

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING - PROGRESS REPORT

Corporate Director (Resources)

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of progress made since the previous report.

2 Recommendations/for decision

- 2.1 To note the content of the report

3 Background

- 3.1 At its January 2007 meeting the Audit Panel discussed the then current position with the Authority's preparations of a Business Continuity (BC) plan which were being reviewed by Internal Audit. At that time our first BC plan had been prepared and published but the Internal Audit report issued in February 2007 identified a number of areas, including items included in the Audit Commission's checklist, where further work was necessary.
- 3.2 At the September 2007 meeting of the Audit Committee an update on Business Continuity was requested. The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the progress of Business Continuity arrangements since January 2007.
- 3.3 In the intervening period the following issues highlighted by the Audit Commission checklist have been addressed:
- 3.4 All services have now completed tests of their arrangements at their Continuity Areas – the alternative office location from which they would maintain a limited service. Representatives from each service attended the office areas allocated as their Continuity Area and took over workstations. They logged on to their IT systems and called forward their phone extension before testing access to their work. This process familiarised staff with their allocated areas and also with working at PCs where the settings and appearance are not what they are used to.
- 3.5 For some teams their continuity areas are in meeting rooms and this testing involved setting up workspaces including the provision of furniture & network services. Facilities Management & IT colleagues were involved in these tests thus giving them experience of the part they would have to play.
- 3.6 The BC Plan identifies a 'Restoration Team' to manage the response to an incident. This team would consist of representatives from Corporate Team and those services, such as IT, Property Services, Communications, insurance, etc, who would have additional work as a result of the incident. An exercise for the members of this team was held in late June to talk through how an incident might develop and what decisions & actions would be taken at each stage. This confirmed the basic premise of the plan but highlighted a number of areas where its connection with other processes, such as fire evacuation, needed tightening up.

- 3.7 Reviews of information security and Risk Management have been completed by Internal Audit. One outcome is the recruitment of a Risk Manager who will start on November 1st. An Information Governance Group, chaired by the Corporate Director (Community), has been established to take on responsibility for AVDC's use of information, information security and governance.
- 3.8 One potential weak point in continuing our services is our reliance upon external contractors and suppliers. Heads of Service have been asked to check with contractors the state of their BC planning arrangements. It has also been recommended that all new contracts for significant works or services should require suppliers to satisfy AVDC of their business continuity arrangements.
- 3.9 Appendix One shows our current position against the Audit Commission checklist

4 Current Areas of Work

- 4.1 The recent move of some staff from Exchange Street to the new Gateway office will require some updating of the BC Plan and this work is in progress. Facilities at Gateway for the provision of Continuity Areas are not the same as at Exchange Street & some services, such as Electoral Registration and Community Safety, have made moves to & from other offices.
- 4.2 Further moves are currently being planned which involve part of the Leisure Division moving from High Street to Pembroke Road. Once the detail is known, further adjustment of the BC plan will be undertaken.
- 4.3 Service BC Planning representatives have been asked to review their own plan to ensure that the number of spaces required and the contact names are all up to date. This information will be fed into corporate document and Continuity Areas confirmed or re-allocated. In particular, a continuity area for Customer Services needs to be determined.
- 4.4 Following on from this, the Emergency Planning Officer intends to meet with each of the Service BC Planning representatives to carry out a thorough review of the prioritised functions within the service, using a business impact analysis process. This will give a more formal footing to those priorities and enable comparison of priorities between services. In doing this, the risks identified in the Service & Corporate Risk Registers will be noted and addressed.
- 4.5 A British Standard for Business Continuity Management (BS25999 part 2) has recently been published in draft form. The Standard specifies requirements for setting up and managing an effective business continuity management system. The Emergency Planning Officer is studying this standard with the intention of incorporate as much as possible of the standard into the revised edition of the BC Plan.

4.6 The current BC planning has been done around the basis of an incident which prevents the use of one of our buildings. In addition, work is ongoing to consider and plan for the effects of an influenza pandemic or the like which could lead to widespread or long term absences.

5 Resource implications

5.1 The BC Plan needs to be kept up-to-date. This involves not only the Emergency Planning Officer in a co-ordinating role but also representatives from each Division to manage & maintain their own sections of the Plan.

5.2 It is also necessary for all staff to be aware of their role in implementing the BC Plan through training and exercising at regular intervals.

6 Response to Key Aims and Outcomes

6.1 The development & maintenance of the Business Continuity Plan will enable the Authority to minimise the reduction of services and continue to deliver all Key Aims & Outcomes in the event of a disruptive incident.

Contact Officer
Background Documents

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Service Continuity Plan
Internal Audit Report on Business Continuity February 2007