

RISK MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY ANNUAL REPORT

Executive Summary

Risk Management and Business Continuity Management are the two main disciplines through which the Council identifies, manages and mitigates its business and operational risks. An annual report is submitted to the Executive to outline any activities or issues that have occurred.

Corporate Strategic Risks have been reviewed and updated by CLT since the last annual report, and the risks that have been identified have been logged and owners allocated. The management of Service Plan risks will recommence in September this year, during which all risks at this level will be reviewed and updated.

Work to update the Risk Management Strategy is underway, and will be submitted to the Executive in September for review and adoption. The updated strategy will aim to strengthen the existing arrangements by introducing the capture and assessment of risk at director level; this will ensure that there are clear linkages between all tiers of the organisation.

The full review of Business Continuity was completed in November 2019. The outputs of this work included an updated Business Continuity Strategy, a Business Continuity Incident Plan, an updated Business Impact Analysis, an Alternative Premises Plan, and the completion of 19 Action Cards, which provide step-by-step procedures to be followed to address service specific disruption for the Council's most critical activities.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

the report be noted and that Risk Management arrangements will be reviewed and updated in the coming months to ensure that the strategy and associated guidance is sufficient to match the needs of the Council.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: The continuous development of Risk Management and Business Continuity is essential to ensure effective management and planning within the Council.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

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Background Papers: None.

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Date Published: 7 July 2021

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on Risk and Business Continuity Management arrangements that are in place within the Council. The status of both of these functions is reported on an annual basis. Risk Management and Business Continuity provides the framework through which the Council identifies, manages and mitigates its business and operational risks.
- 1.2 Risk Management is the process whereby the organisation methodically identifies and manages the threats and opportunities that might exist within a Council activity. Business Continuity sets out to enhance the strategic and tactical capability of the organisation to plan for incidents and business disruptions, in order to continue business operations at an acceptable pre-defined level.
- 1.3 Risk Management and Business Continuity Planning are not one off activities. They are part of a continuous process that runs throughout the Council's activities, taking into account all aspects such as projects as well as day-to-day work that is undertaken. It must be integrated into the culture of the Council with an effective strategy and led from the top.
- 1.4 The continuous improvement of risk and business continuity arrangements will also feed into the ongoing work of aligning strategic planning and performance management functions across the Council. All of these functions working together will provide an integrated and cohesive framework for prioritising the delivery of effective services.
- 1.5 The functional responsibility for corporate Risk Management and Business Continuity rests with the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). The Business Improvement Team is accountable for overall delivery and review. All senior managers are responsible, with guidance and support from Business Improvement, for ensuring appropriate risk and business continuity arrangements are deployed in their functions, services and areas of responsibility.

2.0 Risk Management

- 2.1 Risk can be defined as the combination of the probability of an event and its consequences. In any organisation there is the potential for events and consequences that can result in opportunities for benefits or threats to success. Corporate Strategic Risks have been reviewed and updated by CLT since the last annual report, and the risks that have been identified have been logged and owners allocated. Due to the challenges posed by Covid, Service Plan risks were not updated in 2020, however, the Service Planning process will recommence in September this year, during which all risks at this level will be reviewed and updated.
- 2.2 The current Risk Management Strategy covers the period from 2015 to 2020, which means that it is now due a formal review and update to reflect current best practice. Work to update the Risk Management Strategy is underway, and will be submitted to the Executive in September for review and adoption. The updated strategy will aim to strengthen the existing arrangements by introducing the capture and assessment of risk at director level; this will ensure that there are clear linkages between all tiers of the organisation. All suggested changes to the Strategy will be submitted to CLT for discussion and sign-off.

3.0 Business Continuity

- 3.1 Business Continuity arrangements were last reviewed and updated in November 2019. Various documents and procedures make up the Council's Business Continuity Plans. These are listed here:

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Business Continuity Strategy: This document details the purpose of Business Continuity Management, the Council's overall approach to Business Continuity (including documentation, organisational structure, testing and training), and the relationship between Business Continuity, Emergency Planning and Disaster Recovery.

Business Continuity Incident Plan: The Business Continuity Incident Plan details the steps that should be taken when faced with a Business Continuity disruption. This plan lists the process that will be taken to ensure that critical functions remain up and running, or are brought up and running, in the event of a threat to normal service.

Business Impact Analysis (BIA): To determine the Council's critical functions that need to continue to run in the event of a Business Continuity disruption, a BIA has been completed for every Council function. This is reviewed annually. The BIA assesses what the impact would be (Minimal, Noticeable, Major, Disaster) if a function was not available in a particular time period (1 hour, 1 day, 3 days, 1 week, 2 weeks) and in a particular circumstance (Emergency, Human Welfare/Environment, Breaches of Statutory Duty, Damage to Reputation, Financial Implications).

Action Cards: An Action Card is completed for any Council function that is assessed as having a 'disaster' level of impact if it was unavailable. This document details the things that would stop the service running (e.g. lack of staff, loss of the Civic Offices), any mitigation action that has been taken to reduce the impact of the issue, and actions that would be taken to restore the service to an acceptable minimum standard. The Action Card also lists the people that would be responsible, the equipment and information they would require, and the overall actions that they would take to respond to a Business Continuity disruption.

Alternative Premises Plan: The Alternative Premises Plan details the process for setting up the Upper Gallery at the Leisure Centre as the Council's main base of operations in the event that the Civic Offices was unavailable.

- 3.2 The Business Continuity suite of documents, particularly the BIA and Action Cards, has assisted the Council in forming its approach in responding to the many challenges that Covid-19 has presented. Business Continuity documentation will also help the Council to move towards 'business as usual' operations once we are in a position to progress to that phase. Lessons learned from the Council's response to Covid-19 will be fed into the annual review of Business Continuity to ensure that the arrangements benefit from continuous improvement.

4.0 Conclusions

- 4.1 The application of Risk Management and Business Continuity Management remains very important for the Council. Good progress has been made in updating Business Continuity arrangements, and a similar review is currently underway for Risk Management. Work is also ongoing to provide the opportunity to further align risk and business continuity principles with emergency planning and disaster recovery, to ensure that the Council can achieve a robust and joined-up approach in all of these areas for the future.

5.0 Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 Risk management and business continuity are themes that need to be considered across all Council services. These disciplines underpin the effective delivery of the functions that the Council provides, which in turn supports the objectives listed in the Corporate Strategy.

6.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 6.1 No additional implications arise specifically from the report but any proposals to further improve or enhance resilience may have cost implications and these would be identified in any such proposal.
- 6.2 There are no risk implications, other than those outlined in this report.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 6.3 None arising from this report.

Legal

- 6.4 None arising from this report.

7.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

REPORT ENDS