

**To: Audit and Governance Committee**

**Date: 11 January 2018**

**Report of: Head of Financial Services**

**Title of Report: Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Review – Progress Report**

# Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report**: To update the Committee on the progress of the review of Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans.

# Key decision: No

**Executive lead member: Councillor Ed Turner**

**Policy Framework: Efficient and Effective Council**

**Recommendation: That the Committee notes the content of the report**

**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1**  **Category 1, 2 and 3 Critical Services**

**Appendix 2 Zurich Report Executive Summary**

**Background**

1. A Business Continuity and Disaster recovery audit was undertaken by BDO as part of their 2016/17 Internal Audit Programme. The audit report was considered by the Committee on 1st March 2017. Since the audit report was considered by the Committee significant progress has been made in reviewing and developing the Council’s Business Continuity and Disaster Recover Plans. This report provides an update on that work.

**Progress Overview**

1. Following the audit of the Council’s Business Continuity and Disaster Recover Plans (BCPs), an initial scoping meeting was held with Zurich, the Council’s insurance providers to discuss how the Council’s BCP’s could be made more robust and fit for purpose. In line with the recommendations from the audit, it was subsequently agreed that the scope of the work with Zurich would include:

* Refresher session on BCP
* Review the plans
* Test the plans
* Feedback and revise the plans

This work was undertaken as part of the risk management support provision included in the Council’s insurance contract.

1. Six stages were identified:

Stage 1 – A workshop, led by Zurich, to cover:

* An overview of the process, what Business Continuity Management is and why it is important.
* The types of incidents or crisis the Council might face and some of the challenges that may be met with when responding.
* What a good Business Continuity Plan looks like.
* Practical tips and best practice on how to write and develop effective Business Continuity Plans.

Stage 2 – Service Heads to review and update their service area Business Continuity Plans in accordance with advice and support received from Financial Services and Zurich.

Stage 3 – Once all Plans have been updated internally, Zurich to carry out an independent desktop review of the revised plans in line with good practice and to provide a report on their findings.

Stage 4–Heads of Service to update their plans as necessary following subsequent feedback.

Stage 5- Zurich to provide a realistic and challenging test of the Business Continuity Plans (and the Corporate BCP) on 18th October 2017 so that the Council can be confident that the Plans are broadly effective. The exercise will also help raise awareness of the importance of the Plans and help identify any gaps or weaknesses. The test exercise to involve:

* Presenting Heads of Service and their teams with a scenario or scenarios that would create a crisis or major disruption.
* Use of the plans to respond to the crisis.
* Identifying any gaps or potential weaknesses in the plans.

Stage 6 –After the test, Zurich to provide a short report with action points and recommendations for the Council to review and implement.

1. Each of the stages has now been completed and a draft report from Zurich Risk Engineering UK has been received. The Executive Summary can be found at Appendix 2.

**Business Continuity Group**

1. A Business Continuity Group has also been formed which has members representing each of the Council’s service areas. This group’s Terms of Reference are to progress the updates to the Business Continuity Plans and to deal with the issues arising from the audit report and also actions arising from the Zurich report. Progress to date can be measured against the seven areas for improvement identified in BDO’s audit report. The Group has met in full once but there have been a number of subgroup meetings and work has been requested via circulated emails. A further meeting is planned for later in January.

**Progress against Audit Recommendations and Actions Going Forward**

Finding 1 – the Council’s services have not been assessed to determine their criticality.

1. The Council’s Corporate Affairs Lead is reviewing criticality as part of the Corporate Business Continuity Plan review. No changes are currently proposed to the list of Category 1, 2 and 3 critical services agreed by the Council’s Corporate Management Team (CMT) in 2014 (shown at Appendix 1). The Council’s services have not changed in the intervening period nor has the impact on the factors that determine the level of criticality e.g. impact on life, reputation. More information is needed on the resources required, both staff and equipment, and this is being considered in connection with workplace availability and IT systems requirements and accessibility.
2. Service Heads are being asked to comment on the corporate categorization of critical services and to review the resources they would require at the recovery location in the short term. CMT will be asked to comment on/confirm the categorization and resource requirements early in the New Year after which Service Heads will be asked to update their BCPs to reflect any changes to the categorization or resource requirements.

