

Audit & Governance Committee

12th February 2014

Report of the Assistant Director – Housing & Community Safety

Emergency Planning / Business Continuity - Update

Summary

1. The council has a number of detailed and extensive emergency and business continuity plans which support the long term reliance of the city both in times of emergency and during the recovery stage. Key plans that are in place 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.

2. During 2013 the council carried out a review of its approach to emergency planning and business continuity. It was agreed that the outcome from the review should be an emergency planning / business continuity function that is:
 - Modern, resilient and a cost effective service that is driving best practise, reflective and alive to any new responsibilities;
 - Has a developed understanding of community & business resilience and the work the council needs to do to build resilience especially in areas of high risk;
 - Has a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities across the council and with partners, agencies and the public;
 - Learns from recent events i.e. 2012 Floods, Exercise Vale, including review of learning from regional and national partners;
 - Resourced to ensure sufficient emergency planning capacity to support incidents.

Emergency Planning

3. The main focus in driving towards improving our approach to emergency planning is three fold:
 - a) Ongoing and reflective learning;
 - b) Improving our approach to community resilience;
 - c) Developing our strategic & operational capacity.

Ongoing & Reflective Learning

4. The council plays an active role in the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum where all Category 1 responders come together to review ongoing risks, jointly develop plans and share best practice and learning.
5. Following the floods in 2012, a full multi agency strategic review was undertaken, including all local and national agencies, where lessons from all agencies were shared as well as partnership issues considering the timing and impact of decisions on communities and partner agencies.
6. The council has also taken part in two real time exercises testing the robustness of our response, one exercise was a 'live shooter / terrorist threat' which focused not only on our role supporting the blue light services, but also on our response to providing mass rest centres, managing media communications and the recovery phase.
7. This council has also hosted a further event with regards to an incident resulting in an accident on a defence nuclear material convoy, comprising the MOD, all emergency services as well as the Local Authority and NHS colleagues.
8. A key outcome of these exercises is the shared learning on the day, valuable experience for those officers taking part. However, the review / evaluation of the exercise which is circulated to all agencies taking part will be critical to our process for reviewing and updating our own emergency plans.

Community Resilience

9. Community Resilience is about communities using local resources and knowledge to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements the local emergency services through being collectively prepared to respond and recover, and being able to provide assistance to vulnerable residents.

10. Resilient communities are better prepared to cope during and after an emergency where everyone works together using their local knowledge. Things like understanding what requirements most-at-need groups may have in an emergency can make a real difference. Communities identifying and planning for the risks which they may encounter during a severe flood, heat-wave or snowfall could help in reducing the potential impact on individuals, families and the wider community.
11. The council has historically supported a number of parish councils / communities to come together to develop Community Emergency Plans. At the moment we have seven such plans in place, however a number have not being effectively reviewed by the communities for some time.
12. The Community Safety Overview & Scrutiny Committee has recently undertaken a scrutiny review which developed a number of recommendations to Cabinet with regards to strengthening our approach to community resilience.
13. On the 3rd October, the Emergency Planning unit in partnership with the Communities & Equalities team held a community emergency planning training event for residents which was attended by over 50 members of the public. This event was supported by the Environment Agency, the Red Cross, North Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, The Met Office, North Yorkshire Major Incident Response Team (MIRT) and the City Council. The focus of the event was short presentations from each of the above agencies on what communities can do to support themselves and the agencies in times of emergency.
14. The aim was to engage with communities, peak their interest and then provide them with support to, over time, develop their own community safety / resilience plans. Following the event individuals / groups who indicate a desire to engage in some way, ranging from Flood Wardens to developing full community safety plans will be supported to do so.

Strategic & Operational Capacity

15. Prior to the floods in 2012, Strategic Command Group (Gold) and Tactical Command Group (Silver) had not been established since the floods of 2000, however the 2012 floods saw SCG & TCG's called twice in two months and coming very close to a third within three months. This very quickly resulted in the identifications of shortcomings in our strategic and operational capacity to manage in an emergency.
16. Greater emphasis needed to be placed on the role of chief officers in terms of emergency planning, both in terms of understanding our leadership roles and in terms priorities and decision making in times of emergency.

