

Leicester
City Council

Business Continuity Management Policy Statement and Strategy 2025

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Leicester City Council

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Business Continuity Management

Policy Statement and Strategy 2025

Business Continuity Management Policy Statement

Leicester City Council (LCC) is committed to implementing and maintaining a robust and effective Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) as a key mechanism to restore and continue to deliver services in the event of a disruption or emergency, particularly those that are critical. Unexpected disruptive events occur. Such events could be **external** like severe weather, utility failure, terrorist attack or flu pandemic, or an **internal** incident such as ICT failure, loss of a major supplier or loss of a key building which could affect the delivery of LCC's services. These events are usually low likelihood, but high impact if they materialise which should be planned for by implementing a robust, effective and efficient Business Continuity Management System(BCMS).

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty on the council (as a Category 1 responder) to ensure that it can:

- Respond to an emergency;
- Continue to support emergency response partners and
- Continue to provide critical services to the public.

By pre -planning rather than waiting for incidents to occur, normal business can be resumed more effectively and efficiently. This is essential for those stakeholders who rely on, or interact with, council services and it helps communities retain confidence in the council. Planning minimises firefighting in a real incident, staff can respond better, service delivery is resumed at an acceptable level, reputational damage is managed and reduced potential for financial loss.

In an internal corporate business continuity incident, it will not be possible to initially run **all** council services as normal. Recovery will be prioritised to services that are the most essential (business-critical services and activities) – those that the Corporate Management Team (CMT) have defined must be back up and running within 24 hours in a defined priority order, unless a dynamic risk assessment of the situation identifies exceptions to this reflecting particular unexpected circumstances.

The expectation is that all services whether deemed critical or not, should have a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in place which aligns to the ISO22301 Standard.

The BCM Strategy and Policy sets the framework for our BCM approach, key elements of which include:

- Aligned approach with the International Standard for Business Continuity, ISO22301;
- An Incident Response Plan which is reviewed and updated annually;
- Business critical services determined and agreed by CMT through a Business Impact Analysis exercise;
- Clear roles and responsibilities defined within both the Incident Response Plan and Service BCP's, which staff are fully aware of;
- Management have responsibility for ensuring an effective service level BCP is in place for invocation (in line with the corporate standard) which is reviewed annually and as and when changes take place in the service;
- Corporate training provided to staff on BCM;
- BCM will also apply to the Council's relationships and dependencies on goods, supplies and services delivered by other third parties; and

- The council will implement a programme of BCP testing exercises and learning will be reflected in plans.
- A corporate debrief is carried out after a Corporate Business Continuity Incident.

The BCM Framework (Policy and Strategy) will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure continued relevance and to assess that its aims and objectives are being met.

Alison Greenhill
Chief Operating Officer

Sir Peter Soulsby
City Mayor

Business Continuity Management Strategy

1. DEFINITION

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is defined as:

'A holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations that those threats, if realised, might cause, and which provides a framework for building organisational resilience with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value creating activities.'

ISO22301 Societal security – Business continuity Management systems - Requirements

BCM is about the council preparing for a disaster, incident or event that could affect the delivery of services. The aim is that key elements of a service are maintained at an emergency level and brought back up to an acceptable level as soon as possible. Although the immediate response to a disruption is a key component, business continuity is also concerned with maintenance and recovery of business functions following such a disruption.

BCM is an ongoing process of risk assessment and management with the purpose of ensuring that the council can continue to deliver critical services if and when risks materialise.

BCM is not simply about producing a plan, or even a set of plans. It is a comprehensive management process that systematically analyses the organisation, determines criticality of services, identifies threats, and builds capabilities to respond to them. It should become our 'culture - the way we do things'.

2. SCOPE

BCM is a cross-functional, organisation-wide activity; consequently, the arrangements in this strategy apply to all parts of the council.

Business Continuity will also apply to outsourced contracts, services as well as suppliers, service partners and other relevant stakeholders. This is covered in more detail in section 13. The aim is to ensure that business continuity practices are implemented so that the service provider is able to deliver acceptable standards of service following any disruption they may face. .

3. IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF BCM

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty upon the council. As a Category 1 responder under the Act, Leicester City Council (LCC) has a legislative requirement to develop and maintain plans to ensure that it can continue to exercise its functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. In addition, a clear procedure for invoking BCP's should be in place. Plans should also be reviewed and tested periodically to keep them up to date. Training should be provided to those staff responsible for populating, invoking and reviewing BCPs.

The benefits of having a clear, unambiguous and appropriately resourced Business Continuity Management policy and programme include:

- **Resilience** - Proactively improves resilience when faced with disruption to the council's ability to achieve its key objectives;
- **Communities** – helps to ensure those services which are critical particularly to the city's most vulnerable residents are delivered in as far as possible in order to continue to safeguard and support our communities;

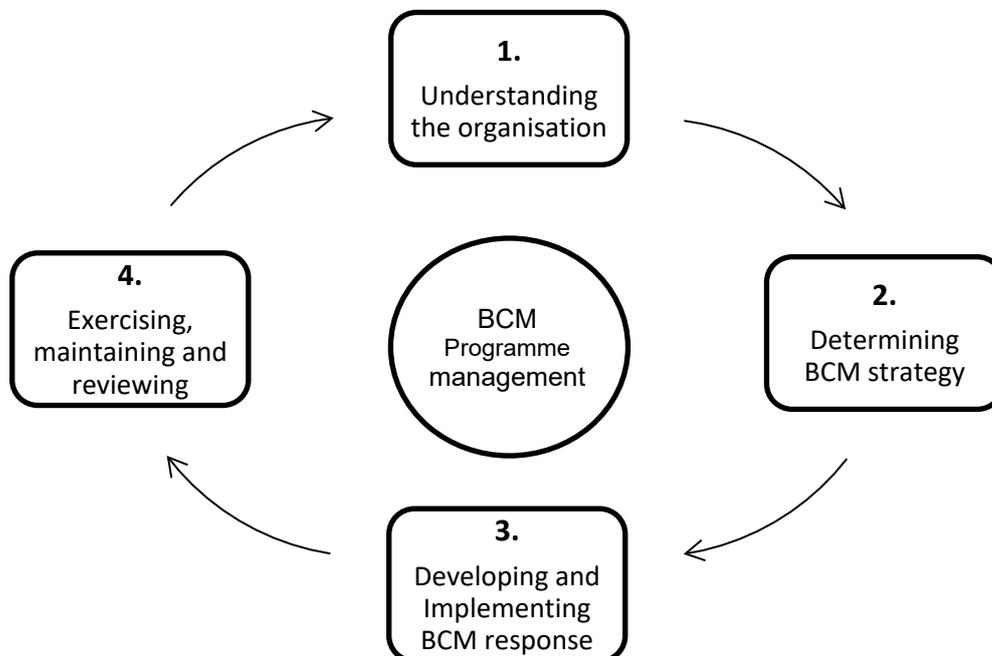
- **Reputation** - Helps protect and enhance the council's reputation as well as reducing the risk of financial loss;
- **Compliance** - Demonstrates applicable laws and regulations are being observed;
- **Cost Savings** - Creates opportunities to reduce the potential cost of disruption and may reduce insurance premiums. Poorly managed incidents also leave the council and its officers exposed to insurance claims;
- **Delivery** - Provides a rehearsed method of restoring the council's ability to supply critical services to an agreed level and timeframe following a disruption;
- **Management** - Delivers a proven capability for managing disruptions which helps to retain confidence in the council.

BCM arrangements are effective only if specifically built for the organisation. The council's programme is aligned with the principles of ISO22301, the International Standard, and to BS11200 Crisis Management Guidance and Good Practice, a recent standard for Crisis Management which is reinforced by reference to the Business Continuity Institute's Good Practice Guidelines.

