

# Lancashire Combined Fire Authority Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on 18 July 2022

## Business Continuity Planning and Testing

Contact for further information: DCFO Steve Healey – Director of Strategy & Planning  
Telephone: 01772 866801

### Executive Summary

In line with the Business Continuity Policy, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) is required to test Business Continuity Plans (BCP) annually. The Service test is usually scheduled towards the end of the year once all the plans have been updated and reviewed.

The 2022/2023 Service wide test is being planned in detail and is programmed to be held in November 2022 to coincide with a Lancashire wide, multiagency exercise in Blackpool. Meanwhile, an exercise to test station BCPs is also being developed and will be executed before the end of the year.

The Service will be looking to develop and implement a Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) which aligns both to the Business Continuity Institute's (BCI) Good Practice Guidelines (GPG), as well as to the Business Continuity (BC) ISO 22301 standard.

### Recommendation

Members are asked:

- (i) to accept the arrangements for BCP exercising in 2022/2023; and
- (ii) to support strengthening LFRS's resilience through the development and implementation of a BCMS.

### Background Information

As a named Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, LFRS is required to maintain robust Business Continuity Plans (BCP). In order to achieve this, LFRS has previously adopted the BCI's GPG and developed a suite of plans accordingly. These guidelines require LFRS to test plans at predetermined intervals, defined in the Business Continuity Policy as being annually.

Each year, all Heads of Department are responsible for coordinating and updating their relevant Business Impact Analysis (BIA), which in turn feeds into updating associated BCPs and submitting them for collation by the Response & Emergency Planning (REP) section. Once all plans have been collated, they are tested towards the end of the year by means of a rotating series of exercises.

For the 2022/23 period, REP is currently developing exercises to test station BCPs. There will be a station BCP exercise prior to the end of the year (2022/23) and will aim

to continue to schedule one or two station BCP exercises per year, with some exercises involving more than one station. Concurrently, REP will also plan a service wide BCP exercise, which will coincide with the Lancashire wide, multiagency exercise in Blackpool in November. Ultimately, REP will work towards building a suite of exercises that can be used on rotation to facilitate testing of all BCPs. This will be done in conjunction with the National Fire Chief's (NFCC) BC group, using learning and cooperation across national Fire Services.

In order to provide coordination for ongoing operations, review and continuous development of business continuity, LFRS created and filled the role of Business Continuity and Emergency Planning Officer in April 2022. Consequently, it will move to implement a Business Continuity Management Systems (BCMS) by aligning to the BC's GPG, as well as the Business Continuity standard, ISO 22301. A BCMS will provide assurance of LFRS's resilience and help keep BCPs and arrangements up-to-date and relevant to the LFRS business continuity needs, including through testing.

Notably, benchmarking with other national Fire Services indicates that official accreditation to the ISO standard is not required at the present time within the public sector and alignment is sufficient. Conversely, accreditation is necessary in the private sector where organisations may not be able to tender without the accreditation certificate.

### **Learning from COVID-19**

LFRS will debrief the BCP activation for Covid-19 thoroughly in conjunction with Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) partners which will be a significant undertaking. We expect that a number of areas of good practice will be identified and there will be opportunities for improvements to be made within the Service Business Continuity Plans. These will be identified via the internal debrief process, combined with the multi-agency debrief capability through the LRF.

### **Business Risk Implications**

Failing to have a robust BCMS in place can potentially result in LFRS breaching the Civil Contingency Act 2004 by being unable to maintain its critical functions, as well as having potential financial, human resources, reputational and data implications.

### **Sustainability or Environmental Impact**

None identified at this stage

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

None identified at this stage

### **HR Implications**

Implementing a BCMS will require human resource input from across numerous departments. Testing of BCPs through exercising should not have a negative disruption on human resources.

## **Financial Implications**

None identified at this stage.

## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

### **List of background papers**

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: