

POLICY REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT PANEL REPORT

REPORT TO:	Audit Committee		
DATE:	26 September 2022		
TITLE:	Business Continuity – annual update		
TYPE OF REPORT:	Monitoring		
PORTFOLIO(S):	Leader		
REPORT AUTHOR:	Dave Robson, Environmental Health Manager		
OPEN/EXEMPT	Open	WILL BE SUBJECT TO A FUTURE CABINET REPORT:	No

REPORT SUMMARY/COVER PAGE

PURPOSE OF REPORT/SUMMARY:
<p>The report outlines the current position of the Council's business continuity arrangements, summarises progress made since the last update on 12 October 2021 and describes work that is planned to be undertaken over the coming months.</p>
KEY ISSUES:
<p>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.</p>
OPTIONS CONSIDERED:
<p>Not applicable; the Council must have plans in place under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>The Audit Committee are asked to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. review progress made and endorse the approach being taken to the Council's business continuity arrangements; and2. confirm whether annual updates on the topic are required.
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
<p>To ensure that members are kept informed about the Council's business continuity arrangements.</p>

1 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:

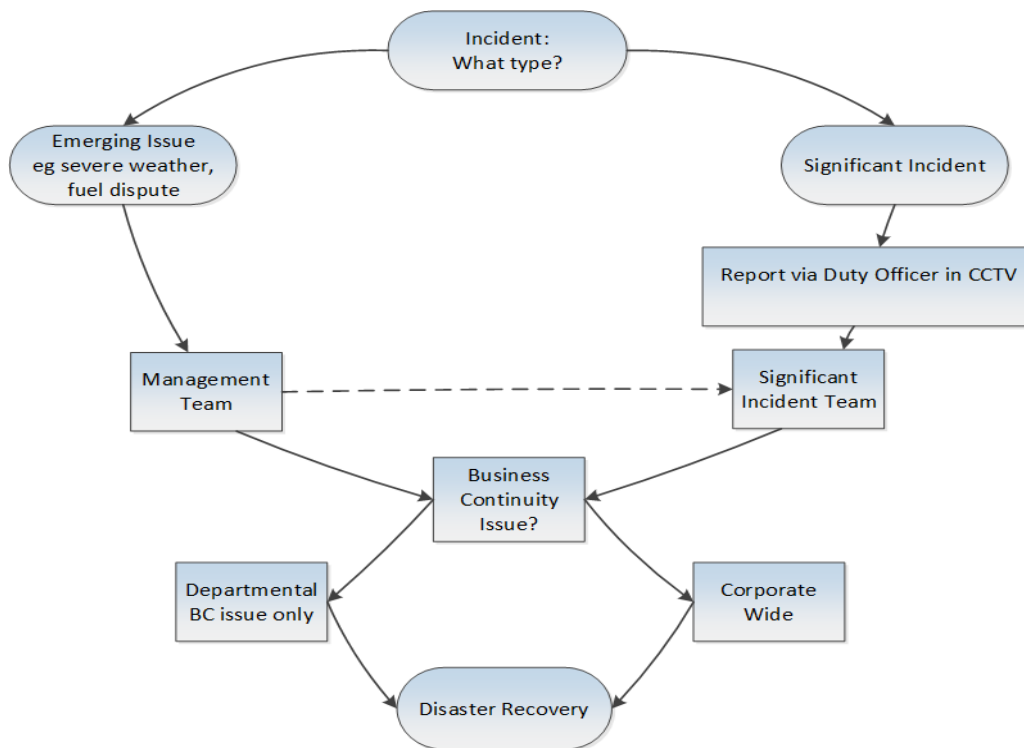
- deal with any emergency
- ensure that the impact of the emergency on the council's day-to-day activities is kept to a minimum, and
- ensure that, so far as possible, vital services for the community can be maintained at appropriate levels.

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 an 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.

1.4 Incidents are broadly of two types. An emerging incident where sufficient notice is given such as in the case of prolonged severe weather or an incident that happens without prior warning but requires immediate senior management attention. The initial Council response in those scenarios differs and is summarised in the following chart.



- 1.5 A Significant Incident Team will usually be the first point of contact for an incident requiring immediate senior management attention. Such an incident may be an unexpected death or tragic event. Equally, it may be an event causing injuries, a fire in a council building or damage to a facility that could result in injury to staff and/or the public at large. It may also be an event that may attract significant or adverse media interest and is linked to the council's activities, this may include issues such as a lost child in the resort where the child hasn't been located within a 'reasonable' time and the search by our staff and police is escalated.

2 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:

- Customer Information Centre – 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 March 2022 and include:

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

2.3 The Council's business continuity policy and strategy was agreed in 2022 by the Chief Executive under delegated powers.

3 Progress since last report in October 2021

3.1 Activities undertaken by the corporate officer group since October 2021 are shown below:

- IT Infrastructure Task and Finish Group has completed works to ensure the IT network is resilient should the King's Court Work Area Recovery plan be invoked. Additional works include Teams telephony to improve communications, Zoom member meetings for YouTube purposes and the installation of Office365.
- Out of Hours Contact Card details revised and circulated.
- All critical and non-critical bronze plans reviewed in August 2022.
- Metis 21 – cyber-attack exercise, how to function without elements of normal IT being available
- The internal business continuity Incident Response Plan was reviewed and published.
- A task and finish group has been set up to review how we communicate to staff and members during a bc incident including a review of how we use the BC portal (which currently has limited functionality).

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 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 and is cyclical in nature. Work to be undertaken includes:

- High level 'business impact assessment' was undertaken in October 2021, next assessment due in December 2022 – this is 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.
- Progress actions agreed by Management Team following exercise Metis 21.
- Progress recommendations from the 2022 Corporate Business Continuity Audit.
- Review live incidents after the event and ensuring the lessons learnt are implemented in future planning.
- Plan for exercise Metis 22, to be held on 30th September 2022.

5 Conclusion

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 those changes.

6 Recommendation

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 Corporate Priorities

Not applicable, statutory requirement.

8 Policy Implications

Policy last reviewed in 2019 but publication initially delayed to 2020 pending the senior management restructure and then by the ongoing requirements of the Covid-19 response.

9 Financial Implications

None in this update.

10 Personnel Implications

None in this update.

11 Statutory Considerations

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 Equality Opportunity Considerations

None in this update.

13 Risk Management Implications

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

14 Environmental considerations

None in this update.

15 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

None in this update.

16 Background Papers

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