

**WEST MIDLANDS FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**19 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**1. BUSINESS CONTINUITY ARRANGEMENTS**

Report of the Chief Fire Officer.

**RECOMMENDED**

- 1.1 THAT Members note the Authority's Business Continuity (BC) responsibilities and the arrangements which are in place to discharge those responsibilities.
- 1.2 THAT following the briefing given at the Policy Planning Forum meeting on 18 July 2011 Members raise any outstanding comments or queries about BC arrangements with officers.
- 1.3 THAT Members note that Section 41 Members are to receive a more detailed briefing on specific BC plans.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report is submitted to ensure that the Authority is aware of the specific responsibilities which exist in respect of BC and that Members have an awareness of the mechanisms which are in place to implement these plans when required. Further, the report raises with Members the opportunity to develop personal understanding by engaging with responsible officers on the content of specific plans.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) requires 'Category 1' responders to undertake contingency planning and to maintain plans to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, an organisation is able to continue to perform its functions in the event of an emergency occurring. In the context of the CCA the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is deemed to constitute a Category 1 responder (CCA Schedule 1, Part 1).

- 3.2 It is also a requirement of the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2008-2011 that each FRA must have in place a plan to provide 'such levels of emergency cover as it deems appropriate' during the period of any emergency, liaising as appropriate with other organisations but without reliance upon the support of the Armed Forces.
- 3.3 The Authority is obliged to consider a range of 'emergency' scenarios and the likelihood and impact of such a scenario occurring. Plans are then developed to mitigate the impact of such a scenario and, as far as reasonably practicable, allow the organisation to continue to function without an interruption to service delivery. This process involves both training staff and exercising plans periodically.
- 3.4 West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) has a team dedicated to BC planning, although it is emphasised that BC is also part of the role of each member of staff. Guidance is produced in the form of Standing Order 1/31 'Business Continuity'.
- 3.5 In the event of an emergency scenario occurring (such emergencies could be sudden impact, civil disturbance, or more gradual such as Pandemic Influenza) the WMFS Business Continuity Management Team will convene. The composition of this team is detailed in Standing Order 1/31. This team is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer and its role is to strategically co-ordinate the efforts that will be made and the measures that will be put in place to efficiently and effectively respond to and resolve the issue. It is one of the specific roles of the Chief Fire Officer to keep the Chair of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority informed as the emergency is managed.
- 3.6 Members will recall that a presentation was given at the Policy Planning Forum on 18 July 2011 outlining the range of completed plans, and the links between these plans and various items of national guidance.
- 3.7 It is intended to arrange a briefing for Section 41 Members on specific plans linked to their risk rating on the Corporate Risk Register.
- 3.8 It is proposed that should individual Members require briefings on specific plans then this will be arranged with responsible officers. Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer Walton will be the point of contact for arranging any such briefings.

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 within this report do not relate to a policy change.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report describes the duty placed upon the Authority by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and describes the method by which the duty is satisfied.

5.2 The Fire & Rescue National Framework 2008-2011 also makes specific requirements of the FRA with regard to BC planning.

6. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Civil Contingencies Act 2004  
Fire & Rescue Services National Framework 2008-11  
WMFS Standing Order 1/31

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CHIEF FIRE OFFICER