

22 November 2016

Report of

Assistant Chief Executive

Author

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Title

Annual Review of Business Continuity

Wards  
affected

Not applicable

**This report reviews the Business Continuity work undertaken  
for the period 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.**

## 1. Actions Required

- 1.1 Consider and note the business continuity work undertaken during the period.
- 1.2 Consider and comment on the review of the Business Continuity Strategy.
- 1.3 Consider and note the intended work plan for 2017.

## 2. Reason for Scrutiny

- 2.1 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.

## 3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 the Council has two duties relating 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.
- 3.2 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 in Corporate and Financial Management. 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. The duty to provide advice and guidance to local businesses also sits within the Corporate Governance Team.
- 3.3 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.

#### **4. Summary of Work Undertaken**

- 4.1 Alongside the normal process of working with services to review and update plans, the following work has also been completed:
- 4.2 Working in conjunction with the Essex Resilience Forum, to develop national and regional plans for fuel and flu & mass death. This has involved working with services to determine requirements and in respect of the mass death plan, the capacity of the cemetery and crematorium.
- 4.3 Providing advice and guidance to the new Health & Safety Manager at Colchester Borough Homes to help develop and improve the sheltered housing section in their plan, following an incident, and working on areas where the CBC and CBH plans overlap.
- 4.4 The Council's critical services list has been reviewed and updated. This prioritises services in the event that there are limited resources, such as office space or IT equipment.
- 4.5 The Council uses the Resilience Direct website to store Emergency Planning information. This allows remote access to plans in the event that the Council's IT systems are unavailable and also allows collaboration with other authorities in Essex. A Business Continuity area has now been added to the website, to enable remote access to critical information.
- 4.6 The Council's Incident Management Plan (IMP) has been updated to reflect changing roles and contacts. The IMP is the overarching document that facilitates the Council's response in the event of an incident occurring
- 4.7 Each service of the Council has their own plan, which sets out their specific information and requirements. The template used for these plans has been updated following consultation with other districts, and is being rolled out across the services.
- 4.8 The on-line information relating to Business Continuity has been updated for the launch of the Council's new intranet system.
- 4.9 The Resilience Officer has completed the Business Continuity Institute Certificate examination.
- 4.10 The Corporate Governance Manager and the Resilience Officer represented the service at several events including the annual parish councils meeting and county wide training exercises.
- 4.11 The Resilience Officer has developed a strong working relationship with the other Essex Authorities and most officers now work together at Essex Fire and Rescue headquarters at Kelvedon, one day a week.

## **5. Business Continuity Strategy for 2017**

- 5.1 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.
- 5.2 Therefore a review has been undertaken and the strategy has been updated for 2017. The revised strategy is attached at appendix 1. It is considered that the strategy continues to meet the needs of the organisation and therefore there are no fundamental changes to the strategy or the business continuity process.

## **6. Work plan for 2017**

- 6.1 The following areas will be the primary focus for developing business continuity further in 2017:
  - Testing of Service Plans to ensure that they are complete and fit for purpose
  - Developing a comprehensive self-serve presence on the intranet for both management of plans and training.
  - Mapping Business Continuity plans with significant partners and contractors.

## **7. Proposals**

- 7.1 To note and comment upon the Councils progress and performance with regard to business continuity during 2016, the Business Continuity Strategy and work plan for 2017.

## **8. Strategic Plan Implications**

- 8.1 The ability of the Council to carry on providing critical services, even when dealing with a major disruption, is a fundamental part of customer excellence.

## **9. Risk Management Implications**

- 9.1 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.

## **10. Other Standard References**

- 10.1 There are no direct Publicity, Financial, Consultation, Equality and Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety or Health and Safety implications as a result of this report.