

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	24 March 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Risk Management – Review of Business Continuity Arrangements
REPORT NUMBER	ECS/16/020
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform Members on the review of Education and Children's Services business continuity arrangements.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee are asked to note the information provided in the report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific financial implications arising from the report. However, a robust system of risk management itself mitigates potential negative influences on management of the Council's finances.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal

The Council is bound by legislation and, in its role as a corporate body, as a public service provider. The Civil Contingencies Act and Aberdeen City Council's Corporate Plan require all parts of the Council to develop Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) to enable them to respond to sudden or unexpected interruptions to normal activities. Such plans will be constructed to prioritise recovery in relation to the potential impact on the business.

4.2 Resource, Personnel, Property, Equipment and Health and Safety Implications

Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) are required to ensure that normal business arrangements can be maintained within the minimum period of time should an unanticipated emergency arise. BCPs address the resource, personnel, property implications in the event of loss of business continuity.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 Audit and Risk Committee on 26 June 2014 considered a report by the Director of Corporate Governance which provided an update on progress with the continuing development of the Council's system of Risk Management.

The Committee resolved to instruct all Services to review their business continuity arrangements and to report back to their Service Committee.

The use of a Business Continuity Plan Review and Testing Schedule for Services was agreed by CMT to give assurance that business continuity planning is being actively managed and that effective business continuity and disaster recovery arrangements are in place.

- 5.2 Officers in Education and Children's Services annually review the Business Continuity Plans for the Directorates "critical" functions. In addition to the annual review, Officers will update plans as and when required to reflect changes in establishment personnel or circumstances as appropriate.

Critical functions, agreed by CMT, are based on one or more of the following criteria being met:

- human welfare or the environment
- the finances of the Council
- the Council's statutory obligations
- the Council's reputation
- the Council's ability to respond to emergencies

Within Education and Children's Services the functions deemed critical based on these criteria are:

- Schools
- All Children's Social Work functions
- Child Protection Services
- Educational Psychology Service
- Frederick Street based group of Services
- Business Support Services

- 5.3 Each establishment has its own BCP which is reviewed annually and submitted to Service Managers and the Emergency Planning Unit.

A review of all school BCPs has just been undertaken. At the date of writing, of 63 plans requested, 2 have still to be received. These plans are being quality checked before being sent to the Emergency Planning Unit. Plans are in place for Child Protection Services, Educational Psychology Service, Frederick Street Services and Business Support Services though these are due for review.

BCPs under review for Children's Social Work have been sent out to 25 teams/establishments. A guidance note was issued to assist managers complete the form and highlight areas they needed to consider in their plans. At the date of writing, 15 have been fully completed, 8 have been partly completed and 2 are still to be submitted to Business Management. Of the 15 that have been completed, 6 are now actively testing their plan.

The Emergency Planning Manager is updated on progress and has copies of all plans. He will also contact individual managers where there are issues.

- 5.4 In reviewing business continuity arrangements, testing has been, and continues to be done to ensure ongoing business performance following an emergency. This involves desk top exercises assessing the preparedness of BCPs in service specific areas. A series of planned scenarios is anticipated in the coming year which will create a simulated, real life experience to test the responsiveness and effectiveness of Service BCPs to react. This will include collaboration with the Emergency Planning Manager and colleagues in Police Scotland.

Effective disaster recovery and business continuity arrangements are an essential feature of the Education and Children's Services Risk Register.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer and Staff Experience –

Business Continuity Planning will identify all the requirements which are essential to keeping Services running and will include processes to keep disruption to customers and staff to a minimum and should address the continuance and resumption to normality of critical functions.

Well developed and tested business continuity plans build employee confidence and provide reassurance that we are taking steps to protect their health and safety and place of work. Business continuity planning maintains customer confidence and the reputation of the Council.

Improving our use of Resources –

Business Continuity Planning will consider the efficient and effective deployment of required Council resources in the event of an incident to ensure the continuance and resumption to normality of critical functions.

Corporate -

The review of the Services' Business Continuity Plans and the wider management of risks is linked to the Shaping Aberdeen ethos as robust Business Continuity Plans will ensure that the Services' resources are used correctly, whilst ensuring that our customers' experience is not adversely affected. The staff experience in such scenarios will not be adversely affected if the Plans are managed and maintained properly.

The system of risk management impacts on all aspects of decision making across the Council. The Local Code of Corporate Governance tasks councils with six principles. Principle 4 requires that councils maintain transparent, informed decision-making which is subject to effective scrutiny and the management of risk.

Public –

The report is designed for information purposes only and no Equalities and Human Rights implications are involved either in its preparation or the recommendations contained within the body of the report.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

This report details information on an element of the Council's system of risk management

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

"System of Risk Management" report submitted by Director of Corporate Governance to Audit and Risk Committee on 26 June, 2014 and subsequent Minute of Meeting.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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