

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	25 th April 2006
Subject:	Business Continuity Planning Update Report
Responsible Officer:	Myfanwy Barrett – Director of Financial and Business Strategy
Contact Officer:	Julia Bourne – Service Manager Risk
Portfolio Holder:	Sanjay Dighe – Business Connections and Performance
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To note the current position of Business Continuity Planning across the council.

Reason for report

At its meeting on 10th October 2005 the Committee considered a report on Business Continuity Planning and requested an update report in April.

Benefits

- Effective launch of the Business Continuity Management process at Harrow.
- Ensure that we are at the same point as our neighbouring boroughs in West London.
- Compliance with our statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- Assist us to conform to the current Business Continuity British Standard PAS 56 and work towards the pending BSI Business Continuity standard BS 25/999.

Cost of Proposals

The cost of consultants to support the Business Continuity Officer is £14, 250 and this will be contained within the existing budget.

Risks

- The absence of Business Continuity Planning at Harrow could lead to severe service disruption in events such as, flu pandemic, flood, power outage, or terrorism.
- Without a Business Continuity Management culture, the potential impact on Harrow's ability to be a more business like organisation will be seriously compromised, and could lead loss of image, and criticism from the public and Government.
- Non-compliance with the statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 could result in criticism and affect Harrow's CPA score.

Implications if recommendations rejected

- N/A

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

- 2.1.1 On 10th October 2005 Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on Business Continuity Planning (see Appendix 1). This report outlined the current position which was that, in 2005-06 a new post of Business Continuity Officer (BCO) was created within the Audit and Risk Group. For various reasons this remained unfilled until 1st February 2006

2.2 Options considered

- 2.2.1 Since his arrival the BCO has produced a draft flu pandemic toolkit and this is being piloted with domiciliary care, residential care and Harrow PCT this toolkit concentrates on how to deal with staff shortages and preventative action that can be taken like vaccinations and health education. The BCO has also given some advice to the HOST project team and started initial work drafting the Council's Business Continuity Policy, to be discussed and agreed with the CMT later this year.
- 2.2.2 Key tasks for the BCO over the next few months will be to attend DMTs to raise Business Continuity Planning awareness. In June Harrow Rules sessions will be run to raise awareness and start work to identify critical service areas. Following Harrow Rules, meetings will be held to assist managers to undertake business impact assessments, from which business continuity plans will be produced. To ensure that the whole process happens quickly and effectively the BCO will need some expert assistance and Public Risk Management Limited have been appointed for 15 days. To comply with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 business continuity awareness guidance has to be offered to SMEs in the borough and the BCO is attending the Harrow Business Consultative Forum in July 2006 to launch this process.
- 2.2.3 Following a tendering process (undertaken in compliance with Contract Procedure Rules) Public Risk Management Ltd has been identified as the partner/consultants offering the best value for money and experience.
- 2.2.4 The Gantt chart attached (Appendix 3) shows the timescale for Business Continuity Planning over the next 12-17 months. It is envisaged that the use of PRM will kick start the Business Continuity Planning process at Harrow with some 'quick wins' being achieved in 2006 - 07. The BCO is working closely with colleagues in neighbouring boroughs and the West London Alliance to ensure that we are using a consistent and recognised approach.
- 2.2.5 The consultants will *assist* with the following:
- Producing a Business Continuity Policy and Strategy that is specific to Harrow Council and devised in consultation with key managers and Directors across the Council.
 - Training of up to 100 key officers. The objective being to give an overview of business continuity and raise awareness, highlight links to risk management and the requirements of the Civil Contingencies act, explain how to undertake a business impact assessment (BIA) and start producing business continuity plans.

- 2.2.6 The PRM team is made up of Business Continuity specialists with a proven track record. They major on skills and knowledge transfer so that we will end up independent of external assistance and will be able to run with the programme in an ongoing and creative way.
- 2.2.7 It is envisaged that the Business Continuity Officer and the Emergency Planning Officer will work closely and share many resources like the Emergency Planning Directors Group (Myfanwy Barrett, Andrew Trehern, Jon Turner and Peter Brown), which will be renamed to the Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Directors Group. Once business continuity plans are in place we also envisage a core group of key officers will be called on to initiate plans and arrangements in the event of a crisis.
- The Business Continuity Officer's plans are based on the British Standard PAS 56 Business Continuity cycle, which involves a five stage management system: building and embedding a business continuity management culture
 - understanding the organisation
 - business continuity management strategies
 - develop and implement business continuity plans
 - exercising, maintenance and audit.
- 2.2.8 A phased approach is planned for business continuity planning in Harrow with PRM being involved in Phase 1. Phase 1 is primarily about awareness raising, producing business impact assessments and business continuity plans for all critical service areas and promoting business continuity to small and medium-sized enterprises using the Harrow Business Forum, business portal, Harrow People and other local media.

2.3 Consultation

CMT, other local authorities and the West London Alliance.

2.4 Financial Implications

The work plan will be achieved within the existing budget.

2.5 Legal Implications

None

2.6 Equalities Impact

None

2.7 Crime and Disorder Act Considerations

None

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Report dated 10th October 2005

Appendix 2 – Business Continuity Work plan

Appendix 3 - Business Continuity Gantt chart