

**REPORT FOR: GOVERNANCE, AUDIT &  
RISK MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE**

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**Date of Meeting:** 6 September 2011

**Subject:** **INFORMATION REPORT – Civil Contingencies Team (Emergency Planning & Business Continuity) Activity Update Report**

**Responsible Officer:** Tom Whiting, Assistant Chief Executive

**Exempt:** No but with Part II Appendices. Appendices 2-4 to the report is exempt. The report contains information relating to paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as it contains information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

**Enclosures:** Appendix 1: Governance Audit and Risk Management Committee - Emergency Planning Update (28 June 2011)  
Appendix 2: Business Continuity, Telephone Cascade Test (23 Nov 2010) (Exempt)  
Appendix 3: Exercise Brisbane, Briefing Note (7 July 2011) (Exempt)  
Appendix 4: CSB For Information Report, Bomb Threat (27 July 2011) (Exempt)

## **Section 1 – Summary**

This report sets out the recent activity of the Civil Contingencies Team, which includes Emergency Planning, Business Continuity and Civil Protection, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

### **FOR INFORMATION**

## **Section 2 – Report**

### **Introduction**

The Civil Contingencies Team, also known colloquially as the “Emergency Planning Team”, is one of six distinct teams that sit within the Risk, Audit & Fraud Division of the council.

The Civil Contingencies Team is a small, but effective unit of three staff. The team provide a corporate service delivering Emergency Planning, Business Continuity, and Civil Protection, as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004; and is the Counter Terror link with the Police Service and HM Government.

This report will provide an activity update on each of these areas, and in particular Business Continuity, as requested at the last GARMC meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

### **Business Continuity**

#### Background and process

The council’s Business Continuity plans and ethos are firmly embedded in the council. In order to explain the current issues, risks, and deliverability, it is useful to explain the background and process that led us here.

The council’s approach to Business Continuity was based on the British Standard BS25999 ‘bottom – up’ process. The ‘bottom – up’ process began in 2006, with Business Continuity workshops being delivered to service managers (and similar grades) to identify and classify the council’s essential and critical services. Over 130 key service areas were identified.

During 2007, Business Continuity training sessions were held with divisional directors (and similar grades) to develop Business Continuity plans for the key service areas within their divisions. From these Business Continuity plans, key infrastructure and IT requirements were identified.

In 2008, table top exercises were held to simulate a major incident occurring, such as fire, flood or explosion; and to practice the response of individual departments, to see if their Business Continuity plans were viable, and to test the corporate response to infrastructure and IT demands. The key learning

point identified was the dependency on IT, and in particular the 34 key IT applications, out of the council's 200 plus legacy IT applications.

During 2009, the 34 key IT applications that had been identified were taken into account as part of the IT Disaster Recovery project, and the wider 'LBH Anywhere' proposal. This was going to provide a credible Business Continuity response to a major incident occurring.

The council now has Business Continuity plans for all its key 37 departments. These were reviewed, refined and tested at director level. The departmental Business Continuity plans now feed into a corporate Business Continuity plan, an overarching plan for the whole council. The end had been reached to the 'bottom – up' process.

As part of the corporate Business Continuity plan, arrangements were made for key staff to be deployed to a remote location, in the event of a major incident occurring at the civic centre complex. These key staff were identified through a series of table top exercises: 280 key staff were identified in total, with 150 being allocated seats at the remote site known as 'relocators', and 130 being expected to work from home or another location being known as 'isolators'. This plan was physically tested during a live exercise in 2010, with key managers driving to the remote site and setting up as if dealing with a real incident.

### Risks and weaknesses

One of the key dependencies of the overarching business continuity plan is the provision of IT disaster recovery (DR) which has been identified through workstreams which commenced in 2009.

There are already some arrangements in place to meet this requirement (including an annual DR test) and a comprehensive range of improvements have been developed to ensure resilience and recovery capabilities as part of the new Capita IT contract.

One of the main projects to support this is the migration of the council's IT applications to the Capita West Malling site, which is due to commence in September on a phased programme which will be completed in April 2012.

There is a continuing risk until this project is complete although the wider business continuity plan takes this into account and the risk is no greater than it has been historically over a number of years.

### Deliverability of the plans

The council's corporate Business Continuity plan and 37 departmental Business Continuity plans are tested and reviewed on an annual basis. The plans are workable and are amended to reflect any staff or structural changes.

As the improvements in IT DR capability are delivered this will significantly enhance business continuity resilience across all council services.

## HR issues

The council's 37 departmental Business Continuity plans take into account three generic issues to plan for: non-availability of ICT, denial of access to the building, and reduced staff attendance.

