TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 25th MARCH 2013

SUBJECT: BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT - ACHIEVEMENT OF CERTIFICATION TO BS25999-2:2007

JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY, THE FINANCE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY

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1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   The purpose of this paper is to report TWFRA's success in achieving accreditation to BS25999-2:2007 following a formal assessment by the British Standards Institute (BSI), the first Fire Authority to achieve accreditation across the whole of the organisation's activities. The paper also sets out the ongoing commitment under the Standard to regular assessment in support of continuous improvement.

2   BACKGROUND

2.1   Business Continuity Management (BCM) concerns the systems an organisation has in place to continue operating in the face of a wide range of business disruptions. The risks could be from the external environment such as power outages; severe weather; pandemic influenza or from within an organisation for example systems failure or loss of essential equipment.

2.2   All businesses need to have adequate BCM arrangements in place, however it is considered essential for emergency services, operating 24/7 in risk critical environments, to have strong BCM arrangements. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires TWFRA as Category 1 responders to *'put in place arrangements to ensure that they continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable'*, and continue to perform our everyday critical business functions, with particular emphasis on those functions which serve the public. (Emergency Preparedness pg.76, 6.11).

2.3   FRAs are encouraged through the same statutory guidance to align their BCM arrangements to BS25999 since it provides a specification for use by internal and external parties to assess an organisation's ability to meet regulatory requirements in relation to Business Continuity. It contains only those requirements that can be objectively audited and

certification to the standard will assure interested parties that this service can continue to react appropriately to any business interruption.

2.4　In 2010, the service management team agreed to align its BCM approach to BS25999 and to work towards accreditation under the scheme. This has involved a wholesale review of processes, a Stage 1 desktop assessment (March 2012), and a full Stage 2 assessment later in the year.

2.5　This 5 day assessment involved site visits and interviews across the service to confirm that Business Continuity Management (BCM) was fully embedded. In addition to the visits there was a rigorous assessment of our BCM plans, processes and procedures. Confirmation was received in January 2013 that accreditation had been achieved until August 2015.

3　IMPACT AND ONGOING COMMITMENT

3.1　The assessment confirmed the adequacy and effectiveness of the controls applied to operational activities, along with the effective implementation of risk reduction that safeguarded the interests of stakeholders. The process has been rigorous and demanding, but has had great benefits in bringing together staff from across the organisation to review, test, exercise and improve our arrangements. A number of "real" incidents such as floods and power outages during the period we were preparing for the assessment also provided opportunities to test and improve arrangements.

3.2　It was noted that throughout the assessment that the Service demonstrated that we had the necessary resilience to deal with periods of disruption to our normal operations. It was also recognised that lessons learnt through experience of disruption and planned exercising were incorporated into the BCMS ensuring we were better prepared for future disruptions.

3.3　There is a continuing "surveillance audit" process to maintain accreditation and promote improvement of the BCM. Continuing assessment visits will take place every 6 months and be of 2 days duration. There is also a new ISO standard ISO22301:2012 – Societal Security – Business Continuity Management Systems which will eventually supersede BS25999. The continuing assessment visits will facilitate a transition from BS25999 to ISO22301 without the need for further audits. This transition is scheduled for around August　2014.

3.4　Staff will be maintaining involvement in the BCM process and undergoing continuation training to ensure that preparedness is maintained. An e learning package has been designed and rolled for operational crews and this package will be modified and provided for

non-operational staff in the near future. A schedule of BCM exercises are also planned for 2013/14 to robustly test the business continuity plans.

3.5 Since introducing a formal recording procedure for business interruptions and exercises via the Quality Assurance Database, we plan to enhance the use of the database to develop the reporting function to identify trends and improvements to our BCMS. BSI recognised and endorsed the work that had been done to incorporate BCM within the Quality Assurance Database during the audit.

4   LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 This process has helped the whole organisation to learn more about business continuity and will continue to do so as set out in section 3.4.

5   LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 BS25999 accreditation assists us in meeting our statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, as noted in 2.2.

5.2 Emergency Preparedness (Guidance on Part 1 of the CCA) currently endorses BS25999 as a recommended framework to follow to fulfil the business continuity duties of the Act specifying that '*Category 1 responders must have regard to this material*' and may only use other models to deliver statutory requirements '*where there are compelling reasons for doing so*'.

6   ICT IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Although there are no direct ICT implications in this report, ICT is key in maintaining Business Continuity in our organisation and this has been taken into account in our own systems as tested under the accreditation process..

7   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The cost of on-going continuing assessment is estimated as £3.7K per year and this has been included within the Corporate Development budget.

8   EQUALITY & FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality and fairness implications envisaged in respect of this report.

9 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 BCM systems assist in mitigating risk to continuous service delivery. It is considered that the alignment of BCM and Corporate Risk Management through the back office review will further improve the management of these agendas.

10 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no health and safety implications envisaged in respect of this report.

11 CONSULTATION

11.1 Consultation has taken place with representatives of the British Standards Institute (BSI). Staff affected by surveillance visits assessments will be fully involved in planning these, and managers are responsible for ensuring that business continuity arrangements for their own service areas are subject to ongoing review.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Members are requested to:

I. Note the progress made in achieving BS25999

II. Endorse and support the necessary work to maintain this standard

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- British Standard - Business continuity management Part 1: Code of Practice (BS25999-1:2006)
- British Standard - Business continuity management Part 2: Specification (BS25999-2:2007)
- ISO Standard 22301:12 Societal Security – Business Continuity Management Systems – Requirements
- Civil Contingencies Act (2004)
- Emergency Preparedness – Guidance on Part 1 of the CCA 2004