

**Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution**

Report To: Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
10 January 2010

Subject: Business Continuity Management content of 2009/10 Business
Plans

Report of: Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services

Summary:

To appraise the Committee on the quality, completeness, and trends identified within the Business Continuity Management reporting within 2009/10 Business Plans.

Recommendations:

The Committee are asked to note the contents of the report.

Wards Affected:

All

Contact Officers:

Name: Fiona Worrall
Position: Head of Business Support, Neighbourhood Services
Telephone: 0161 234 3926
E-mail: fiona.worrall@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Mark Hart
Position: Head of Civil Contingencies Unit
Telephone: 0161 234 4444
E-mail: m.hart@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Thomas Croall
Position: Business Continuity Manager
Telephone: 0161 234 3293
E-mail: t.croall@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

1. CONTEXT

- 1.1. The Council's Business Continuity Management (BCM) programme was initiated in early 2005 in response to the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. To address the maturing needs of the Council's risk programme and the need for wider BCM programme governance the Corporate Business Continuity Team (CBCT), within the Civil Contingencies Unit, introduced BCM into the Business Planning Process in 2008. Leading organisations have adopted BCM as a core management competency clearly linking it to all business planning, project and change management.
- 1.2. BCM is a holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations that those threats, if realised, might cause. It provides a framework for building organisational resilience with the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value creating activities¹.
- 1.3. A 2009 review of BCM arrangements within the Council and the lessons learnt from the disruptive ICT virus incident of March/April this year have shaped the approaches being adopted. Further refinement has been adopted in response to lessons from the current outbreak of pandemic flu, which provides evidence of the strengthened understanding and resilience across the organisation. Forming an integral component to the governance of this new approach is a revised set of BCM delivered through the Annual Business Planning approach.

2. BUSINESS PLANNING APPROACH

- 2.1. The newly revised direction within the business plans seeks to ensure that effective BCM is embedded in the culture of the Service and additionally aims to seek assurance that any substantive developments or changes in the organisation have included a BCM perspective.
- 2.2. The supporting Business Planning Guidance document sets out clearly that each Service should demonstrate ownership of their BCM planning arrangements and outlines that, further to the development of plans, officers should be aware and competent in discharge of their duties if the plans are to be robust.
- 2.3. The following overview provides a CBCT management response to the completeness, quality and key themes exhibited within *Section 7: Business Continuity Management, 2009/10 Business Plans*.
- 2.4. CBCT has offered subject matter support and guidance to all Services throughout the initial stages of Business Plan authorship. At time of writing, detailed submissions have been received from approximately 50% of Services. Work is continuing to build, strengthen and improve the submissions will that will come into force in April 2010.

¹ Definition of Business Continuity Management, British Standard 25999

3. OVERVIEW

3.1. It is clear, based upon current submissions, that there has been a concerted effort across Services to complete their BCM submissions. Services have provided statements as to their interpreted degree of resilience, previous and ongoing actions that continue to improve resilience and conversely, impediments to establishing or deepening this resilience.

3.2. *Interdependencies*

3.2.1. All Services have highlighted the dependency they have upon corporate services such as ICT or Corporate Property. Importantly, some Services have cited their reliance upon third parties external to the Council. For the most part this reference is in relation to suppliers of goods and services that are integral to the Councils service delivery. To a lesser extent reference is made to reliance upon partners.

3.3. *Ownership / Engagement*

3.3.1. All Services have attempted to address development opportunity actions for their BCM programme. Services with little or no formal BCM arrangements in place have addressed this responsibly and have clear timelines in place to establish a programme with the ongoing support of CBCT; for example, notable engagement has come from Libraries, Highways and Corporate Performance. Some submissions have been of a very high quality. These notable submissions have been received from Revenues and Benefits and Adult Social Care, who have, in doing so, exhibited a high level of management buy-in. It is also clear that, some Services require additional support to further refine their actions to address ownership issues and sensible implementation timelines

3.4. *Managing Change*

3.4.1. To ensure that BCM capability remains current and appropriate the business planning guidance sets out that BCM be a key considerations of any substantive developments or changes with a Service. An ongoing concern highlighted in most business plans is that change provides both risk and opportunity. Most Services have noted *service change* to be a major impediment to the adoption / development of high quality BCM. This includes restructures such as in ICT or Children's Service, outsourcing such as in Housing and small and large scale office moves.

