

Business Continuity Policy

Approved by Audit, Risk & Scrutiny Committee on
2020 with an implementation date of 2020



Document Control

Approval Date	To be confirmed
Implementation Date	To be confirmed
Policy Number	To be confirmed
Policy Author(s) and Owner	Corporate Risk Lead, Ronnie McKean
Approval Authority	Risk Board
Scheduled Review	Annual
Changes	

Draft

Table of Contents

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Section Number, Section Heading Titles, Sub Heading Titles, Page Numbers

(Will be added following final approval)

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1. Purpose Statement

- 1.1 Aberdeen City Council (“the Council”) is responsible for delivering a wide range of services to the citizens of Aberdeen, both in order to meet statutory requirements and to deliver on the outcomes set out within the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and associated strategies.
- 1.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to comply with the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) which sets out the Council’s duty to:
 - “Maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that if an emergency occurs the person or body is able to continue to perform his or its functions”
 - “Provide advice and assistance to the public in connection with the making of arrangements for the continuance of commercial activities by the public, or the continuance of the activities of bodies other than public or local authorities whose activities are not carried on for profit, in the event of an emergency”
- 1.2.1 This policy and supporting documentation set out how the Council will continue to provide critical services during and after a disruptive event and how it provides Business Continuity advice to the businesses and voluntary organisations.
- 1.2.2 This policy integrates with the Council’s Generic Emergency Plan (GEP) which is activated in response to an incident or emergency by linking the Council’s response activities with the activation of Business Continuity Plans when it appropriate to do so.

2. Application and Scope Statement

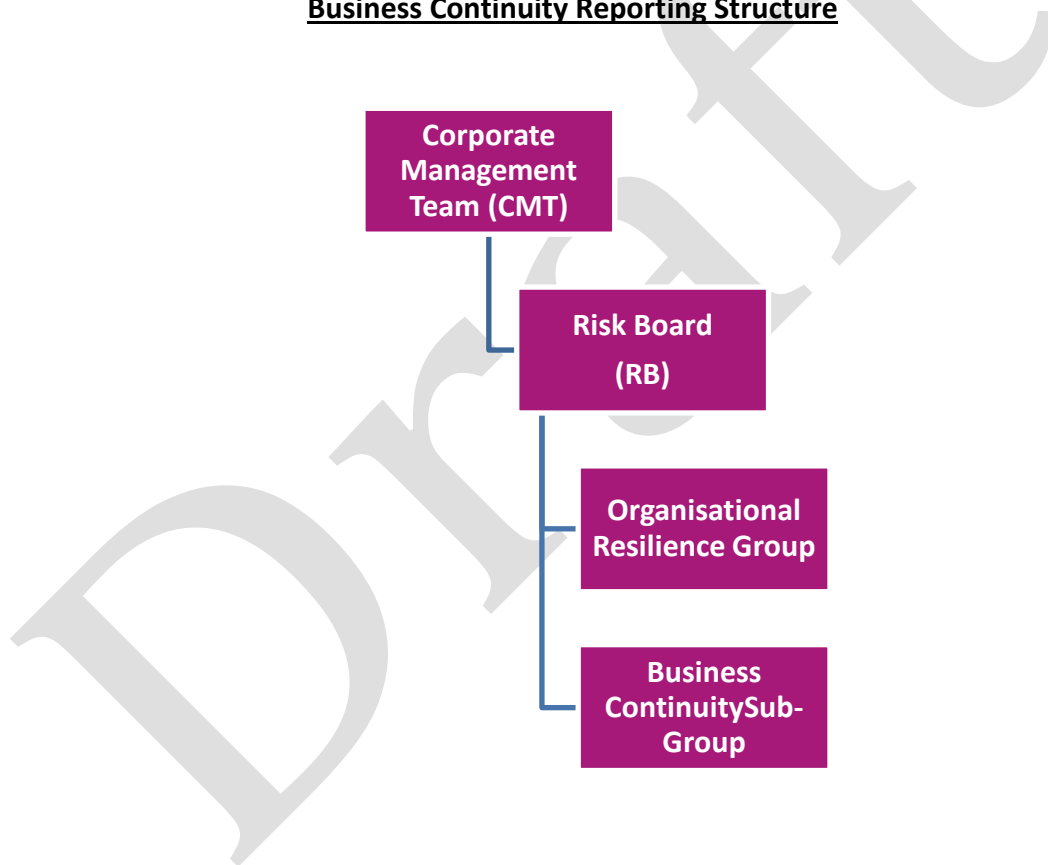
- 2.1 This policy and its supporting documents are applicable to all members of the Council’s workforce.
- 2.2 This policy does not apply to the Council’s Arms-Lengths External Organisations (ALEOs) as these organisations are responsible for their Business Continuity plans and arrangements. These arrangements are monitored through the ALEO Assurance Hub and reported by exception to the Audit, Risk and Scrutiny Committee.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Audit Risk and Scrutiny Committee is responsible for ensuring effectiveness of the Council’s Business Continuity arrangements as such is the approval authority for this policy.

