
The Corporate Risk and Business Continuity Policies and Strategies

Date of meeting: 24th March 2025

Lead director/officer: Andrew Shilliam

Director of Corporate Services

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Governance and Audit the Risk Management and Business Continuity Policy Statements and Strategies (Appendix 1 and 2), which form an important part of the council's governance arrangements by providing an effective framework for Leicester City Council (LCC) to manage and respond to key risks facing its services and to support the delivery strategic priorities and objectives, and to manage the impacts of potential disruption to ensure continuity of service delivery.
- 1.2 To date, improvements have been made in strengthening risk management arrangements within the council's diverse business units allowing for the continuity of delivery of service, albeit in a proportionate way.
- 1.3 The council has also established robust business continuity practices, and progress continues to be made to strengthen Business Continuity Management (BCM) arrangements, particularly addressing the continuous change the organisation experiences.
- 1.4 In line with our agreed corporate approach, an annual review of both Policies and Strategies has taken place to support the ongoing implementation of risk management and business continuity procedures/processes.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 That the updated Corporate Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy (appendix 1) be noted. This sets out the council's attitude to risk and the approach to be adopted to manage the challenges and opportunities in relation to the Council's strategic objectives.
- 2.2 That the Corporate Business Continuity Management Policy Statement and Strategy (appendix 2) which provides a framework to consider and manage disruptions to service delivery, and sets out the council's attitude, perception and approach towards implementing business continuity practices, be noted.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The Council's Insurance Services team have been consulted to provide an update on the insurance related matters in the Risk Policy and Strategy, and both have been considered and approved by the Corporate Management Team.

4. Risk Management Update

- 4.1 The Risk Management Strategy sets the corporate outlook on how the Council manages its risks. This is vital in the overall governance framework of the Council and is particularly important in the current environment given the need to deliver our services in a different and more cost-effective way within our diverse business units.
- 4.2 Effort continues to be made to integrate risk management into the Council's culture, its everyday business operations and those of its contractors and partners. Every project/programme should have a risk assessment/log and risk management should be a significant part of managers overall duties.
- 4.3 The Risk, Emergency and Business Resilience Team (REBR) is continuing to work with business areas to ensure compliance with the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy. Work is ongoing to address some specific areas of weakness although it should be highlighted that practice continues to improve and such weaknesses are much less prevalent than in previous years.
- 4.4 Very occasionally, risk assessments are being completed that are not fit for purpose (limited detail, no clearly defined risk etc.), sometimes risk assessments are being completed by staff who have not attended the mandatory risk management training, the impact cost of risk is not always clear when considering indemnity limits to be sought from third parties, thus exposing the council to unnecessary or uninsured risk or (if specified limits are higher than necessary), and we occasionally experience increased contract costs as suppliers pass on their own increased insurance costs and inadvertently exclude some SMEs from the tender process.
- 4.5 As alluded to in the Risk Update Report, a sample has been proposed in the way Strategic Risks are reported to this Committee, which addresses the feedback raised in previous meetings.

Key Deliverables 2025

- 4.6 The key deliverables in this year's strategy, include:
 - 4.6.1 Ensuring the Risk Management Framework at the council continues to reflect the organisational structure, and those risks affecting the delivery of the council's priorities and objectives are properly identified, assessed, managed, monitored and reported;
 - 4.6.2 Divisional Directors (and their Heads of Service) have individual risk registers feeding through to the council's Strategic and Operational Risk Register, which is reviewed by CMT, led by the Chief Operating Officer, supported by the Director of Corporate Services and the Manager, Risk Management;
 - 4.6.3 Continuing to integrate and embed risk management into the Council's culture and its everyday business operations via awareness of the risk management policy and strategy, risk management training sessions, attendance at DMTs by a member of the REBR Team, periodic population of risk reports to present at CMT, CMB & G&A. Risk management should be a part of a manager's overall duties, part of the daily process and not a 'form filling' exercise seeking to 'add

value'. A risk assessment should be completed and / or updated for each project or contract being let and for all our significant procedures, as a minimum;

