design of recovery strategies and renewal initiatives that involves whole-of-society in their development and implementation.

An international standard aims to “give world-class specifications for products, services and systems, to ensure quality, safety and efficiency” [13]. To do this, standards collate the latest research findings, expert knowledge, recent practitioner experience, and reaches consensus to provide a detailed, informative document that can be applied in different contexts because all the important aspects are considered. In short, an international standard often describes best practice and how that can be achieved.

4.1.2. The scope of ISO/TS 22393

ISO/TS 22393 describes its scope as presenting:

“Guidelines for how to develop recovery plans and renewal strategies from a major emergency, disaster, or crisis (such as the COVID-19 pandemic). The document provides guidelines on how to identify the short-term, transactional activities needed to reflect and learn, review preparedness of parts of the system impacted by the crisis and reinstate operations to build preparedness. It also distinguishes a longer-term perspective of recovery – called renewal. In describing renewal, the document provides guidelines on how to identify visionary initiatives to address the strategic impacts and opportunities that have been exposed by the crisis and need to be addressed through transformational, ambitious initiatives. While recovery plans should enhance preparedness following a crisis, renewal strategies should enhance resilience.”

When the process outlined in ISO/TS 22393 is pursued involving whole-of-society, then recovery and renewal can be co-produced with those actors and so be more accommodating of societal disruptions and ambitions for the future.

The guidelines are applicable to city officials who consider the implications of community, local, national, and international issues on city recovery and renewal.

4.1.3. Concepts in recovery and renewal

ISO/TS 22393 provides concepts of recovery and renewal that include:

- **principles of recovery** i.e., that recovery should: reflect and learn on experiences; assess readiness for other emergencies; reinstate operations impacted by the crisis
- **principles of renewal** i.e., that renewal should include: people; places; processes; the systemic relationships between people, places and processes; whole-of-society perspectives on their future
- **resilience partners** in recovery and renewal including: national government and departments; sub-national and local government partners; local communities, including small place-based community organizations and local initiatives; individual organizations; individual members of the public
- **impacts and needs to recover and renew**, examples being the impacts on: humanitarian assistance; economic; infrastructure management; environment; communication and engagement; governance and legislation
- **cross-cutting systemic themes for planning recovery and renewal**, including themes of: the people who participate in the crisis; the places and infrastructure that have been affected; the processes that have been disrupted; the formal and informal power and influence; the partners and relationships developed during the crisis
- **arrangements to activate recovery and renewal** should be: planned; have governance; include partners; be activated in the early stages of a crisis

We now summarise the content of the substantive sections of the international standard.
4.1.4. Main sections in ISO/TS 22393
4.1.4.1. Setting up a recovery coordination group. ISO/TS 22393 describes how addressing these concepts should prepare the foundations on which to build a Recovery Coordination Group (RCG) that will arrange the investigations and planning for recovery and identify renewal opportunities. It advises that it is necessary to:

- agree the membership of the RCG, including: a chairperson with the necessary skills; members who have knowledge and legitimacy to represent a broad range of whole-of-society constituents; project management support
- agree the RCG’s terms of reference including its scope, terminology, training needs for members, reporting structures into and out of RCG, and its approach to develop a Recovery Plan
- initiate the work of the RCG by building a shared understanding of the crisis and having clear criteria for when to initiate and pause the RCG’s work

The standard also covers the need to access the resources needed for Recovery and Renewal as well as how to communicate consistently with interested parties.