Finding 2 – the Business Continuity Plans for the Council’s services were found to be incomplete or missing.

1. All of the Council’s service area BCPs have been reviewed and revised following a review by Zurich, which included a workshop session with Service Heads on 23rd May 2017). The plans now reflect the current Council structure and internal and external contact details have been updated. The Plans will be kept under review and further changes will be made as necessary – see para 7 above..

Finding 3 – there is not an effective process to manage the Council’s continuity planning to provide central oversight.

1. The Financial Accounting Manager is responsible for ensuring that a sound business continuity framework is in place, including oversight of service area BCPs, and regular testing. The Business Continuity Group and ongoing support from Zurich will be used to facilitate this. Service Heads are responsible for their service area’s BCP.

Finding 4 – there is not a defined IT Disaster Recovery Plan in place

1. SCC, the Council’s infrastructure provider, has a Data Centre Continuity Plan to ensure it is prepared to respond to continuity events impacting operations at the Data Centre. The Plan was reviewed and updated in April 2017. In addition, Business Improvement’s BCP has a section that relates to ICT business continuity processes. A review of the IT Disaster Recovery Plan has recently been undertaken by the Council’s ICT department in conjunction with SCC.

Finding 5 – the Council’s business continuity and disaster recovery plans are not tested on a routine basis.

1. Two IT disaster recovery tests have taken place in 2017 with SCC. The first, in March, successfully tested the recovery process to obtain confidence that requisite procedures were in place to achieve recovery. In October, there was a full test of the entire key infrastructure and applications environment. As a result, SCC’s operational manual has been updated to include an agreed schedule for loading infrastructure and applications servers. This has also been incorporated into the corporate disaster recovery plan.
2. The Council’s Corporate BCP and Service Area BCPs were tested by Zurich on 18th October 2017. Key learning points which are or have subsequently been addressed were as follows:

* Review and raise awareness of Corporate BCP; A regular programme of testing will be put in place going forward.
* A Business Impact Analysis of the Council’s critical activities should be undertaken
* Accessibility of business continuity plans

Paper and electronic copies will be kept by key officers involved in the BCP process and at the remote location (Horspath Road). A dedicated file will be set up on the M drive for key officers to access them.

* Loss of IT - Staff guidance is being issued on the availability and use of laptops and mobile phones for homeworking in the event of BCPs being activated. Guidance in respect of access to the Council’s systems via the Citrix program is to be circulated so that personal laptops can be used for Council work. Priority for replacement laptops is to be given to staff undertaking critical services.
* Support from Third Parties - Service Heads were reminded that their BCP should consider how the service will interact with key suppliers and partners and how they might provide support during an incident.
* Ensuring there is no key person dependency for the Council’s media response
* Ability to write cheques - The Head of Financial Services is examining how this can be covered if the usual process cannot be followed.

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Finding 6 – the viability of the Council’s alternative site at Horspath Road has not been assessed.

1. Arrangements are in place for the Customer Contact Centre to move to Horspath Road, if required, and are included as part of Business Improvement’s BCP.
2. The total number of work spaces available at Horspath Road, together with associated infrastructure will be checked by the Corporate Affairs Lead early in the New Year. A draft Accommodation Strategy has been produced. The review and strategy will be mindful of the availability and use of home working. Other accommodation options are identified in the strategy if there is medium and longer term disruption. Service areas’ requirements will be considered as part of the process of determining the most suitable location(s).

Finding 7 – members of staff with responsibility for continuity planning are not provided with adequate training.

1. Service Heads attended the workshop run by Zurich on 23rd May 2017. This was followed by a facilitated session on critical activities on 13th July 2017 and the test that took place on 18th October 2017. A regular training plan will be put in place going forward.

