AUDIT COMMITTEE – 11TH MARCH 2015

SUBJECT: BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR, SOCIAL SERVICES

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To update the Committee on business continuity management arrangements within the Council.

2.   SUMMARY

2.1   This report provides an update on the business continuity management arrangements being implemented across the Council. A three stage process has been implemented incorporating Business Impact Analysis of services, followed by a Risk Assessment and Action Plan where appropriate. A Business Impact Analysis of 255 functions has been undertaken with 238 being subject to a subsequent Risk Assessment. The Risk Assessments have identified 124 functions for which Business Continuity Action Pans have been developed. A task and finish group has been established to address the corporate priorities and arrangements in relation to accommodation and ICT in the event of a business disruption.

3.   LINKS TO STRATEGY

3.1   Business Continuity Management is a process which supports the delivery of all services and strategies across the organisation.

4.   THE REPORT

4.1   The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Local Authorities to put business continuity management arrangements in place. This Committee has received a number of updates on the business continuity management arrangements being implemented across the Council including planning in schools and IT disaster recovery arrangements.

4.2   The business continuity management process requires services to undertake a Business Impact Analysis in the first instance. This involves the identification of critical services and functions and an assessment of the impacts on the Council if these were disrupted or lost. It includes consideration of the length of time over which a disruption could be managed and the resources required. 255 functions have been subject to a Business Impact Analysis with 238 moving forward to Risk Assessment to identify the potential threats to these critical services.

4.3   In accordance with our Business Continuity Management Strategy our approach involves:

- implementing appropriate measures to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring and/or reduce the potential effects of those incidents
- taking account of mitigation measures in place
- providing continuity for critical services during and following an incident
- taking account of services that have not been identified as critical.

Services have identified actions to mitigate loss, and to support effectiveness in maintaining the Council's ability to deliver critical service functions. Completion of this organisation wide process has resulted in Business Continuity Action Plans being developed for 124 functions. This is a large body of work that has required significant input from staff across the organisation.

4.4   In analysing services the impact of disruption has been considered in relation to staff, accommodation, specialist equipment, and IT. In the main service managers are able to identify and implement actions to mitigate risks to critical services. However, an organisation wide view is required where services have identified a need in relation to accommodation and IT availability. A task and finish group has been established in order to assess the requirements identified through the Business Continuity Management process and to set out proposals for the prioritisation of accommodation and IT resources as necessary in the event of a business disruption; consideration will also be given to our approach to agile working.

4.5   Service managers are responsible for ongoing review and maintenance of business continuity arrangements and the Annual Governance Statement review provides a process for seeking assurance that this is in place.

5.   EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1   There are no potential equalities implications of this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan, however having sound business continuity management arrangements in place in the event of any disruption ensures that the most vulnerable in society are not without the services they need at such a time.

6.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1   Business Continuity Planning will be undertaken within existing resources and therefore there are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The resourcing of measures to mitigate the likelihood or impact of a business disruption will need to be considered on a case by case basis as appropriate.

7.   PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1   There are no personnel implications arising directly from this report.

8.   CONSULTATIONS

8.1   This report has been sent to the Consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the Committee note the progress that has been made to date in relation to Business Continuity Management.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To advise the Committee in relation to Business Continuity Management within the Council.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Civil Contingencies Act 2004

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Background Papers: Audit Committee Reports of 5th March 2014 & 10th September 2014 entitled "Business Continuity Management", and of 10th December 2014 entitled "ICT Disaster Recovery Arrangements".