



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda Item No:

Date: 04 February 2011

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the outcomes of the Audit Commission Business Continuity Review of Fire and Rescue Services.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Within the provisions of the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2008, the Government states that Fire and Rescue Services must:
- Have in place a plan to provide such emergency cover as it regards appropriate during any period of emergency. Liaising as necessary with other relevant organisations, but without reliance on the support of the armed forces.
 - Ensure the availability of all necessary vehicles, equipment, training and support.
 - Have in place arrangements for heightening public awareness and vigilance in respect of safety issues during periods of emergency cover.
- 1.2 To ensure that these arrangements are robust, the Government contracted the Audit Commission to undertake a national survey to establish how Fire and Rescue Authorities were meeting their obligation.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Audit Commission commenced their work in April 2010, which built on some initial scoping work which was completed in late 2009. Throughout the summer of 2010 some further targeted work was undertaken to verify information that had been received.
- 2.2 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service was contacted and responded fully to the questions and subject areas raised by the Audit Commission. An assessment of Nottinghamshire's arrangements is contained within the national report (Appendix A).
- 2.3 In summary, the survey covered three specific areas:
- Generic business continuity management.
 - How Fire and Rescue Authorities deal with a mass absence of staff.
 - How Fire and Rescue Authorities deal with the capacity of the Service to deal with disruption.
- 2.4 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's business continuity arrangements were deemed to be satisfactory. Business continuity plans are in place covering most critical areas. Plans are exercised and learning is captured and agreed. Training is in place and public safety and communication were deemed to be good.

- 2.5 The Audit Commission did comment that staff awareness needed to be developed and since the report was published, further work has been done to ensure this observation has been addressed.
- 2.6 Like all arrangements, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service will continue to review its business continuity provisions and report to the Fire Authority as appropriate. It is intended that further reports are to be brought to Policy and Strategy Committee in the future as the Service assesses the implications of its current financial pressures and any decisions it might have to take.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

As the report was commissioned by government there were no direct costs falling to Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are some human resources implications which are part of the business continuity management arrangements. These are addressed by the Service as appropriate. The Service has also invested in training for those involved in business continuity planning and exercising.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An equality impact assessment is not required in relation to this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Authority has specific obligations within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and within the Fire and Rescue Services National Framework 2008-2011. This report provides an independent assessment of how Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service is meeting these obligations.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Failure to have arrangements in place could put the Fire Authority at risk of breaching its legal duty and also of not being able to react appropriately to any business continuity issues. This risk is reduced by the actions being taken and has now been independently verified.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 9.1 Note and accept the findings of the Audit Commission report; and
- 9.2 Task the Chief Fire Officer and his team with the provision and maintenance of business continuity arrangements.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER