Meeting:	Harrow Business Consultative Panel
Date:	18th July 2006
Subject:	Business Continuity Management
Responsible Officer:	Myfanwy Barrett – Director of Finance and Business Strategy
Contact Officer:	Kan Grover – Business Continuity Officer
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Ashton
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1 – Public

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

- The Harrow Business Consultative Panel is asked to note the current position with regard to Business Continuity Management within the Council and the promotion of business continuity generally to local small and medium sized enterprises.

Reason for report

- Information and comment.

Benefits

- Compliance with our statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- Ensure that we are providing Business Continuity advice that is consistent with our neighbouring boroughs in West London.
- Effective launch of the Business Continuity Management process in Harrow.
- Assist the local business community in using the Business Continuity Management process, thereby increasing the community's resilience generally.

Cost of Proposals

- No extra costs involved as already contained within budget.

Risks

- Non-compliance with the statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- The absence of Business Continuity planning in the local business community could lead to the loss of profit and possible business closures, in the event of an incident such as flu pandemic, flood, power outage, or terrorism.

Implications if recommendations rejected

- None made.

Section 2: Report

2.1 <u>Brief History</u>

2.1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 placed a duty on Local Authorities to provide Business Continuity advice to their local business community. This duty came into force on 15th May 2006, on the understanding that neighbouring Local Authorities could work together and deliver this long-term initiative over a period of time.

2.2 <u>Options considered</u>

2.2.1 Business Continuity Management (BCM) is a management process that helps manage the risks to the smooth running of an organisation or delivery of a service, ensuring it can continue to operate to the extent required in the event of a disruption. These risks could be from the external environment (e.g. power outages, severe weather) or from within an organisation (e.g. systems failure, loss of key staff).

2.2.2 The Business Continuity Institute defines this process as follows: "Business Continuity Management is a holistic process that identifies potential business impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value creating activities."

2.2.3 The Business Continuity Institute has developed a five-stage process, which has become widely accepted and has been incorporated into a British Standards Institute Publicly Available Specification – PAS 56. This model provides a generic framework that is applicable across the public, private and voluntary sectors.

2.2.4 The five stages of the Business Continuity Institute process are:

- Stage 1: Understanding your business: Using business impact and risk assessments to identify the critical deliverables, evaluate recovery priorities and assess the risks that could lead to a disruption to service delivery.

- Stage 2: BCM Strategies: Identifying the alternative strategies available to the business to mitigate loss, assessing their potential effectiveness in maintaining the business's ability to deliver its critical functions.

- Stage 3: Developing and implementing a BCM response: Developing the response to business continuity challenges and the plans underpinning this.

- Stage 4: Establishing a BCM culture: This stage looks at the need for businesses to ensure that a continuity culture is embedded in their organisation by raising awareness throughout the organisation and its key stakeholders, and offering training to key staff on BCM issues.

- Stage 5: Maintaining and auditing BCM: Ensuring plans are fit for purpose, kept up to date and quality assured. This should involve exercising plans, rehearsing key staff and testing systems.

2.2.5 Effective BCM is built on "seven Ps":
- Programme – proactively managing the process
- People – roles and responsibilities, awareness and education
- Processes – all organisational processes, including ICT
- Premises – buildings and facilities
- Providers – supply chain, including outsourcing
- Profile – brand, image and reputation
- Performance – benchmarking, evaluation and audit

2.2.6 The Council appointed a Business Continuity Officer (BCO) within the Audit and Risk Group in February 2006. The BCO has set up a work stream for 2006-07 and 2007-08 to deliver Business Continuity training to assist with Business Impact Analysis and the development of Business Continuity Plans throughout the Council, and to promote Business Continuity generally to the local business community.

2.2.7 During the summer of 2006, Business Continuity guidance for the local business community will be placed on the Council's website – www.harrow.gov.uk and will also be published in the Council's local newspaper – Harrow People. This will include information on the importance of Business Continuity, guidance on the fundamentals of Business Continuity planning, contact details and links to websites for further information and professional advice. Further Business Continuity presentations are also being considered, e.g. with the Brent and Harrow Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, and West London Business.

2.2.8 Specific Business Continuity guidance on flu pandemic has been delivered to domiciliary and residential care providers in the Harrow area. The BCO has been working with colleagues in neighbouring boroughs and the West London Alliance to make sure that Harrow Council are using a consistent and recognised approach to Business Continuity.

Conclusion

- The Harrow Business Consultative Panel is asked to note the current position with regard to Business Continuity Management within the Council and the promotion of business continuity generally to local small

and medium sized enterprises.

2.3   Consultation

2.3.1 London Prepared, neighbouring local authorities and the West London Alliance.

2.4   Financial Implications

2.4.1 If there are any costs associated with this report they will be contained within the Audit and Risk Group budget. Costs for specific business continuity planning, for small and medium sized enterprises, will be the responsibility of those businesses respectively. The Council's duty is to promote business continuity in general terms; it is not in a position to offer specific advice.

2.5   Legal Implications

2.5.1 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, all primary Local Authorities are Category 1 Responders, including Harrow Council. The Act places certain duties upon the Council, including the requirement to have business continuity plans in place for the provision of services during a major incident; and also to promote business continuity generally to local small and medium sized enterprises.

2.6   Equalities Impact

2.6.1 Equalities and diversity issues are an integral part of the Council's promotion of Business Continuity Management to local small and medium sized enterprises.

2.7   Crime and Disorder Act Considerations

2.7.1 Business Continuity planning, in the community, will strengthen the borough's resilience to adverse incidents, which may arise from a variety of events including crime and disorder issues.

Section 3: Supporting Information/ Background Documents

Appendix 1 – Business Continuity for Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SME) presentation dated 9th June 2006