

Audit Committee

21 November 2022



Report of: Corporate Risk Register – deep dive

Title: Deep Dive: CRR12 Failure to Deliver Effective Emergency Planning

Ward: N/A

Presenting Report: Jim Gillman, City Operational Planning and Response Manager

Recommendation

To note the contents of the report

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the Audit Committee with a 'deep dive' into corporate risk CRR12: 'Failure to Deliver Effective Emergency Planning'

Policy

None

Consultation

1. Internal

None

2. External

None

Proposal

3. None

Other Options Considered

4. None

Risk Assessment

5. As per Corporate Risk Register

Summary of Equalities Impact of the Proposed Decision

6. None

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

None arising from this report

Financial

(a) Revenue

None arising from this report

(b) Capital

None arising from this report

Land

None arising from this report

Personnel

None arising from this report

Appendices:

Appendix A: Report for Audit Committee: CRR12 Failure to Deliver Effective Emergency Planning

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers:

None

Appendix A:

Report for Audit Committee – CRR12 Failure to Deliver Effective Emergency Planning

10 November 2022

Purpose of this report:

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Audit Committee with a ‘deep dive’ into the corporate risk CRR12: Failure to Deliver Effective Emergency Planning.

Context:

CRR12 covers BCC’s role as a **Category 1 Responder** to emergencies under the **Civil Contingencies Act** and its associated ability to respond effectively to emergencies and major incidents that befall the city.

Under the Act, all Local Authorities are identified as Category 1 Emergency Responders, along with Police Services, Fire Services, Ambulance Services, parts of the NHS and the Environment Agency. Although blue light emergency services are likely to lead the response phase to an emergency, Local Authorities will always lead the recovery phase.

As a Cat 1 Responder, BCC has a lead and active role in the **Avon & Somerset Local Resilience Forum (ASLRF)**, the multi-agency ‘vehicle’ for joint emergency planning. There is an LRF for every police force area in England.

Civil emergency risks are identified through a localised understanding of the **National Security Risk Assessment (NSRA)**, as well as local issues and events.

The **Civil Protection Unit (CPU)** lead and coordinate emergency planning work, but roles and responsibilities fall across the organisation.

Recent history of the risk score for CRR12:

Risk score was raised from 15 to 21 in Q1. This reflected

- the emergence and impacts of new geopolitical risks (Ukraine) and associated threats to energy supplies
- the ‘concurrency’ of the ongoing global pandemic
- the growing threat of climate related severe weather events
- the ‘ongoing’ risks identified in the NSRA (e.g. terrorism, fire, infrastructure failure, etc)
- the expanded focus on resilience in light of these uncertainties, particularly on infrastructure resilience (including utilities) and supply chains

The increase in the risk score was in relation to the changing risk profile, not to the internal controls in place to manage the risk.

CRR12 is related to CRR5: Business Continuity.

Internal Controls:**Governance and oversight:**

The **Corporate Resilience Group** oversees the delivery of BCC's emergency management system, including training and exercising. It is chaired by the Director, Management of Place with Director leads for the other Directorates (Director, Policy, Strategy and Digital for Resources and Director of Public Health for People) and including other relevant Heads of Service (including, for example, adult social care, Housing and Highways). This group has been re-invigorated since Covid; the ToR and membership has been reviewed and a reviewed work programme is underway.

Partnership working:

BCC plays an active and lead role in the ASLRF. Director, Management of Place represents BCC on the ASLRF Executive Group. BCC, led by the Civil Protection Manager, lead aspects of ASLRF work, including work with Voluntary Agencies and Excess Death and Emergency Mortuary planning. BCC also plays a central role in ASLRF risk assessment work and other capability themed work.

The **Avon & Somerset Local Health Resilience Partnership (ASLHRP)**, made up of NHS and Public Health organisations but under the umbrella of the ASLRF, leads health emergency planning, looking at risks such as emerging infectious diseases and mass casualties. Public Health colleagues represent BCC on the ASLHRP.

Emergency Plans

BCC produces and works to:

- ASLRF emergency plans, including the ASLRF Major Incident Response Guide
- A suite of internal emergency strategic, tactical and operations plans. These are published on the Source (where protective markings allow)
- 'Regulated' emergency plans (plans overseen by the Health and Safety Executive) regarding our industrial sites at Avonmouth and Severnside and the city pipelines that carry hazardous material. These are known as COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) and MAHP (Major Accident Hazard Pipelines) plans. CPU chair the Severnside Emergency Planning Forum, a group made up of industry and agencies that maintain, train and exercise these plans.

The BCC Strategic Emergency Management Guide was signed off by CLB on 4 October 22.

The BCC Incident Response Plan and Recovery Plans provide the basis of how BCC will respond to and recover from an emergency.

Risk and capability themed plans, such as the Flood Plan, the Severe Weather Plan, the Fuel Shortage Plan, the Humanitarian Assistance Plan are also in place.

24/7 Operations Centre and Duty Rotas, including Duty Director rota

BCC maintains a robust out of hours capability. The 24/7 Bristol Operations Centre is the contact point for the emergency services, as well as providing 24/7 CCTV monitoring and a range of critical emergency services for BCC residents and tenants. Bristol Operations Centre staff are trained to initiate the BCC emergency response and log initial decisions and actions taken.

Out of hours duty rotas are maintained at the Strategic (Duty Director), Tactical (Civil Protection, Public Health and Communications) and Operational levels (Highways and Traffic, Housing, Environmental Health, Dangerous Structures, Social Care, Port Health)

Training and exercising

CPU maintain a ‘training needs analysis’ which identifies training and exercising needs and is overseen by the Corporate Resilience Group.

BCC training, although disrupted by Covid (in itself a comprehensive ‘exercise’), has re-started and recent sessions have covered: Duty Officer training; Rest Centre Management and Volunteer training; emergency loggists training, and flood barrier training. Sessions in ‘crisis decision making’ are being planned. eLearning packages are in development.

Recent BCC emergency exercises have been held covering power outages (03/22), rest centre management (10/22), IT outages (09/22), recovery (10/22) and fires in high rise buildings (07/22 and 09/22).

Multi-agency and national exercising have also come back online post-Covid: Ex Nova One (COMAH exercise), held 11/21, Ex Governing (Counter Terrorism), held 12/21 and Bristol Airport Exercise, held 03/22.

Community Resilience:

CPU have compiled a GIS ‘community resilience’ mapping capability – identifying hazards and emergency response resources, such as rest centre and place of safety locations, and mapped against other relevant city indicators, such as deprivation. This is used to understand local risk and impacts. CPU lead the Avon Area Voluntary Agency Group (AAVAG), a sub-group of the LRF, which is made up of local ‘emergency response’ voluntary agencies such as Wessex 4x4, St Johns Ambulance, the Red Cross and others. Work is underway with the Community Development team to build closer relations with ‘non-emergency’ community groups.

City events:

CPU sit on the Safety Advisory Group for Events (SAGE) and provide significant emergency planning support for major city events such as the Harbour Festival and the St Pauls Carnival.

Related National issues:

- The ongoing Public Enquiries into the Manchester Arena bombings, the Grenfell tragedy and Covid, as well as the imminent ‘Protect Duty’ are likely to produce further emergency planning demands on Local Authorities.
- We lack guidance from Government regarding the role of local elected officials in emergency planning and response, particularly urban Mayors.
- The government is developing a ‘National Resilience Strategy’ which will aspire to make the UK the ‘most resilient nation’. Whilst the ambition is good, there is a significant gap between the ambition and the reality of stretched and resource-strapped response agencies, energy and food insecurity and weakened supply chains. Overall, it is not a ‘resilient’ picture.
- LRFs have benefitted from the government LRF funding pilot, which has now been extended for 3 years. This amounts to c£170Kpa for ASLRF. Whilst this is welcome, without corresponding resilience funding to agencies, there is a risk of imbalance and the prospect of the ‘creation of an industry’ at the regional level which does little to boost resilience for local communities or emergency responder agencies.

Recent incidents:

- Covid learning is still being absorbed; the reality of a ‘nationwide, all encompassing’ emergency has highlighted the challenges of working at the strategic level across so many systems and sectors in an emergency, particularly Health systems.
- However, emergency systems were sufficient to manage the concurrent emergencies that took place during Covid; fatal industrial accidents (Wessex Water incident 12/20), infrastructure failures (multiple water outages), severe weather (e.g. Storm Eunice) and major protests (Colston, Kill the Bill)
- Emergency systems were also sufficient to manage the most recent spate of emergencies: the heatwave last summer, the Twinnell House Fire, the Bedminster ‘pipe bomb’ evacuation, and the Ecclestone House Fire, although debriefs and the process of identifying lessons is ongoing.
- CPU have expended significant recent operational effort on managing public protests and demonstrations. This is likely to continue.

The coming winter:

The winter is going to be extremely challenging. Usual preparations for winter risks have taken place. However, new risks and threats are abundant:

- uncertainties around energy supplies;
- the ongoing and escalating impact of the cost of living crisis;
- the threat of widespread industrial action, particularly in key areas such as the Fire Service and Nursing
- the impact of internal cost saving measures, including the loss of many experienced staff and emergency volunteers

The desire for ‘resilience’ (now reflected in the corporate strategy) needs to be realistic. Although the internal controls in place to mitigate CRR12 are strong, the reality is we are living through extremely uncertain times. The delivery of the BCC emergency management system is dependent on a small but skilled CPU team (4 fte + 1 fixed term contract, ending 06/23). The team have worked incredibly long hours over the last 3 years.

Jim Gillman
City Operational Planning and Response Manager