

WILTSHIRE & SWINDON FIRE AUTHORITY

REPORT REFERENCE NO.	11
MEETING	Fire Authority
MEETING DATE	9 December 2015
SUBJECT OF REPORT	Business continuity review
LEAD OFFICERS	Barbara Owen, Brigade Manager
RECOMMENDATIONS	The note that this paper provides assurance to members of the Service's business continuity arrangements.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	This paper provides members with an overview of the large scale business continuity exercise completed in March 2015, along with outcomes of the event and confirmation of the Service's robust business continuity arrangements.
APPENDICES	None

Summary of paper content

1. This paper provides Members with an overview of the large scale business continuity exercise complete in March 2015, along with outcomes of the event and confirmation of the Services robust business continuity arrangements.

Background:

2. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) identifies fire and rescue authorities as "Category 1 Responders". As a result, the Authority has the following duties under the CCA:
 - Assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
 - Put in place emergency plans.
 - Establish arrangements for business continuity management.
 - Introduce provisions to provide information to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.
 - Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination.
 - Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.

3. To ensure that plans and arrangements are fit for purpose the Service completes a number of exercises on an annual basis to test the resilience of plans and ensure that staff are adequately trained to successfully manage a disruptive event.
4. On a bi-annual basis the Service holds a large strategic exercise event to test high level plans.
5. In January 2013 the Service undertook its first strategic exercise. The scenario covered a gas explosion at Potterne, which took out the ICT infrastructure and caused a death of an employee.
6. This exercise was a great success with no major areas for concern. The minor learning outcomes from this were used in the planning for the 2015 exercise, to test and provide further assurance.

Update

7. On 3rd March 2015 a strategic exercise took place. The exercise was developed to test the Service's business continuity arrangements in the following areas:
 - Significant Event.
 - Relocation and Recovery.
 - Loss of utilities at a fire station.
 - Media and Communications.
8. To give the exercise credibility it was designed around real incidents that had happened in recent years albeit that they had not occurred at the same time and some of the outcomes were changed to bring value to the exercise e.g. the death of an employee.
9. The exercise was a 'table top' exercise played in real time. To add realism and a true sense of pressure Way Ahead Media was commissioned to facilitate a 'rough ride' from the press.
10. The stated aims of the exercise were:
 - To test our strategic and middle managers to ensure that they are aware of our business continuity arrangements and how to manage an event.
 - To ensure that improvements have been made from the last exercise.
 - To review the training needs of our managers in business continuity.
 - To ensure that the media training which managers had received was embedded.
 - To ensure that staff are aware of the level of intrusion from the media during this level of incidents (including social media, TV, interviews/press conferences and telephone calls).
11. Upon completion of the exercise the Service was assured that the business continuity arrangements in place were robust and fit for purpose and staff were adequately trained. All aims of the exercise were met.

12. No major areas of concern were raised, minor lessons learnt and improvements were recorded and communicated to further develop arrangements.

Strategy Implications

13. The Service must ensure that obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as “Category 1 Responders” are considered, met and tested to ensure resilience. In addition, the Service should ensure that arrangements comply with the requirements highlighted within the updated National Framework Document (July 2012).

Significant Risks

14. In writing this report the author will have complied with the code of corporate governance in considering risks associated with the following:

Risk areas	
Financial, Legal and Staffing	√
Environmental and Sustainability	√
Value for Money	√
Implications for partnerships	√
Equality and diversity impact assessments	√
Risks, mitigations, opportunities and performance management implications	√

Risks identified are:

15. Insufficient governance arrangements within business continuity could lead to the Service being unable to fulfil its commitments within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) Services as “Category 1 Responders”.

Policy implications

16. None other than those mentioned in the report.

HR, equality and diversity implications

17. None arising from this report.

Environmental implications

18. None arising from this report.

Financial and legal implications

19. None arising from this report.

Combination implications

20. None arising from this report.

Recommendation

21. The note that this paper provides assurance to members of the Service's business continuity arrangements.

Barbara Owen Brigade Manager
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Unpublished documents used in the preparation of this report:

None.

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