

## NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

JUNE 2016

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY – UPDATE REPORT

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1** To provide an overview of the current Business Continuity (BC) arrangements for North Yorkshire County Council and to provide continued high assurance for the management of risk within directorates and service areas.

**2 Background**

- 2.1** A comprehensive review of NYCC Business Continuity (BC) took place during 2014. Following the review, an updated methodology was introduced in order to prioritise the business continuity needs of each individual service area. This review considered the recommendations of the internal audit of October 2013 and ensured a consistent and corporate approach to BC planning across the organisation during any disruption of critical services.
- 2.2** The NYCC Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) responded to the internal audit recommendations and service area manager feedback to focus on reducing bureaucracy by working together with service managers to migrate existing Business Continuity plans into a consistent corporate document format consisting of:
- 1)** Business Impact Analysis (BIA) - The Business Impact Analysis looks at **critical** business functions and quantifies the impact a loss of those functions may have.
  - 2)** An Incident Management Plan (IMP) - The Incident Management Plan helps a service area to plan a process to respond to and work around a range of possible impacts on their critical services.
- 2.3** These documents are now held centrally on the NYCC BC share-point site for ease of access allowing both practitioners and senior management to make informed business continuity decisions during any disruption of identified critical services.

### **3 Corporate Business Continuity Policy and Strategy**

- 3.1** In preparation for any disruption to NYCC services, business continuity is now corporately addressed through assessment of loss of staff, equipment and technology, buildings and key suppliers. These considerations are addressed through pre-planning and mitigation measures identified in service area BC plans.
- 3.2** Each directorate has continued to work with the EPU to utilise planning training and exercising aiming to ensure staff know what to do and when to do it during any disruptive incident.
- 3.3** To address audit concerns, specific officers have been designated to review service area BC arrangements and a reporting regime put in place. Every directorate now has a designated BC champion to oversee their business continuity, to represent the directorate at the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) and to support managers in production of BC plans for directorate **critical services**.
- 3.4** The Corporate Director Strategic Resources continues to have overall responsibility for BC within NYCC, with the BC function co-ordinated and supported by the EPU. The Leader of the Council, Cllr. Carl Les, continues to hold the Executive portfolio for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.
- 3.5** Directorates are required to provide a BC RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status update to the CRMG every quarter. This process allows directorate BC champions to inform their directors on the current status of their directorate BC plans who can, in-turn, confirm their satisfaction in their annual statements of assurance.

### **4 Corporate Business Continuity Plan**

- 4.1** A Corporate NYCC Business Continuity Plan has recently been agreed by Management Board and introduced to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated response across the organisation during any major or significant disruption. This plan provides guidance and a structured framework for communication and management of information across all directorates during any disruption and allows informed strategic management decisions to be made across the organisation considering available resources and identification of priorities in the restoration of critical services.
- 4.2** The Corporate BC Plan takes into account recent incidents impacting on NYCC including utility failures, the Selby re-cycling fires in 2014 and 2015 the recent Winter storms and flooding in 2015/16 and organisational learning from the Tour de France and Tour de Yorkshire races and recent Fracking protests.

- 4.3** Some service areas such as Technology and Change and the Customer Service Centre have very specific recovery requirements during any critical service disruption. As such they have additional plans to ensure they can support response to wider disruption across NYCC. These service areas however, still provide corporate Incident Management Plans to allow informed strategic and corporate BC decision making during service disruption.
- 4.4** Designated officers within the EPU continue to provide on-going support for directorate BC champions and their staff within each directorate. The EPU officers work with the directorates to ensure that service areas have the knowledge and support to meet their BC responsibilities and that an annual work-plan including exercises is completed within an agreed time-scale.
- 4.5** It is acknowledged that BC planning is an on-going process and that the EPU and directorates will continue to work together within the identified structures to ensure robust, well-planned and exercised BC arrangements are in place to provide the required assurance across the organisation.
- 4.6** In May 2016 NYCC were faced with unprecedented protests against fracking proposals in North Yorkshire. The planning for the protests identified the need for activation of directorate and corporate BC plans across the organisation. NYCC had the challenge of maintaining “business as usual” and full provision of services across the organisation without the use of the majority of the County Hall site. Throughout the period of protest NYCC demonstrated their ability to work around identified problems using well and pre-defined flexible BC plans, to produce a robust and effective response to disruption, with large numbers of staff working remotely to great effect.
- 4.7** This positive development and the progress made was acknowledged in the Veritau audit report of May 2015 which states that the current arrangements for business continuity planning within NYCC provide substantial assurance. A further audit report is expected in June/July 2016.

## **5 Recommendations**

- 5.1** Audit Committee to note the review of Business Continuity, planning and resilience arrangements within North Yorkshire County Council and the management Board validation of the NYCC Corporate Business Continuity Plan.

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