

REPORT FOR: CABINET

Date:	14 January 2010
Subject:	Council Corporate Business Continuity Plan
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Myfanwy Barrett, Corporate Director Finance
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Ashton, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnership and Finance
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	Yes
Enclosures:	Appendix 1: Harrow Council Corporate Business Continuity Plan

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out the council's corporate business continuity plan that has been developed in accordance with the council improvement project (CIP) "Enhancing disaster recovery and business continuity" and approved by the Corporate Strategy Board (CSB) on 2nd December 2009.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to comment on and approve Harrow Council's corporate business continuity plan.

Reason: (For recommendation)

To ensure that Harrow Council has suitable business continuity arrangements and procedures that can be invoked as necessary.

Section 2 – Report

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Enhancing disaster recovery and business continuity is a key component of the council's improvement programme. Business continuity (BC) plans for each division within the council have been produced as part of this work and in turn this has enabled the production of the council's first corporate business continuity plan, which was approved by CSB on 2nd December 2009.

2.2 Background

- 2.2.1 Business continuity is a holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations those threats, if realised, might cause. Business continuity provides a framework for building organisational resilience with the capability for an effective response, which safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand, and value-creating activities.
- 2.2.2 Business continuity differs from Major Incident and Emergency Planning, as it is solely concerned with an internal council incident that may not affect any members of the public or residents. However, extended internal disruption may lead to an inability to provide council services to the public or residents.
- 2.2.3 The plan has been developed using the scenario of a loss of access to facilities at the Civic Centre, e.g. fire, flood or loss of power. It is intended to document the process for determining the nature of a business continuity event, the management processes to support decision-making during the incident, a location for key staff to relocate to, and specifies the documentation required during the incident
- 2.2.4 Harrow Council is using the British Standard BS25999 process, working to West London Alliance agreed criteria:
- Priority 1 staff and systems – required within 48 hours of an incident
Priority 2 staff and systems – required within 2 weeks of an incident,

and
Priority 3 staff and systems – required after 2 weeks of an incident.

2.2.5 Progress in this project has resulted in the following:

- Business continuity training has been delivered to service managers and critical services have been identified
- Business continuity plans have been completed at Divisional Director level (97% complete)
- The draft Harrow Council corporate business continuity plan has been developed from these divisional plans
- Business Continuity plans have identified minimum staff, accommodation and IT requirements during an incident
- An assessment of options for recovery locations for staff has been carried out, including an evaluation of reciprocal arrangements with other councils
- Tests are planned, starting with telephone cascade tests for contacting staff during a simulated incident. The first was conducted on 24th November 2009
- Procedures are being developed for testing components of the plan including the relocation of staff to the alternative recovery location.

2.2.6 Funding has been approved for a recovery location for up to 150 staff outside the borough in Hertfordshire.

2.2.7 An associated programme of work is developing a sound disaster recovery plan for the IT systems required to support the BC plan.

2.3 Current situation

2.3.1 The council has in place ratified departmental business continuity plans, but no overall approved corporate plan for invoking following an event.

2.4 Why a change is needed

2.4.1 Without a corporate business continuity plan the council will continue to be exposed to risks of serious service disruption with consequent impact on a range of factors such as service delivery, customer satisfaction and council reputation, loss of income etc.

2.4.2 It is recognised that as the climate changes, extreme weather events are likely to occur more frequently – increasing the risk that the council's business and operations may be adversely affected.

2.5 Financial Implications

- 2.5.1 Divisional business continuity plans are the responsibility of Divisional Directors to produce and maintain within service budgets.
- 2.5.2 The corporate business continuity plan includes a professional recovery site for key staff to use as a work base and through a full procurement exercise, the cost of this facility is £25k per annum on a 3-year contract. This is the only additional cost in respect of the corporate plan.
- 2.5.3 This cost will be contained in the current year and ongoing costs are factored into the MTFS.

2.6 Performance Issues

- 2.6.1 Within the annual Use of Resources assessment, KLOE 2.4 (Internal Control) requires evidence to determine the answer to the question “Does the organisation manage its risks and maintain a sound system of internal control?” A significant part of this test relates to the effectiveness of business continuity planning.
- 2.6.2 The production of a corporate business continuity plan is an important milestone within the Use of Resources improvement plan.
- 2.6.3 Overall, a successful response to a real emergency mitigates the risk of poor performance as a result of prolonged disruption to services.

2.7 Environmental Impact

- 2.7.1 Development of this plan will be an important element in the council’s (adaptation to) climate change strategy and enable it to demonstrate progress in relation to NI 188 (Adapting to Climate change)
- 2.7.2 There are no negative environmental impacts from this proposal.
- 2.7.3 As part of the procurement process the company will be asked to provide their sustainability policy before entering into a contract for an alternative recovery location for key staff.
- 2.7.4 Further procurement for the implementation of the corporate BC plan will follow Harrow Council’s environmental purchasing guidelines.

2.8 Risk Management Implications

- 2.8.1 The work of the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity team supports the management of risks across the council.
- 2.8.2 A corporate business continuity plan will assist in an efficient and effective response by council officers during a business continuity incident, reducing the impact on the delivery of council-provided services.

2.8.3 Business continuity planning is a high profile activity and is captured in risk registers at both strategic and divisional level.

2.9 Corporate Priorities

2.9.1 This report sets out the council's corporate business continuity plan that has been developed in accordance with the council improvement project (CIP) "Enhancing disaster recovery and business continuity" and approved by the Corporate Strategy Board (CSB) on 2nd December 2009.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Myfanwy Barrett	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief Financial Officer
Date: 15 December 2009		
Name: George Curran	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Date: 16 December 2009		

Section 4 - Performance Officer Clearance

Name: David Harrington	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Divisional Director Partnership, Development and Performance
Date: 17 December 2009		

Section 5 - Environmental Impact Officer Clearance

Name: Andrew Baker	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the* Divisional Director (Environmental Services)
Date: 16 December 2009		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: David Ward, Divisional Director – Risk, Audit & Fraud
Tel: 020 8424 1781

Background Papers: Appendix 1 – Harrow Council Corporate Business Continuity Plan

Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee

NOT APPLICABLE

*(for completion by Democratic
Services staff only)*