**Climate Change / Environmental Impact**

1. There are no climate change / environmental impact implications arising directly from this report.

**Equalities impact**

1. There are no equalities impacts arising directly from this report.

**Financial Implications**

1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**Legal Implications**

1. There are no legal implications directly relevant to this report.

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**List of background papers: None.**

**Appendix 1**

**Category 1, 2 and 3 Critical Services**

***Group One Activities (Immediate***)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| SERVICE AREA |  | REASON GIVEN |
| City Development (Building Control) | Dangerous Structures | Life, public health, reputation |
| Human Resources and Facilities | Locking/unlocking security of buildings | Life, public health, reputation |
| Customer Services | Contact Centre | Life, public health, reputation |
| Customer Services | Provide telephone information and advice to customers | Reputation |
| Direct Services | Car Parks emergency out-of-hours line | Reputation |
| Direct Services | Emergency repair work | Life, public health |
| Direct Services | Food and Waste Collection | Public health |
| Direct Services | Flooding Drainage | Life, public health, reputation |
| Direct Services | Winter maintenance | Life, public health |
| Environmental Development | Respond to emergency issues (sewage flooding, pest control, notifiable diseases, accidents/deaths at work, food poisoning/complaints/hazards, burst pipes, unsafe housing) | Life, public health, reputation |
| Environmental Development | Advice and guidance from EH officer | Life, public health |
| Housing and Property | Homelessness | Life, public health |
| Human Resources and Facilities | Health and Safety (Council properties) | Life, public health, reputation |
| Human Resources and Facilities | Retention factors/employee relations | Reputation |
| Law and Governance | Electoral Services (only on Polling Day or the day before) | Reputation |
| Leisure, Parks and Communities | Tree maintenance | Life, public health |
| Policy, Culture and Communications | Media and external communications | Reputation |

***Group Two Activities (1-7 days)***

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| SERVICE AREA |  | REASON GIVEN |
| Direct Services | Street cleaning | Public health, reputation |
| Direct Services | Motor Transport Emergency Work | Life, public health |
| Customer Services and Finance | Benefits (emergency payments only) | Payments out, money received |
| Direct Services | Food and Waste Collection | Reputation |
| Environmental Development | Anti-social behaviour | Life, public health, money received |
| Human Resources and Facilities | Retention factors/employee relations | Reputation |
| Law and Governance | Court deadlines, hearings | Reputation |

***Group Three Activities (After 1 week)***

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| SERVICE AREA |  | REASON GIVEN |
| City Development (Building Control) | Demolition sites | Life, public health, money received |
| City Development (Building Control) | Issuing statutory notices/decisions | Reputation |
| City Development (Building Control) | Property searches | Reputation |
| City Development (Building Control) | Registration of applications | Money received, reputation |
| City Development (Planning) | Handling planning applications and associated services | Reputation |
| Customer Services | Counter service | Money received |
| Customer Services | Personal visits to provide information and advice to customers | Reputation |
| Direct Services | Collecting of parking revenue | Money received |
| Direct Services | Enforcement and collection of penalties | Money received |
| Direct Services | MOT and taxi testing | Reputation |
| Direct Services | Motor transport | Reputation |
| Direct Services | Provision of car parking spaces | Money received, reputation |
| Direct Services | Recycling | Reputation |
| Environmental Development | Harassment/illegal evictions | Life |
| Financial Services | Coin counting and banking | Money received |
| Financial Services | Cash records to other council systems | Money received |
| Financial Services | Government claims/returns | Reputation |
| Financial Services | Payments to suppliers | Payments out, reputation |
| Financial Services | Processing customer credits | Money received |
| Financial Services | Setting budget/Council Tax | Reputation |
| Housing and Property | Building maintenance | Reputation |
| Housing and Property | Equalities, community cohesion | Reputation |
| Housing and Property | Grants for voluntary/community groups | Reputation |
| Housing and Property | Handling requests for general purpose repairs | Life, public health, money received |
| Human Resources and Facilities Management | Employment law compliance | Reputation |
| Human Resources and Facilities Management | Handling of post | Payments out, money received |
| Human Resources and Facilities Management | Payroll | Payments out, reputation |
| Human Resources and Facilities Management | Town Hall room hire and catering | Money received, reputation |
| Law and Governance (Legal) | Advice to Licensing, Environmental Health & other statutory functions | Reputation |
| Leisure, Parks and Communities | Cemetery management | Reputation |
| Leisure, Parks and Communities | Leisure centres | Reputation |