

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Audit Committee		
DATE:	11 March 2020		
TITLE:	Business Continuity – annual update		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Monitoring		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Leader		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Ged Greaves, Senior Policy and Performance Officer		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	No

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
The report outlines the current position of the council's business continuity arrangements, summarises progress made since the last update in November 2018 and describes work that is planned to be undertaken over the coming months.
KEY ISSUES:
The council has a responsibility as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to develop and maintain plans to ensure that, as far as is reasonably practicable, key services can continue to be performed in the event of a disruption or emergency.
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
Not applicable; the council must have plans in place under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Audit Committee are asked to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. review progress made and endorse the approach being taken to the council's business continuity arrangements and 2. confirm whether annual updates on the topic are required.
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
To ensure that members are kept informed about the council's business continuity arrangements.

REPORT DETAIL

1.0 Background

1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on Category 1 responders (as defined by the act and which includes all local authorities) to develop and maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that, so far as is reasonably practicable, if an emergency occurs they are able to continue to perform their key services / critical activities. This means that, in the event of a disruption or emergency, the council must have plans available to ensure that it can mobilise the functions it needs to:

- deal with any emergency
- ensure that the impact of the emergency on the council's day-to-day activities is kept to a minimum, and

- ensure that, so far as possible, vital services for the community can be maintained at appropriate levels.
- 1.2 Business continuity management in the authority is based around a framework of documents as shown below:



- 1.3 The responsible officer for business continuity in this authority is the Executive Director, assisted by a group of officers from across the council – the Business Continuity Corporate Officer Group. Implementing business continuity is the responsibility of the council's Management Team. However, all members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of the plans that affect their service area and their role following invocation of any business continuity plan.

2.0 Current position

- 2.1 Critical activities are those services that protect life and safety, or are considered essential to support such activity and are considered critical to restore and deliver in the event of a disruption or emergency. The council's critical activities are:

- CIC – response to customer contacts
- Corporate Communications – including website
- CCTV responsive functions control room
- Emergency Planning – response to recovery and incidents
- Homelessness
- ICT – to support other teams
- Incident Management Team – Executive Directors and support staff
- Personnel – for staff contact details (not normal business)
- Property Services – for building access/maintenance (not normal business)
- Electoral Services – if during a critical time
- Env Health – Food Safety / Health & Safety– if during an incident
- Env Health – Environmental Quality – if during an incident

- 2.2 A risk assessment has been undertaken to identify the potential threats to the critical activities. A 'threat card' is in place for each of the threats to guide the Incident Management Team in their consideration of response. The currently agreed threats to the critical activities are listed below. The threat cards were updated in October 2019 and include:

- Loss of Staff
- Loss of ICT
- Loss of King's Court
- Fuel Shortage

2.3 The council's business continuity policy was agreed in 2017 by the Chief Executive under delegated powers and will be reviewed in 2020.

3.0 Progress since last report in November 2018

3.1 Activities undertaken by the corporate officer group since November 2018 are shown below:

- IT Infrastructure Task and Finish Group with oversight of work to ensure the IT network is resilient should the King's Court Work Area Recovery plan be invoked.
- High level 'business impact assessment' undertaken – this was a review of all business activity against a set of criteria to confirm in which order services should be recovered in the event of a disruption.
- Out of Hours Contact Card details revised and circulated.
- Annual review of critical activities and key threats.
- All critical and non-critical bronze plans reviewed and published.
- Peer review of critical bronze plans.
- Metis 19 tested the Work Area Recovery plan for King's Court and considered the staff numbers, alternative sites and IT requirements in the event Kings Court is unavailable.
- A review was undertaken of the Critical Incident Team.
- The business continuity policy and strategy were reviewed.

3.2 Periodic updates on business continuity have been published in Internal Affairs and the Members Bulletin that remind staff and members of the importance of business continuity and how to access the council's business continuity portal following an incident.

4.0 Forward work plan

4.1 The corporate officer group has a work plan in place for the next 12 months. Our planning and exercise programme is based upon the agreed threats. Work to be undertaken includes:

- Progressing actions agreed by Management Team following exercise Metis 19.
- Reviewing live incidents after the event and ensuring the lessons learnt are implemented in future planning.
- Planning for exercise Metis 20.
- Reviewing the borough council's Incident Response Plan, which following the streamlining exercise, now contains all threat cards.
- Reviewing bronze level business continuity plans.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 The council's business continuity arrangements are aligned to the principles of ISO22301 – which aims to minimise the impact of disruptive incidents. Business continuity is not a static process; it is therefore important that, as the nature of the organisation changes, our business continuity arrangements reflect the changes.

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 The Audit Committee are asked to note progress made, endorse the approach being taken to the council's business continuity arrangements and confirm that annual updates are required.

7.0 Corporate Priorities

Not applicable, statutory requirement

8.0 Policy Implications

None. Policy last reviewed in 2017, review commended in 2019 but publication delayed to 2020 pending management restructure.

9.0 Financial Implications

None.

10.0 Personnel Implications

None.

11.0 Statutory Considerations

- 11.1 The council is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and therefore has a duty to develop and maintain plans of this nature.

12.0 Equality Opportunity Considerations

None

13.0 Risk Management Implications

- 13.1 Business continuity arrangements are included on the council's risk register.

14.0 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None.

Background Papers

Business Continuity Policy Statement and Strategy
Civil Contingencies Act 2004
ISO22301 Business Continuity Management Standard