

## **Business Continuity**

### **Summary**

1. This reports sets out the council's approach to business continuity and the current position of the council with regards to identifying those service areas which provide critical services and progress towards the development of business continuity plans for these critical service areas.
2. The report covers two key areas:
  - The council's overall approach to business continuity;
  - The directorate / service position;

### **Background**

3. The statutory duty for business continuity is placed on a local authority by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, said duty is to have in place robust and resilient contingency plans to ensure the authority's resources and staff are equipped to deal with a crisis situation effectively, while continuing to provide the usual day-to-day services of the Council.
4. In February 2014 Audit & Governance Committee received a report setting out an overview of the council approach and resilience in terms of emergency planning & business continuity. The report highlighted that the authority has a number of detailed and extensive emergency and business continuity plans which support the long term resilience of the city both in times of emergency and during the recovery stage. Key plans are:
  - The Emergency Handbook;
  - Rest Centre Plan;
  - Flood Plan;
  - River Ouse Emergency Plan; (deals with incidents on the river)

- City Centre Evacuation Plan;
  - Various internal Business Continuity Plans.
5. The report also set out that following the accommodation move to West Offices and the integration of a number of functions it was agreed to review the council's approach to business continuity and where appropriate strengthening the approach. Committee asked for an update on this review in 12 months time.

### **The council's overall approach to business continuity**

6. All directorates have carried out Business Impact Assessments (BIA's) to identify their critical functions and subsequently developed Business Continuity Plans (BCP's). The aim of this approach is to:
- Understand what functions are carried out and whether those functions are 'critical';
  - Clearly establish where responsibility for business continuity functions sit, i.e. service / directorate or corporate;
7. To ensure that there was a corporate approach, and importantly a consistency across all business continuity plans, it was agreed that the emergency planning team would review the templates, streamline them making plans focused and concise. This work was undertaken with key representatives from each directorate alongside external peer challenge. New templates for both BIA's and BCP's were devised and put in place.
8. In 2014 an audit of the council's approach to business continuity was undertaken by Veritau. The purpose of this audit was to provide assurance to management that procedures and controls within the system will ensure that:
- Risks and threats to critical services have been identified and assessed;
  - Business continuity plans have been produced and approved to ensure key services can be continue to be provided in an emergency;
  - There is an agreed process for invoking the council's business continuity plans when emergencies occur;

- Testing has been done on business continuity plans and staff have been given training as to how they should be implemented;
  - Business continuity plans have been communicated to relevant staff and published where appropriate.
9. In areas where the work had not yet been completed to reflect the council's move to the West Offices, the audit reviewed the work that had already been done together with the proposed plans to complete outstanding tasks.
10. Key findings of the audit were:
- That good progress was being made in refreshing the council's approach to business continuity and in updating the individual plans to reflect the move to West Offices and other recent changes.
  - Most service level plans have been updated and reviewed and there are plans in place to continue this process up to directorate and corporate level plans.
  - In addition to the completion of these higher level plans, specific outstanding issues identified during the audit relate to the production of plans for services which have a wider corporate dimension, the consideration of telephone service requirements and the availability of hard copy business continuity plans.
11. The overall conclusion of the audit was that it found that the arrangements for managing risk were good with few weaknesses identified. An effective control environment is in operation but there is scope for further improvements in the areas identified. Overall opinion of the controls within the system at the time of the audit was that they provided **Substantial Assurance**. A copy of the audit can be seen at Annex 1.

### **Directorate / Service Position**

12. Significant work has been undertaken by the Emergency Planning team to support the directorates / service areas to complete the BIA's & BCP's. The outcome of this work is that 67 service areas across the council were identified as having critical elements of service delivery and needing BCP's.
13. CMT have received updates on the approach to delivering BCP's and placed the completion of these plans as a priority.

14. Of the 67 service areas identified as needing to complete BCP's, 66 of these have been completed. The one area where work is still being undertaken is Public Health. The reasons for the delay in completing the formal BCP for this area have been the separation of this function from Adult Social Care and the subsequent review of the structure for service delivery.
15. However, it must be stressed that this delay does not place the authority at significant risk. The main responsibilities for a Public Health emergency sit with Public Health England. When considering the CYC input into any response, reciprocal informal arrangements for cover are in place with NYCC. The key focus of the LA response to an emergency would be the Director of Public Health being the public face of any communication, the spokesperson for giving messages to local health providers and the general public.
16. The Council's Public Health function is not a "blue light" service and as such, not a first responder, the role is one of assessment of the nature, scale and impact of any threat, seeking/providing expert advice, communicating messages to the public, working with/advising first responders, and coordinating local health service response.
17. The following table breaks this down by directorate.

<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
Communities & Neighbourhoods	19	18	1
City & Environmental Services	5	5	0
Customer, Business Support Services	18	18	0
Children, Education & Skills	10	10	0
Adult Social Care	13	13	0
Office of Chief Executive	2	2	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>1</b>

18. Having BCP's in place is important, however of equally importance is that they are regularly tested and reviewed. In November 2014, CMT agreed an annual programme of exercises at both directorate and corporate level, with two exercises per year for each directorate along with one corporate exercise per year.

## **Consultation**

19. This report is for information only.

## Recommendations

20. This report is for information only, Audit & Governance Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

Reason: To ensure Members are updated on the Council's approach to business continuity and the current position.

## Contact Details

**Author:**

**Steve Waddington**  
Assistant Director – Housing  
& Community Safety

**Chief Officer Responsible for the report:**

**Sally Burns**  
Director – Communities & Neighbourhoods

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**Approved**

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** - None

**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Annexes

Annex 1 - Audit review of Business Continuity (2014)