17. Initial work has focused on two areas:

- The development of our strategic capacity (including training of Chief Officers); and
- The development of a supplementary emergency planning officer role to support the existing Emergency Planning Officers (EPO) during times of emergency.

Development of our strategic capacity

18. A Chief Officer out of hours on call rota has been established which supports the on call Emergency Planning Officers in the event of an incident arising.

19. A training programme has also been developed with all Chief Officers undergoing training on the role expected of them in the event of an emergency, including the role local authorities play as part of the strategic and tactical command groups.

20. Part of the training programme has also been the development of the National Decision Model / Joint Decision Model to support robust decision making in times of emergency.

Supplementary Planning Officer

21. It is proposed to develop capacity within each council directorate creating 5 supplementary Emergency Planning Officers which in times of emergency can be taken out of their substantive roles and, with support, perform the function of an Emergency Planning Officer. This role will be developed during 2014.

Business Continuity

22. As part of the review of business continuity an 'external challenge session' was organised the aim of which was to provide directorates with a fresh look at business continuity, challenge our approach to determining what functions are critical. Key points coming out of the session were:

- The need for strong corporate leadership role in setting business continuity as a corporate priority;
- The need to ensure a multi-layered approach to determining critical services;
- When considering reputation as part of the criteria a number of key points should be considered:
 - i. local, regional and national impacts;

- ii. business leaders confidence in City of York Council to deliver;
- iii. the context within which a service may not be delivered;
- iv. reputational impact on partners.

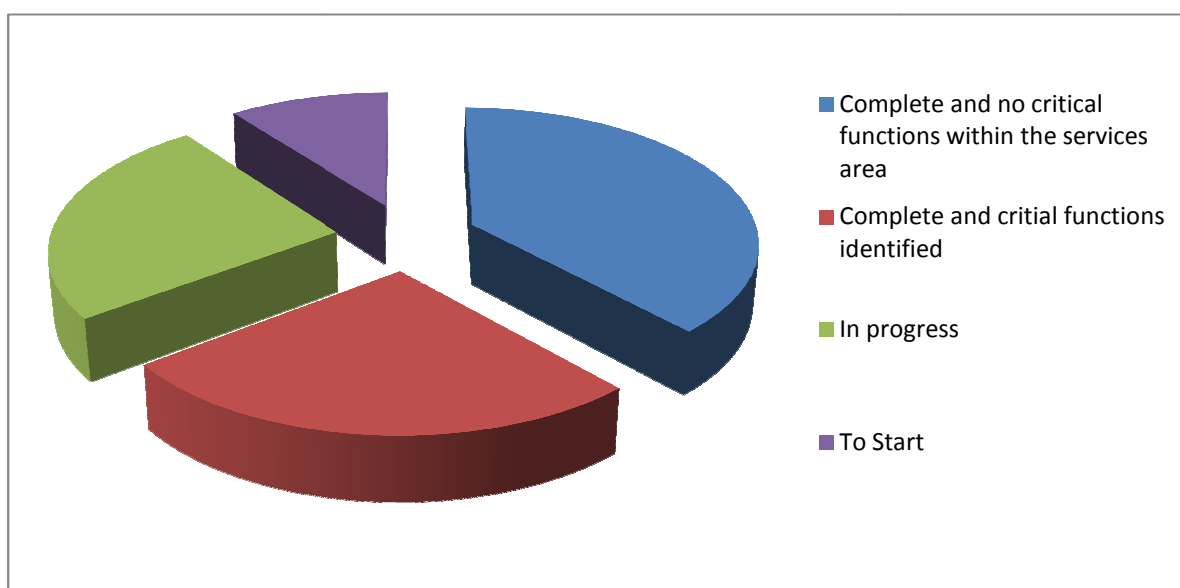
- Financial impact, both in terms of income to City of York Council and payment to external providers (recognising the impact of non-payment on local businesses)
- Timeliness of the service (i.e. our response to dangerous structures)
- Directorate based criteria, i.e. safeguarding issues etc.

23. Following this session directorate representatives are undertaking / refreshing Business Impact Assessments (BIA's) which will identify which elements of their service are critical.

24. In total 68 business areas have been indentified that cover the services that the council deliver. The current picture of Business Impact Assessments / Business Continuity Plans against these business areas is as set out below.