- 4.6.4 Continuing to support the operational service areas in the development and improvement of their individual risk registers by identifying training needs, providing support and guidance, and delivering training to them;
- 4.6.5 REBR attending Directorates DMT's to provide a critical eye friend approach on the divisional risk registers, which will help with achieving the above;
- 4.6.6 A training programme has been established for 2025 (appendix 5 of the strategy). Directors and managers should continue identifying staff requiring risk management training not only through the appraisal process, but also by job specification process. As it is the business areas that 'own' and should manage their risks;
- 4.6.7 As part of the procurement process, risk is continued to be considered, identified and assessed and in the procurement of goods / services with contractors and partners and;
- 4.6.8 Emphasising via training sessions/DMTs or any other means that the risk service is perceived across the council as 'risk advisers' who will assist managers in scoping and managing their risk exposure to enable the implementation of innovative schemes. This team do not manage the council's risks as this remains service areas' responsibility.

Risk and insurance

- 4.7 Whilst our insurance arrangements protect the Council from the financial impact following catastrophic loss in any given year, any overall deterioration in the council's loss experience will have an impact on premiums for future years. Effective claims management can reduce the cost of settling claims, feedback is provided to departments to help prevent any reoccurrence and share lessons learnt. It is never possible (or desirable) to eliminate the cost of loss; however, proper attention to risk control can maintain low incident rates and reduce the financial impact.

Business continuity update

- 4.8 The Council is committed to implementing a robust and effective BCM system as a key mechanism to restore and deliver continuity of critical services in the event of a disruption or emergency. We have established robust business continuity practices and progress continues to be made to strengthen BCM arrangements. The BC Policy and Strategy at Appendix 2 sets out how the council achieves an effective approach. The Council's BCM practices are consistent with the International BC Standard (ISO22301) and ensure that its business continuity responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) are met. Following the intensive and constant progress made in the last few years, the council is aligning more to the standard.
- 4.9 The council has developed a good understanding of BCM and this is being embedded effectively into the council's culture and everyday business operations and those of its contractors and partners. The Incident Response Plan (IRP) is part of the overall framework for contingency planning and is reviewed annually and augments the implementation of business continuity practices within the organisation.

- 4.10 The BCM framework adopted by LCC contributes towards identifying our critical services and ensuring BCPs exist for such services. An annual self-certification process is standard practice whereby directors confirm their plans have been reviewed annually as a minimum and tested biennially understanding the importance of the BIA and its findings supporting this process. However, BCPs and BIAs should be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in service areas as and when they occur or following an incident (if before the annual review). REBR will also provide feedback on Critical BCPs every two years and officers should acknowledge and appreciate that BCPs may not be 100% foolproof as there will be the 'unknowns'.
- 4.11 REBR will also facilitate testing service BCPs and is regularly involved in undertaking reviews and testing of plans with service areas. Our BCM system is tailored to fit the nature of the organisation for it to be successful. One size does not fit all and failing to plan appropriately may result in loss of service delivery, financial loss, reputational damage, and possibly litigation in the event of an incident.

Key deliverables 2025

- 4.12 During the next 12 months the focus in relation to effective BCM will be:
- 4.12.1 To ensure the Corporate BCP template is reviewed and updated and made available for council-wide use.
 - 4.12.2 To ensure BCPs are reviewed and updated accordingly by services, particularly for business-critical services and are submitted to REBR.
 - 4.12.3 Scoring of business-critical services plans takes place and feedback to plan owners is provided.
 - 4.12.4 Carry out further BIAs upon request of services if they are deemed to be critical.
 - 4.12.5 To ensure the continuation of testing all critical service BCPs every 2 two years as stipulated in the Self Certification signed off by directors annually.
 - 4.12.6 Provide council-wide training and bespoke sessions upon request of services.
 - 4.12.7 Follow up with interested schools (maintained) the offer of BC Planning, developing their BCP and testing.
 - 4.12.8 Offer Business Continuity/Emergency Planning services to the community and academies.
- 4.13 REBR work with partners/stakeholders to discuss and share best practice and to promote business continuity. LCC's major incident plan, if invoked, is aligned to link to wider Local Resilience Forum (LRF) emergency response plans and LCC work to ensure we have consistency of approach and work collaboratively to achieve the desired outcome.
- 4.14 The Manager for Risk Management Chairs the 'Multi-Agency Business Continuity Group', inviting business continuity officers from partner organisations to share good practice, discuss their response to business continuity incidents, and reflect on

lessons learned. Participants include blue light services, district authorities, and utility providers.

Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

Risk

The revised Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy is intended to promote an effective approach to risk across the Council, and in financial terms minimise the costs of insurance premiums, successful claims and responding to incidents.

Business Continuity

Rigorous, targeted and proportionate BCP arrangements are essential to ensure the council can be confident of recovering effectively from a major incident and with as little additional or abortive expense as possible.

Signed: Kirsty Cowell, Head of Finance (Strategy), Ext. 37 2377

Dated: 13th March 2025

5.2 Legal implications

Rigorous Risk Management/BCM arrangements are essential to ensure the council can be confident of ensuring it has proper cover for its legal liabilities.

Signed: Kamal Adatia, City Barrister, Ext 37 1401

Dated: 13th March 2025

5.3 Equalities implications

Risk

Effective risk management is essential for organisations and their partners to achieve strategic objectives and improve outcomes for local people and therefore is likely to be beneficial to people from across all protected characteristics.

However, in some circumstances, effective risk management will be particularly relevant to those with a particular protected characteristic (for example, safeguarding risks and risks which could result in service disruption). Therefore, a robust risk strategy and policy statement which is embedded effectively will minimise the likelihood of ineffective risk management resulting in a disproportionate impact on those with particular protected characteristic/s.

The 2025 strategy identifies other potential risks which are relevant to equalities, such as legislative requirements (ensuring that the council meets its statutory duties) and the risks posed by demographic changes. The strategy promotes that the management of such risks should be embedded into the day-to-day business and culture of the council, the continued integration and embedding of risk management into the council's culture and its everyday

business operations support the continued delivery of positive equalities outcomes for the citizens of Leicester.

Business Continuity

A robust approach to business continuity planning will limit the impact of incidents and plays a key role in maintaining service delivery, therefore there will be a positive impact across all protected characteristics.

If business continuity planning is not effective there is a greater risk where a service has been identified as critical. If those critical services were unable to maintain service delivery, there may be a disproportionate impact on those with particular protected characteristic/s, such as age and disability.

The recommendation, to approve the 2025 Corporate Business Continuity Management Policy Statement and Strategy will support a robust approach and minimise the impact of incidents which could have a disproportionate impact on certain protected groups.

The correct prioritisation in the event of an incident, will ensure that those areas of greater risk, including risks around equalities and human rights will be prioritised provided this is a consideration in any changes that are made.

Signed: Surinder Singh, Equalities Officer, Ext. 37 4148

Dated: 13th March 2025

5.4 Climate Emergency implications

There are no significant climate emergency implications directly associated with this paper. However, it worth noting that the impacts of worsening climate change are among those covered by council's risk management processes. However, it is worth noting that the BCM Policy Statement & Strategy and associated documents play a key role in ensuring the council is prepared for potential incidents and emergencies linked to the impacts of worsening climate change, such as flooding and extreme weather.

Signed: Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

Dated: 13th March 2025

5.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph/References Within Supporting information
Risk Management	Yes	All of the paper.
Legal	No	Rigorous Risk Management arrangements are essential to ensure the council can be confident of ensuring it has proper cover for its legal liabilities.
Policy	Yes	All of the paper.
Sustainable and Environmental	No	
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	No	
Corporate Parenting	No	
Health Inequalities Impact	No	

6. Background information and other papers:

N/A

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Corporate Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategy 2025

Appendix 2 – Corporate Business Continuity Policy Statement and Strategy 2025

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

9. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

N/A