



AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

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| Report Title | Business Continuity Update |
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

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| Meeting Date: | 19 th March 2012 |
| Directorate: | Resources |
| Accountable Cabinet Member: | Cllr Alan Bottwood |
| Ward(s) | Not Applicable |

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on progress with the management of Business Continuity across the authority.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the draft Corporate Continuity Plan.
- 2.2 To note the Council's business continuity critical functions.
- 2.3 To note the recent developments in Business Continuity Management.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Audit Committee requested an update on the developments in Business Continuity Management.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 Business Continuity Management (BCM) is the process that supports the Council in delivering its critical services and functions in the event of an unexpected emergency or disruption. The purpose of BCM is to provide the Council with a framework of procedures and plans that will assist in the recovery of its key functions as quickly as possible and practicable. This ensures the Council can respond to an emergency proactively, with a well-planned and tested response rather than a reactive ad-hoc one.

- 3.2.2 Under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 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.”
- 3.2.3 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.
- 3.2.4 Business continuity forms part of the risk management function. As such, business continuity is included in the Council’s Risk Management Strategy and Risk and Business Continuity Management Handbook.
- 3.2.5 The Risk Management Strategy and The Risk and Business Continuity Management Handbook have undergone a review to ensure they comply with general good practice and reflect any developments across the authority.
- 3.2.6 The key developments within the Risk Management Strategy were presented to the Committee on 24th November 2011. Cabinet approved the changes to the Strategy on 14th December 2011.
- 3.2.7 One of the key steps in developing an approach to managing business continuity is to understand what services are critical to the Council. There is a distinction to be made in business continuity, between those services that are important to the Council and its customers and those that are critical - in terms of loss of life, injury, significant financial loss and significant reputational damage. This includes the services that the Council has a legal responsibility to provide.
- 3.2.8 The Council has an approved list of critical functions, included as **Appendix A**. These are categorised as set out below:
- 0 – 24 hours - Critical Function 1 (CF1)
 - 1 – 3 days - Critical Function 2 (CF2)
 - 3 – 7 days - Critical Function 3 (CF3)
 - 1 week – not a Critical Function (NCF)
- 3.2.9 All critical functions must be included in a Business Continuity Plan, either by service area or a plan that specifically covers a critical function. For example Call Care and CCTV have individual specific plans.
- 3.2.10 The Council has a standard template for its Business Continuity Plans. Recognising the broad nature of Council services, this can be adapted to suit the needs of each function.
- 3.2.11 A Corporate Continuity Plan is currently in final draft, attached as **Appendix B**. This is an ‘umbrella’ plan that cuts across all Council services.
- 3.2.12 A continuity plan cannot be considered reliable until it has been tested. Plans can be tested via a tabletop or live exercise; however the best form of testing is a real-life event.

3.2.13 Over the last few years there have been a handful of genuine disruptions that have provided an ideal opportunity to test our plans and learn valuable lessons. Examples are detailed below:

- Swine flu in summer/autumn 2009.
- Cliftonville House power failure in December 2009
- Excessive snow fall in December 2010
- IT and telecoms failure in November 2011
- Strike action in November 2011

3.2.14 Following each of these disruptions, Heads of Service and Managers are asked to compile a list of their lessons learnt and to ensure their plans are updated to take account of these lessons.

3.3 Choices (Options)

3.3.1 None.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no policy implications arising from this report.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 There are no specific resource implications arising from this report.

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

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 Director of Finance and Support and the Head of Finance have been asked to comment on this report.

4.6 How the Proposals deliver Priority Outcomes

4.6.1 Sustain effective and prudent financial management.

4.6.2 Be an agile, transparent organisation with good governance.

4.7 Other Implications

4.7.1 None.

5. Background Papers

- 5.1 Appendix A – The Council’s Critical Functions.
- 5.2 Appendix B – Draft Corporate Continuity Plan

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