Reduced staff attendance is the main HR issue that Business Continuity planning takes into account. This planning takes place because lower staff attendance could happen for a number of reasons, e.g. severe weather, travel disruption or influenza pandemic. During the recent influenza pandemic during 2009, extensive planning was conducted with managers and HR to ensure Business Continuity plans were in place to deal with staff absence rates of 25% and 40%.

## Communications issues

The main communications issue during a Business Continuity incident is the ability to communicate with all staff in a timely and effective manner. During a major incident we may not have access to the building or be able to use ICT, so Business Continuity plans have been developed and tested to ensure that key messages can be given to staff.

Each manager of a service has as part of their Business Continuity arrangements, a staff contact list, including personal and home telephone numbers. These arrangements were made in consultation with HR and the trade unions, to ensure that these contact details were only used in an emergency or during the annual test.

We test these communications arrangements each year as part of the Business Continuity Phone Cascade Test in November. The test is carried out of hours on a non-specified date. We initiate the test by contacting Corporate Directors, who in turn call their Divisional Directors, who call their Service Managers, who then contact their staff members.

For the past two years we have included the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders, and their Deputies, so that elected members are included in the process; so make sure Democratic Services have your up to date contact details.

## Disaster Recovery

As mentioned before, this is our biggest area of concern. All the work has been done to identify which IT applications are critical and the timescale that they are required to be reinstated. The decision to outsource took longer to bring about which in turn affected the decision on how to deliver the IT Disaster Recovery arrangements.

## **Emergency Planning**

Since our last report to GARMC on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011, we organised and hosted our annual Emergency Planning training exercise, 'Exercise Brisbane', at Churchill Place. Exercise Brisbane was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July, with over 50 officers from the police, fire, ambulance, health service, health protection, red

cross and Harrow Council in attendance. The main objective was to practise our resilience work with multi-agency partners.

The scenario involved a local fire, with acetylene cylinders, necessitating the evacuation of local residents to a council run temporary 'Rest Centre'. A rest centre was set up at Churchill Place where council Emergency Response Officers and volunteers practised their drills in registering displaced people, making provision for their needs, providing refreshments and arranging for their onward accommodation. The day went well, with Michael Lockwood sending a personal thank you to our team.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, we participated in the West London Sub Regional Resilience Forum's Major Accident Pipelines Emergency Plan Exercise. This was hosted by the London Borough of Hillingdon and attended by multi-agency partners including the police, fire, ambulance, health service, health protections, red cross and West London council officers.

For your diaries, in December, we will be delivering annual training to Elected Members on their role during a major incident, as part of the Member Development Programme. This is something members have asked for, although three members attended in 2009 and ten members in 2010.

This year it will be held on the evening of Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011, starting at 7:00pm, in the Members Lounge. Please put this date in your diary and encourage your colleagues to attend. Members have an important role to play during a major incident, and it is important that you receive your annual refresher training.

## **Civil Protection**

Since our last report to GARMC on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2011, a bomb threat was made and subsequent evacuation of the civic centre carried out. On the afternoon of Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011, a bomb threat was made to the Civic Centre. The call was received in Access Harrow, Security was informed and the Police called.

The civic site was evacuated and a cordon placed around the site. The Bomb Squad attended from Brixton. The all clear was given by the Police and staff returned to the building. Facilities Management invoked the evacuation procedure, but there was some initial confusion amongst some staff.

Overall the incident was handled well as all staff were evacuated. However, there were some key learning points to improve our future response. CSB requested us to write a report on the incident and key learning points. Following this report to CSB we are now assisting Facilities Management in improving their evacuation procedure. The Assistant Chief Executive has been keeping the Leader of the Council informed of the developments.

We have been assisting the Chief Executive during the 'London Riots' that started on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2011, by attending strategic partnership meetings with the Leader of the Council and opposition Group Leader, and also tactical

deployment meetings with the Police and key council services, during this period of public disorder.

### **Section 3 – Further Information**

There will be further update reports every 6 to 12 months, as and when requested by GARMC.

### **Section 4 – Financial Implications**

None

### **Section 5 – Corporate Priorities**

#### **Keeping neighbourhoods clean, green and safe**

The Civil Contingencies Team helps the council keep neighbourhoods and the borough as a whole safe, by developing, exercising and reviewing: emergency plans, business continuity arrangements, and assisting the emergency services in civil protection.

Name: Steve Tingle	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 8 Aug 2011		

### **Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers**

**Contact:** Kan Grover, Service Manager – Civil Contingencies (Emergency Planning & Business Continuity)  
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**Background Papers:** None