Report of Director of Resources

Report to Corporate Governance & Audit Committee

Date: 22 April 2013

Subject: Business Continuity Management Arrangements for LCC's Most Critical Services.

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	☐ Yes	☒ No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	☐ Yes	☒ No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	☐ Yes	☒ No

Summary of main issues

1. This report provides assurance that Leeds City Council is making acceptable progress towards meeting its statutory duties required under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 by having in place arrangements to be able to continue to deliver critical aspects of day to day functions in the event of an emergency.

2. The 94 service areas identified as most critical will be covered by 64 Business Continuity Plans. There are currently 27 plans in place, with 37 in development.

3. Progress is being made across all directorates to encourage, engage and support managers and officers in developing the required plans and arrangements.

4. The BCM Toolkit of templates and guidance is now published on the LCC 'InSite' Website for managers and officers to use. The toolkit and centrally provided support has been designed to support a fast-track route to implementing business continuity arrangements.

5. The transfer of Public Health duties to Local Government control in April 2013 will include the provision of business continuity advice and assurance. The transfer will bring additional interest and challenges and liaison with colleagues in Public Health is on-going to clarify the roles and responsibilities.

6. LCC's responsibility under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to offer business continuity advice and guidance to business and voluntary organisations continues to be provided through the BCP Network.

Recommendations

7. The Committee to note that the current level of assurance on the adequacy of business continuity management arrangements is acceptable and that further progress is being made with all directorates to meet the statutory duties required of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

8. The Committee to note this report for information and receive an annual update detailing progress and achievements in 2014.

1   Purpose of this report

1.1   To provide assurance on the adequacy of business continuity management arrangements for LCC's most critical services.

2   Background information

2.1   The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 made it a statutory duty of all Councils to have in place arrangements to be able to continue to deliver critical aspects of their day to day functions in the event of an emergency, if the impact on the community is to be kept to a minimum.

2.2   For LCC to achieve and maintain compliance with the statutory duty, a centrally managed BCM Programme is providing a structured approach and proactive support to directorates using good practice guidance aligned with the British Standard BS 25999.

2.3   Initially, work was completed to identify LCC's *most* critical services i.e. those services that require recovery from a disruptive incident within 24 hours or less. This was achieved by co-ordinating a self-assessment exercise with managers responsible for a total of 727 service areas. At the time, the self-assessment exercise identified 94 services as being *most* critical. Some of these services were found to have existing Business Continuity Plans in place, though many of these had not been maintained.

2.4   Critical services without plans in place, or with unmaintained plans is exposing some of LCC's *most* critical service areas to resilience issues in the event of a disruptive incident occurring. The importance of this is recognised by CLT through the identification and on-going management of Corporate Risk LCC2 - Council Resilience, a risk "unlikely to ever go away" for which CLT requires annual assurances.

2.5   The BCM Programme approach has two clear strands. The first is to develop Business Continuity Plans for the *most* critical service areas currently without such plans in place. The second strand is to support managers in reviewing and revising existing Business Continuity Plans. This report presents the current status of the BCM Programme and LCC's responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and in doing so aims to provide assurance to the Corporate Governance & Audit Committee of the adequacy of the business continuity management arrangements currently in place for LCC's *most* critical services.

3   Main issues

3.1   **BCM Toolkit.** In order to bring good practice guidance and consistency to the development of business continuity plans and arrangements, a BCM Toolkit was developed consisting of BCM policy, guidance and templates. The templates have proven to be straightforward for managers and officers to use and with centrally provided support can provide a fast-track route to implementing documented business continuity arrangements. The BCM toolkit is published on LCC's 'Insite' Website.

3.2   **Key Services.** ICT Services, Human Resources and Facilities Management are key services that that all other services depend upon. It is essential that each set out what they can realistically provide as part of an emergency response during a disruptive incident. This might include hands on technical support, deployment of specialist staff and equipment or professional guidance to help managers and officers during a disruption.

A descriptive template of what each can provide has been developed and published on 'InSite'. The templates help to manage expectations and ensure that unrealistic assumptions are not made by managers and officers when developing business continuity plans and arrangements.

3.3   **Industrial Action.** To manage the impact of industrial action on critical services and ensure that a consistent response based on previous experience is invoked, a cross service procedure has been drafted. The procedure is based on the role of the Industrial Action Core Strategic Group which is convened in response to the threat of industrial action. The procedure includes the key input of Human Resources, Health & Safety, Emergency Planning, ICT Services, Facilities & Corporate Property Management, Communications and the Contact Centre in the event of industrial action. The outcome is to ensure that a prompt, co-ordinated, structured cross service response is invoked at the earliest opportunity to protect our most critical services.

