

## **BUSINESS CONTINUITY - UPDATE**

**Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee - 13 June 2016**

Report of Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services

Status: For information

Key Decision: No

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**Executive Summary:** This report provides an update to the Advisory Committee on current Business Continuity practises and procedures

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**This report supports the Key Aim of Safe Communities**

**Portfolio Holder** Cllr. Hogarth

**Contact Officer** Kevin Tomsett - ext: 7368

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**Recommendation to Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee:**

That the report be noted.

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### **Introduction and Background**

1. The Council has statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to have business continuity arrangements in place to ensure that they can continue to provide their critical functions in the event of a disruptive challenge.
2. This type of event could also require an emergency planning response to the community; as such there are appropriate links with the Emergency Plan and with its supporting documentation.

### **Business Continuity Management Strategy**

3. The objective of Business Continuity Management is to allow the Council to continue to provide its critical functions, and as many non-critical functions as possible, in the event of an unexpected disruption.
4. This improves the Council's resilience against the disruption of its ability to achieve its key objectives, and improve its ability to recover from any such disruption while protecting welfare and safety.
5. To achieve this objective, the guidance and processes shown in national standards (BS 25999 - ISO 22301) has been used and having regard to good practice elsewhere.

6. There is a generally accepted cycle to this process:
  - Understanding the organisation
  - Determine BCM Strategy
  - Develop and implement BCM response
  - Exercise, maintain and review plans
7. For the business continuity process to be as effective as possible there is a need to embed business continuity management into the organisation's culture and this is achieved by a working group, annual review and training/testing of the plan.
8. Understanding the organisation includes identifying the functions that the Council undertakes and compiling a Business Impact Analysis on each of those functions. It also includes the identification of the hazards that could cause a business disruption and undertake a Business Risk Assessment on those hazards.
9. The Business Impact Analysis and the Business Risk Assessment provide the information to compile the Business Continuity Plan. The aim of the Business Continuity Plan is to provide a framework in which to manage the response of the Council to an event which is likely to seriously obstruct it in the performance of its functions.
10. The objective of the plan is to enable the Council to exercise its functions in the event of an emergency, so far as is reasonably practicable. Not all functions need be kept operating at normal levels. The plan facilitates functions being at an acceptable level of operation within acceptable timeframe.
11. There is also a need to train staff. This includes general awareness training for managers and staff groups and specific training for 'key players' identified in the plan. This assists in the embedding of Business Continuity into the organisation's culture.

### **Business Continuity Management Plan**

12. The business continuity plan follows the principles of BS 25999 (ISO 22301) and is the ongoing management and governance process supported by management and appropriately resourced, to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to identify the impact of potential losses, maintain viable recovery strategies and plans, and to ensure continuity of service, through training, exercising, maintenance and review.
13. A Business Impact Assessment for each service function of the Council (as outlined in the Business Continuity Management Strategy), has been undertaken which involved gathering information from each Service Manager on the level of criticality of each of their functions.

14. Each function is classed into one of four categories ranging from functions that must be operational within 24 hours, to those which could be left for over 7 days. For any function under seven days, minimum levels of staff, resources, IT and critical suppliers were identified. This information is compiled into the Business Impact Analysis.
15. Staff have received training on the plan, their function and role in any given scenario and recovery procedures and have completed a table top exercise of the plan involving key staff and services.
16. The Business Impact Assessments and Plan are reviewed on an annual basis, or, after any business continuity incident.
17. Recent enhancements to Business Continuity arrangements include the introduction of the ‘Lync’ telephony system, greater ability for mobile or remote working and shared working arrangements that allow services to be delivered from facilities owned by partner organisations.
18. Current considerations are a replacement generator at Argyle Road offices and the potential for an off-site IT server arrangement.

### **Key Components**

19. The Business Continuity Management Plan consists of the following key components:
  - A business continuity management strategy, see extract above.
  - Alerting procedures, which are very similar to those in the Major Emergency Framework Document
  - Guidance on possible incident management structures. The exact structure required will be incident dependant, but it should be a clear structure for efficient command and control. For consistency the same concept is used as in the Major Emergency Framework Document
  - A section on pre-identified roles and responsibilities. This includes damage assessment, salvage, personnel issues and media relations. It also outlines mutual aid that may be available from other Kent local authorities
  - Incident management guidance for the different incident consequences (derived from the analysis of the impact assessments), including denial of premises, denial of IT and paper record systems, denial of staff, denial of utilities and denial of supplies and services
  - Guidance for the recovery phase
  - Guidance on function prioritisation, derived from the business impact analysis

- As a denial of premises event will probably lead to a substantial extension of home-working, agreed guidance on the human resources implications of this
  - Schedules of premises, equipment, vehicles, agents, contractors that may be required

20. Similar to the Major Emergency Plan, the Business Continuity Plan is subject to a current audit and will be updated with any recommendation which arise.

21. Later this year a ‘live’ exercise is planned which involves a number of staff working from, and providing a service from, our predefined backup location. Any learning will be fed back into the plan.

## Key Implications

## Financial

The Council has a small budget for Civil protection (£35,000) which is largely salary allocations for key staff responsibilities. In the event of invoking emergency Planning procedures and actions funding would need to be found from Partner Agencies, or from Council reserves, depending on the nature of the response.

#### **Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.**

The Council has statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingency Act 2004 to prepare and maintain a Business Continuity Plan. Failure to have a plan in could potentially lead to critical services not being delivered in the event of a major incident.

## Equality Assessment

There are no equalities impacts arising from this report.

## Appendices

**Background Papers:** None

**Richard Wilson**  
**Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services**