



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

DRAFT
AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Risk Management Update
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Meeting Date:	2 nd June 2009
Directorate:	Finance and Support
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Malcolm Mildren
Ward(s)	Not Applicable

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on recent progress in business continuity management across the authority.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note recent progress in business continuity management across the authority.
- 2.2 To note the draft list of critical functions.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 At the Committee meeting on 17th February 2009, the Audit Committee requested 'that the Business Continuity Plan be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee for consideration'.
- 3.1.2 Due to the timing of this meeting, it is not possible to circulate the continuity plans for each service area, however this report sets out the progress to date and details the next steps in the development of the Council's continuity arrangements.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 The original plan was to develop the Corporate Business Continuity Plan and the Service-level Business Continuity Plans in parallel, however, it quickly became apparent that the information required to complete the corporate-level plan was heavily dependent on the needs and requirements identified through the service-level plans. Therefore it has been decided to complete

the service-level plans, providing the service areas with a significant element of self-resilience, and then develop the over-arching Corporate-level plan.

- 3.2.2 Over the last few months, work has been undertaken across all services to identify the Council's critical functions. In the event of a major disruption, this enables the Council to quickly understand its priorities and focus resources accordingly. This work builds on a previous exercise undertaken by the Council. A draft list of the critical functions is attached.
- 3.2.3 The service areas that have critical functions are then required to develop Business Continuity Plans covering each of the critical functions within their area. A guidance note and template has been developed to assist the development of these plans. A copy of the guidance note is attached.
- 3.2.4 In light of the current flu situation, a number of business continuity actions have been brought forward. This included the prioritisation of the arrangements specific to the temporary loss of staff. An extract from a note circulated at a recent Corporate Briefing is attached to this report to illustrate the issues Managers are being asked to consider.
- 3.2.5 The aim is for all service areas to have draft continuity plans in place by the end of May, in particular arrangements for loss of staff.
- 3.2.6 Business Continuity Plans cannot be considered completely reliable until they have been exercised and tested. A series of desktop and live exercise will be undertaken providing valuable lessons learned that could be incorporated within the plans.
- 3.2.7 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, all Local Authorities have a responsibility to provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.
- 3.2.8 A link has been included on the Council's web site 'Preparing for emergencies'. This links through to excellent supporting information on the Direct.Gov site. Additionally, the Council is working in collaboration with other Councils within Northamptonshire to produce a leaflet, generic web page and tool-kit, specifically designed to support the wider business community.
- 3.2.9 A permanent Risk and Business Continuity Manager has now been appointed.

3.3 Choices (Options)

- 3.3.1 To suggest any additional areas to cover in future updates.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

- 4.1.1 None.

4.2 Resources and Risk

- 4.2.1 This report provides an update on the progress being made to ensure that risk mitigations and business continuity arrangements are in place across the Council and that these mitigations and plans are reviewed and tested on a regular basis.

4.3 Legal

- 4.3.1 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 the Council has specific responsibilities relating to Business Continuity. All Local Authorities are classified as a Category 1 responder. As a Category 1 responder the Council is required “to maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to perform their functions in the event of an emergency, so far as is reasonably practicable.”
- 4.3.2 The act goes on to explain that as a Category 1 responder the Council needs to be able to deliver the critical aspects of its own business functions to enable it to help others in an emergency situation, keeping the impact on the public to a minimum.
- 4.3.3 The Civil Contingencies Act also places a responsibility on Local Authorities to provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

4.4 Equality

- 4.4.1 There are no specific equalities implications arising from this report.

4.5 Consultees (Internal and External)

- 4.5.1 The Head of Finance & Assets and the Director of Finance & Support have been asked to comment on this report.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

- 4.6.1 Reduction in interruptions to service delivery.
- 4.6.2 Continuity of critical Council activities.
- 4.6.3 Enabling the Council to act proactively, avoiding reactive management wherever possible.
- 4.6.4 Protecting and enhancing the reputation of Northampton Borough Council.

4.7 Other Implications

- 4.7.1 Not applicable

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Draft list of the Council’s Critical Functions.
- 5.2 Business Continuity Guidance Note and Template.
- 5.3 Corporate Briefing Note - Business continuity actions specific to temporary loss of staff.

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