

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Progress Report on Business Continuity Planning
Meeting/Date: Corporate Governance Committee 7 December 2016
Executive Portfolio: Cllr Cawley, Organisation and Customer Services
Report by: Adrian Dobbyne, Corporate Team Manager
Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Progress is on target to complete the revisions to the Business Continuity Plans and our approach to business continuity management to be completed by the end of December 2016. It is clear what the next steps are and who is to undertake them and it has been agreed to complete this work in the timescale advised with plans in place with Internal Audit to then undertake a test of the Plan in Quarter 4 2016/17.

The new Plan will follow a template as advised by the Government.

Recommendation(s):

Members are asked to comment on the report indicating the progress made in revising the Business Continuity Plans.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This is to outline the progress made on updating our Business Continuity Planning at Huntingdonshire District Council.

2. BACKGROUND / UPDATE

- 2.1 Corporate Governance Committee received a report on 7 June 2016 and agreed the following actions with regards Business Continuity Planning (BCP):

- Prepare a new Template for the Business Continuity Plan;
- Consider having one organisational Plan with appendices that provide additional information per Service where relevant;
- Review roles and responsibilities and confirm these to all concerned;
- Review the management of the plans and the mechanism of storage and accessibility;
- Organise for an annual test of the new Plan;
- Schedule an audit for early 2017 by Internal Audit, after the Plans have been updated and the test carried out; and
- To undertake a review of the various scenario plans (e.g. adverse weather, fuel shortages) in place.

Taking each of these actions in order, this is the progress that has been made.

- 2.2 A new template is currently in draft form. This is actually changing the nature of the template as we are following a recently issued template from the Government. Although it covers similar areas to our previous template, it does change the emphasis in a few places. For example, there are more details on what is required to restore services such as staffing levels, locations, resources, data and therefore the dependencies, to be clear on how we can be up and running after a disruption to services provision. It will also enable a clearer set of priorities to be made to avoid duplications. For example, we only need to state once (listed under Resources) that financial systems need to be up and running to make payments, rather than state them in the list of priorities for all Services. A key aspect of the current work is to really challenge some assumptions made in the Plan, so that the Senior Management Team (SMT) are absolutely clear that they are priority activities within the correct timescales needed for restoration of services. If it is not a priority, then it is not in the Plan.
- 2.3 There will be one organisational wide Plan. This will confirm all the priority activities to be reinstated in specific timescales and will include a set of generic actions to mitigate hazards / risks that apply in most cases to all Services. This follows the principle that the actions to mitigate against the loss of people, IT, accommodation, utilities etc. are generally common across all Services and any specific activity needing further actions can be held within teams. It does look though that we will have a specific additional Plan for Customer Services. This is still to be finalised, but some specific actions required within this Service do look as if they would be best supported by their own unique Plan and it will help to keep the organisational Plan to a manageable size.
- 2.4 There has been a revision to the roles and responsibilities. In most cases, the approach has been to specify job roles that have a responsibility rather than the detailed list of names of Officers in the previous Plan. This prevents the Plan from getting or at least looking out of date so early and encourages a more flexible approach to managing business continuity, where the role can signpost where to look for support so that if the post holder is not available, other Officers can step in.

- 2.5 The current management arrangements for the Plan are cumbersome and what is obvious is that as people have left the organisation or changed roles over the past 2 years, we have had little control over any returns or removal of the Plans in either hard copy or electronic through memory sticks (they do contain some confidential information). We will take steps to retrieve all Plans where they are no longer required. Our SharePoint site on our Intranet where Plans and supporting documentation is kept is populated with loads of documents. A more controlled management of the Plan will be introduced and outlined in the Plan and a clear up of the data on the Intranet undertaken.
- 2.6 Internal Audit were due to carry out an audit on business continuity and this was postponed to enable this review of our arrangements to be carried out first. We are scheduling in for the period January – March 2017 for the audit to take the form of a series of tests to check many of the assumptions of the Plan.
- 2.7 In 2017/18, we will undertake a desk top scenario planning exercise of the Plan. This will follow the Plan being updated following the outcomes based on the findings of the tests.

3. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS

- 3.1 There is a key risk that if our plans are not maintained and fit for purpose, we are not able to manage effectively any scenario that calls into play our business continuity arrangements. Although the current plans can be used with adaptability and application from Managers, the risk is that this would slow up any response and so limit our effectiveness.

4. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 It is expected that a draft of the new Plan will be presented to SMT in December, with a final version produced in January 2017.

5. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 5.1 This links to the Corporate Plan Strategic Priority of “Becoming a More Efficient and Effective Council”.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The resources required the next stages are for the Corporate Team Manager to complete the first draft which requires SMT to complete their revisions of the service priorities to enable an up to date schedule to be included. In order to produce the final version, SMT will be required to answer the impact analysis as per the template. The Plan when completed in January will be subject to a test by Audit, which has been scheduled into the revised 2016/17 Audit Plan.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no other implications to consider.

8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 8.1 That this is the best use of our resources to make amendments to the Business Continuity Plans at the levels suggested to keep the plans relevant and fit for purpose.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None applicable

CONTACT OFFICER

Adrian Dobbyne, Corporate Team Manager

Tel No: 01480 388100

Email: Adrian.dobbyne@huntingdonshire.gov.uk