

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Date: 17 January 2014

Report of: Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods

Title: Business Continuity Annual Report

Ward: City-wide

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Recommendations

To note the contents of the report.

Summary

This paper addresses the concerns raised by Audit Committee members in January 2013 regarding the inclusion of business continuity responsibilities in Service Managers PMDS / job descriptions and the impact of losing the Civil Protection Unit's GIS officer.

In January 2013, Audit Committee members were also interested in Exercise Laveer, the corporate flooding exercise held in December 2012. [The exercise report is published on the Source.](#)

Additionally, the paper provides a general update for members of the Audit Committee regarding Business Continuity (BC) activity since January 2013.

1. Policy and Context

Business Continuity (BC) requirements are set out in the Civil Contingencies and 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 Resilience Group (CRG - formerly the Corporate Civil Contingencies Group) oversees the process. The CRG is made up of 2nd tier Directorate Champions and other key officers.

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. Business continuity arrangements support BCC's wider civil contingencies response; the support the Council gives to the emergency services and the public as a result of emergencies Business Continuity Report for Audit Committee, Jan 2014.

and major incidents.

2. Business Continuity responsibilities for Critical Service Managers

In January 2013 it was reported that 47% of critical service managers who responded to the query had a business continuity related PMDS element. In a similar survey conducted in May 2013 66% of critical service managers had a BC related PMDS element.

Although a further survey has not been undertaken, the generic Service Manager job description has now been re-written to include business continuity and civil contingencies responsibilities. This now mirrors the responsibilities written into Strategic and Service Director job descriptions.

The following has been added to the generic Service Manager job description:

Bristol Leadership Capabilities and Accountabilities for Service Managers:

- *Participate in duty rotas to cover emergency call-outs, major city events and emergency management exercises.*
- *Complete BCC senior officer emergency training and multi-agency Integrated Emergency Management training.*
- *Ensure business continuity plans are in place and regularly reviewed.*

3. Losing the Civil Protection Unit (CPU) GIS Officer

Further to the January 2013 report, the following measures have been taken to mitigate the impact of losing the CPU GIS officer post:

- A GIS Analyst has been identified from within Corporate GIS to be the 'lead' and first point of contact for GIS-related support.
- 'Emergency support', including out of hours support (when volunteers are available) is available from two GIS volunteers familiar with the CPU GIS tools. These volunteers were trained by the outgoing GIS officer and their contact details are kept in the Emergency Contact Directory.

Although the loss of dedicated GIS support has reduced the resources within CPU, these measures provide the mitigation required.

4. Exercise Laveer

In January 2012, the Audit Committee were interested in the outcome of Exercise Laveer – the corporate-wide flooding exercise held in December 2012. A copy of the [Laveer exercise report](#) is published on the Source.

5. Business Continuity update – headline issues

5.1 Flooding and storms

Several recent bouts of bad weather have tested plans and arrangements. Heavy rain and high winds in October and rain, wind, high tides and tidal surges over Christmas and the New Year have triggered responses developed after Exercise Laveer and the Business Continuity Report for Audit Committee, Jan 2014.

heavy rains experienced in 2012 and early 2103.

These arrangements, to develop BCC's flood and severe weather response and ensure closer co-operation between key teams, have worked well. The severe weather response, triggered by Met Office weather forecasts, ensured:

- Key teams developed a shared view of the likely impact of the severe weather;
- Resources available inside and outside usual office hours were identified;
- Gullies and drains around known flooding hotspots (e.g. Henbury Ford and Whiteladies Rd, by the BBC) were checked and cleared; and
- Escalation options, particularly with regards to road closures, traffic management, support to the public, tree management and debris clearance were in place.

Although there were a small number of reports of properties being flooded over the New Year period, most of these were due to surface water flooding and most appear to be related to blocked drains. The Flood Risk Team is currently producing a comprehensive list of properties affected.

The Civil Protection Unit's flood barrier was used 'in anger' for the first time to protect properties along the Harbourside, particularly along Avon Crescent and buildings owned by the Harbour Office. The flood barrier was effective and received positive reviews from local residents and in the local media.

Fortunately, Bristol escaped the most severe impacts again and although this weather was managed well, different circumstances could have posed a significantly more challenging situation.

5.2 Snow and cold weather

A well-publicised winter campaign has encouraged all teams and services to prepare. A corporate-wide coordination meeting held at the beginning of November pulled all Directorates together and allowed continuity plans to be harmonised.

Over 100 voluntary community snow wardens have now been recruited across the City and are prepared to support snow clearance and vulnerable people in their neighbourhoods.

5.3 Change and continuity

Organisation re-structuring, staff movements, staff loss, office movements and changes to IT service delivery all continue to present internal challenges to continuity. This has been highlighted by a lack of permanent Strategic Directors in post, which has put strain on the 'Gold' emergency call-out rota. However, with new arrivals in post and imminent this situation is alleviating.

CPU have been working with teams across the Council, particularly in IT, to ensure continuity requirements are discussed and identified at key stages of the change process. This has ensured:

- Continuity is a key priority of the BCC Data Centre project – the move to take Data Centre 1 out of Romney House;
- Continuity issues have been included in the systems architecture planning documents;

- Re-written job descriptions include civil contingencies and business continuity requirements;
- Business Continuity requirements remain in Service delivery planning documents;
- A continuity risk assessment is undertaken by anyone starting a procurement project.

However, there is an ongoing requirement to ensure the opportunities to build organisational resilience presented by re-organisation are capitalised on.

6. General preparedness and moving forward

Following reorganisation, work will need to be undertaken to update plans to reflect new Directorate and team structures. This will include reviewing the critical service list and providing training for new staff. In anticipation, the membership of the Corporate Resilience Group has been widened to include more officers likely to play a role in a major emergency or a significant business disruption (e.g. the Highway Network Operations Manager) and the terms of reference for the Group have been reviewed.

BCC's ability to manage small to medium sized incidents has been proved this year, not only by the severe weather, but also by the support given to the police operation to liberate exploited workers from traveller sites in South Gloucestershire. At short notice, CPU successfully established the reception centre to receive those 'liberated' by the operation to significant plaudits from the Police.

Exercise Blue Kestrel, a major multi-agency COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards; the legislation regulating emergency planning around hazardous industrial sites) exercise is taking place on 26th February 2014, using a scenario based on an incident at a chemical plant in Avonmouth. This will be followed by an internal Kestrel exercise on 26th March 2014 to include more BCC staff and examine the BCC related issues in more detail.

A smaller exercise, to be co-ordinated by the Police Counter Terrorism Security Advisers, considering the impact of a major incident in City Hall and including security and reception staff is planned for February 2014.

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

No implications arising from this report

8. Legal and Resource Implications

Legal: None sought

Financial: None sought

9. Appendices: None