3.4.2. Throughout most business plans reference is made to flexible, modern ways of working that will provide substantial benefits in terms of resilience. Actions listed in business plans address the benefits that can be realised through increased agility of response to incidents, use of technology and flexible ways of working. In the context of resilience the added value the "model office" concept could provide should not be underestimated. Whilst the transition occurs, for those Services located in the Town Hall Extension, a key concern highlighted is the need for their BCM arrangements to remain relevant and be developed for both during the move and after settlement at First Street.

3.4.3. Many Services have noted that 'business as usual' changes on a day to day basis, such as staff turnover, are issues that degrade the quality of plans. Those Services have highlighted key actions to address the currency of plans by allocating clear plan owners and governance arrangements for the document.

3.4.4. Adult Social Care's learning from recent pandemic flu planning and their increased understanding to the level of high quality BCM arrangements has impressed upon them the need for added dedicated BCM resource. Through an ongoing restructure and creation of a wider business support unit they are addressing this need.

3.5. *Service Improvement / Project Management*

3.5.1. Whilst the organisation must continue to strive for efficiency it should also be mindful of the fact that squeezing too much redundancy out of work flow can leave little room in the timeline to deal with unexpected events. The Library Theatre Company has exhibited an apt understanding of this by explaining how its pre-planning considers the real and potential problems which may be encountered and thus avoid any interruption of business. There is more scope for other Services to document how they build contingency into workflow and project timelines.

3.6. *Awareness*

3.6.1. Few Services have provided assurance of how they maintain staff BCM awareness and competency in discharge of specific duties that may arise in an incident. Where Services have identified a deficit in this area, actions have been cited to increase staff awareness such as briefing and guidance sessions facilitated by CBCT. Revenues and Benefits have shown a key drive to improve ownership and awareness within their management team. More Services could provide actions to address this issue.

3.7. *Testing and Exercising*

3.7.1. Directly linking with the issue of awareness and competency is that of testing and exercising of BCM arrangements. Nearly all Services have identified the need to test the robustness of their plans. Different Services are at different levels of maturity in terms of testing and exercising. Adult Social Care and various components of Trading Services have highlighted a high level of progression and expertise in this area, which can be related to the imposing needs of pandemic flu planning. Other Services have recorded development actions to further address this need.

3.8. *ICT Disaster Recovery (DR) Planning*

3.8.1. ICT resilience remains a key concern to Services. In most submissions reference has been made to the reliance, security, and data back up schedules of systems specific to those Services. By citing impacts on 'business as usual' operations and longer term business planning from the ICT Virus of March/April this year, all Services have exhibited an acute awareness of how the loss of ICT can impact upon their delivery. Most Services have highlighted key actions to liaise with Corporate ICT to better increase their resilience.

3.8.2. Many Services highlighted how the use of Citrix enables them to work in an agile fashion and hence improves their resilience. Noted, are some Services that rely upon stand alone terminals for specialist systems or rely upon physical paper records which clearly cannot be remotely accessed. Corporate Finance has exemplified how they are addressing this by adopting a scanning and electronic digital records management system. Some Services have explained how they are resilient in the face of ICT loss by utilising paper based systems or alternative manual work-arounds. It is clear that there has been much learning from the ICT Virus, however more assurance could be provided as to how Services have documented these new practices into their BCM plans.

3.9. Incidents

3.9.1. Little reference has been made to known incidents such as utilities failures, losses of telephony and reputational incidents. Incidents that Services have listed as having occurred during the previous year include ICT systems outages and denial of access issues to employment sites. Services must improve their tracking and monitoring of disruptive events if they are to report on this in future business plans. Unsurprisingly, many Services have made reference to the ICT Virus of March/April this year (see *ICT Disaster Recovery* above) as a very disruptive event. Many references are also made to ongoing pandemic flu planning. It is very important to note that whilst clearly these two incidents have, or are, affecting Services in terms of disruption or work load, the way in which they are referenced in business plans clearly examples the increased BCM awareness that is prevailing across the Council. More so, the learning that has been achieved, especially through the partnership working during the response to these incidents, has provided a legacy of increased resilience the Council can now benefit from.

4. SUMMARY

4.1. A step change in the Council's BCM is already well underway. Additional momentum from senior management will further progress this change, so that Services take full ownership of their resilience needs and corporate functions develop capabilities to deliver cross organisational solutions to protect against, respond to and recover from all manner of business disruption. CBCT will continue to deliver support to Services by providing guidance, expertise, facilitation and importantly, by bringing coherence between stakeholders.