

**CORPORATE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING (2012 ANNUAL REPORT)**  
**(Report by the Head of Information Management)**

**1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to:

- a) Inform the **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL (CGP)** of the progress that has been made in planning for Corporate Business Continuity; and,
- b) Report on BCP incidents since September 2011.

This paper describes the processes around the development and proposed maintenance of the **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)** but does not include the detail of the Plan itself.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council's **Service Recovery Plan** and associated responsibilities were audited in 2010/11. The final report can be found here:

<http://teams.huntsdc.gov.uk/finserv/audit/actions/Audit%20Reports/Business%20Continuity%2011.12.pdf>

- 2.2 Two high risks were identified:

- a) "Overall responsibility for BC Management has not been re-assigned or communicated since the retirement of the Manager responsible in March [2011]. Whilst there is a Corporate Service Resumption Team comprised of representatives from across the Council, there is no evidence that the terms of reference for the Team and formal roles and responsibilities have been documented and agreed. There is an increased risk of a lack of formal accountability for Business Continuity."
- a) "Although the Council has a "Corporate Service Resumption Plan", which contains much of the detail that would normally be expected with a BC Management plan, there are some key exceptions e.g. it was only available as a single hard copy in the office and required review as there has been no significant update of the plan since June 2008. There is a risk that the plan will not support the Council's priority objectives during an invocation."

2.3 In addressing these and other issues the following actions were taken:

- a) The Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects), as Head of Paid Service, assumed responsibility for Corporate Business Continuity;
- b) The Executive Leader became the Executive Member with responsibility for Business Continuity;
- c) The Head of Information Management (HoIM) was tasked to:
  - (i) Lead the project to review & update the **Service Recovery Plan** (now the **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)** and develop a **BC Management System (BCMS)** (on-going – version 1.0 of BCP completed);
  - (ii) Re-establish a team of Officers who would be responsible, on behalf of SMG, for developing service-specific BC plans - within an overall corporate BC plan framework (completed);
  - (iii) Establish mechanisms to support the on-going sustainable maintenance & development of the Plan (completed);
  - (iv) Exercise the Plan at regular intervals (to be done); and,
  - (v) Take the corporate lead, on behalf of SMG, should the Plan need to be implemented (on-going).

**NB** In the absence of the HoIM, the Head of Environmental Management would take on this role (v). In the absence of both these HoS then one of Managing Directors would nominate one of the remaining Heads of Service to take on this role. The role should **not** fall to a Team Manager in IMD as they are likely to be engaged in implementing the ICT-specific BCP.

2.4 The CGP recorded its concern regarding the adequacy of the Business Continuity arrangements in the September 2012 Annual Governance Statement and recorded its intention to monitor the progress of Business Continuity Plan improvement.

2.5 An earlier version of this report was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) panel on the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012. The points raised by the panel have been either incorporated into the BCP or included in the **Improvement Plan** for the BCP.

### 3. DEVELOPING THE BC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (BCMS) & BC PLAN (BCP)

3.1 Research was undertaken into how other authorities address BC; in particular, Cambridgeshire County, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire were consulted. It was decided that the South Cambridgeshire approach offered a clear and comprehensive model and this has been adopted for the HDC BC Plan. Several adaptations & improvements have been made to the original SCDC model during the project.

3.2 The development team has made good use of available technologies to help both the development of the Plan and to provide an encompassing BCMS. For example,

- a) Separate SharePoint sites<sup>1</sup> have been established for the project and “business as usual”; these help communicate information and understanding about the BC process as well as the Plan itself; they also provide a means to

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<sup>1</sup> SharePoint is an intranet-based information system which allows teams to share information in a controlled manner