4. METHODOLOGY

The ultimate aim is to embed BCM within the council's culture. Training and education is an ongoing task but awareness and capability is also a product of the structures put in place and the way we manage our programme.

Embedding BCM in the organisation's culture



Key stages in a BCM programme are:

1. Understanding the organisation:

This involves carrying out in-depth information gathering via business impact analysis' (BIAs) and risk assessments to identify critical activities / functions, evaluate priorities and assess risks to service delivery (see below).

- **BIA** – identify the critical processes and functions and assessing the impacts on the council if these were disrupted or lost. The BIA measures the impact of disruptions upon the organisation;
- **Risk assessment** – once critical processes and functions have been identified, a risk assessment can be conducted to identify the potential threats to these processes. Specific risks that would have a high local adverse impact are documented in service BCPs with details of contingency arrangements in place.

2. Determining an appropriate Business Continuity Strategy:

This involves identification of strategies that support the timely and efficient recovery of services, making decisions based on analysis of data gathered in stage 1, setting recovery time objectives for services and determining resources required to mitigate loss and assessing the effectiveness of maintaining the council's ability to deliver critical service functions in the event of a disruption.

BCM strategies at LCC involve:

- Implementing appropriate measures/strategies to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring and/or reduce the potential impacts of those incidents;
- Taking account of mitigation measures in place;
- Providing continuity for critical services during/following an incident in priority order;
- Plan owners/HoS reviewing/updating their BCP's and the Business Impact Analysis Assessment annually otherwise sooner where required due to changes in the internal or external environment;
- Identifying key staff/teams who would be involved in a response to a BC incident and ensuring they have access to the relevant response plans;
- Factoring services that have not been identified as critical in planning of BC;
- Consider, determine and set communication channels for implementation in an incident;
- Ensure a Corporate Debrief is conducted following any corporate internal business continuity related incidents and lessons learnt are incorporated into any processes, guidance, plans etc.

3. Developing and implementing a BCM response:

This involves implementing relevant BCM strategies in response to a disruption/interruption. For LCC this would mean triggering the Incident Response Plan (IRP) and service area BCPs to pull together the organisation's response to a disruption and enable resumption of business units according to agreed corporate priorities. The IRP and service area BCPs ensure that the following actions are considered:

- The immediate response to the incident;
- The interim solutions for maintaining an emergency level of service;
- Reinstatement of full services within realistic timescales.

4. Exercising, maintaining and reviewing:

- **Testing and Exercise** – Testing ensures plans are in step with organisational and wider external changes and can be audited against defined standards. This enables LCC to demonstrate the extent to which plans are complete, current and accurate and helps identify opportunities for improvement.
- **Maintenance of BCPs** – Ensures the organisation’s BCM arrangements and plans are fit for purpose, kept up to date, quality assured and support an effective response.
- **Review and Lessons Learnt** - Assesses suitability and adequacy and effectiveness of the BCM programme and identifies opportunities for improvements. It is imperative that a debrief is held after any incident with the involvement of relevant parties, be it internal or external. Lessons learnt should be reflected by updating BCPs accordingly.

LCC Critical service BCPs are to be tested every two years as agreed by LCC’s Corporate Management Team.

5. INVOKING THE INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN (IRP) FOR A BUSINESS CONTINUITY INCIDENT

The IRP is a high-level strategic response plan which is accessible to all on-call senior officers and other relevant staff. A redacted version of the plan is also available to all council staff located at the REBR pages on Interface. This plan will not allow recovery of individual services but co-ordinates the overall approach and supports the recovery of affected services, alongside the use of service area BCPs. The IRP can be invoked by a member of the council’s Corporate Incident Response Team (CIRT) as defined within the plan itself.