3.4   **Supply Chain Resilience.** Supplier resilience is an area where guidance is being developed to assist managers and officers responsible for procuring or commissioning services to gain confidence with their current or future supply chain. The guidance is based around a series of questions to help managers and officers to assess the capability of low, medium and high risk suppliers in the event of a disruptive incident.

3.5   **Business Continuity Plans.** There are 64 Business Continuity Plans required to cover 94 LCC services identified as most critical. Of the 64 plans required there are currently 27 plans in place with a further 37 in development.

3.6   Business Continuity Plans are developed and maintained in readiness for use during a disruptive incident and provide managers and officers with solutions in the event of loss of staff, loss of buildings and accommodation, loss of ICT, loss of or disruption to key suppliers and partners and loss of any other key requirements such as vehicles and specialist plant and machinery identified in the Business Impact Analysis as essential to supporting critical services.

3.7   Progress is being made across all directorates to encourage, engage and support managers and officers in developing the required plans and arrangements.

3.8   **Schools.** The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) requires local authority maintained schools to complete and submit their SFVS by 31 March 2013. Question 23 requires that schools develop an appropriate business continuity or disaster recovery plan. In anticipation of an increase in enquiries from schools, work is currently on-going with colleagues in Education including Head Teachers and school staff to develop school specific guidance and a template in readiness.

3.9   **Public Health.** The transfer of Public Health duties to Local Government control from April 2013 will include the provision of business continuity advice and assurance. The transfer will bring additional interest and challenges. Liaison with colleagues in Public Health is on-going to clarify the roles and responsibilities.

3.10   **Businesses & Voluntary Organisations.** The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Councils to offer business continuity advice and guidance to businesses and voluntary organisations. LCC's commitment to this duty is affirmed through the BCP Network which now exceeds 500 members representing businesses in the Leeds area. With twice yearly BCP Network events offering informative presentations from a varied range of speakers, the BCP Network continues to attract new members.

4   Corporate Considerations

4.1   Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1   The BCM Toolkit has been shared with the Emergency Planning College and Core Cities for peer review purposes. Positive feedback was received providing additional confidence in the adequacy and completeness of the toolkit.

4.2   Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1   All published templates have been assessed by the Equality & Diversity Team to check that due regard has been given and that the templates meet Plain English requirements.

4.3   Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1   The Council Business Continuity Policy sets out the requirements placed upon services across the Council. The Policy is due for its initial review in September.

4.4   Resources and value for money

4.4.1   No implications.

4.5   Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1   A failure to deliver critical services may result in a risk to the health and well-being of service users or a failure to comply with our legal responsibilities. Robust business continuity arrangements will help to reduce the likelihood of litigation against the Council for failing to meet its responsibilities.

4.6   Risk Management

4.6.1   The 'Corporate Risk LCC2 – Council Resilience' is one of six 'standing risks' on the Corporate Risk Register "unlikely to ever go away" for which CLT requires annual assurances on how the risk is being mitigated and managed. The implementation of Business Continuity Plans for LCC's most critical service areas will underpin the required assurances relating to the mitigation and management of this risk.

5   Conclusions

5.1   The focus of the BCM Programme continues to be the development of Business Continuity Plans for the service areas identified as being *most* critical currently without such plans.

5.2   The BCM Toolkit of templates and guidance has been published on the 'InSite' Website. The toolkit and the support provided centrally provide a fast-track route to implementing documented business continuity arrangements.

5.3   Progress is being made across all directorates to encourage, engage and support managers and officers in developing the required plans and arrangements.

5.4   The transfer of Public Health duties to Local Government control from April 2013 will bring additional interest and new challenges; work is currently on-going with colleagues in Public Health to clarify the roles and responsibilities.

5.5   LCC's responsibility under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to offer business continuity advice and guidance to business and voluntary organisations continues to be provided through the BCP Network.

6   Recommendations

6.1   The Committee to note that the current level of assurance on the adequacy of business continuity arrangements is acceptable and that further progress is being made with all directorates to meet the statutory duties required of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

6.2   The Committee to note this report for information and receive an annual update detailing progress and achievements in 2014.

7   Background documents[1]

7.1   None.

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[1] The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.