- 3.2 The Chief Officer – Governance is responsible for the development, management and maintenance of this policy. Approval of all supporting documentation is delegated to the Chief Officer – Governance following its development by the Corporate Risk Lead.
- 3.3 All Directors and Chief Officers are responsible for implementing the policy and for ensuring that appropriate and adequate resource is in place within their service areas to deliver on its requirements. Support on applying the policy is provided by the Corporate Risk Lead.
- 3.4 The Business Continuity Group is responsible for supporting the Corporate Risk Lead in order to provide the Organisational Resilience Working Group and the Risk Board with the assurance that the Council’s Business Continuity plans are implemented, maintained and tested.

Business Continuity Reporting Structure



- 3.5 Users of this policy can communicate feedback to the Corporate Risk Lead.

4. Supporting Procedures & Documentation

- 4.1 This policy is supported by a number of documents including, but not limited to:
- 4.2 **Business Continuity Guidance** – a guidance document describing the processes and documentation to be used to create, maintain, schedule testing and conduct testing on the Council’s Business Continuity plans.

- 4.3 **Business Continuity Advice and Guidance** – a guidance document that provides Business Support advice and guidance to the businesses and voluntary organisations.
- 4.4 **Corporate Templates** – the pre-formatted documents used to ensure consistent content and design in the Council’s Business Continuity Plans.

5. Policy Statement

General

- 5.1 Each of the Council’s functions will develop, implement and maintain Business Continuity Plans to ensure that:
- all critical functions are identified;
 - the impact of the loss or disruption to these functions is assessed, identified and recorded;
 - arrangements are in place to ensure the continuance of these critical services at a predefined level in the event of an emergency.
- 5.2 Each Function must ensure that these Plans are reviewed, maintained and tested in accordance with the testing schedule provided by the Business Continuity Group.
- 5.3 Each Function must ensure that key members of staff receive appropriate training to ensure that they are competent in implementing Plans when required.
- 5.4 The Council will provide and publish Business Continuity advice to the businesses and voluntary organisations on its Website and assess on a case by case basis whether a charge is applicable for the advice provided.

Business Continuity Management Vision

- 5.5 It is our vision to deliver a fully integrated Business Continuity Management System which:-
- ✓ Supports officers to develop and promote appropriate Continuity Plans.
 - ✓ Supports officer decision making in the event of an emergency or disruptive event allowing for resources to be focused on the most critical areas
 - ✓ Allows the Council to continue to provide its critical and non-critical services as far as is reasonably practical
 - ✓ Supports co-operation with other responders and partner organisations
 - ✓ Incorporates Business Continuity into the Council’s day to day activities

