Leeds CITY COUNCIL

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Report of Director of Resources

Report to Corporate Governance & Audit Committee

Date: 27 March 2012

Subject: Business Continuity Programme update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	☐	Yes	☒	No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	☐	Yes	☒	No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	☐	Yes	☒	No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	☐	Yes	☒	No

Summary of main issues

1. An 'all service' criticality assessment has taken place to determine current services identified as critical. A service is critical if non-delivery generates an impact such as a potential loss of life or a failure to comply with legislative requirements.

2. A toolkit is due to be launched that will provide services with everything needed to develop a robust and effective Business Continuity Plan.

3. The Peace & Emergency Planning Unit will be monitoring compliance with the corporate Business Continuity Policy. The BC 'healthcheck' will be the initial phase for auditing service resilience.

4. A programme of validation by means of exercising plans is in development.

Recommendations

5. The Committee note this report for information and receive an annual update with quantitative achievements from 2013.

1   Purpose of this report

1.1   To provide assurance on the adequacy of policies and practices surrounding Business Continuity arrangements.

2   Background information

2.1   The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 made it a statutory duty of the Council to have in place arrangements to continue services in the event of a disruption, through Business Continuity Management (BCM). The way in which the overall BCM process is implemented is at the organisations discretion. Leeds City Council has had a BC policy and programme that predates the legislative requirement.

2.2   Business Continuity across the organisation is nothing new and a concept many will be familiar with. A considerable commitment was made by Corporate Leadership Team and each Directorate on the preparation for and management of pandemic flu in 2009. This period identified a number of gaps in arrangements, particularly a lack of confidence in the currency and validity of some service Business Continuity plans. In order to rectify this, a benchmarking checklist was developed to ensure that all plans were of a standard fit for the response and management throughout a disruptive event and the recovery afterwards.

2.3   In the last two years, organisational change has provided an opportunity to review and identify improvements to the BC programme. The Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) supported a wholesale revision to the approach to BCM in order to work towards compliance with a new British Standard for Business Continuity, BS25999. This renewal also incorporates learning from the experiences of previous events to create a fit for purpose programme suited to the organisation Leeds City Council has become. This includes a more developed understanding of the breadth of services delivered across the Council, seeking out those functions assessed as most critical. The programme is structured in such a way as to suit both internally delivered and commissioned services.

3   Main issues

3.1   A criticality assessment template was issued in 2011 to all services within the Council and from this a list of Critical Services was developed for each directorate. This list was issued to CRMG representatives to progress a final check and validation of the critical services from each Directorate Management Team. Of 526 services assessed by managers using the criticality assessment template, 519 (99%) have been completed and returned. This has identified a total of 119 services assessed as critical.

3.2   The programme manager is ready to launch the Business Continuity Management toolkit across the organisation. The toolkit will be available to any service, however there will be a requirement placed upon critical services to complete the toolkit contents. The toolkit is designed to meet each requirement of the good practice guidelines and British Standard 25999. The stages that compromise the Council's BCM programme are reflected in the toolkit.

3.3   The BCM Toolkit includes:

* A BCM Policy
* A BCM Strategy
* Criticality Assessments
* Business Impact Analysis (BIA) Template – To determine service functions and risks
* BIA Guidance
* Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Template – A plan template to aid services in responding to disruptive events
* BCP Guidance
* Business Continuity Plan Health Check Review – Designed to provide a structured process by which managers and others responsible for continuity arrangements can assess the content of BCPs regardless of plan format or style. Based on the good practice guidance contained within BS 25999, users of the BCP Health Check Review will find a checklist style format with sections where comments can be recorded. The BCP Health Check Review will be used by PEPU as a consistent tool to review existing BCPs.
* IT Systems Disaster Recovery Checklist - to assess the content of existing Disaster Recovery Plans

3.4   The rollout of the BCM programme recognises that a great deal of work has been undertaken and that many arrangements in place are already recognised as good practice by the Peace & Emergency Planning Unit, when acting as auditor. In critical services where existing BCPs are in place, these will be reviewed by the BCM Programme Manager using the BCP Health Check Review. For critical services where BCPs are not in place, support will be offered to managers in using the toolkit to develop their own set of arrangements.

