



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 28th JANUARY 2022

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RESILIENCE AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Governance Committee with an annual update on the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity activities, work undertaken with other Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland local authorities, and wider multi-agency resilience activities.

Background

2. As a "Category 1 Responder" as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the Act) Leicestershire County Council fulfils its obligations stipulated in the Act through both membership of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Resilience Partnership and Local Resilience Forum (LLR (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland) Prepared) as well as its Business Continuity Policy and structure.
3. The Council's Resilience Partnership team provides representation within the Multi-Agency arena of the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) by a number of professional Resilience Officers and the formulation of both incident response and framework plans. This team also provides a 24-hour response capability and the establishment of Emergency Centres and Humanitarian Assistance.
4. The Council's Incident Management Plan and Business Continuity Policy are the strategic documents which describe the core principles by which the Council maintains its ability to respond to internal and external Major Incidents that impact on 'business as usual'. On an annual basis, there is a requirement to review, update and exercise these plans to ensure they are appropriate and fit for purpose within the wider multi-agency framework.

Progress Summary

5. The previous annual report was presented to this Committee in November 2020, and a summary of progress achieved on the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity activities since the previous annual report is set out below.

6. On-Call Arrangements

The On-Call Senior Manager (OCSM) rota was established in October 2017 to act as the first point of contact for any incident that affects the Council. Mandatory training sessions are held for all managers on the OCSM rota to ensure that the OCSM role provides the ability to provide a consistent and

effective response at a senior level to incidents both in and out of working hours.

7. Incident Management and Business Continuity Plans

To manage incidents and business continuity provision within the Council, three plan structures operate at different levels to ensure resilience and business continuity is fit for purpose:

(i) Leicestershire County Council Incident Management Plan

Incident Management Plan: A single purpose plan for the structured response to a major incident that lays out the Council's response to both internal and external incidents that impact to such a degree that normal day to day operations are affected. As well as general guidance and identified roles and responsibilities for departments and areas of the Council, itemised 'Action Cards' give an *aide-memoire* of pre-agreed actions for key personnel in order to facilitate a more strategically led process.

(ii) Business Continuity Plans at Three Levels of Provision

Corporate Business Continuity Plan: A new Corporate Business Continuity Plan is in development which takes direction from the Council's Corporate Business Continuity Strategy and, information collated from Departmental Management Team (DMT) plans (see below), that will provide the Council's Corporate Management Team (CMT) with clear reference material on the prioritised critical services and suppliers within the corporate structure. This will then enable strategic oversight of business continuity, and enable CMT to provide pre-determined, clear strategic guidance to Council staff in order to assist in impact mitigation following an incident.

DMT Business Continuity Plans: New DMT Business Continuity Plans have been developed which combine the information captured from the refreshed team level plans to allow DMT managers to effectively assess risk and plan contingency measures to ensure continuity of service during an incident that impacts on business continuity. These plans are supervised by the Resilience Planning Group (RPG). These have been updated to include learning from the Covid-19 pandemic such as scenario planning based on staff shortages.

Team Business Continuity Plans: Operational Business Continuity Plans have been completed for all critical services or services that are underpinned by a critical supplier. These refreshed plans take into account new ways of working and the experiences of the past 24 months. These plans source all relevant information which has been collated to enable completion of the DMT Business Continuity plan (see above). A shorter, less detailed plan is provided for non-critical services and teams that have been assessed as not using a critical supplier. Importantly, this approach allows for the identification of all critical services and suppliers within the Council, to allow departments to assess the impact on services during and following an incident. This enables a more effective and robust examination of single points of failure and areas where back-up processes need to be considered. These plans are supervised at departmental level.

(iii) Flood and Severe Weather Planning

Flood and Severe Weather Plan: The Council's Flood and Severe Weather Plan has been constructed in partnership with the Council's Highways Operations Team, Croft Operations Room, the Environment Agency, Flood Wardens, and the Resilience Partnership. This plan identifies flood specific roles and responsibilities to provide structure and direction to the Council during a flooding or severe weather event within the Leicestershire area. This plan also sits within the wider LLR Prepared Flood Framework structure to clearly define the support available to Districts affected by a flood or severe weather event. The **Flood Management Board** has been re-established as one of the lessons learnt from last series of severe weather incidents. The role of the Board is to oversee multi-agency flood risk management across Leicestershire.

8. **Community Response Plans**

The Community Response Plan scheme continues to encourage communities across LLR in the production of plans that encourage and support the concept of resilience and community. There are 55 completed community plans.

Training

9. During this reporting period a continuous programme of training and development has taken place including:

- (a) **Emergency Rest Centre Volunteers** – Ten training sessions were hosted and organised, involving 52 participants. The Council continues to maintain a healthy number of Emergency Rest Centre Volunteers that are trained in the necessary skills to staff Emergency Rest Centres established in the response to a major incident. Typically, volunteers would be mobilised to run rest centres if residents were asked to leave their homes due to severe weather, loss of utilities, or other major incidents. These volunteers are trained to cover the relevant roles at Emergency Rest Centres, Survivor Reception Centres, Friends and Family Centres or Humanitarian Assistance Centres when a response is needed to major incident.
- (b) **Flood Warden Training** – Two events were hosted and organised adding a further 14 flood wardens to bring the current total to 111 across Leicestershire.

