

Committee: General Purposes

Date: 27 September 2012

Agenda item: 10

Wards: All

Subject: Business Continuity Review

Lead officer: Caroline Holland, Director Corporate Services,

Lead member: Cllr Mark Allison

Key decision reference number: N/A

Urgent report: N/A

Recommendations:

1. For information only and Members are asked to consider the contents of this report
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1. Purpose of report and executive summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the current outcomes and progress in the review of business continuity arrangements for the council.
- 1.2. Following a failure of the councils IT systems and infrastructure in March this year, a number of reviews into the systems and infrastructure of the council has been undertaken in order to minimise the risk of reoccurrence and reduce the impact of any future event.
- 1.3. The Councils Safety Services, Emergency Planning staff provides the council with support and service as a category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA 2004). The council has robust plans in place to undertake the initial responses during an emergency and these plans are regularly tested in pan London exercising as well as peer reviews of key elements under the Minimum Standards for London as conducted by the London Fire Brigade Emergency Planning Service (LFBEP). This ensures that the resilience of the councils plans to respond to emergencies remain robust in line with other authorities and the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

- 1.4. Planning for and managing recovery after a disaster is the other element of the civil contingencies more commonly known as Business Continuity. Whilst it is part of the CCA 2004, it is not tested under the auspice of the CCA and LFBEP but is left up to local authorities and businesses to develop plans and arrangements to suit the local risks.
- 1.5. In the context of the local community, resilience planning is a coordinated effort between responders with statutory duties under the CCA. In Merton under current regimes the risks associated with the borough are identified and treated under the remit of the Borough Resilience Forum which currently is chaired by the Head of Safety Services with attendance from senior members of the police, Fire brigade, ambulance service and health protection agencies. Where significant risks exist, plans are then drawn up under national guidelines and shared with responders.
- 1.6. Business continuity is not new and is something that has always been contained in the council's arrangements for managing people property and process. Since 2006 the council has had in place a process for each department and service to consider the threats and challenges to continuing to deliver services under a variety of losses including loss of IT. Each service has gone on to consider what resources it requires to deliver critical elements of the service and how it could achieve that with reduced or no support. This process produced what is known as business impact analysis (BIA) which formed the basis of the business recovery plans for departments and was used in the development of the target operating models (TOM) as part of service reviews.
- 1.7. With the advent of workforce reduction, consolidation of services and properties it is clear that these arrangements may be affected by the transformation process and a review of the council's business continuity arrangements is required. The recent loss of IT systems brought home the fact that more reliance on systems and single points of resource increase the risk of failure to recover from a major incident and the outcome of a point of failure has a greater impact than before. Disaster recovery is subject to a linked project with the AD of Infrastructure and Transactions and a separate report to this committee.
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2. **Work progression**

The Council's emergency Planning Team has been working with departments and teams to review their business Impact analysis (BIA) to reflect their criticality in relation to departmental business plans and service criticality. This has proven to be a long and difficult process with so many teams changing and requiring considerable input from EP to guide staff and

draw out the key issues.

The format of the BIA's was subject to much discussion and some change but a solution has been to create a spreadsheet to capture key basic information to be used as a single source of information for the future challenge and decision making process.

- 2.1 Corporate Services has led the way with the review of the BIA's and has conducted a challenge at the departmental team meeting on the review to determine prioritisation and resource requirements for recovery. This process is being rolled out across all department management teams with all service BIA's now completed. Over the next month the challenge process will be repeated at Departmental Management Team meetings which will result in a complete list of critical services for priority recovery.
- 2.2 Timescales for this process are as follows:
Environment & Regeneration Departmental Management team 10th October,
Community & Housing Departmental Management Team are testing arrangements on the 21st November with results feeding back to DMT shortly after (TBA),
Children Schools and Families DMT 5th October.
- 2.3 In parallel to this work the AD of Infrastructure and Transactions has undertaken a review of the infrastructure and systems available to the departments with a view to providing a definitive view of what can be recovered and when. Once this review is complete the results will be matched to the review of the BIA to allow key decisions to be made as to what services will be recovered to where and in what timescale. This will form the basis of the council's strategic business continuity and disaster recovery plan. Timescales for completion of this is 31st December 2012. This plan will be the definitive list of what can be recovered and when with the resources available.
- 2.4 In early January 2013 CMT will be able to consider the options for a recovery timetable. This will be based on the information from both the reviews of the BIA's and the departmental challenges as well as the report on the infrastructure and systems recovery process. The outcome from this CMT meeting will provide the information that will be written into the strategic business continuity plan and is due to be completed by April 2013.
- 2.5 The plan will apply only to those staff and services deemed critical by CMT and all other services will be recovered in a sliding scale of priority as and when resources come back on stream.
- 2.6 Services deemed non critical will need to consider alternative ways of working outside of the main recovery process and elements of other plans such as home working and the Flexible working project will assist services in continuity outside of the strategic recovery plans.

- 3. Alternative options**
None for the purpose of this report.
- 4. Consultation undertaken or proposed**
None required as information only
- 5. Timetable**
Not applicable
- 6. Financial, resource and property implications**
None at this time
- 7. Legal and statutory implications**

Emergency planning and business continuity is a statutory requirement under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- 8. Human rights, equalities and community cohesion implications**
 - 8.1 None for the purpose of this report
- 9. Risk management and health and safety implications**
 - 9.1 Contained within the body of the report
- 10. Appendices – the following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report**
- 11. Background Papers – the following documents have been relied on in drawing up this report but do not form part of the report**
 - 11.1 None