- record and learn lessons from previous incidents and hence provide opportunities to develop and improve the BC Plan;
- b) Encrypted USB sticks will contain both the BC Plan and supporting documents required by individual services.
  - c) A mechanism to “broadcast” SMS messages to key personnel will be available to complement other communication channels during a Business Continuity incident.
- 3.3 The team has worked on a one-to-one basis with BC Co-ordinators as well as holding monthly joint meetings. This has helped understanding of the BC process for the co-ordinators and been insightful – in terms of understanding how services work and their priorities - for the development team as well.
- 3.4 It is recognised that the “perfect” plan, which would be applicable in all scenarios, would never be achievable; there would always be something extra which could be developed. Therefore, it was decided that the plan needed to be flexible and to focus on identifying what **outcomes** were most important to individual services within certain timeframes ie within 24 hours, 7 days and 30 days of a major incident.
- 3.5 Having identified the priority outcomes the Plan seeks to identify what resources & processes would be required to deliver these outcomes for services.
- 3.6 A further, as yet incomplete, development – included with the BCP’s Improvement Plan - is to rationalise the service priorities and, hence, produce a “definitive” priority service list for the Council. This is important to ensure that reduced Council capability, during a Business Continuity incident, can be targeted on the most urgent & important service elements.
- 3.7 However, at different times of the month and at different times of the year, services have different priorities. For example, “year-end” is important for a number of services whereas the preparation for, and the running of elections is particularly important to Electoral Services. A “time-line” is being prepared to capture these calendar-dependent priorities.
- 3.8 Most of the services which the Council provides depend heavily on the availability of information provided through computer-based systems. However, in developing the service-specific plans BC Coordinators were challenged to consider the scenario where their usual reliance on computer-based systems was compromised. This proved a useful approach in that it focussed attention on what was most important and how alternative sources of information - and other necessary resources - could be provided.
- 3.9 As each service developed their individual plans various issues were identified and logged. For example, inter-dependencies between services became evident – in particular between certain services and customer services. Some of these issues were service-specific and others more generic. All these issues have been recorded and - together with an independent review of the Plan (see 3.10) and with feedback from colleagues - form the Improvement Plan for the BCP. The **draft** Improvement Plan can be found in Appendix 9 of the BCP; this will need to be re-assessed in light of available resources.

- 3.10 BGG Associates, who specialise in the areas of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity, have worked with the Emergency Planning team for a number of years. BGG was recently commissioned to review the draft BCP against the British Standard for Business Continuity BS25999 (much of which has recently been incorporated into ISO22301). BGG subsequently produced a report of their findings making a total of 31 recommendations. The executive summary is reproduced in Annex 1.

The overall view was that the BCP (version 1.0) was a “good start” and that “many of the fundamental building blocks have now been developed”.

#### 4. **INSTIGATION OF THE BC PLAN IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS**

- 4.1 There were 6 “notable” incidents (or anticipated incidents) over the last 12 months which “triggered” action by the BC Team (or parts thereof); namely:

November 2011:	strike action
February 2012:	adverse weather (snow - 2 instances)
March 2012:	fuel shortage (potential for)
March/April 2012:	Call Centre: Speke House/Pathfinder telephony issues
April 2012:	Electronic Document Management (EDM) failure

- 4.2 Although the new corporate BCP was not fully in place elements of this were used successfully and the BC Team met and/or contributed towards the resolution of the incidents. Post-incident review sessions were (generally) held to learn any lessons. The documentation relating to these incidents is held on the “business as usual” BCP site:

<http://initiatives.huntsdc.gov.uk/BusinessContinuity/default.aspx>

- 4.3 In addition there were a number of ICT-specific incidents which were addressed by IMD and the affected service(s). These were addressed using the IMD HESP (Help Desk Emergency Situation Procedure) process which has been in place since 2004. HESP follows the same basic corporate BCP process of “analyse-document-communicate-recover-review & learn”. However, due to the Council’s heavy reliance on operational ICT, a review of the HESP process will be included within the BCP Improvement Plan.
- 4.4 In all 25 HESP incidents were logged during the period September 2011 to August 2012.

#### 5. **ISSUES**

- 5.1 As issues were identified during the development project they have been logged and incorporated within the **Improvement Plan** (Appendix 9 of the BCP).
- 5.2 The Council’s Emergency Plan (EP) and Business Continuity Plan need to be “synchronised”. During the development of the BCP there was close working with the EP team. Further work needs to be done to ensure the 2 plans are complementary. It was noted that some other authorities combine the roles of BC & EP coordination - this needs further consideration.

- 5.3 The identification of alternative sites to accommodate Council services after a major incident is a priority objective. The Council's participation in both the Making Assets Count (MAC) project and Cambridgeshire Public Services Network (CPSN) should facilitate achieving this objective.

## **RISKS**

- 5.4 Insufficient time may be devoted to the ICT/IMD BCP due to the need to develop and execute the corporate BCP. Mitigation: the Head of Information Management has delegated responsibility for the ICT/IMD BCP to the IMD Operations Manager and the IMD Development Manager. It may be necessary to spend more IMD resource developing the ICT BCP than developing other more "corporate" elements of the Improvement Plan as failures of ICT, arguably, pose most risk to Business Continuity.
- 5.5 The BCP may be insufficient or over-engineered. Mitigation: a) an independent review of the Plan (by BGG) has reduced this risk; b) a continuous improvement programme will be instigated including reviews of current best practice; c) practical exercises, facilitated by external experts, will be held annually, and, d) regular "engagement" with both Senior Management Group and the BC Team (together with a formal annual report to COMT and the Governance Panel) will make sure the BCP is regularly reviewed.
- 5.6 Outsourced services may have inadequate BCPs (eg LGSS HR/ODW/Payroll/Recruitment, HIA) and accountability for their development and upkeep may be unclear. Mitigation: the BCP Improvement Plan schedules further work in this area.

