

AGENDA ITEM NO.10

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Audit Committee

18th January 2013

Report of: Service Director, Safer Bristol

Title: Business Continuity Annual Report

Ward: City-wide

Officer presenting report: Jim Gillman

Contact telephone number: 92 24313

Recommendation:

To note the contents of the report.

Summary:

This paper intends to update members of the Audit Committee of Business Continuity (BC) progress since January 2012.

1. Policy and Context

1.1 Business Continuity (BC) requirements are set out in the Civil Contingencies Business Continuity Policy Statement, available on [the Source](#). Adopting a managed approach to BC is a statutory duty under the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004. The Civil Protection Unit lead on the delivery of duties imposed by the Civil Contingencies Act. The Corporate Civil Contingencies Group (CCCG) oversees the process. The CCCG is made up of 2nd tier Directorate Champions representing all Directorates.

1.2 The aim of the BC programme is to build 'organisational resilience' - to ensure that the Council is able to keep critical services running during emergencies, such as flooding and disruptions to usual working conditions, such as a loss of IT services.

2. Response to the Audit Committee letter of January 2012

Following last year's report to the Audit Committee, Brenda McLennan, Vice Chair of the Audit Committee, wrote to the then Chief Executive drawing her attention to:

- The requirement to include business continuity requirements into the job descriptions and PMDS of critical service managers
- Making the necessary time and resource to test critical service plans and arrangements across Directorates
- The importance of continuity issues in the face of budget restraint and organisational change, requesting that all areas subject to change have business continuity embedded in change in programme plans.

Following this letter, the Service Director for Safer Bristol wrote to Service Directors in all Directorates asking them to ensure Critical Services Managers had a business continuity element within their PMDS and that sufficient time was spent testing BC arrangements. SLT also requested that the Programme Manager of the People Programme consider the issue of business continuity requirements in the job descriptions of critical service managers.

CPU recently polled critical service managers to establish how many of them now had a BC element within their PMDS. Of the critical service managers to respond, 42% said they had a BC related element within their PMDS, 47% would add one at their next 6 monthly PMDS review and 11% didn't have a BC-related performance target.

3. Main Report

2012 was another testing year for contingency planning. Early year drought and fuel shortage threats gave way to the widespread and enduring threat of flooding.

3.1 Fuel shortages

The threatened fuel delivery drivers strike in April / May and changes in the Government's plan for dealing with a fuel shortage of this nature, required a reassessment of the Council's ability to manage a fuel shortage.

BCC is well positioned to manage a short-lived fuel shortage due to the fuel reserves held at Sandy Park Depot. These reserves (up to 160,000 litres, at maximum capacity – 120,000 diesel and 40,000 unleaded) are sufficient for providing fuel for BCC critical services for more than the 10-day planning assumption recommended by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

However, any kind of forecourt fuel shortage is likely to lead to requests for BCC to use some of the Sandy Park reserves to support a wide range of non-BCC provided activities, service delivery partners and independent service providers – some commissioned by BCC. This will require a clear idea of the types of activity BCC will seek to support in advance of any shortage and a well drilled decision-making and incident management process should a shortage occur. It will also require BCC to work closely with a range of organisations in difficult circumstances to ensure all fuel is used appropriately.

The fuel shortage situation illustrates some of the additional difficulties in commanding resources and controlling fast moving situations now Council services are increasingly provided by independent providers, who often have less ability and incentive to plan for service disruptions of this nature.

3.2 Flooding

2012 was the wettest year on record in England, with record amounts of rainfall since the summer repeatedly testing the ability of some key teams to operate, particularly the Responsive Repairs in Landlord Services, Highways and Traffic and customer service teams.

Heavy rain in November, coinciding with the Autumnal leaf drop, created problems with drains and gullies blocked by leaves causing localised flooding. Known hot spots (e.g. Henbury Ford and Whiteladies Road) flooded causing traffic disruption. However, Bristol was relatively fortunate and was not as severely affected as surrounding areas.

In line with review procedures and with an eye on recent weather events the Bristol City Council (BCC) Flood Plan has been reviewed. The plan seeks to coordinate more closely across teams with key roles in managing the flood risk – Traffic and Highways, City Docks, Flood Risk Team, Emergency Control, Civil Protection Unit and Customer Services – as well as ensuring that public information regarding service disruptions is issued quickly and accessibly.

3.3 Exercise Laveer

Exercise Laveer was a corporate-wide flooding exercise, held on 5 December. Over 60 Council staff and Managers took part, as well as representatives from the Police, Fire Service and Health Agencies. The scenario took participants through a major flood event, recreating the urgency of responding to fast moving events and requiring participants to consider and respond to some of the likely impacts of a major flood. The scenario was designed to test aspects of the BCC Incident Response Plan, the BCC Flood Plan and Directorate and Critical Service Continuity arrangements.

The exercise tested the operation of the Council's Incident Management Room and allowed volunteers and staff the opportunity to practise incident management skills.

A full exercise report will be written and presented to the Corporate Civil Contingencies Group with recommendations. Until this report has been finalised and published, it is not appropriate to comment on particular findings regarding the preparations of Directorates. However, there were some general learning points that came out of the exercise:

- How to collect and manage real time information regarding the extent of flooding – and getting this information out to responding teams and the public in a usable form
- The capacity of frontline teams to manage a city-wide flood event
- Managing information regarding a fast moving event within the Incident Management team
- The training and effectiveness of Directorate Continuity teams
- Working with service delivery partners to support the delivery of critical services to the most vulnerable

4. Business Continuity Programme Overview

4.1 Critical services

Critical service BC planning is now fairly well established at the critical service level. Services, for the most part, are clear of the requirements even if plans are not always comprehensive. The process for identifying critical services will be re-evaluated this year. With time and budget pressures on teams and services increasing, CPU are looking at ways to reduce the burden of planning.

4.2 Directorate Planning

Planning at the Directorate level is more problematic. Although all Directorates have generic plans in place, these are not well delivered within all Directorates and the ability of officers to act as 'Directorate Continuity Teams' in some instances is still in the early stages of development. This will be picked up in the Exercise Laveer report to be presented to the CCG.

4.3 Corporate Planning.

The Corporate Business Continuity plan was re-written and published in 2012. The Corporate Continuity Plan is available on [the Source](#).

4.4 Commissioning Services

Business continuity guidance for officers buying services on behalf of the Council has been published and now forms part of the procurement procedures. CPU will undertake work to assess the effectiveness of the guidance in the New Year.

5. Civil Protection Unit

The CPU has not been unaffected by the cuts. The team will be reduced to 4 in April 2014, if the GIS Officer post is cut as proposed. Having an experienced GIS officer within CPU allows for the rapid analysis of incident zones, making possible the speedy identification of vulnerable residents, hazards and infrastructure in affected areas and improving our response to incidents.

Although, this will be a significant reduction in CPU capability, we are currently exploring options with the corporate GIS team to consider how this capability gap can be filled.

10. Equalities Impact Assessment

No implications arising from this report

11. Legal and Resource Implications

Legal: None sought

Financial: None sought

12. Appendices: None