



## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 20 MAY 2024**

### **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 exercising 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 of the Council become 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 Two Levels of Provision

**Corporate Business Continuity Plan:** This plan has now been withdrawn and the information that was contained within has now been included in the Business Continuity Management Policy & the Incident Management Plan.

**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:** following on from last year's report the two-part plan template is now being used to assess critical and non-critical services by all departments. All plans now include Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment to identify the impact on critical functions against identified time scales. Recovery elements are now included, with confirmation that lessons learned are now fed back into the relevant BC plan if required.

### **Business Continuity Progress Summary**

6. The following is a summary of progress achieved on the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity activities:
- A review of the Business Continuity page on the Council's intranet page to better inform officers and elected members. This has been completed and is now live on the intranet.
  - Business Continuity critical supplier assurance – continue to review and assess assurance levels of critical suppliers' business continuity plans on a three yearly cycle.
  - IT validation exercises have been completed and the lessons identified have now been fed back to relevant departments for action, supported by the Resilience and Business Continuity team.
  - A three yearly training cycle has now been implemented and the relevant officers are attending the training. The Resilience and Business Continuity team are on a rolling programme of developing and delivering training and exercising to Council officers, also incorporating learning from national and local incidents.
  - Lessons identified from the internal widespread power outage exercise have now been fed back into relevant plans.
  - Business continuity officers have conducted a gap analysis against ISO22301 (Business Continuity Management Systems) and have provided the Resilience Planning Group with a detailed breakdown of assurance against the standard. The team are currently working on the actions that came out of the gap analysis. The completed gap analysis will be used to evaluate the

conformity level of the business continuity management system against the requirements of the ISO standard.

### **Resilience and Emergency Planning Progress Summary**

7. The Council's Incident Management plan has been reviewed, reduced in content and adapted to ensure it is easy to follow during an incident. The plan has several appendixes that contain secondary information. It also includes elements of business continuity plans that should be picked up and used at the start of an incident. Once the plan has gone through an internal consultation process via the Resilience Planning Group. It will be tested by managers during On Call Senior Manager (OCSM) bitesize exercises and feedback will be sought to ensure that the plan contains everything required for the end user.
8. The three yearly training cycle is ongoing. This is aligned to the National Occupational Standards and the National Resilience Standards to further enhance the capability and confidence within the On-call manager cohort. This includes bitesize exercises based on relevant scenarios for them to work through.
9. The Resilience and Business Continuity team are working to develop all plans and policies to the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP). This enables the joint decision model to be used that will support decision making during an incident and allow knowledge to be developed around plans, powers, policies and procedures that are available.
10. Implementation from the learning from national and local incidents are ongoing.

#### **Concurrent Incidents**

11. 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.
12. 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**

13. The Resilience and Business Continuity teams are continuing to take account of lessons learnt from the Manchester Arena inquiry and feed this back into the workplan which is reviewed on a regular basis.
14. The inquiry into the Grenfell fire is ongoing and whilst no overall or final 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**

15. 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’](#). This framework and standards have been fed back into the workplan that the Resilience and Business Continuity team are continuing to review and implement.
16. The Resilience and Business Continuity Team work with other Local Resilience Forum partners to progress work arising from the government led Stronger Local Resilience Forum Pilot Programme which is likely to be significant. Details of the enhanced role of elected officials will be shared with members when this is made available, the Stronger LRF Pilot Programme is expected to deliver LRF reform by 2030.

### **Business as Usual**

17. All programmed reviews of plans and policies have either been completed or are due for completion in line with expected time frames as agreed with the Resilience Planning Group.

### **Fatigue and Wellbeing**

18. The resilience officers and managers have been heavily involved in responding to a number of incidents that have occurred in a brief period of time. Due to recent retirements and staff leaving, members of the current team have had to take on additional roles.

### **Training**

19. During this reporting period a continuous programme of training and development has taken place including those activities listed below:
  - LRF Immersive training Strategic Coordination Group/Tactical Coordination Group. This includes a number of representatives from multi agencies coming together to work through a flooding incident in real time.
  - Skills to support survivors, families and friends affected by a major incident. These training sessions have been well attended and have provided the officers with the skills and knowledge to be able to provide support if required.
  - Decision Loggists - During a response to a major incident the Civil Contingencies Act requires the Council 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. This training has been developed following the recommendations of the Manchester Areana inquiry report.
  - Multi-Agency Information cell (MAIC) course – this training was attended by multi agency officers to ensure they are able to fully understand the role of the MAIC and how that can be facilitated during a live incident.

- Promoting the internal Resilience Partnership Training and external Local Resilience Forum training to local authority staff. This has been recorded on the Myrus training recording system, so we are able to easily generate reports of training attendance for auditing purposes.

### **Exercises**

20. During this reporting period several internal and external exercises have taken place, these include:
- Multi-agency cyber incident response exercise – this exercise was police lead and local authority facilitated this exercise. The exercise was well attended and helped raise awareness.
  - Numerous small scale bite size (JESIP) exercises held for council officers.
  - Exercise Voltornus, ongoing series of TCG and SCG multi-agency exercises. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council officers chair these exercises in turn.
  - Exercise Mighty Oak, along with LRF partners the Council took part in a national power outage exercise. This took place over 3 days, with circa fifty officers taking part.

### **Incident Responses during 2023/24**

#### **County Council Incidents**

21. 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:
- Storm Babet – resulted in flooding within County and City. Numerous multi-agency activity associated with the storm from 17<sup>th</sup> October through to the 24<sup>th</sup> October. TCG was chaired by Leicestershire County Council.
  - Storm Henk – Major incident declared on the 5<sup>th</sup> January. TCG/SCG and associated cells stood up including debriefs chaired by Leicester City and Leicestershire County Council in turn. Heavy flooding occurred throughout the County and City.
  - Adults and Communities (A&C) provider failure – regular meetings held with A&C. Tabletop exercise delivered with key staff to assess preparedness
  - Ratby & Kirby Muxloe gas outage – major incident declared. TCG (chaired by an officer of the Council) and associated cells stood up supported in part by numerous support from officers of the Council. Mutual aid request for volunteers. Debrief completed.

- MOD Garats Hay – Supporting the MOD led Afghan resettlement scheme.
- Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC), the team supported the LRF in understanding any potential risks across LLR.
- Storm Ciaran, supported the internal and multi-agency response.
- Meridian Park protests – Pro-Palestinian group Palestine Action have conducted a number of long- and short-term protests. The County Council has supported Leicestershire Police in a variety of ways, including implementing temporary traffic regulation orders, barriers to ensure roads remained closed and facilitating the street lighting to remain on
- Melton Mowbray hospital power cut, led by the NHS there was the potential that all 'in patients' would need evacuating and transporting to other NHS sites.
- The Coneries (apartment buildings Loughborough) - Mass decant following a prohibition notice being issued by Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service. — Social care have also been involved.

### **Multi-Agency Incidents**

22. 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:
- Leicester City Council cyber-attack.
  - Flood Risk Evaluation Team (FRET) convened on several occasions for potential flooding.
  - Paragon fire in South Wigston.
  - BCC Radio 2 event – stranded people due to rain and disruptions caused by a lightning strike.
23. 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'**

24. 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. The proposal for ensuring lessons identified become lessons learnt is currently going through the proposal process to ensure a robust process is in place. The RPG will continue to have oversight of all actions for delegation and monitoring purposes.

### **Notifying Members of Ongoing Incidents**

25. 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**

26. The list below notes the planned areas on which work will be focused during the next 12 months:
- Corporate Management team training and exercise.
  - RPG Tactical training and exercise.
  - departmental management team exercise for all departments.
  - On Call Senior Manager (OCSM) ongoing resilience training.
  - subject specific training (Counter Terrorism).
  - ongoing Business Continuity/Disaster Recovery tabletop exercises, and to then work with IT to develop and deliver a corporate level exercise.
  - development of command-and-control system for Leicestershire County Council and other local authorities

### **Resource Implications**

27. 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**

28. Nonspecific arising from this report.

### **Human rights implications**

29. Nonspecific arising from this report.

### **Recommendations**

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

**Officers to Contact**

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