The IRP can be triggered by serious situations such as:

- Serious danger to lives and/or the welfare of council staff, Members, visitors or service users;
- The disruption of two or more council services by a business continuity incident;
- A business continuity incident which has the potential to affect the Council’s ability to deliver its critical services;
- More than one council service area is involved in the response;
- Significant resources are required to respond effectively to the incident;
- Actual or potential disruption to public service is incurred or likely to be.
- A coordinated response, over and above day to day working practices, is required.
- A business continuity incident with the potential to adversely affect the organisation’s performance and reputation due to loss of **PEOPLE** and/or **PLANT** and/or **PARTNERS** and/or **PREMISES**.
- Serious loss or damage to key assets;
- Serious impact on the council’s financial status or political stability; or
- Emergency situations in Leicester, or the wider Local Resilience Forum area (Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland).

6. CORPORATE INCIDENT RESPONSE TEAM

The council has put in place a 3-tier incident management structure: - the Strategic (Gold) and Tactical (Silver) teams have control of the situation and are authorised to take all decisions necessary. The Strategic (Gold) Team have overall control by overseeing, directing and authorising the work of the Tactical (Silver) Team who are managing the response and monitoring the actions which the Operational (Bronze) Recovery teams implement.

The IRP sets out this process in more detail. The constitution of the following teams can change as the BCM response unfolds which are:

Incident Response Team:

- Comprises predominantly of those Directors and Senior Heads of Service who have responsibility for defined Business Critical Services;
- Manages and directs the council's response to a serious incident affecting council services or assets;
- Comprises of the Strategic (Gold) and Tactical (Silver) teams;
 - **Strategic (Gold) Team** sets the response strategy, oversees the response including work-force related matters, and leads on communications (internal and external),
 - **Tactical (Silver) Team** will manage the Operational (Bronze) Recovery teams and keeps the Strategic (Gold) team informed of developments.

Recovery Teams:

- Comprises principally of Heads of Service and their senior managers;
- Collective responsibility for resumption of critical services within their divisions by means of their own individual BCPs;
- Will be directed by and report back to the 'Tactical' (Silver) team reporting to Gold.

The above establishes the command, control and communication system helping to ensure the organisation has clearly documented and well understood mechanisms for responding to an incident regardless of its cause.

Instances may occur where external stakeholders may need to be involved in responding to an incident.

7. MAINTENANCE OF THE INCIDENT RESPONSE PLAN (IRP)

It is crucial that the IRP reflects ongoing changes within the organisation. This involves revising the document and amending to reflect updates, testing the updated plan, informing and updating the on-call team / authorised personnel. REBR will facilitate the maintenance of this plan and will ensure that this undergoes a formal/complete review every 2 years. However, if changes are required before the review, they will be made.

8. BUSINESS CRITICAL SERVICES BCPs/BIAs

Annually, the Business Continuity & Risk Officer / Manager, Risk Management circulate a reminder to business-critical services plan owners requesting a thorough update of the plan and the associated BIA

for submission to REBR. The Business Continuity & Risk Officer facilitates this process. Although, changes should be made to BCPs as and when new staff join or leave, to reflect office moves, procedures changing or a major corporate change, a thorough review is required annually, usually by the financial year end.

Each department is responsible for keeping its contact lists up to date and issuing off-site documentation to new members of staff in their service areas BCPs. These revisions will need to then be distributed to all authorised personnel, who exchange their old plans for the newly revised plans.

9. LOCATING BCPS

The IRP and business-critical service BCPs are held securely on Resilience Direct (a secure Government IT platform within which LCC have a restricted area) as well as the restricted pages on MS Teams.

BCPs should be saved electronically and onto a memory stick (ensuring that the memory stick is an encrypted one). Holding paper copies is acceptable as this mitigates the risk of total loss of ICT, however, also being cautious of such a method as the plan will contain confidential information. All staff within teams should be aware who has access to their service area BCP. This will ensure smoother and faster recovery following an incident.

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The table below details the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the planning and implementation of BCM and invocation of plans.

City Mayor / Executive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the council's Business Continuity Strategy and Policy Statement annually.
Governance and Audit Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the Business Continuity Strategy is produced, approved by CMT and the Executive and updated regularly; • Note and comment on the BC Policy & Strategy
Chief Operating Officer / BCM Champion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During an incident, lead the council's 'Strategic' (Gold) Incident response.
Strategic and Divisional Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the BCM policy, strategy and development plan is implemented and resourced appropriately across service areas; • Participate as required in management teams within the Incident Response Plan; • Ensure appropriate staff sit on the 'Strategic' (Gold) and 'Tactical' (Silver) and Operational (Bronze) Recovery teams within the Incident Response Plan; • Ensure each of their Service Areas has an effective and current BCP in place which is reviewed each year; • Annually self-certify that effective plans exist for all their services, that these plans remain current and 'fit for purpose'; and that any testing of those plans has been carried out (with the assistance and support of REBR, if required); • Identify staff for training and keep themselves updated on BCM practice; • Ensure a debrief is carried out following a BC related incident in their division • Embed BCM culture into the ethos of operational management
Corporate Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the BC Strategy and Policy annually and ensure implementation
Manager, Risk Management / Business Continuity & Risk Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate the BCM programme; • Produce the Corporate BCM framework; • Provide a critical friend service on reviewing service areas BCPs • Produce the Business Continuity Policy and Strategy and ensure it is reviewed annually; • During an incident, co-ordinate the council's BCM incident response(s), supporting the COO as 'Strategic' lead; • Following an incident, facilitate the 'lessons learned' session(s); • Make available best practice tools (e.g. templates); • Identify training needs and arrange delivery; • Support and advise service areas and LA maintained schools; • Facilitate the self-cert process; • Facilitate BIA Workshops • Facilitate testing and exercising of the council's BCPs when requested by Directors/their teams and undertake testing in business-critical areas at least every other year; • Quality control – review BCM arrangements for services; • Promote BCM in the community.
All Heads of Service / Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Business Continuity arrangements within their area; • Attend training commensurate with their role; • Identify staff from their teams that have a role to play in any recovery for suitable training; • Prepare a recovery plan covering all service delivery functions (priority for critical functions), update at least annually; and, • Implement the agreed arrangements in the event of a disruption.
All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarisation with business continuity arrangements within their area; • Attend training commensurate with their role; • Engage with testing and exercising; • Respond positively during a crisis.

11. BUSINESS CONTINUITY SELF CERTIFICATION

Annually, all Directors will self-certify that BCPs are in place for all their services and the associated BIA is updated. LCC's BC and Risk Manager will facilitate the process and report to CMT.

12. MANAGING BC INCIDENTS AND INCIDENT LOGGING

REBR support and advise service areas during a business continuity incident to help manage a response to an incident. Once an incident has concluded, REBR can assist with conducting a debrief and draw out any lessons learnt, involving relevant parties and gather feedback for distribution, and where necessary, services amend BCPs appropriately to reflect any changes.

On-call officers are regularly briefed by REBR on how to deal with internal and external incidents and LCC's response. In addition, they are also briefed on guidance, plans and processes available to them to aid in the response to an incident.

REBR have produced an incident logging template which Senior Officers On call and other relevant officers have access to or will be given access to it the event of an incident. This is found on MS Teams. This is to be used for all major and minor incidents and may help when conducting the debrief.

13. BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND PROCUREMENT

Contracts for goods and / or services deemed critical to business continuity should include a requirement for each nominated supplier to give an assurance and evidence that robust BCP arrangements are in place covering the goods and/or services provided. When procuring for goods and/or services, the need for business continuity requirements in the specification and/or evaluation criteria must be considered.

14. BCM IN THE COMMUNITY

The council will participate in appropriate practitioner groups and work with partner agencies to promote BCM in the community and will advise and assist local organisations with their BCM arrangements.

15. MULTI-AGENCY BUSINESS CONTINUITY WORKING GROUP

The Manager, Risk Management will continue to chair this group which involves partner agencies such as emergency services, utilities, voluntary organisations. These meetings highlight how partner agencies respond to an incident and its business continuity implications and support the sharing of ideas and good practice.