

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report To: Resources and Governance Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
13 January 2011

Subject: Review of 2011/12 Draft Business Plan Submissions on
Business Continuity Management

Report of: Vicky Rosin, Strategic Director Neighbourhood Services

Summary:

To look at how Council service areas are planning for business continuity and how the plans have changed since last year, including case studies.

Recommendations:

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

Wards Affected:

All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

None.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Embedded corporate resilience, as an outcome of effective Business Continuity Management (BCM), allows any organisation to continue to develop and withstand events with potential to disrupt or damage its assets, processes and reputation. The 2010/11 business planning process contained a newly revised section on business continuity within the delivery plan component of the business plan. As part of a wider programme it sought to ensure that effective BCM is embedded within the culture of all the Services and seeks assurance that any substantive developments or changes in the organisation have included a BCM perspective. An overview of the wider content and purpose of the delivery plan component of the business plan, including the role of the business continuity section, features elsewhere on this agenda.
- 1.2. This report takes stock and focuses upon the current state of Business Continuity planning within Services across the Council. It does this by appraising how business planning for 2011-14 has been approached by Services with respect to business continuity and the key progressions / changes in BCM reported by Services over the last 12 months. It highlights trends, presents a few case studies to amplify best practice emerging and outlines adjustments being made by the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) to further establish a level of resilience across the organisation.

2. CONTEXT

- 2.1. The Business Continuity team within the Civil Contingencies Unit leads and supports a wide range of BCM activities and outcomes across the Council and city. The main focus remains the resilience of the organisation, through a comprehensive Service BCM programme, which involves two strands; supporting Heads of Service/DMT develop ownership and strategy and secondly, working with Service managers developing their own Impact Assessments and Plans.
- 2.2. Over the last 12 months the team has focussed on:
 - A continuous service engagement programme of management briefings, training, publication of guidance, Business Impact Analysis (BIA) challenge and reporting, BCM plan development support and facilitation of BCM exercises.
 - Significant development of shared strategies with some corporate functions that Services are highly reliant upon in BCM (ICT, HR, Corporate Property and Procurement) seeking to avoid repeat failures at service level and add further strengthening of the Council's resilience. These corporate functions have been referred to as the "corporate dependencies".
 - Supporting the Town Hall Transformation programme to ensure appropriate BCM matters are considered and adopted as part of the physical infrastructure and new ways of working.

- Leading an ambitious school resilience project through Children's Services across the city into primary, secondary and special schools. The programme highlighted the importance of resilience in the education sector and the school's part in supporting community and city wide resilience. Through workshop based training, presentations to school management teams and Governors coupled with practical and bespoke business continuity templates and guidance, over 60% of schools have taken best practice into their running of local schools.
- The support and coordination of response to a range of business continuity incidents that have occurred over the year, such as the severe winter weather of early 2010, various ICT interruptions and work area recovery following building evacuations.
- Continuing to deliver sector leading practice in BCM promotion with businesses across Manchester, particularly in the city centre area. An extensive work package of BCM promotion continues to support the development of a resilient culture across our businesses and voluntary sector; this includes training, conference events, mentoring schemes and networking groups. Additionally, in late summer the Council hosted the first businesses city wide exercise – Exercise Candlelight. Over 10 businesses (including leading blue chip stakeholders) with representation from blue light services, Council and Manchester University conducted an exercise based on an extensive loss of power major incident and how various business groups would react individually, collectively and in partnership. This was one of the first public / private exercising initiatives in the UK. The work of the Manchester Business Continuity Forum continues to be promoted by Cabinet Office as national best practice.
- Working with Capital Programmes Division in the revision of the Manchester Method. In the future all project work will consider BCM, ensure the outcomes of any project does not invalidate existing BCM arrangements and that resilience is a consideration at all project gateway stages.
- Contributed to Internal Audit's development of Terms of Reference for forthcoming audit of ICT Disaster Recovery and ICT incident management capability.
- Developing procedures for mass communications / notification for staff, to ensure effective management of workforce in the event of a major BCM incident. This will include production of a wallet card for staff (in draft) and establishment of a "0800" Information Line.

