

Lancashire Combined Fire Authority

Planning Committee

Meeting to be held on Monday 15 July 2024

Business Continuity Planning and Testing

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

Executive Summary

This paper provides an update on the actions taken for enhancing the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). Key developments include the creation of an e-learning module to educate all staff on business continuity (BC) principles, advanced training for over 80 LFRS and North West Fire Control (NWFC) staff, and the completion of comprehensive Business Impact Analyses (BIAs) at the operational level. BC has been integrated into daily operations with the nomination of BC champions, and a new Business Continuity Group has been established to bridge the gap between strategic oversight and operational implementation. Additionally, the BCMS has been fully integrated with LFRS's risk management procedures, ensuring a cohesive approach to resilience.

Looking ahead, standardised BC plan templates for stations and departments have been created, and a suite of exercises with pre-made scenarios will be used to test these plans. The BC Policy and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) will be updated to reflect these changes.

Recommendation

Members are asked:

- (i) Endorse the detailed progress and achievements outlined in this report regarding the enhancement of the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS).
- (ii) Support the outlined future plans for BC, including the implementation of standardised BC plan templates for stations and departments, and the development and use of a comprehensive suite of exercises to test and refine these plans.

Introduction

This paper provides an update on the progress of the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) at Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS). Significant strides have been made in enhancing our BCMS, ensuring that we are prepared to maintain essential services during disruptions. This update outlines the key developments and future plans to further strengthen our business continuity capabilities.

Progress in Business Continuity Management

1. E-Learning Module Development

- An interactive Business Continuity (BC) e-learning module has been developed for all LFRS staff. This was done on behalf of the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) BC group and has become a template for BC e-learning across the fire sector. The module is designed to increase awareness and understanding of BC principles, ensuring that every member of the team is equipped with the knowledge to contribute to our continuity efforts.

2. Higher-Level BC Training

- Over 80 staff members from LFRS and the North West Fire Control (NWFC) with BC responsibilities have received higher-level BC training. This training focuses on advanced BC concepts and practical skills required to write and effectively manage continuity plans.

3. Operational Level Business Impact Analysis (BIA)

- Comprehensive BIAs have been conducted at the operational level throughout the service. These BIAs identify critical functions, assess potential impacts of disruptions, and prioritise resources to ensure swift recovery.

4. Strategic Oversight and Operational Implementation

- Business Continuity (BC) has been added as a standing agenda item to the Senior Management Team (SMT) Corporate Planning Board (CPB). This ensures strategic oversight of the LFRS BCMS.
- A newly established Business Continuity Group bridges the gap between strategic oversight and operational implementation. This group ensures that BC strategies are effectively translated into actionable plans at the operational level.

5. BC Integration and Support Structure

- BC has been integrated into the daily operations of all stations and departments, with BC champions/reference holders nominated to support Business Continuity Plan (BCP) owners. These champions play a crucial role in the BC process, providing expertise and ensuring plans are maintained and updated.

6. BC Integration with Risk Management

- The new LFRS risk management procedure has been fully integrated with BC planning. Risks identified through our risk management process feed directly into the BC plans, ensuring a cohesive approach to resilience. This integration allows us to prioritise and address risks

comprehensively, making our BC plans more robust and aligned with the overall risk landscape.

Future Developments

1. Standardised Operational BCP Templates

- Two standardised BCP templates have been created: one for stations and one for departments. These templates will ensure a consistent approach to business continuity across the service, simplifying the planning process and ensuring all essential elements are covered.

2. Exercise and Testing Suite

- A comprehensive suite of exercises, including pre-made injects and scenarios based on the highest BC risks, has been developed. These exercises will be used to test and refine the new BCPs, ensuring they are robust and effective in real-world scenarios.

3. Exercising Tactical and Strategic BCPs

- In the second half of this year, we will conduct an exercise for tactical and strategic BCPs. The scenarios for this exercise will be determined by the current risk profile of LFRS, ensuring relevance and effectiveness. These exercises will test our preparedness at both the tactical and strategic levels, providing valuable insights and opportunities for improvement.

4. Policy and SOP Updates

- The Business Continuity Policy and SOPs will need to be updated to reflect these changes. This will ensure all documents are aligned with the latest BC practices and strategies, providing clear guidance to all staff.

Conclusion

LFRS has continued to strengthen its BCMS. Through comprehensive training, strategic oversight, and operational implementation, we are building a resilient organisation capable of maintaining critical services during disruptions. The future developments outlined will further enhance our capabilities, ensuring we are well-prepared to face any challenges.

Business Risk Implications

Maintaining a robust BCMS is essential for LFRS to meet the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requirements and sustain critical operations. An effective BCMS reduces operational, financial, human resource, and reputational risks. Continual improvement of our BC practices ensures we remain a reliable emergency service provider.

Sustainability or Environmental Impact

None identified at this stage.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None identified at this stage.

HR Implications

Business continuity will be officially assigned to individuals as BC champions and reference holders, requiring them to dedicate more time to BC activities. This will enhance our resilience and preparedness culture.

Financial Implications

A budget may be needed for additional training, promoting BC during international BC week, and conducting BCP exercises. These costs will be addressed as needed.

Legal implications

Our BCMS updates ensure compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and other relevant legislation. We will monitor and manage any legal implications to maintain ongoing compliance.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of background papers

Paper:

Date:

Contact:

Reason for inclusion in Part 2 if appropriate: