



## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – 31 MARCH 2025**

### **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, in the period April 2024 to the end of March 2025.

### **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 and Rutland Resilience Partnership and Local Resilience Forum 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.
5. 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**

6. 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

***Department Management Team (DMT) Business Continuity Plans:*** These plans combine the information captured from the 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 overseen by the Resilience Planning Group (RPG).

***Team Business Continuity Plans:*** As per the previous report, plans now include Business Impact Analysis and Risk Assessment. The plans are now fully aligned to the DMT plans and include a widespread power outage section.

### **Business Continuity Progress Summary**

7. The following is a summary of progress achieved on the Council's Resilience and Business Continuity activities:
  - Business Continuity critical supplier assurance – continue to review and assess assurance levels of critical suppliers' business continuity plans on a three yearly cycle. The three-year cycle is now ending, and a new cycle will commence shortly.
  - The Resilience and Business Continuity team are on a rolling programme of delivering familiarisation training to Council managers on grades 11-16. This involves 1350 managers and is likely to take in the region of two years to complete.
  - Lessons identified to a lessons learnt procedure has now been approved at Corporate Management Team (CMT). The procedure is now being implemented and overseen by the Resilience Planning Group (RPG).
  - Business Continuity Officers (BCO's) continue to work closely with departments on the actions process against ISO22301 (Business Continuity Management Systems) and have provided the RPG with a detailed breakdown of assurance against the standard. The completed gap analysis is being used to evaluate the conformity level of the business continuity management system against the requirements of the ISO standard.
  - Following discussion and comments from various levels and departments within the Council, BCO's are working on strengthening governance processes to be used by RPG on all Business Continuity plans both internally and externally.
  - September 2024/January 2025 – Business Continuity Audit Officers commenced a two-part audit on the Council's Business Continuity arrangements. Part one of the audit focusses on the identification and

prioritisation of business applications. Part two is examining the development and maintenance of the Business Continuity Plans. The audit has been completed and the anticipated draft report is due by the end of March 2025.

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

8. The Council's Incident Management Plan is active and was used in the recent flooding incident January 2025, along with a number of incidents throughout 2024.
9. The three yearly training cycle is ongoing and this is aligned to the National Occupational Standards and the National Resilience Standards. The Resilience and Business Continuity team members are reviewing existing training and exercise packages to ensure these are relevant and up to date.
10. Implementation from the learning from national and local incidents are ongoing.

### **Concurrent Incidents**

11. The risk of concurrent incidents, including flooding, 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 has proven to help minimise the impact on officers and supports flexible working.
12. Since the last report to this Committee, the Council has responded to a number of widescale flooding incidents including in January 2025. ([January 2025 flooding media statement](#))
13. The Resilience and Business Continuity team attends 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**

14. The Resilience and Business Continuity team are continuing to take account of lessons learnt from the Manchester Arena and now the Grenfell Inquiry and feed this back into the resilience and business continuity workplan. Representatives from the Council and broader Local Resilience Forum have analysed the findings from the Grenfell report with recommendations on moving forward which have been presented to the Resilience Management Board. These recommendations will then be added to relevant workplans.

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

15. The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, has [announced](#) a review of national resilience in response to the first report of the Covid inquiry. The report from the recent inquiry recommends significant changes in Government preparedness for emergencies. The Government will consider these recommendations alongside relevant findings from the Grenfell inquiry and respond within six months.

### **Business as Usual**

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

### **Fatigue and Wellbeing**

17. Resilience officers and managers have been heavily involved in responding to a number of incidents that have occurred over a brief period of time. As a result, a review is being undertaken of the service, in line with the national threat and risk assessment, to identify any issues around capacity and capability. Findings will be reported to the LRF Executive in the first instance, followed by consultation and engagement with partner agencies. The findings will be shared with Members in the next annual report.

### **Training**

18. 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. These courses have now been extended to two days and have received very favourable feedback from attendees
  - Counter terrorism training package delivered to County staff
  - Promoting the internal Resilience Partnership Training and external Local Resilience Forum training to local authority staff. This has been recorded on the LRF 'Myrus' training recording system and will also be recorded on the Council's new platform 'Thrive.'

### **Exercises**

19. During this reporting period, a number of internal and external exercises have taken place, including:
- Numerous small scale bite size exercises including IT outage have been undertaken for council officers and individual departments.
  - Exercise Volturus, a series of Tactical Coordinating Group (TCG) and Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) multi-agency exercises. Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council officers chair these exercises in turn.
  - There are a number of large multi-agency exercises that are being planned for this reporting period and beyond.

## **Incident Responses during 2024/25**

### **County Council Incidents**

20. Since the 2024 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 provide advice and support to senior managers. Incidents have included:

- Flooding in Market Harborough – TCG called
- Flooding in Braunstone – the Environment Agency (EA) called a Flood Action Service (FAS) multi-agency meeting
- Meridian Park protests – Pro-Palestinian group Palestine Action has 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
- Flooding incident - January 2025 - that impacted the whole county. Impacts recorded more than storm Henk.

### **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:
- Firearm Incident and potential Improvised Explosive Device (IED) in Braunstone – June 2024, TCG called
  - Drug potential overdose. TCG called due to East Midlands Ambulance Service and NHS strain
  - Fire at commercial building in Leicester – TCG meetings held
  - Global Microsoft outage – SCG meetings held
  - Prohibition notice issued on 6 flats; EC required for 12 people – Leicester
  - Road Traffic Collision involving a Heavy Goods Vehicle and school bus in Leicestershire
  - Widespread flooding (January 2025)
  - Other various flooding incidents
22. The Resilience and Business Continuity Team has supported several incidents across the wider LLR partnership.

### **Schedule of Work - 2025/26**

23. The planned areas on which work will be focused during the next 12 months:
- Initiate training, capability assessment and support project for business continuity management (2-year project)
  - Resilience and Business Continuity team to create a training and exercise programme cycle
  - Incident management centre policy and procedure to include role profile and testing
  - Develop on call senior manager training and refresher programme
  - Incident response briefing sessions for all departments
  - Support for a regional pandemic exercise run by the UK Health Security Agency
  - Support for a national pandemic exercise
  - Development of command-and-control system for Leicestershire County Council
  - Development of Resilience Planning Group (RPG) operating procedures for incidents

- Launch of the agreed 'lessons identified to lessons learned' procedure for RPG

### **Resource Implications**

24. As indicated in paragraph 17 above a review of capacity and capability is being undertaken by the LRF office. Additionally, an internal audit report on business continuity management systems is due shortly, this should provide a stocktake and organisational health check with recommendations for future proofing the service in light of growing threats, risks and demands. The outcome and any recommendations will be shared with Members.

### **Equality Implications**

25. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report. However, it should be noted that at the start of any SCG response and recovery mobilisation, the needs of vulnerable individuals and communities are prioritised. Data and resources are pooled into a coordinated response to protect and support those in greatest need.

### **Human Rights Implications**

26. There are no specific human rights implications arising from this report.

### **Recommendations**

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

### **Officers to Contact**

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