

26 November 2019

<b>Report of</b>	<b>Assistant Director of Policy &amp; Corporate</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Hayley McGrath</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Annual Review of Business Continuity</b>		<b>☎ 508902</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	Not applicable		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Colchester Borough Council provides a wide range of services to the local community. Any unexpected interruption to those services can have a negative impact on both the community and the authority. As such, the Council has established a Business Continuity process to minimise, as far as possible, the likelihood of an incident occurring and the potential impact if it does happen.
- 1.2 This report provides Members with an overview of the of the Council's Business Continuity activity for the period from 01 October 2018 to 30 September 2019.

## 2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 Consider and comment on the business continuity work undertaken during the period.
- 2.2 Endorse the Business Continuity Strategy for 2020.

## 3. Reason for Recommended Decision

- 3.1 The Risk Management Strategy, which forms part of the policy framework, identifies the Governance & Audit Committee as being responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the risk management process and reporting critical items to cabinet as necessary. Business continuity is an integral part of the risk management process and it is appropriate that a detailed progress report is provided to this Committee.

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 There are no alternative options to consider

## 5. Background Information

- 5.1 Whilst Business Continuity primarily relates to the delivery of the Council's own services, it sits alongside the Council's responsibilities for Emergency Planning, where the Council is required to assist the emergency services in dealing with events in the borough (such as flooding) as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Under the act there are two duties relating specifically to business continuity:
  1. To be able to carry on providing its own services in the event of a disruption
  2. To provide advice and guidance relating to business continuity to local businesses and voluntary organisations.

- 5.2 The responsibility for ensuring that the Council has effective business continuity plans rests with the Chief Operating Officer and the function is delivered by the Corporate Governance Team. The role is to provide advice and guidance to services including the co-ordination of individual service plans as well as the overall Council plan. Issue specific plans, such as responding to a flu pandemic, are also required.
- 5.3 Business continuity issues are primarily reported to the 'First Call Officer' group, this consists of the senior management team and other key staff. The primary role of this group is to provide the strategic management of any emergency – either internal or external. The group meets every two months to review plans and consider emergency planning and business continuity issues.

## **6. Summary of Work Undertaken**

- 6.1 The primary focus for 2019 has been preparations for the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. This has required a significant input from the Resilience Officer (RO) to ensure that CBC participates in local and national exercises and plans. Officers have also been trained to provide administration support to the Essex Resilience Forum, in the event that national plans (primarily focused on a 'no-deal' exit) are activated. In the lead up to the two proposed exit dates, daily situation reports were compiled and senior management participated in regular conference calls. Internally the impacts of the EU exit have been reviewed and this has led to revised plans, such as vehicle usage requirements and staffing.
- 6.2 During the year the RO has been working with services to update and refine their individual plans. The RO's role is to provide advice and guidance about issues that services need to consider and the content of the plan, however it is the service's responsibility to produce the plan. Historically each service area has produced one plan for all of their functions, however this has recently been changed to producing a streamlined plan for each key function, so that plans can easily be moved between services. The RO is currently putting together a review timetable for each service area and reports of completed and outstanding plans will be provided to the First Call Officer group.
- 6.3 Alongside revising service plans training has been provided for officers on both business continuity and emergency planning, there has been a generator test at Rowan House and the severe weather plan has been reviewed. Other service areas have also been working on out of hours security arrangements for Rowan House and out of hours support for IT.
- 6.7 We continue to work collaboratively with the Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) to produce generic plans that can be used across the whole of the County. This year we have produced the Major Accidents Hazards and Pipelines plan, along with reviewing existing plans. Senior officers have also taken part in strategic and tactical training exercises facilitated by the ERF.

## **7.0 Business Continuity Strategy for 2020**

- 7.1 The Business Continuity Strategy was agreed for the first time in 2009. A requirement within the strategy, and also of the regular internal audit assessment, is that it is reviewed annually to ensure that it is still appropriate to the Council's needs.
- 7.2 Therefore a review has been undertaken and the strategy has been updated for 2020. The revised strategy is attached at appendix A. It is considered that the strategy continues to meet the needs of the organisation and therefore there are no changes to the strategy or the business continuity process.

## **8. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights implications**

- 8.1 There are no equality, diversity or Human Rights implications as a result of this report.

## **9. Strategic Plan References**

- 9.1 The ability of the Council to carry on providing critical services, even when dealing with a major disruption, is fundamental to ensuring the achievement of the strategic plan objectives.

## **10. Risk Management Implications**

- 10.1 The failure to adequately manage a business interruption may have an effect on the ability of the Council to achieve its objectives and operate effectively.

## **11. Other Standard References**

- 11.1 There are no particular references to consultation or publicity considerations or financial; community safety or health and safety implications.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A – Business Continuity Strategy for 2020