NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

25 October 2019

BUSINESS CONTINUITY – UPDATE REPORT

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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 assurance for the management of risk within directorates and service areas.

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2   Background

2.1   The NYCC Resilience & Emergencies Team (RET) is tasked with ensuring that all NYCC directorates and service areas have robust arrangements in place to ensure they are able to deal with a variety of impacts capable of disrupting their provision of service to the communities of North Yorkshire.

The business continuity arrangements have evolved to ensure that directorates have plans in place to mitigate and manage any disruptive incidents such as a loss of staff, buildings or disruption to information technology or supply chains. This requirement has been magnified recently by the challenges of preparing for Brexit and the hosting of the 2019 UCI Road World Cycling Championships. This process continues to consider recent audit recommendations to ensure a consistent and corporate approach to BC planning across the organisation.

The NYCC Resilience and Emergencies Team continue to consider internal audit reviews and work with NYCC BC Champions via the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) to maintain a dialogue with each service area, to focus on reducing bureaucracy, improving engagement and transparency and ensuring a consistent corporate process for business continuity across North Yorkshire County Council

2.2   The NYCC Business Continuity plans consist of two key documents for all service provision;

Business Impact Analysis (BIA) - The Business Impact Analysis looks at **priority business functions** and quantifies the impact a loss of those functions may have.

Incident Management Plan (IMP) - The Incident Management Plan helps a service area plan a process to respond to and **work around** a range of possible impacts on their provision of priority services during any incident.

2.3   The NYCC corporate Business Continuity share-point site is the central portal for all relevant service-area and directorate documentation and is monitored and overseen by a Senior Resilience & Emergencies Officer from the Resilience and Emergencies Team, ensuring compliance and currency.

The share-point site is easily accessible and regularly updated providing service area practitioners and management, with up to date information, allowing informed business continuity decisions to be made. This also provides a framework for assurance during any disruption of service, information for the Corporate Risk Management Group and a mitigation pathway for loss of priority services.

3   Corporate Business Continuity Policy

3.1   Corporate Business Continuity (BC) and disruption to NYCC services continue to be addressed through an embedded assessment considering loss of staff, equipment, technology, buildings and key suppliers. These impacts are assessed through risk assessment and mitigation measures documented in service area BC plans.

3.2   Each directorate is required to work with their allocated RET officer to assess their BC planning and their most likely risks. RET continue to facilitate BC exercises with all directorates to raise awareness and train relevant staff. This ensures that staff are regularly provided with realistic and current scenarios and what to expect during any relevant incident.

3.3   Policy adherence is overseen by named RET officers, designated with the task of reviewing service area BC arrangements. A reporting regime is in place and every directorate now has a designated BC champion to oversee their business continuity arrangements, to take ownership of the process and to represent their directorate at the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG).

3.4   The Corporate Director (Strategic Resources) continues to have overall responsibility for Business Continuity within NYCC, with the function co-ordinated and facilitated by the designated officers from the Resilience and Emergencies Team. The Corporate Risk Management Group oversee the BC process. The executive portfolio for resilience, emergency planning and business continuity continues to sit with Leader of the Council, Cllr. Carl Les.

3.5   The CRMG have strategic oversight for business continuity and BC Champions work closely with relevant directors to ensure satisfaction with information and process to provide annual statements of assurance. Directorates report a BC RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status update to the CRMG every quarter.

4   Corporate Business Continuity Plan

4.1   A Corporate NYCC Business Continuity Plan is in place, ratified by NYCC Management Board and continues to ensure a consistent and co-ordinated response across the organisation during any disruptive incidents.

The Business Continuity Management System will be updated in 2020 in line with the current corporate Business Continuity Plan and will adhere with the latest Business Continuity Institute (BCI) good practice guidelines.

In the past 12 months two members of the NYCC Resilience and Emergencies Team have successfully passed their professional BCI examinations to enhance their understanding and application of business continuity within NYCC.

The provision of a structured BC framework across NYCC directorates, including links with the multi-agency Response to Major and Critical Incidents (RMCI) plan has enhanced management of information and supported a communication strategy that informs senior management across the organisation enabling them to identify priorities in the restoration of priority services.

4.2 North Yorkshire County Council has continued to evolve the embedded BC arrangements to meet recent challenges. NYCC has had to step up when dealing with the flash flooding of August 2019 in the Yorkshire Dales, organising and delivering the UCI 2019 Road World Cycling Championships in severe weather, delivery of the Tour of Yorkshire 2019 and in working around the planned loss of the Brierley building. NYCC continue to meet the numerous challenges and impacts of dealing with Brexit planning, recent cyber-attacks, loss of technology, utility failure and community impacts. The solid foundation for dealing with all of these incidents and many others has been our business continuity planning.

4.3 In the last 12 months, NYCC RET have continued to ensure that NYCC take every opportunity offered in ensuring on-going learning and development for BC. NYCC have worked collaboratively with a wide spectrum of multi-agency partners and have hosted and facilitated BC focused workshops and exercises together with Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners, government departments and internal directorates. The training and exercises have focused on Cyber impacts, social care, health outbreaks, our capacity to work from home and the expected impacts of Brexit. RET ensure that any organisational learning from incidents is captured by a robust de-brief process and recommendations embedded in future practice.

4.4 Designated officers within the RET continue to provide on-going support for directorate BC champions and their staff within each directorate. The RET officers work with the directorate BC Champions to ensure that service areas have the knowledge and support to meet their BC responsibilities and that Incident response, training and exercising continue to be part of an auditable annual work-plan.

4.5 It is acknowledged that Business continuity is a key part of overall Resilience and that BC planning continues to be an evolving process. RET and directorate BC Champions are committed to continuing this process.

4.6 RET continue to work closely with Veritau to ensure audit validation and assurance on the progress made with BC against evolving challenges and a changing landscape. This progress has been acknowledged in the latest Veritau audit report (December 2018) indicating **Reasonable Assurance** for business continuity arrangements within NYCC.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Audit Committee to note the recent challenging incidents that have been managed by the NYCC Directorates, overseen by the Business Continuity Champions and fully supported by the Resilience & Emergencies Team and the continued efforts of all service areas at North Yorkshire County Council to embed resilient practice.

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