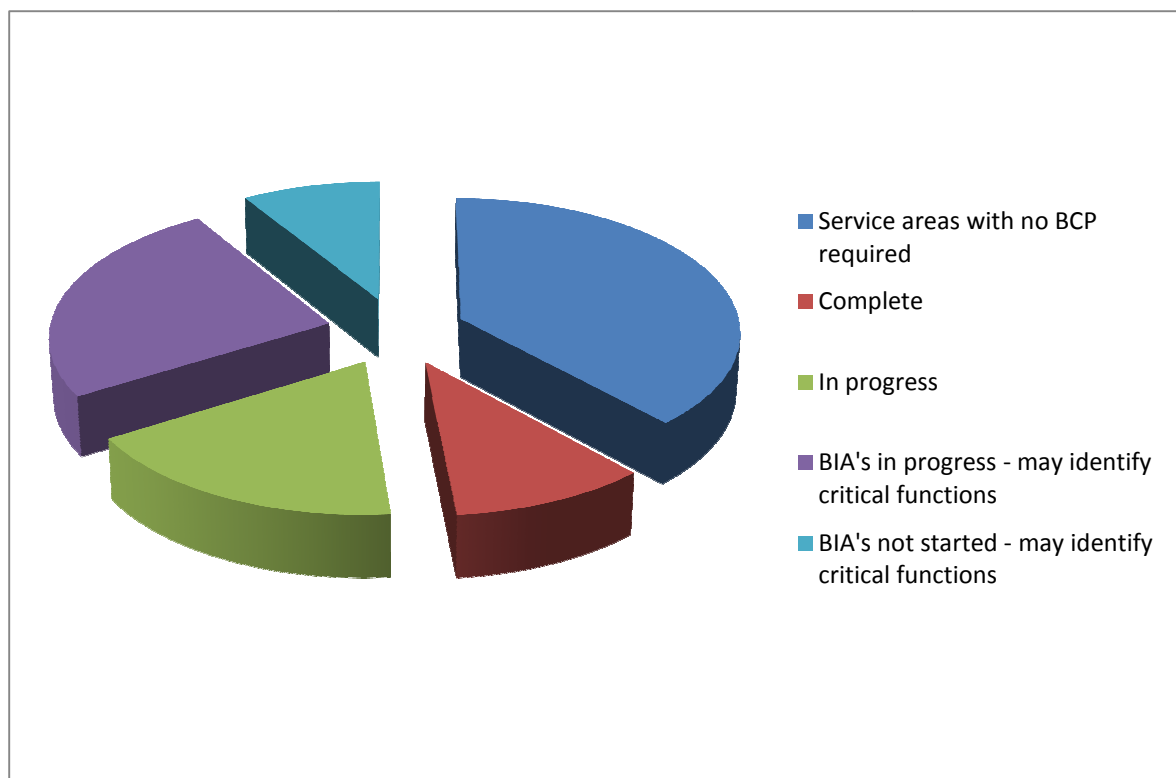
Business Impact Assessments

Complete and no critical functions within the services area	26
Complete and critial functions identified	18
In progress	17
To Start	7
Total	68



Business Continuity Plans

Service areas with no BCP required	26
Complete	7
In progress	12
BIA's in progress - may identify critical functions	17
BIA's not started - may identify critical functions	6
Total	68



25. The business areas where services are still working towards completing their BIA's / BC's, work is ongoing to ensure that where a BIA is complete then, if required, a BCP's will be developed by the end of February 2014, Where BIA's are not in place, a deadline for completion of the BIA and any subsequent BCP has been set for end of March 2014.
26. Moving forward following the completion of BIA's & BCP's, work is planned for March / April to test those plans in light of the Tour de France and the impact this will have on the city leading up to, during and after the event.

Consultation

27. This report is for information only.

Recommendations

28. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

Reason: To ensure that are kept updated on the emergency planning/business continuity arrangements that are in place.

Contact Details

Author:

Steve Waddington
AD – Housing &
Community Safety
Tel: (01904) 554016

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Sally Burns
Director of Communities &
Neighbourhoods

**Report
Approved**



Date

4th Oct 2013

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

All



For further information please contact the author of the report