



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 27th JANUARY 2023

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RESILIENCE AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY ANNUAL UPDATE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) with an 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 Council fulfils its statutory obligations through membership of the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Resilience Partnership and Local Resilience Forum (LLR Prepared), and via the Business Continuity Policy and associated delivery structure.
3. The Resilience Partnership team provides representation within the multi-agency arena of the Local Resilience Forum by several professional Resilience Officers and the formulation of both incident response and framework plans. This team also provides 24-hour response capability and the establishment of Emergency Centres and Humanitarian Assistance in conjunction with Council departments and the local voluntary sector.
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.

Incident Management & Business Continuity Plans

5. Council resilience and business continuity management is delivered through the production and excising of general and specialist plans.
 - (i) Leicestershire County Council Incident Management Plan

This is a single purpose plan for the structured response to a major incident that lays out the Councils' 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 to facilitate a more strategically led process.

(ii) Business Continuity Plans at Three Levels of Provision

Corporate Business Continuity Plan: A refreshed Corporate Business Continuity Plan has been produced. This plan will take direction from the Council's Corporate Business Continuity Policy 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 to assist in impact mitigation following an incident.

DMT Business Continuity Plans: These plans combine the information captured from the new 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).

Team Business Continuity Plans: A two-part plan template has been developed and provided for all teams in the Council. For all critical services, or services that include a critical supplier, there is a detailed plan to gather all relevant information required for completion of the DMT plan (see above) and 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.

Progress Summary

6. The following is a summary of progress achieved on the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity activities.

COVID-19

7. The response to COVID-19 has developed into more business as usual for the team and is largely managed by individual departments. However, RPG meets monthly and the impact of COVID-19 both internally and on communities is monitored. The team is supporting the Council's input into the national Covid-19 inquiry.

Climate Change/Severe Weather

8. The Local Resilience Forum is currently reviewing its Severe Weather plans and is to produce a framework which will then feed into internal planning. It is envisaged that the framework will cover a wider range of hazards including snow, rain, heatwave, and wind. The Council's planning will focus on

consequence management and supporting communities whilst maintaining critical services.

Concurrent Incidents

9. The Resilience and Business Continuity team is currently in the process of developing a training plan with the aim of equipping more senior managers to take on the various incident command roles to support a response both internally and externally.
10. The risk of concurrent incidents remains high and the potential impact on the Council would cause significant disruption to services and officers. The ability to move meetings to a virtual platform helps to minimise the impact on officers and can support more flexible working.
11. The Resilience and Business Continuity Team attend multi-agency meetings to identify potential hazards early and feed these back into the RPG where departments are asked to identify any impacts that may be occurring.

Learning from national inquiries

12. Part 2 of the Manchester Arena inquiry was released shortly before Christmas 2022. The inquiry document is currently being reviewed to identify the recommendations that are relevant to the Council. There is a focus in the report on the training of key personnel and the process of embedding doctrine and lessons identified.
13. The inquiry into Grenfell fire is ongoing and whilst no report has been published, the Council is monitoring the evidence submitted and addressing any points that are raised.

National Review into Resilience/Independent Review of the Civil Contingencies Act

14. The release of the national review into resilience was delayed through the year and subsequently released at the end of December 2022 under the banner of [‘The UK Government Resilience Framework’](#). Of note for this Committee is the planned enhanced role for elected members in community and organisational resilience. The specifics of this are yet to be released,
15. The Resilience and Business Continuity Team will work with the Local Resilience Forum and partners to progress work arising from the national review which is likely to be significant. Details of the enhanced role of elected officials will be shared with members.

Business as Usual

16. All programmed reviews of plans and policies have either been completed or are due for completion in line with expected time frames.

Fatigue and Wellbeing

17. There is an acceptance that the Resilience Officers and managers have been in a constant state of response since 2019, this includes supporting planning for the EU-Exit and responding to COVID-19, as well concurrent incidents such as those listed in paragraphs 21 and 22 below. This has also extended out more widely to all Council officers who have played a significant role in responding to this wide range of incidents. Further work and training is being undertaken to develop the skills, knowledge and experience of a wider range of officers to ensure that it is not the same officers being asked to undertake response roles in the future.

Training

18. During this reporting period a continuous programme of training and development has taken place including those activities listed below. Further plans have been put in place to catch up with training events cancelled or delayed due to the volume of response activity since Covid-19.
- (a) Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) Commanders Training - The JESIP doctrine outlines the principles that all responding organisations should adhere to when responding to incidents. Officers have supported the development and delivery of an LLR wide training programme, which will deliver 240 training spaces per year.
 - (b) Emergency Centre Volunteers - Following a summer recruiting drive, the Council continues to maintain a healthy number of Emergency Centre Volunteers that are trained in the necessary skills to staff Rest Centres established in response to a major incident. These staff volunteers are trained to respond to Emergency Rest Centres, Survivor Reception Centres, Friends and Family Centres or Humanitarian Assistance Centres.
 - (c) Loggists - During a response to a major incident the Council is required to keep and maintain clear records of information, decisions and actions taken during the response which may be used as evidence for many years to come. During this reporting period further recruiting and training of suitable staff within the Council has been undertaken to ensure that adequate numbers for the role is maintained.

Exercises

19. During this reporting period several internal and external exercises have taken place, these include:
- (a) Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery Tabletop Exercises - This is an ongoing piece of work being conducted with all critical services as identified in the Corporate Business Continuity Plan (84 in total). The purpose of the exercise is to assess service preparedness in relation to a complete IT outage. Once completed further work will be done to identify departmental and corporate impacts. IT have expressed a desire to conduct an exercise focused on the response to a cyber attack.

- (b) FloodEx22 - A national flooding exercise was held in 2022 which aimed to assess preparedness across multiple Local Resilience Forums in response to widespread flooding along the River Trent catchment and along the East Coast. The exercise ran for two days and included participation from several Council officers. The Council also played a significant part in planning the exercise with the Resilience and Business Continuity Manager acting as Exercise Director and a Council Resilience Officer acting as project lead. An exercise report is due to be published which will contain several lessons which will be actioned by RPG.
- (c) Exercise LEMUR - A multi-agency tabletop exercise was undertaken in 2022. This was designed to support planning in relation to a possible National Power Outage (NPO). The exercise was incorporated into an existing Local Resilience Forum training plan for a NPO. The exercise was used to inform and confirm a concept of operations for multi-agency working. Officers from a range of departments attended. An internal exercise is due to take place in early March 2023 to further support this work and a national exercise is taking place at the end of March 2023. Council officers are again heavily involved in the planning.

Incident Responses during 2022/23

County Council Incidents

20. Since the 2022 annual report to this Committee, internal incidents of varying levels of severity have required Resilience and Business Continuity support and follow-on actions. The role of the Resilience and Business Continuity team is to coordinate the Council response meetings, collate actions and to provide advice and support to senior managers. Incidents have included:
- Home 4 Ukraine Scheme – The team established the ‘Welcome Desk’ and volunteer provision at East Midlands Airport and facilitated the handing over of this provision to the County Council’s Adults and Communities Department.
 - Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) – The DDOS attack on the Councils Internet Page.
 - Microsoft Windows 10 Enterprise Downgrade Issue.
 - Global Microsoft loss of desktop icons.
 - Operation London Bridge following the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II.
 - Avian Influenza

Multi-Agency Incidents

21. As part of the multi-agency response to Major Incidents, the Council’s Resilience and Business Continuity team was involved in the response to the following incidents:
- Widespread public sector industrial action
 - Heatwave, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue declared a ‘Major Incident’ due to the pressures felt responding to a significant number of calls
 - Partial building collapse in Blaby

- Partial building collapse in Church Gate, Leicester
- Leicester East Disorder
- Operation London Bridge
- Gravel Street Fire

22. As part of the Resilience Partnership Duty Officer provision officers have supported several incidents across the wider LLR partnership (such as house fires where residents require temporary support, reporting flooded roads to the relevant highways team during periods of rainfall).

Ensuring ‘Lessons Identified’ become ‘Lessons Learnt’

22. Following a request from this Committee for members to be kept informed about the lessons identified following incidents, it is proposed that post incident, where debriefs and investigations have taken place, that the lessons identified and subsequent actions will be aggregated into a single action plan by the Resilience and Business Continuity Team. This document will be placed on the Council’s intranet which members will be able to access. This will give greater assurance that any relevant lessons or actions have been identified, and appropriate steps taken to update and improve the Council’s response arrangements. The RPG will continue to have oversight of all actions for delegation and monitoring purposes.

Notifying Members of Ongoing Incidents

23. To keep members informed about live incidents, it is proposed that the On Call Senior Manager in consultation with the Council’s Corporate Communications team will decide on the appropriate mechanism by which to notify members. This will be dependent on the nature and severity of the incident and its potential impact on localities and communities.

Schedule of Work: Forward Plan 2023/24

24. The list below notes the planned areas on which work will be focused during the next 12 months:
- Ongoing implementation of learning from local and national incidents and enquiries, namely the Inquiry into the Manchester Area Attack and Grenfell.
 - Business Continuity Critical Supplier Assurance - Continue to review and assess assurance levels of external critical suppliers’ business continuity plans.
 - Implementation of a 3 yearly training cycle, aligned to National Occupational Standards and National Resilience Standards to further enhance the capability and confidence within the On-call Manager cohort.
 - Internal Widespread Power Outage exercise to be held to explore and confirm the Councils role in a multi-agency response.
 - Leading the planning and delivery of Exercise Mighty Oak, a nationally led multi-agency attended Power Outage exercise.
 - Ongoing Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery tabletop exercises, and to then work with IT to develop and deliver a corporate level exercise.
 - A review of the Business Continuity page on the Councils Intranet page to better inform officers and elected members.

Resource Implications

25. The implementation of the Business Continuity Schedule of Work will continue to be undertaken as part of business as usual, working with the RPG and the Business Continuity and Resilience Working Party. No additional resources are requested.

Equality implications

26. None specific arising from this report.

Human rights implications

27. None specific arising from this report.

Recommendations

28. The Committee is asked to note and comment on the report.

Officers to Contact

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