


Report of: Strategic Director, Finance & Corporate Services

To: Executive Board


Date: 8th January 2007

Item No:


Title of Report : Business Continuity Planning




Summary and Recommendations




Purpose of report: To inform Members on the Council's progress on Business Continuity Planning (BCP) and to put forward recommendations for the next steps.




Key decision: No



Portfolio Holder: Cllr John Goddard




Scrutiny Responsibility: Finance




Ward(s) affected: All


Report Approved by




Portfolio Holder: Cllr Goddard




Legal: Jeremy Thomas




Finance: Mark Luntley








Policy Framework: None



Recommendation(s): That Executive Board:



- Endorses the recovery plan
- Authorises a trial run of our processes in 2007
- Builds the principles of continuity planning into future business planning
- Asks the Audit & Governance Committee to review the arrangements in twelve months' time.



Background

1. The Civil Contingencies Act (2005) made all Local Authorities responsible for putting local plans in place in case of disruption to their services.
2. These contingency plans:
 - Help us to continue as far as possible with our normal business functions in the event of a “disruption”. Disruption might mean a fire, flood, epidemic or systems failure.
 - Are in addition to the IT Disaster Recovery plan and our Emergency planning activities.
 - Are part of our wider risk management activities (and form part of the CPA process).
3. In Dec 2005 the Executive Board asked the Strategic Director Finance and Corporate Services to ensure the Council was ready to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act. He established a project team with representatives from across the council.
4. We did not have the expertise to do this work, and so we joined a tender exercise being led by South Oxfordshire District Council. We jointly commissioned continuity experts, Garrison Continuity, to work with both of us. The project was managed under Prince2 principles.
5. The project cost about £20,000, which was funded from the Risk Management budget.

Stages of the work

Business Impact Analysis Workshops

6. We held meetings with service/business managers to identify and prioritise those functions that had to continue even under severe difficulty. Managers estimated how many staff would be needed for the first few days of any emergency, and how many ‘workspaces’ (i.e. desk, PC, phone etc.) would be required.

Recovery Plan

7. Garrison analysed this information and drafted a recovery plan. In the event of an emergency involving city centre offices, key staff would be relocated to Horspath Rd (approx 100 people needing 35 workspaces on day one, increasing to 250 needing 78 by week 2).
8. If the Horspath Rd offices or Cowley Marsh were affected, staff would relocate to the other site.
9. The Chief Executive signed off the recovery plan (attached as an appendix), on behalf of the Council on 10th July 2006.

Business Unit Plans

10. Garrison have produced a draft plan for each business unit and one for the ‘Crisis Management Team’. The plans set out the procedures each BU should follow in order to keep a basic service working. There is a final task to list the names and contact details of those staff that would need to be contacted in an

emergency. When all the details have been collected Garrison will issue a set of final plans.

Desk-top testing

11. When the plans have been produced and agreed, Garrison will support us in “desk-top” testing each plan. This should show us how the plans will work in practice and highlight any areas to improve. These walkthroughs are scheduled to take place in the first half of January 2007.

Next steps

12. Once Garrison have tested our plans they will have completed their planned work for us. They are willing, (for a fee) to help us with our first annual test.

Conclusion

13. Business Continuity Planning is a tool for preparing ourselves for an unforeseen incident. The plan is the first step, the next stage is to embed these into mainstream processes.

Recommendations

14. Executive Board is recommended to:

- Endorse the recovery plan
- Authorise a trial run of our processes in 2007
- Build the principles of continuity planning into future business planning
- Ask the Audit & Governance Committee to review the arrangements in twelve months’ time.

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Background papers: None

