HarrowCOUNCIL
LONDON

Meeting:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date:	10th October 2006
Subject:	Business Continuity Management Update Report
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

- 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

- At its meeting on 25th April 2006 the Committee considered a report on Business Continuity Management and requested an update report in October.

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 Brief History

2.1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 placed a number of duties on Local Authorities, including the obligation to make plans to continue providing essential services following a major incident, and to provide Business Continuity advice to the local business community. The Act came into force in November 2005, on the understanding that neighbouring Local Authorities could work together and deliver this long-term initiative over a period of time.

2.2 Options considered

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 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 The previous report of 25th April 2006 to the Committee included the work stream for 2006-07 and 2007-08 as background documents. The BCO is pleased to report that the delivery of the Business Continuity work stream to Harrow Council is running according to the original plan and schedule.

2.2.8 The BCO's approach and work stream are based on the Business Continuity Institute's five stage approach and the British Standards Institute Publicly Available Specification – PAS 56. The BCO has attended meetings with other local government colleagues from the West London Alliance. The BCO has fully supported the setting up of the West London Business Continuity Group and has attended their meetings, ensuring that Harrow Council is following a recognised process in line with its neighbouring London Boroughs.

2.2.9 During March and April 2006, the BCO, working together with the Emergency Planning Team, delivered Business Continuity training specifically for Pandemic Flu to Domiciliary Care and Residential Care providers in Harrow. This included guidance material, plan templates and workshops.

2.2.10 Also in April 2006, the BCO attended the Strike Action Group meetings, to discuss the Business Continuity arrangements to cope with the threat of strike action to coincide with the local government elections in England and Wales.

2.2.11 The BCO assisted the Emergency Planning Team in its council wide live training exercise in June 2006. Exercise Adelaide involved council staff and outside agencies, such as the WRVS, Salvation Army, St Johns Ambulance, Red Cross, Police Service, Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service, RAF personnel and more. The exercise was deemed a success, testing Emergency Planning and Business Continuity procedures.

2.2.12 In June 2006, an introduction to Business Continuity was delivered as part of the Harrow Rules mandatory training for managers. Module 6 of Harrow Rules – Risky Business, incorporates Health & Safety and Business Continuity training for managers. Further sessions are planned for December 2006 and spring 2007.

2.2.13 The Council has a duty to promote Business Continuity to local small and medium sized enterprises. In July 2006, a presentation was made to local businesses at the Harrow Business Consultative Forum.   Local businesses were able to ask questions and seek guidance on obtaining more information on Business Continuity.

2.2.14 In July 2006, the BCO started delivering workshops to help managers identify their critical services, and write their Critical Service Assessments (CSA) for their service areas. It is planned that all managers will have attended this training by December 2006.

2.2.15 In spring 2007, the results from all the Critical Service Assessments will be compiled into a Business Impact Analysis (BIA). This BIA will be used by the BCO and senior management to analyse the Council's most critical services.   The BCO will then be able to assist senior management in formulating the Council's Business Continuity Plans on a Departmental basis

2.2.16 During June, July and August 2006, a series of meetings were held with Harrow IT Services, to discuss Business Continuity and specifically IT Disaster Recovery issues.   This has fed into Harrow IT Services preparation of a draft report highlighting various IT Disaster Recovery options. The options include the construction of a second computer room, the use of a back up site, and the retention of a contracted facility providing essential users with 100 personal computers and associated office facilities. The draft report has not yet been finalised, but Harrow IT Services will give progress updates in due course.

2.2.17 In August 2006, a series of web pages were designed for the Council's Intranet. These have been approved and will be placed on the Council's website in due course. Also, external material has been developed in conjunction with the West London Alliance, the London Resilience Forum, and London Prepared. This material is in final draft stage, and is due to be approved in September 2006. This will provide a commonality of approach across London.

2.2.17 During the autumn of 2006, Business Continuity guidance for the local business community will 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.

Conclusion

- 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 Costs associated with this report 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

None