

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL
AUDIT COMMITTEE**

16TH MARCH 2026

BUSINESS CONTINUITY – ANNUAL REPORT

Report of the Head of Resilience and Emergencies

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides the Audit Committee with an update on progress of the business continuity planning (BCP) process for 2025/26 and other business continuity (BC) related activity.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The various elements of BCP activity within North Yorkshire Council (NYC) continue to progress well as part of the 2025/26 BCP approach since the last update to the Audit Committee in March 2025.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities as a Category 1 Responder to maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of an emergency so far as is reasonably practicable. The duty relates to all functions, not just their emergency response functions. The Resilience and Emergencies Team (RET) is responsible for ensuring that all Directorates/Assistant Chief Executives have robust BC arrangements in place to enable them to continue to operate in the event of a significant impact(s) occurring to their service areas.

4.0 CORPORATE BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

- 4.1 The Corporate Business Continuity Policy has been reviewed in line with the 3-yearly review cycle. The policy has been reduced in length to ensure a focus on essential principles; make responsibilities obvious; and to encourage increased engagement by making it easier to read.
- 4.2 The policy document was signed by Corporate Management Board (CMB) on 24 February 2026. Following this, it is intended to produce a programme document to elaborate on the principles, and subsequently to review the Corporate Business Continuity Plan.
- 4.3 Business continuity will continue to be championed by the Director of Resources and coordinated through the Corporate Risk Management and Resilience Group (CRMGRG)

5.0 BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSES (BIAs) / INCIDENT MANAGEMENT PLANS (IMPs)

- 5.1 RET Officers continue to engage with Heads of Service (HoS) across their respective Directorates to provide support with BIA/IMP completion. In addition, the BC Manager provides additional support and guidance, particularly relating to service areas with the most critical activities.

- 5.2 The majority of BIAs are completed (89%), although a number of IMPs are still to be completed (68%) and are being followed up by RET Officers. Further work is underway within the Health and Adult Services Directorate to review and finalise the documentation following their restructure at the beginning of January and are therefore not included in these figures. Support from BC Champions will be requested for overdue documentation to encourage HoS to complete it where necessary.
- 5.3 BC arrangements for Traded Services were not fully covered during the 2024/25 cycle. The BC Manager has liaised with the Head of Commercial to secure participation in a forthcoming half-day training session for company directors. This session will provide an opportunity to examine the arrangements in greater depth and create a route for further engagement with the companies.

6.0 CRITICAL ACTIVITIES

- 6.1 The list of critical activities has been updated and will be reviewed and revised following further work on the impact scoring methodology. Where appropriate, efforts will be made to streamline the list by reducing the overall number of designated critical activities, ensuring a more focused and manageable approach to prioritisation.
- 6.2 Liaison with ICT colleagues is ongoing, with the objective of aligning the critical activities list with the disaster recovery list. This work will ensure that priorities, dependencies, and recovery time objectives are consistently reflected across both artefacts.

7.0 FINANCE INTERDEPENDENCIES WORKSHOPS

- 7.1 A series of workshops examining interdependencies between Finance, ICT and Business Support has been ongoing since November 2025; a second session was held in January, with a third scheduled for March. The current focus is on critical activities within the Welfare and Benefits service, mapping the end-to-end payments process to identify interdependencies and clarify HoS responsibilities.
- 7.2 Business Analysis support has been commissioned due to the technical nature of the work. Findings will be shared with all HoS who rely on Finance to provide clarity on processes and responsibilities and to agree any required actions.

8.0 ResilienceDirect (RD)

- 8.1 The use of RD continues to be promoted to HoS and key staff, with a steady flow of new account requests from a range of services being processed. The sustained demand for training delivered by RET is indicative of the wider adoption across the organisation.
- 8.2 Multi-factor authentication (MFA) was introduced in January and progressed smoothly, supported by RET through targeted guidance and two open drop-in sessions for all staff.

9.0 TRAINING AND EXERCISING

- 9.1 The CRMRG approved the implementation of BC training materials at its May meeting. Working with Training and Learning, it has been agreed that all new starters will be required to read the Corporate Business Continuity Policy as part of induction, in line with arrangements for other corporate policies. The refined policy, written in clearer language, will aid understanding and compliance.

9.2 The more detailed package for staff with specific BC responsibilities is in development. Training content has been provided to Training and Learning to be converted into an online module, including an assessment element to evidence participants' knowledge and understanding.

10.0 CYBER EXERCISE

10.1 Following CMB approval to repeat the no-notice cyber exercise, the BC Manager has liaised with the Director of Community Development to identify a suitable service area within the directorate for the next iteration. The exercise will then be extended to other parts of the organisation in due course.

11.0 BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS)

11.1 Guided by the November CRM RG steer, the search for a suitable MIS is in progress. Although leveraging existing NYC platforms such as Netcall is preferred where appropriate, the approach will prioritise the system that best meets the required functionality. Initial research points to Netcall as a potentially strong fit however, alternative options will be considered to confirm best value and suitability.

12.0 NATIONAL RESILIENCE STANDARDS (NRS) WORKING GROUP

12.1 In line with NRS 10, the BC Manager continues to lead a working group focused on strengthening resilience among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) across North Yorkshire and the City of York. The group has delivered a range of improvements to the support available to SMEs, with particular progress on engagement and practical assistance.

13.0 BC SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS (SLAs) WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS

13.1 The City of York Council's (CYC's) annual BC cycle is nearing conclusion. RET Officers aligned with CYC Directorates have provided support to them to review the BC documentation in a similar fashion to that of the NYC process.

13.2 Further progression of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority's (YNYCA's) BC has continued over the year. This has included advice on the planning required to strengthen the arrangements, including framework and policy development, documentation alignment, and training/exercising.

14.0 INCIDENTS THAT HAVE OCCURRED OVER THE PAST YEAR THAT HAVE HAD POTENTIAL OR ACTUAL BUSINESS CONTINUITY IMPLICATIONS

Incident	Locality	Date
Airwaves radio outage	County wide	10/03/2025
Vessel collision in North Sea	East coast	11/03/2025
Unexploded munition – River Ure	South of Ripon	25/03/2025
Unexploded munition	Malton	16/04/2025
Unexploded munition	Flaxton	13/05/2025
Potential chemical incident	Scarborough	03/06/2025
Drought escalation	County wide	19/06/2025
Langdale fire	Langdale	26/06/2025
Road traffic collision	Harrogate	18/07/2025
Langdale fire (Fylingdales)	Langdale (Fylingdales)	12/08/2025
Missing child	Richmond	16/08/2025

Incident	Locality	Date
Residential fire	Spofforth, Harrogate	19/08/2025
Hydrochloric acid spill	Masham	10/09/2025
Amber snow warning	East side of the County	19/11/2025
Fire in industrial unit	Northallerton	25/11/2025
Road traffic collision	Tadcaster	01/12/2025
Residential fire	Danby, Whitby	19/01/2026

15.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 Note the contents of this report and raises any issues so that further refinements can be made to the BC process.

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