3. 2010/11 BUSINESS PLANNING APPROACH

- 3.1. This year's refinement of the business planning process has provided an enhanced guidance section for Heads of Service to reflect on their BCM approach. Heads of Service were invited to attend a series of collective lunchtime seminars that provided support in completing each section of the delivery plan component of the business plan. All Services were encouraged to seek to ensure the quality of their submissions.
- 3.2. The guidance issued to services emphasised the following key aspects:
- Plans should appraise progress since the previous submission.
 - Plans should be cognisant of the risk and opportunities of the transformation agenda.
 - All objectives should be "SMART".
 - There should be appropriate cross referencing between relevant sections of the business plan (e.g. Workforce Development and Risk Register sections) to ensure coherency in planning.

4. QUALITY OF BUSINESS PLANS SUBMISSIONS

- 4.1. In November detailed feedback was provided to all Services that had submitted their draft delivery plan focussing on the strengths, quality and completeness of all Business Plans and identifying where areas could be further strengthened. Feedback on business continuity was incorporated into the wider co-ordinated feedback which encompassed each section of the delivery plan. At this point in time the business planning process is not yet complete and therefore it is expected that services, where appropriate will be actively working on improving their plans based upon this feedback.
- 4.2. Whilst there are still areas that require active support to enable completion to a reasonable standard the overall progress since last year has been significant, both in terms of quality and completed business plans.
- 4.3. Some services have proactively sought support in their plan writing and have established a service level BCM champion to support this work. Where this has happened these services reported the support to be beneficial and this is reflected in the quality of the plans they have subsequently developed. Areas of good practice in this context include, the Directorate for Adult, Highways, Children's Services, Crime and Disorder, Strategic Housing, Private Sector Housing, Trading Services and HR/OD.
- 4.4. The remaining majority of the Services have completed acceptable drafts with some gaps in completeness, coherency or well considered SMART objectives. Extensive feedback has been provided and follow up activity is currently underway prioritising those requesting support or those deemed to be priority Services. It is expected that the final drafts of the business plans will have taken account of this feedback.
- 4.5. Some Services have outlined BCM arrangements and stated they are well placed to manage an incident. Whilst it is permissible that these Services have resources and management teams that will be able to respond to

business disruptions, limited engagement to date, testing or validation cannot be fully assured. This gap will diminish over the next 6-9 months as the Business Continuity team will be able to verify all statements with confidence.

- 4.6. Across all plans one of the areas identified as requiring further support for the future is the development of SMART objectives in terms of being measurable and specific. Nearly all submissions could be further refined to identify success criteria. Feedback and support has been provided suggesting further work to develop specific Key Performance Indicators for the different aspects of BCM with appropriate success criteria.

5. BUSINESS CONTINUITY THEMES

- 5.1. Key themes around Managing Change, ICT resilience, reliance on key partners etc as well as potential loss of staff or work areas identified in the review¹ of last year's business plans remain current. However all services have reported progress in each area over the last 12 months.
- 5.2. Transformation is now a fundamental consideration within business planning and has warranted its own section within the delivery plan component of this year's business plans. Feedback on previous business plans recommended that Services must be cognisant of the pace and scale of organisational change that may compromise the currency of BCM plans if not aligned. The formalised transformation agenda provides many opportunities for Services to align BCM to the new business practices.
- 5.3. There is evidence of increased reliance on cross Service partnership working. This includes outsourcing to internal partners and the introduction of new / shared use of assets including premises and ICT platforms. This approach lessens the management visibility and control of process and asset management, whilst adding complexity to the interdependencies within the organisation which in turn increases the complexity of BCM.
- 5.4. Loss of staff remains a key BCM threat. This applies to the mass absence of staff and the loss of key individuals that retain critical skills, knowledge or relationships. HR/OD are addressing this by aligning this issue to the M People approach. Workforce Development plans for many Services go some way to address this issue in their planning for staff development. Through the workforce planning process focus for the future will be placed on generic cross-skilling and succession planning in priority areas. Further work is being undertaken with HR/OD to plan for large scale people absence.
- 5.5. Many Services remain reliant on access to their primary office space. The use of Citrix enables staff to work from alternate offices and with prior planning this can provide an effective solution to alternative working in the event of an issue in the main workspace. Work is underway with Corporate Property to support the preplanning that may be required on a corporate level.