4.1.4.2. Assessing the impacts of the crisis and whole-of-society needs. An initial activity that the RCG might commission is an evaluation of the impacts of the crisis and the wider needs of people, places and processes that existed before the crisis hit but can be addressed through recovery and renewal. ISO/TS 22393 advises that impacts and needs are identified through an Impact and Needs Assessment (INA) and provides advice on how an INA can be completed by involving whole-of-society, including:

- identify themes on which to commission an INA, for example, on the impact and needs around humanitarian assistance, economy, infrastructure, environment, communication and engagement, governance, and legislation
- design and set up the INAs by agreeing whether one or several thematic INAs will be commissioned, how the results will be used, how information will be collected and analysed, and defining the boundary of the assessment
- analyse and present results from the INA by categorizing all the impacts and needs to build a general overview alongside specific thematic insights
- select action areas to recover and renew by understanding what potential actions to address impacts and needs can be implemented, and will create the biggest improvement for people, places, and processes

The RCG should agree whether to pursue each selected action area as either:

- a transactional action, i.e., a limited action to be addressed within a Recovery Plan
- a transformational initiative, i.e., an ambitious action to be addressed within a Renewal Strategy

4.1.4.3. Developing a recovery plan. Establishing the Recovery Plan aims to agree the short-term activities to support people, places and processes that have been impacted by the crisis. ISO/TS 22393 describes two steps in developing the Recovery Plan:

- identify transactional activity that aligns with the available resource to reinstate, restore, and renovate parts of the system impacted by the crisis, to maximise the benefit to communities by implementing the Recovery Plan
- manage delivery of the recovery plan using a project management methodology and monitoring the outcome of the plan

ISO/TS 22393 provides templates to inform the Recovery Plan.

4.1.4.4. Developing renewal strategies. Identifying renewal opportunities is initially the duty of the RCG, analysing insights from the INAs and lessons learned to consider the potential for major ambitious change that is merited and desired by whole-of-society in the aftermath of COVID-19. The development of Renewal Strategies requires enthusiasm for a longer-term endeavour to address key challenges that are intractable and not easily defined – so addressing them requires complex arrangements of activities by multiple whole-of-society partners. Initial conversations should be conducted by the RCG, with the potential of those discussions being continued with representatives of whole-of-society via a renewal summit, which should:

- identify transformational initiatives to implement in the Renewal Strategy, by engaging with important whole-of-society stakeholders in a thoughtful approach, to co-produce a vision for renewal of people, places, and processes
- consider challenges to renewal, such as the pressures created by simultaneously responding to any ongoing emergency needs, while also attending to the Recovery Plan, other Renewal Initiatives, other political priorities, financial pressures, and fatigue
- encourage commitments from key whole-of-society stakeholders to support transformational Renewal Initiatives that are identified during the Renewal Summit

ISO/TS 22393 states that Renewal should be positive, therefore needs to be embedded in a new narrative of a better future that is not linked to the negativity, loss, and pain of the crisis from which it has been instigated.

4.1.4.5. Continuous improvement. ISO/TS 22393 puts emphasis on the need to continuously improve the process of planning recovery and renewal. It provides guidelines on how to identify lessons through a systems approach to learning lessons using: ISO/TS 22392 which offers guidelines for conducting peer reviews of disaster risk reduction policies and practices [26]; act on lessons; scenario plan; and exercise future crises.

4.1.5. Summary
We believe we were the first team in England to promote Recovery and Renewal from COVID-19 having first published the term on 27th April 2020, after having done several presentations in the month before. We have tested the guidelines in ISO/TS22393 in a wide range of RCGs and a vast number of RCGs in England have adopted the recovery and renewal agenda. We have also developed the ideas in ISO/TS 22393 with the support of many cities including in Canada, Chile, Palestine, and in England. These experiences have been invaluable in providing additional insights to the use of the international standard and its appropriateness for different contexts. While sharing commonalities, these contexts are quite different, yet ISO/TS 22393 has proven its transferability to each to support diverse ways of involving whole-of-society in recovery and renewal.

4.2. Case study 2: The National Consortium for Societal Resilience (UK+) (NCSR+)

This article has already described how the response and recovery to COVID-19 has been a whole-of-society effort where every individual, community group, business, and organisation in cities have had a role to play. To maintain the outpouring of goodwill, local government and voluntary organisations have been considering how to renew their efforts on resilience to ensure that a positive legacy of the pandemic is a more cohesive, risk-aware, and prepared society that can work with local government to enhance its own local resilience.

