



Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	10 th October 2005
Subject:	Update On Business Continuity Planning
Responsible Officer:	Myfanwy Barrett – Director of Finance and Business Strategy
Contact Officer:	David Ward – Group Manager Audit & Risk Management
Portfolio Holder:	Sanjay Dighe – Business Connections and Performance
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

The Committee is asked to note the current position of Business Continuity Planning across the council.

Reason for report

At its meeting on 19th July 2005 the Committee considered a report presented by the Group Manager – ICT in relation to the council's IT including the draft IT security policy. An update report regarding Business Continuity Planning was requested for this meeting.

Benefits

Business Continuity Planning is an essential part of sound risk management and enables organisations to recover more quickly from adverse incidents that threaten service delivery.

Cost of Proposals

None directly related to this report.

Risks

Without sound Business Continuity Planning the council's ability to recover from adverse incidents is diminished, which could lead to extended periods of service reduction or failure. This could lead to a range of consequences including financial loss, criticism of the council and an adverse affect on its reputation.

Implications if recommendations rejected

Not applicable.

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

- 2.1.1 Under the MMR re-structure the Internal Audit and Risk Management Group was created within the Business and Financial Strategy Directorate of Business Connections (now Business Development). This Group has strategic responsibility for the development of Internal Audit, Business Risk Management, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Planning (BCP) across the council. The key to delivering this is a risk-based approach across the Group.
- 2.1.2 From 2005-06 a new post of Business Continuity Officer (BCO) was created within the group with specific responsibility to raise awareness of BC issues across the council, support the development of plans and ensure these are regularly updated and tested by managers.
- 2.1.3 It should be noted that this post is responsible for business continuity in its widest context and not just in respect of IT risks or IT disaster recovery. The reliance on technology is such that IT is of course a critical part of the BCP process but the council's Business Continuity Officer's role is to ensure that all services have a plan for dealing with wider risks such as those related to staff, accommodation, reliance on external suppliers / partners etc. etc.
- 2.1.4 The business continuity and emergency planning functions within the group are very closely linked as both functions reduce risks by planning for adverse incidents. The principal difference is that emergency planning focuses on supporting the community to recover from an event, whereas the business continuity role is to support the council itself.
- 2.1.5 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, new responsibilities have been placed on local authorities to prepare for and respond to community-based incidents and the council's emergency planning arrangements are fairly well developed with regular training and testing of plans, including joint exercises with key partner organisations.

Appendix 1

- 2.1.6 Under the new legislation, the council will also be required to provide support to the business community in relation to their business continuity planning arrangements.
- 2.1.7 For various reasons the Business Continuity Officer post has remained unfilled to date although a recruitment campaign is currently underway and interviews are due to be held in October. Without a BCO, resources in the team are severely limited and work on business continuity planning has not progressed as quickly as anticipated.
- 2.1.8 However, it should be emphasised that the council is not completely unprepared for adverse incidents. Services across the council do have arrangements in place to deal with business recovery but these tend to be informal and usually unwritten. The key is to formalise and build upon these arrangements in a standard process and format.
- 2.1.9 The London events of 7th and 21st July showed that the council was actually able to implement key business continuity measures to ensure services were prioritised whilst simultaneously delivering an emergency response to the community.
- 2.1.10 In addition, arrangements for disaster recovery within IT systems are being developed and are an integral part of the delivery of the Business Transformation Partnership. Discussions are also being held with Capita regarding the potential for their wider assistance on business continuity generally.
- 2.1.11 Training consultants have been identified to “kick-start” the formal planning process across the council and this will involve workshops with all relevant managers. The workshops will (a) raise awareness on business continuity issues and (b) actually write the service continuity plans during the workshops, for following up by the BCO.

2.2 Options considered

Not applicable to this report.

2.3 Consultation

None.

2.4 Financial Implications

Any costs associated with this report will be contained within budget.

2.5 Legal Implications

The legal implications are largely contained within the report. Such planning will enable the council to continue to meet its statutory obligations in an emergency situation.

2.6 Equalities Impact

None.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

None