

# **WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

## **AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE**

**13 JANUARY 2020**

### **1. CORPORATE RISK UPDATE**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

RECOMMENDED

THAT Audit and Risk Committee note the increase Corporate Risk 6 – Business Continuity and Preparedness to ‘High’.

### **2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

For the Audit and Risk Committee to note a significant change to the Corporate Risk 6, Business Continuity and Preparedness. The agreed reporting frequency for updates on the Corporate Risk Register is twice yearly but Policy 22/07 - Corporate Risk Management states, “Should there be any significant change to the corporate risk environment, Audit and Risk Committee will be informed of this at the next available Audit and Risk Committee meeting. In order to build and maintain Audit and Risk Committee Members capability and to ensure their continued engagement in corporate risk issues, timely and relevant reports on specific corporate risk topics will be presented by Officers to Audit and Risk Committee.”

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Members will be aware that all corporate risk is reviewed on an ongoing basis as part of normal business. As part of this process and in response to changes in the risk environment, officers reviewed the risk control measures for business continuity and more specifically the impact of industrial strike action.

- 3.2 This was primarily influenced by the change to the National Security Risk Assessment in August 2019, which for the first time included industrial strike action and considered the capability to respond to significant high rise fires following the Grenfell tragedy.
- 3.3. As an outcome of the review, the control measures were considered inadequate so a report, 'Business Continuity Arrangements' outlining this issue and enhanced capability to manage the situation, was prepared for members to consider at the Fire Authority meeting on the 30 September 2019.
- 3.4. As a consequence of the enhanced capability that would strengthen the existing control measures when implemented, the risk level was rated as Medium.
- 3.5. Following the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 26 September 2019 and on request of the Scrutiny Committee, this report was subsequently deferred at the Fire Authority meeting on 30 September 2019, to allow the review of the matter to be conducted.
- 3.6. In support of this decision and as part of the Annual Scrutiny Review Programme, on the 7 October 2019 the Scrutiny Committee formally agreed, 'To review the recommendations made by the Chief Fire Officer to meet the Fire Authority's responsibility for sufficient business continuity and resilience arrangements for the delivery of response services.'
- 3.7. To conduct the review in a timely manner the Scrutiny Committee met on 21 October 2019 and considered information from both WMFS officers, Representative Bodies and external contributors. The recommendation of the Scrutiny Review was deferred to allow members to consider further information.
- 3.8. The Scrutiny Committee reconvened on the 4 November 2019 and considered additional information, reviewed previous submissions and subsequently recommended that, 'the Fire Authority continues to utilise existing arrangements for business continuity during industrial action, through the use of volunteers drawn from existing staff numbers.'
- 3.9 On the 18 November 2019 the report, 'Business Continuity Arrangements' was presented to the Fire Authority as part of the private session.

The Chair of the Scrutiny Committee also provided an overview of the review process that had been undertaken in respect of the above report and presented the additional option developed and recommended by the Scrutiny Committee outlined in paragraph 3.8 above. This recommendation was supported by the Fire Authority.

- 3.10 As an outcome of the decision, the Risk Owner who has the overall responsibility for monitoring and reviewing the progress being made in managing the risk, considers that the control measures remain inadequate and has subsequently increased the risk level to 'High'. (Likelihood 3, Impact 4, Overall Score 12)

#### 4. **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

In preparing this report an initial Equality Impact Assessment is not required and has not been carried out. The matters contained in this report do not relate to a policy change.

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) have a legal duty as detailed in Part 2, Section 7-9 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act, 2004. The FRA must make provision for responding to fires, road traffic accidents and emergencies.

The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004 also requires Category 1 responders to maintain relative to risk(s) appropriate business continuity plans to ensure that they can continue to deliver key services in the event of an emergency.

#### 6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications associated with the implementation of the recommendations set out in this report.

#### 7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Business Continuity Arrangements Report  
Fire Authority, 30 September 2019 & 18 November 2019

The contact for this report is Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Gary Taylor, telephone number 0121 380 6006.

PHIL LOACH  
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER