

**JOINT INDEPENDENT AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023**

<b>SUBJECT</b>	Business Continuity
<b>REPORT BY</b>	DCC Steve Cooper
<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>	Scott Beasley – Governance and Assurance Team Leader
<b>SUMMARY AND PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of this report is to present to the Joint Independent Audit Committee an update on the Force Business Continuity (BC) testing, in line with the 2023/2024 Business Continuity Testing timetable.</li> <li>• To inform the Panel of common learning themes from BC testing.</li> <li>• To inform the Panel of any organisational or departmental risks highlighted as a result of the Business Continuity exercises.</li> </ul>	
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<p>It is recommended Joint Independent Audit Committee notes the updates and the progress made against the Force Business Continuity function and testing.</p> <p>That Joint Independent Audit Committee notes the Business Continuity Exercise Testing and Learning Report (Appendix 1).</p>

**A. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**UPDATE**

- The Force currently has Business Continuity Plans and Business Impact Analysis (BIAs) covering all aspects of its business.

**TESTING**

- The formal Force programme of testing Business Continuity Plans and Business Impact Analysis was agreed at the Force Executive Board in March 2023. Each area of the Force will be subjected to a table-top test conducted by the Force Business Continuity/Risk Manager together with the Head of the Department or appropriate deputy.

- Following testing, all Business Continuity Plans and Business Impact Analysis, are added to the Business Continuity shared drive for access by Heads of Department and appropriate named deputies.

## **TESTING RESULTS**

Business Continuity Exercise testing results for activities taken place are documented in Appendix 1.

The testing exercises prioritises the key Force Critical Functions for specific testing and then the capacity for individual Departments to identify contingency plans and innovative ways to recover essential services. This testing will be conducted by the Governance Assurance Team together with appropriate staff from each Department.

The format of the testing will predominantly be desktop exercises. However, it is proposed that we will conduct a number of deeper live exercises in some of the Force's critical areas in the future. Exercises will have scenario-based approach and post-exercise reports will be produced following exercises. The post-exercise reports include details of department's response to the proposed scenario, scoring of the department's response, any identified risks, and highlighted actions or recommendations.

These reports are fed directly to the Head of the Department and the Force Business Continuity Officer will work with appropriate individuals to ensure plans are updated and appropriate action is taken. Where risks are identified, they will be recorded on the department's Risk Register and escalated where required.

The current testing cycle will ensure that the plans are robust, fit for purpose and provide confidence that the Force can provide effective resources to tackle critical incidents and still address vulnerable individual and community needs.

Any learning or lessons learned regarding Business Continuity continues to be collated and inform future approaches and testing programme for each Department.

## **B. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no direct financial implications associated with business continuity management within the Force.

## **C. LEGAL AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS**

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all Category 1 responders (which includes the police) to maintain plans to ensure they continue to perform their functions in the event of an emergency, so far as is reasonably practicable. An emergency is defined as an event that threatens serious damage to human welfare, the environment, or the security of a place in the United Kingdom. The qualification "so far as is reasonably practicable" means that in practice the Force is required to maintain plans for the continuity of its most critical functions to an acceptable level.

## **D. PERSONNEL, EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

(including any impact or issues relating to Children and Young People)

Professional support for Business Continuity Management is provided by one FTE (full time equivalent) who also has the Risk portfolio and is based within Corporate Development.

General responsibility for business continuity management forms an integral part of the job descriptions of individuals managing critical functions within the Force.

#### **E. REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee are advised on progress related to business continuity as required.

#### **F. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Business continuity management is closely linked to the management of risk. Whilst the Force will maintain business continuity plans for its critical functions in order to meet its statutory obligations, an awareness and assessment of current risks will enable those plans to take account of changing circumstances and will therefore lead to better and more effective business continuity plans.

#### **G. PUBLIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Information in this report along with any supporting material is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and other legislation.

## Business Continuity Exercise Testing and Learning Report 2023/24

**Date of meeting:** Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2023

### Departmental Business Continuity Testing Activity

Department	Date	Score (out of 10)	Summary
<b>Intelligence</b>	31/07/23	<b>8</b>	Engagement and responses were excellent in the exercise. Some prompting was needed and some good problem solving took place. Only areas of improvement were consideration around wellbeing resources such as EAP and utilising their BCP.
<b>Operational Support</b>	03/08/23	<b>9</b>	Excellent overall, however some improvement required around team wellbeing.
<b>Contact Management</b>	03/08/23	<b>9</b>	Engagement and responses were excellent in the exercise. Some prompting was needed and some good problem solving took place. Only area of improvement is consideration around wellbeing of team.
<b>Custody</b>	31/08/23	<b>9</b>	Excellent overall, however some improvement required around team wellbeing. However during the activity the team has provided confidence in effectively managing the department in such scenario.
<b>Corporate Communications</b>	12/09/23	<b>9</b>	This exercise was extremely beneficial to identity areas such as Mercury and Mutual Aid agreements. We can now ensure the plan contains these details so that future exercise can have more reliance on the business continuity plan.
<b>Response</b>	19/09/23	<b>10</b>	This exercise covered all expected areas, mentioning required details such as wellbeing, public reputation, and ensuring service was upheld.
<b>Neighbourhood Policing</b>	20/09/23	<b>9</b>	This exercise contained details regarding all the specified areas, identifying effective contingencies within the department. An area of learning would be to ensure the wider impact for external stakeholders was considered in further detail.
<b>Integrated Offender Management</b>	27/09/23	<b>9</b>	A score of nine reflects the excellent knowledge held by the SLT, particularly by Inspector Harris. Relevant gaps were identified in the plan and the attendees all had a clear of understanding of their role, only further development areas are to ensure all SLT have sufficient knowledge of the business continuity plan for the benefit of resilience.

### Common learning themes

1. Having tested plans, all completed exercises have highlighted elements/learning previously not considered and as a result departments have updated their processes and/or Business Continuity plans therefore increasing the force's resilience.
2. Common learning themes following BC activities found that either BC Plans or during exercises, departments have not considered their team's physical and mental wellbeing to a satisfactory standard. These have been consistently recorded as actions within the post exercise reports.

## Business Continuity Exercise Testing and Learning Report – Appendix 1

3. Another recurring theme is that we found that some departments could have utilised their BC plans a lot more in the exercise. The purpose of these documents is to support Department Heads in such scenarios to ensure that all appropriate considerations are made, to ensure departmental functions when such scenarios arise.

### Organisational risks/issues identified during period:

No organisational risks or issues highlighted as a result of the Business Continuity activity in this period.

### Departmental Risk Register updates following exercises.

#### Department - Custody

##### Risk Title

Lack of resilience laptops and mobile phones required to ensure business continuity are substantial within Custody.

##### Risk Description

Limited controls within Custody should IT fail, this could cause a loss of access to custody records, such as care plans, and risk and medical records.

##### Update

Currently stored on Custody's departmental Risk Register. Department Head is currently liaising with IS to assess feasibility of requiring additional equipment.

### Planned exercises for October – December 2023 (up to date as of 05/10/23)

Department	Date
Serious and Organised Crime	04/10/23
Information Services	12/10/23
Archives & Exhibits	13/10/23
Public Protection	01/11/23
Prosecutions	09/11/23
Estates and Facilities	10/11/23
Major Crime	22/11/23
Finance	20/11/23

### Future learning and how this will be achieved:

Currently the Governance and Assurance Team are undertaking BC exercises in the form Desktop activity with departments Heads and their SLT's, as we embed a renewed BC focus within the organisation.

Learning is expected to continue with departments as we strengthen BC plans and any key themes will be fed around the organisation. Where risks are discovered to be logged on departments risk registers and escalated where necessary.

In the next financial year plan, we aim to include tests such as:

- Advanced tabletop scenarios
- Full scale exercises such as live evacuations
- Reactive testing (Following significant procedure or departmental changes)

(These are all subject to approval)