The term ‘whole-of-society resilience’ challenges the resilience sector to take an integrated approach to build national resilience as the product of multiple factors, including “effective and trusted governance, government capabilities, social cohesion, and individual and business
resilience” [27]. This second case study outlines one response to this call to action – the renewal of local resilience through a partnership called The National Consortium for Societal Resilience [UK+], abbreviated to NCSR+. Below, we detail the vision and background, objectives, members, and founding principles of the NCSR+. The partnership was launched on 13th October 2021 [28] where members signalled their intention to renew local resilience to reduce risk and prepare society for disruptive events.

4.2.1. Vision, background and members of the NCSR+

The vision driving the NCSR+ is to “enhance the UK{+}’s whole-of-society approach to resilience, so that individuals, community groups, businesses, and organisations can all play a meaningful part in building the resilience of our society” [29].

The NCSR+ involves 62 member organisations that are central to building resilience in the UK{+}. The local government members alone represent over 97% of the population of the United Kingdom along with 10 nationally important sector partners.

NCSR+ members want to work together on the ‘national endeavour’ of whole-of-society resilience, with their communities, strengthening inclusivity and diversity, knowing each have different starting points on how they understand their risks, pinpoint vulnerabilities, enhance preparedness, and leverage agency.

NCSR+ members believe that whole-of-society resilience must be built from inside communities, using available partnerships offering important support, facilitation, and intervention within a national framework of guidance and good practices. This explains why building whole-of-society resilience is not top-down from national or local government, because society is not controlled by them. However, resilience building cannot only be bottom-up by society, because then those communities that lack agency can be further left behind as they fail to mobilise around this challenge.

This means that whole-of-societal resilience must be co-produced and, in NCSR+ co-production takes place between:

4.2.1.1. Resilience partnerships. These are the multi-agency collaborations involving local government resilience units and other partners which focus on emergency preparedness and assured resilience. These partnerships are the portfolio holders for local risk, vulnerability, and preparedness for disruptive events. Resilience partnerships will have a role to facilitate the implementation of whole-of-society resilience approaches and have an assurance role so that no part of society is left behind because communities lack the agency needed to take responsibility for their own resilience.

4.2.1.2. Sector partners. These are organisations that support the creation of local resilience through collaborative working with resilience partnerships. Sector partners that have strong local connections with their constituencies so can amplify different voices from whole-of-society into the work of the NCSR+, including:

- business sector: larger and smaller businesses
- voluntary sector: collections of national charities, large charities, and hyper-local voluntary organisations
- government sector: whole-system national perspectives and local government capabilities that are not normally in the space of resilience to disruptive events
- higher education sector to support evidence-led practice by providing theory, research skills, and thought leadership to underpin local action

4.2.1.3. Community. The individuals, neighbourhoods, businesses, and organisations that share a characteristic such as being co-located. Communities possess invaluable local resilience capabilities and will play a key role in providing local intelligence on their own local risks, their expectations, and priorities for resilience.

The voices of each of these three constituents are represented by NCSR+ members.

4.2.2. Objectives of the NCSR+

For NCSR+ members to work together to:

- sustain a supportive national eco-system to:
  - establish concepts, language, and principals
  - strengthen relationships with each other and whole-of-society
- learn about:
  - different perspectives and priorities across resilience partnerships and sector partners
  - how others have built whole-of-society resilience
  - lessons that are translatable to the UK{+} context
- develop nationally consistent approaches including:
  - a new foundation to establish a solid basis on which to build whole-of-society resilience
  - new local activities to build on that foundation
- trial, implement, and evaluate the nationally consistent approaches into members’ local activities
- promulgate information and resources under the NCSR+’s neutral identity, including:
  - existing information and resources given over to the NCSR+
  - new information and resources produced by the NCSR+
- develop and implement an evaluation methodology to assess the changing confidence and maturity of whole-of-society resilience:
  - from the perspective of the NCSR+ members
  - from the perspective of whole-of-society

4.2.3. Members of the NCSR+

To ensure the NCSR+ is focused on making evidence-led change happen, the membership is limited to those organisations that have strong local connections to communities to implement approaches for whole-of-society resilience.