Business Continuity Management Approach

- 5.6 The Council’s approach to Business Continuity Management is set out within the Business Continuity Guidance and Advice documentation and will:-

- ✓ Enable officers to identify and assess the range of significant risks that may threaten the performance of critical functions in the event of an emergency or disruption.
- ✓ Enable officers to mitigate and control the effects of an emergency or disruptive event by sharing the tools, documentation and training required
- ✓ Assign Plan ownership to the correct officers to ensure that the most effective management techniques are utilised including;
 - Risk assessment
 - Creation of actions and activities required to mitigate the risk
- ✓ Create effective Business Continuity Plans that reflect the risks, controls and mitigating activities identified that allows the Council to continue to provide its services as far as is reasonably practical
- ✓ Ensure that Plans are maintained, reviewed and tested
- ✓ Establish Business Continuity Management linkages to the following:
 - Emergency Planning
 - Resilience Partners
 - Risk Management
 - Health and Safety

6. Definitions

6.1 The following terms are used within this policy and its supporting documentation:

- **Business Continuity Management (BCM)** – A management process that identifies the threats to an organisation and the impacts to operations should any of the threats occur.
- **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)** – A documented collection of procedures and information that is developed and maintained in readiness for use, in the event of a business interruption or event.
- **Contingencies** – Provision or plans for a possible event or circumstance.
- **Civil Contingencies Act 2004** – UK Parliament Act that makes provision for Civil Contingencies.

7. Risk

7.1 The policy and supporting documentation specified within Section 4 details how the council implements its Business Continuity plans and arrangements that will allow the Council to mitigate and manage the impact of risks arising from an emergency or disruptive event.

- Compliance Risk - The policy and supporting documentation will reduce the risk of non-compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- Operational Risk - The policy and supporting documentation will allow the Council to reduce or manage the effects of an emergency or disruptive event affecting the delivery of critical services.
- Financial Risk - The policy and document will allow the Council to anticipate and manage the costs associated with an emergency or disruptive event.
- Reputational Risk - Effective Business Continuity plans will allow the Council to respond to and manage emergencies and disruptive events in a planned controlled manner, minimising the effects to staff and service users.

- 7.2 There are no unintended effects, consequences or risks directly resulting from the update of this policy.
- 7.3 The risks identified by the Council through its Business Continuity arrangements will be reviewed and monitored via the Council's risk registers and through post incident reporting resulting from plan testing and/or activation.

8. Policy Performance

- 8.1 The effectiveness of the policy and supporting documentation will be determined by the continuation of affected services in a planned and managed way during an emergency or unplanned event.

Performance of the plans and documentation supported by this policy will be monitored in a number of ways including:

- ✓ Post incidents and de-brief reporting to Organisational Resilience Group
- ✓ Testing and review of plans by Business Continuity sub-group
- ✓ Feedback from the public on advice and assistance provided
- ✓ Feedback and de-brief reports received from partner organisations e.g. Local Resilience Partnership

9. Design and Delivery

- 9.1 The policy and supporting documentation fully supports the delivery of strategic outcomes contained in the LOIP as the Council's Business Continuity arrangements focus on the continuation of services required in order to achieve the outcomes.

10. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- 10.1 The supporting documentation specified within this policy will be reviewed and updated as and when required.
- 10.2 Unless otherwise required, this policy will be subject to a planned annual review.
- 10.3 This policy and supporting documentation replaces the Council's Business Continuity Policy dated August 2017.

11. Communication and Distribution

- 11.1 The policy and supporting documentation will be shared directly with Extended Corporate Management Team and the Leadership Forum to enable communication and distribution.
- 11.2 The policy and supporting document will be shared directly with the members of the Business Continuity sub-group in accordance with the Terms of Reference for the group.
- 11.3 The policy and supporting documentation will be available for review on the organisation's shared areas on the Network.

12. Information Management

- 12.1 Data relating to Business Continuity will be stored and managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and supporting procedures.