

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

26th JUNE 2014

BUSINESS CONTINUITY – UPDATE REPORT**1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the current Business Continuity (BC) picture for North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) with particular reference to Business Continuity arrangements for the Tour de France and to respond to the Veritau internal audit of October 2013 to provide continued assurance for the management of risk within NYCC Directorates and Service Areas.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A revised NYCC Business Continuity methodology was introduced in 2011 based on recommendations from the ‘burdens of bureaucracy’ report taking into consideration feedback available from the different directorates. This revised methodology aimed at putting customer needs first rather than producing a bureaucratic and excessive governance burden on service units.
- 2.2 Service Unit managers were asked to take responsibility for completing standard documentation to complete their individual service unit’s Business Continuity plan. The Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) collated completed documentation and subsequently advised which corporate resources were necessary to support individual continuity of service within units (e.g. restoration time for ICT applications or desk space if a building is unavailable).
- 2.3 Each corporate director was required to assert in their annual statement of Assurance, that a full set of Business Continuity plans were in existence and up to date for their directorate.

3 PILOT PROJECT

- 3.1 A pilot programme had been completed with four service areas in BES during winter 2011. The results of the pilot programme were very positive, requiring less administration time and providing greater ownership for the service area. In April 2012 Management Board gave approval for the roll-out of the new methodology to all NYCC directorates.
- 3.2 Business Continuity Leads were appointed in each service area and trained by the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) to act as single point of contact (SPOC) for Business Continuity within their directorate. The SPOC was

tasked with ensuring that all managers in their directorate completed the necessary documentation for their service area Business Continuity plans.

- 3.3** Although the pilot in BES was successful, the Veritau audit in October 2013 noted that standards of documentation varied between service areas. The relevant paperwork was completed in all service areas but an inconsistent approach by some of the service units indicated possible vulnerabilities. The audit highlighted that the overall Business Continuity strategy may not be fully understood by some of the service units and that a more formalised and robust structure was required to ensure the adoption of best practice and continued improvement across all directorates.
- 3.4** The on-going programme of change and changing personnel and staff roles particularly within the EPU, have all impacted on Business Continuity management in NYCC. The audit has acted as a catalyst for the EPU review of Business Continuity strategy within NYCC which has then provided a series of suggestions, agreed actions and implementation timescales in response to the audit.

4 PROGRESS

- 4.1** The necessary documentation for service area Business Continuity plans has been completely reviewed by the EPU since the audit. Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and Incident Management Plans (IMP) have been verified for each of the identified service areas and the plans will now cover a "what to do if" set of actions to guide the service area in recovery of critical services. The updates have also taken. Consideration of recent incidents impacting on NYCC such as utility failures in October 2013 and the challenges faced during the Winter storms of December 2013 to ensure resilient BC plans are put in place.
- 4.2** Some service areas such as ICT or the Contact Centre have produced bespoke impact and recovery plans but have ensured that corporate guidance is still followed and that the principle of service area ownership is maintained. This approach has been successfully implemented this year across a number of directorates with EPU support and guidance. This is demonstrated by the extensive planning, training and exercising of Business Continuity Plans which has taken place in order to enable NYCC to deliver a safe and successful Tour de France in July 2014.
- 4.3** The Business Continuity Strategy will be re-launched via the NYCC Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) in June 2014. The CRMG will be used as a quarterly forum to review, challenge and confirm the Business Continuity plans for each individual service area. The EPU will mirror the system used by Risk to register each service area and monitor and direct specific work-streams over a rolling programme. The CRMG forum will promote ownership for Business Continuity within each directorate and will provide the robust reporting structure previously missing. Responsibility for signing off service area Business Continuity plans will remain with the relevant corporate

directors to continue to provide ownership for the annual statement of assurance.

- 4.4** Named officers within the EPU will be tasked with ensuring an on-going dialogue and support for Business Continuity SPOCS within each directorate. The EPU officers will work with the directorates to ensure that service areas have the knowledge and support to meet their Business Continuity responsibilities and that an annual cycle of tasks, including exercises, are completed and understood.
- 4.5** These proposals aim to utilise the best practice evident in many NYCC directorates to provide a clear and consistent approach to Business Continuity management within an identifiable and accountable reporting structure. This will address vulnerabilities identified in the audit and will ensure NYCC are able to meet future challenges with comprehensive assurance, improved communication and effective BC planning.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1** Audit Committee to note the progress made on the implementation of the updated strategy and revised structure for Business Continuity within North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC).

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