## **6. RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS**

- 6.1 Each Head of Service has nominated a BC Coordinator and Deputy to develop and maintain a service-based BCP which "feeds" into the Corporate BCP maintained by IMD.
- 6.2 During the **development** phase of this new version of the BCP an estimated 0.7 FTE effort has been expended:
- (i) 0.25 FTE (services)
  - (ii) 0.2 FTE (IMD Support Team Leader)
  - (iii) 0.2 FTE (HoIM)
  - (iv) 0.05 FTE (IMD Support Team)
- 6.3 It is expected that the effort required during the next 12 months will be of a similar level as there are a significant number of elements which need to be developed further.
- 6.4 During September 2011 an MTP bid was submitted to fund external consultancy / training / supplies although it was unclear, at the time, what level of funding was required. This allowed for £10k in each of the years 2011-12 & 2012-13. The £10k was unspent in 2011-2012. A revised MTP bid was submitted in September 2012 giving the following spend profile:

2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
£6k	£4k	£4k	£4k	£4k

Internally-funded staff resources are not included within this bid but are estimated to be 0.7 FTE in 2012-13 reducing to 0.5 FTE thereafter.

## 7. **NEXT STEPS**

- 7.1 Encrypted USB sticks will be issued/re-issued with the BCP. The Council remains “at risk” until this has been done as the Service Recovery Plan is substantially out of date. The mechanism for “self-service” updating of the USB sticks will also be introduced at the same time.
- 7.2 Hard copies of the Plan will be issued in line with Appendix A10 of the Plan.
- 7.3 The Improvement Plan will be reviewed and priority actions will be scheduled for the period to August 2013.
- 7.4 In addition to carrying out the updates set out in the Improvement Plan the following annual cycle (to help achieve continual improvement) is anticipated:
- (i) Quarterly meetings of the BC Team have been diarised;
  - (ii) The first annual BC exercise is scheduled for January / February 2013;
  - (iii) The BCP will be reviewed annually in June/July 2013 and submitted, for approval, to COMT in August 2013; and,
  - (iv) Review by Governance Panel in December 2013.

## 8. **CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 Good progress has been made with replacing the former Service Recovery Plan with the Business Continuity Plan. A new group of BC Coordinators and Deputies has been established and there has been excellent input from this group in developing their service-specific BCPs.
- 8.2 Intranet sites have been set-up for both the development project and BC “business as usual”. These help in the communication and management of the BCP.
- 8.3 A comprehensive draft Improvement Plan has been developed.
- 8.4 The BC Team has successfully addressed a number of BCP incidents in the last 12 months.

Background documents:

1. **Corporate Business Continuity Plan** (Version 1.0 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2012)
2. **Review of Huntingdonshire District Council's Business Continuity Plan** (BGG 9<sup>th</sup> October 2012)
3. Draft minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> November 2012 meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) panel

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## Annex 1

### **Executive Summary**

(from BGG's Review of Huntingdonshire District Council's Business Continuity Plan)

Without a Business Continuity Plan being in place the Council is very vulnerable to disruptive incidents, it is therefore important to issue a plan at the earliest opportunity and then work towards a programme of continual improvement.

A significant start has been made in developing a Business Continuity Management System for the Council and the Improvement Plan (Appendix A9) has already identified a number of areas where further improvement can be made over time.

We have reviewed the current draft Plans against the industry best practice standard of BS25999 and, not surprisingly given the early stage in the plan development, have identified areas for further development (See Section 2).

We have also identified a number of areas where we believe the content of the Corporate Business Continuity Plan (CBCP) could be further developed (See Section 3).

We have taken an overview of the Service Plans detailed in Appendices B-O and identified a number of areas for further improvement (See Appendix 1).

At Section 4 we have detailed a suggested Action Plan which should be read together with the Council's own BCP Improvement Plan.

We consider that the high priorities for the Council should be to:

1. Produce a Council prioritised list of services identifying 'key services'.
2. Undertake a detailed business impact assessment to determine the impact of any disruption of the activities that support the Council's key products, services should then be assessed and prioritised.
3. Clarify the roles and membership of the EBCT and the CBCT.
4. Clarify and test the arrangements for producing and holding contact details.

The Council has made a good start on the Business Continuity journey and many of the fundamental building blocks have now been developed, the next stage is to refine and test the draft plan to ensure that the blocks fit together and the plan works in practice.