3.5   The guidance builds upon a principle of core service planning assumptions that are intrinsic to the functioning of all other BC Plans. Core services include Information Communications Technology (ICT), Buildings & Facilities and Human Resources (HR). Clearly setting out to Council services what they can and cannot expect from the 'Core Services' provides a suitable baseline for their own contingency arrangements. In short, knowing if they have to worry about finding another building, can they depend on a guaranteed piece of software from ICT, and if disruption is due to staffing, what will HR be able to do. This helps manage expectations and ensures no assumptions are made incorrectly.

3.6   Once the programme can demonstrate that all the critical service areas have embedded BC plans, future work will need to focus on the audit of services highly dependent upon outsourcing or where the Council services are concerned with commissioning. The Council should expect its contractors and partners to have robust and fit for purpose BC plans. There are recent examples whereby the continuity of Council services undertaken by a partner have failed, creating a reputational and liability risk on Leeds City Council. There will be much work required to ensure that the transition of health services into the Council portfolio are mapped and that compliance with the BCM policy reaches into new service areas.

3.7   In order to ensure compliance with the Policy the Peace & Emergency Planning unit will receive annual Health Check returns from Critical Services. It will also implement a programme of validation including exercising and testing of the BC plans in collaboration with services. Such arrangements are typical of BS25999. It is recognised that this can be resource intensive and the wider team of Emergency Planning officers will be providing support to the BC Programme Manager in delivering the programme.

3.8   Where any service is identified to be falling below the standards set out in the Policy or where the principles linked to the health check are not met, this will be escalated to Directorate Management Teams and to the Corporate Risk Management Group for attention.

3.9   A priority for the next 12 months will be to dovetail BCM related arrangements for industrial action and for disaster recovery following a review of the recent industrial action.

3.10   Leeds City Council continue to promote and support private sector resilience through the Leeds Business Continuity Network. A resilient city is better able to manage through and recover from disruption. This will reduce the short and long term impacts of disruption on our citizens.

4   Corporate Considerations

4.1   Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1   The BCM toolkit has been shared with the Emergency Planning College and within the Core Cities network of BC professionals for peer review.   CRMG and DMTs have had input into the process to ensure that the toolkit suits its users.

4.2   Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.2   All templates have been assessed by the Equality Team to check that due regard has been given to any equality and diversity and plain English requirements.

4.3   Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1   The Council Business Continuity Policy sets out the requirements placed upon services across the Council.

4.4   Resources and value for money

4.4.1   No implications

4.5   Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1   A failure to deliver critical services may result in a risk to life and limb or a failure to comply with our legal responsibilities. A robust Business Continuity programme should reduce the likelihood of litigation against the Council for failing to meet its responsibilities.

4.6   **Risk Management**

4.6.1   Business Continuity and Emergency Planning is rated as 'High' on the Corporate Risk Register. Quarterly updates are provided to the Corporate Risk Management Group.

5   Conclusions

5.1   A full and fresh review of all services has ensured that there is an accurate list of critical services within the organisation.   The launch of the toolkit will assist these services in meeting the Councils legislative responsibilities. The Peace & Emergency Planning Unit will be monitoring compliance with the corporate Business Continuity Policy and the BC 'healthcheck' will be the initial phase for undertaking a compliance audit.   A programme of validation by means of exercising plans is in development. Dovetailing Business Continuity, Industrial Action and Disaster Recovery arrangements will be a priority over the next 12 months following a review of the recent industrial action.

5.2   There will be a need to monitor organisational change and ensure that the Council with its partners continues to identify which services are critical and that appropriate plans are in place for these.

6   Recommendations

6.1   The Committee note this report for information and receive an annual update with quantitative achievements from 2013.

7   Background documents[1]

7.1   BCM Policy

7.2   BCM Strategy

7.3   Criticality Assessments

7.4   Business Impact Analysis (BIA) Template

7.5   BIA Guidance

7.6   Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Template

7.7   BCP Guidance

7.8   Business Continuity Plan Health Check Review

7.9   IT Systems Disaster Recovery Checklist (in development)

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[1] The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.