4.2.4. The founding principles of the NCSR+

Members of the NCSR+ have identified the following founding principles to underpin this collective effort on whole-of-society resilience:

1. We must align behind a shared meaning of ‘whole-of-society resilience’.
2. We must exploit our synergies and the substantial opportunities from working collaboratively together.
3. We are working on an ambitious issue, so we need short-term (realistic) objectives and longer-term (ambitious) objectives.
4. We must be efficient in our work, and facilitate researchers to provide its research capacity and support.
5. We need a new, ambitious, nationally consistent foundation on which to build whole-of-society resilience.
6. We will address significant resource gaps by producing materials and collateral which only contain the NCSR+’s neutral-branding and which can be adopted without charge, provided that NCSR+’s neutral-branding is retained equivalently alongside the user’s own branding.
7. We must accumulate diverse good practices from which to carefully select a starting portfolio to localise as no ‘one-size-fits-all’.
8. We must build the consortium into a national eco-system to co-produce approaches with the voices of our communities.
9. We must analyse the impact of our effort.
10. We must disseminate our learning to everyone via our events, website, outreach, and link.

4.2.5. Summary

In summary, members of the NCSR+ believe that you cannot be resilient on your own and recognises that resilience must be developed
from inside communities. This includes building on existing community structures and partnerships and establishing new ones. Shared understanding and joint working will be key to creating an inclusive, supportive, and enabling environment for the co-production of whole-of-society local resilience capabilities – an approach which requires an adjustment of relationships on resilience between whole-of-society and resilience partnerships.

The work of the NCSR+ will start by developing a shared understanding of whole-of-society resilience, identifying the principles that should underpin a whole-of-society approach, and will gather and promulgate good practice examples of community resilience strategies to both national and international audiences.

5. Conclusion: Resilience—A changing narrative

The evolving narrative of ‘whole-of-society’ resilience is igniting change across the resilience sector and has the potential to accelerate thinking on recovery from crisis towards enhancing resilience across society through transformational renewal. The concept of ‘whole-of-society’ resilience was introduced to the UK resilience discourse through the UK Integrated Review [27] and anticipated National Resilience Strategy 2022 and is embodied through new initiatives such as the NCSR+ [29]. Whole-of-society resilience will require a reorientation of governmental practice and there is a need to investigate the various implications of whole-of-society resilience on policy and practice at the local level, such as its design and implementation. We argue that whole-of-society resilience is a process that should lead to an ability to better prepare for and adapt to future environmental changes. The approach can be mobilised to understand the diverse needs of groups/stakeholders, improve abilities to identify and reduce risks, adapt to shifting landscapes of vulnerability, and enhance local preparedness and response as crises transition through various stages.

Section 3 of this paper detailed how whole-of-society resilience departs from traditional community resilience approaches to incorporate a more integrated and strategic approach to building resilience across the whole of society. One aspect of community resilience is that it is often characterised by co-location, where members of communities work together to build the resilience of their own community. Whole-of-society resilience is broader that this and cannot be restricted to co-location, yet aspects that characterise community resilience such as collaboration, local solutions and partnership working will also be crucial. A key difference in this example will be broadening those partnerships to include organisations and businesses and their respective networks.

For whole-of-society resilience to provide a strategic and guiding frame for building resilience, a comprehensive understanding of the concept and its components is essential. In partnership with those delivering on whole-of-society resilience through the NCSR+, our future work will seek to understand better and examine how the notion of whole-of-society is understood and operationalised. We will ask: Who is the network of actors involved in whole-of-society local resilience capabilities? What systemic enablers are required to operationalise these capabilities? and, what are the different techniques and practices by which they are brought together to synchronise recovery and renewal to complex crises?

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Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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