



AUDIT COMMITTEE - 10TH DECEMBER 2014

SUBJECT: ICT SERVICE DISASTER RECOVERY ARRANGEMENTS

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Audit Committee members of the existing ICT Disaster Recovery (DR), arrangements that are in place within CCBC and how these arrangements were invoked to restore services following an interruption to services in August 2014.
- 1.2 The report also highlights the review process that forms part of the Disaster Recovery arrangements to ensure the experience of such events is used in a positive way to improve existing plans and mitigate risk of future similar occurrences.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report briefly highlights CCBC's existing ICT Disaster Recovery arrangements and informs Members of how these arrangements were utilised to recover ICT systems as quickly as possible following two real incidents which interrupted the provision of ICT Services in August 2014.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The ICT Service critically underpins the large majority of the day-to-day services provided by the Council to its constituents.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 CCBC's ICT DR arrangements have been developed over many years into a tried and successfully tested plan. At the heart of this plan are the Authority's high quality and resilient Primary and Secondary Data Centres, *the secondary acting as a test and a backup to the Primary*. These secure and environmentally controlled facilities are further protected against mains power loss by means of Uninterruptable Power Systems (UPS) together with diesel generators and by automated fire suppression systems.
- 4.2 The ICT DR arrangements are also compliant with the ISO 270001 ICT security standard, which includes Disaster Recovery and as such are regularly audited by the British Standards Institution as part of their ongoing 6 monthly re accreditation process. CCBC has now held BSi accreditation for 8 consecutive years.
- 4.3 The ICT DR Plan enables all ICT systems to be recovered as quickly as possible (within reasonable financial constraints). The backup and recovery processes are tested to ensure a successful outcome can be achieved for the recovery of critical applications, communications and data within the time tolerances set out within the plan.

- 4.4 To put things into context, there are in excess of 500 ICT applications in use across Caerphilly CBC, ranging from large corporate solutions, plus many that support customer facing services, to small tailored applications for the more niche type of services. The ICT DR recovery process has been prioritised depending on the nature of each business application and its service affecting criticality to the Authority.
- 4.5 The main public facing services, such as the Contact Centre, including the main telephone switchboard and the CCBC Website receive the high recovery priority as do Social Services, Schools, Financials and Payroll and so on, the recovery process then continues until all applications and services are successfully recovered. A future review on the prioritisation of the recovery process is planned in conjunction with the work currently being undertaken with the Authority's overarching Business Recovery plan.
- 4.6 In August this year, whilst in the process of moving some of the councils applications and data from an older set of electronic storage equipment onto a newer more resilient and higher performance storage area network (SAN), a move that had been planned during the quieter main Summer holiday period to minimise the risk of disruption, a technical issue developed, which prevented the successful completion of this operation. This issue led to an interruption to some ICT Services on the 5th and 6th of August whilst ICT staff worked around the clock to recover these systems. Further work was also required to ensure the continuity and stability of ICT services following this event. This maintenance work was scheduled, completed and successfully tested on Saturday 9th of August.
- 4.7 However, during Monday 11th of August further technical issues arose, which again had the effect of interrupting some critical ICT Services including some to the Council's telephone Services. Again ICT Staff worked non stop to recover systems as quickly as possible in line with the existing DR arrangements and as far as possible ICT services were restored in priority order, with the majority of critical applications being made available by Tuesday 12th August and all remaining services successfully being brought back online systematically during the following two days.
- 4.8 The source of the issue was traced to the older storage equipment from which all previously affected critical data has since been removed and moved to a new SAN to mitigate the risk of a future similar occurrence.
- 4.9 The DR arrangements have also been updated to reflect the issues experienced during these events and some procedures changed to accommodate the new storage area networks now in use. The updated DR Plan will also be subjected to continual review by CCBC ICT Services, external auditors and the BSi in line with the ISO 27001 accreditation. Co ordination and integration with the currently developing Business Recovery Plan will also take place.
- 4.10 ICT Services support contracts with external suppliers are also reviewed when necessary to ensure CCBC has the correct level of maintenance and support arrangements in place to ensure the continued availability of its ICT infrastructure.
- 4.11 Further enhancements to the ICT DR procedures are also being made with a joint reciprocal arrangement with Newport City Council, by hosting additional backup sets outside a 9-mile radius from the data centres as part of a previous recommendation by WAO.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No full impact assessment has been undertaken. However, the temporary reduction in availability of ICT Services may have had a detrimental effect on customers who fall under some of the protected characteristics groups, in particular people with different types of disabilities and the elderly.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 That sufficient Capital budget, in line with current levels, continues to be annually allocated to ICT Services to enable the appropriate level of ICT equipment refresh within the Authority's Data Centres to ensure the ICT infrastructure remains resilient and fit for purpose.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no Personnel implications resulting from this report, However, it should also be noted that the success of each critical ICT services recovery process is due in no small part to the current skills, experience and dedication of all the ICT Staff concerned. A fact that must not go unnoticed in these more difficult of financial times, especially when prioritising future budgets.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 See below.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the information in this report is noted by the members of the Audit Committee.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To update the Audit committee members of the ICT Disaster Recover arrangements in place within CCBC

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Govt Act 2000

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Appendices:
Appendix 1 BSi Certificate of Registration