Covid Response and Recovery

10. Over this reporting period, the requirements of responding to the Covid 19 pandemic has dominated work and resources amongst the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity Team at both an LRF and local authority level. Throughout the period, the Resilience and Business Continuity Team and the wider Resilience Partnership have been in both 'response' and 'recovery' modes supporting the multi-agency working structure across all levels of operational, tactical, and strategic working.

11. During the first half of the year the focus was on undertaking the considerable work required to establish and maintain both Tactical (TCG) and Strategic

(SCG) Coordinating Groups and sub-cells required to inform and support communities, with an emphasis on reaching more vulnerable groups. This reporting period also saw a change in central government requirements on reporting and monitoring routes with the LRF taking on a much greater role in the coordination of the response and reporting to both regional and Central Government offices.

12. During June and July the main focus and effort shifted to a more 'recovery' orientated approach and the establishment of the Recovery Coordinating Group taking over from TCG/SCG, but due to the onset of the Omicron variant of Covid taking hold nationally and locally, LLR Prepared was required to return to a response footing and re-establish many of the previous structures. This situation is ongoing, and at time of reporting, no de-escalation date has been set.

Resilience Planning Group (RPG)

13. The RPG, chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive, has focussed almost exclusively on managing the implications of Covid. The RPG has met 182 times since 4th March 2020. The Group initiated workstreams to manage and coordinate staffing issues, Personal Protective Equipment, critical sites, communications, and critical services.
14. There were no incidents affecting the County Hall campus requiring action by RPG.

LLR Prepared and Resilience Partnership Multi-Agency Working

15. As part of the Multi-Agency response to Major Incidents, the Council's Resilience Partnership team was involved in response to the following incidents:

January:

- Localised flooding.
- Burst water pipe affecting 500 properties (Snarestone).
- Severe cold weather and snow.

February:

- Localised flooding.

May:

- Community tensions

June:

- High rise fire and evacuation, Leicester City
- Second high-rise fire and evacuation, Leicester City.
- Gas leak and evacuation of 32 properties
- Fire and gas leak with evacuation of 18 properties

July:

- Hailstorm and flooding.

August:

- Suspect Improvised Explosive Device, Leicester City.

October:

- Flooding

November:

- Huncote Leisure Centre evacuation work.
- Hotel fire and evacuation of residents, Leicester City.

December:

- Avian Influenza outbreak (five confirmed cases).

Looking Forward - 2021/22

16. There is a number of significant national and local developments on the horizon and early planning in anticipation of any implications is being considered. These include:

- Ongoing implementation of learning from the Kerslake Report on the Manchester Arena attack, emerging learning from the Grenfell Inquiry and learning from local incidents.
- Ongoing response and recovery to the pandemic including supporting NHS partners with vaccination rollout, public health messaging, and connecting with communities.
- Managing further “Avian Flu” outbreaks.
- Planning for climate change and severe weather incidents.
- Responding to the National Resilience Strategy Review (NRSR) which is expected to report in Spring 2022
- Review of the Civil Contingencies Act which will report back with the NRSR.
- Review of National Security Risk Review.
- Pilot funding of Local Resilience Forums.
- Training provision – possibility of stronger or mandatory minimum standards for those in primary response leadership roles, including local authorities.
- Business Continuity Supplier Assurance: Continue to review key and critical supplier business continuity arrangements to ensure maximum resilience in the provision of service.
- Business Continuity training and exercising: to test and integrate new Business Continuity structure throughout the Council at Operational, Tactical and Strategic level. Emphasis on assisting DMT managers on the implementation of the new Business Continuity structure and data gathering from operational team plans in order to ensure production of high-quality Business Continuity reporting to CMT and Strategic Business Continuity planning.
- Annual Refresher Training for all On Call Senior Managers.
- Joint CMT and RPG major incident exercise to prove new Major Incident Plan, Flood and Severe Weather Plan and Business Continuity Plans.

Resource Implications

17. The implementation of the Business Continuity Schedule of Work will continue to be undertaken as part of ‘business as usual’, working with the Council’s RPG and Business Continuity and Resilience Working Party.

Conclusion and Recommendations

18. Throughout 2021, the requirements of resourcing the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and recovery phases has impacted heavily on the Resilience and Business Continuity Team, however, a continuing programme of work and development has been undertaken to develop and establish a dynamic and structured provision of resilience and business continuity across the Council.

Recommendations

19. The Committee is asked to note and comment on the issues raised in the report.

Officer(s) to Contact

Zafar Saleem
Head of Communities, Policy & Resilience
Strategy and Business Intelligence
Chief Executives Office
Tel: 0116 305 4952
Email: zafar.saleem@leics.gov.uk

Andrew Murr
LLR Prepared and Resilience Partnership Manager
Strategy and Business Intelligence
Chief Executives Office
Tel: 0116 305 6105
Email: andrew.murr@leics.gov.uk

Mark Warden
Resilience and Business Continuity Manager
Strategy and Business Intelligence
Chief Executives Office
Tel: 0116 3056 145
Email: mark.warden@leics.gov.uk