¹ Reference: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee Report - Business Continuity Management content of 2009/10 Business Plans, dated 10/01/2010.

CASE STUDY 1: Adults are working with internal and external partners to look at identifying interdependencies within BCM plans. To mitigate any identified risks, Adults are working to identify staff with their own Service, the wider Council and partners agencies who could support their delivery in the event of an incident and where appropriate are developing bespoke training activities in order to widen staff capacity that can be deployed into priority areas in the event of loss of significant numbers of staff.

CASE STUDY 2: On an internal level Capital Programme Division are addressing “denial of access” risk by continuing to implement and operate on a pathway programme of remote and flexible working. This is being achieved by decentralising operations and enabling staff to work effectively without the need for a dedicated office workspace or a reliance on a single route of connection to the Council ICT network.

- 5.6. Many Services have taken onboard advice on practical steps that can be taken to ensure effective BCM in a building evacuation / “denial of access” incident. These measures include maintaining a “grab bag” containing essential consumables and items that may be needed such as proforma templates, contact lists, mobile phones / chargers and warm clothing etc. Work has also been undertaken to ensure staff can be accounted for and contacted in an incident.

CASE STUDY 3: After experiencing several building related incidents in Alexandra House, Revenues and Benefits now have regular meetings with the landlord and Health and Safety to ensure facility management issues limit future BCM incidents. The Service has also put in place a well manage schedule of evacuation tests to ensure the currency of arrangements and staff awareness.

CASE STUDY 4: Corporate Performance Group have established new ways of working in terms of capturing staff presence in the building, formal protocols and arrangements for home working and have set up a “grab bag” of essential documents and items to assist in an emergency situation.

- 5.7. There is consistent reference in most submissions of increasing work with third party suppliers and partners and we need to ensure that there is a commitment within these arrangements to ensuring appropriate BCM governance within such relationships. A key part of the feedback has been to advise Services that they should be seeking assurance that the third party has appropriate BCM in place for the Councils service delivery.
- 5.8. There is a tendency for Services to make assumptions about what level of resilience is in place within the corporate infrastructure, processes and resource they are dependant upon. Where these assumptions have been made services have been advised to also gain their own assurance that the appropriate corporate function they are dependant upon will support them as they intend.

CASE STUDY 5: Street Management and Enforcement Services deliver waste and recycling through an outsourced contract to Enterprise. Acknowledging the risk associated to outsourcing activity, the service has built a relationship with Enterprise's Risk Manager and local management. Enterprise have in place a BCM Policy endorsed by their Board of Directors. This gives the Council assurance that, as a key stakeholder of the Council, Enterprise it is committed to its customers, clients, employees and other service delivery stakeholders including communities. The BCM Plan for Enterprise Manchester was finalised at the beginning of 2009. There are ongoing discussions regarding joint exercising of BCM plans.

CASE STUDY 6: Adults have sensibly approached their BCM planning by reviewing the environment and culture in which the Service operates. They have started to promote business continuity by establishing a regular management forum, which ensures that those people likely to be involved in a BCM incident can work as a team and have the specific skills that are required by the nature of a BCM response.

CASE STUDY 7: In March 2010 Regulatory and Enforcement Services took the initiative to run a series of workshops to engage all their staff to ensure they understood the importance of BCM and being prepared for different types of incidents. The workshops were delivered by an external expert in the field of BCM and additional support in facilitation was provided by the Business Continuity Team. The scenarios were designed to enable staff to consider and plan for scenarios involving, loss of building, ICT and staff. Feedback from staff was that the workshops were beneficial and that they had a better understanding of their role and responsibilities. To maintain this level of awareness BCM is now an item which is discussed at service team meetings.

6. SUMMARY

- 6.1. The Business Continuity team will continue to actively offer support to Services by providing guidance, expertise, facilitation and by bringing coherence between stakeholders. Testing and exercising of key plans will remain a key priority
- 6.2. Further progress has been made with some services implementing best practice. Overall staff awareness is increased and rising and managers are gaining a stronger understanding of where risks lie and where BCM is integral. This positive trend will improve quicker as Heads of Service and DMTs provide a stronger lead and tighter oversight of BCM maturity in their area.