

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-073-2012/13

Date of meeting: 15 April 2013



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance & Technology

Subject: Corporate Business Continuity Plan

Responsible Officer: Peter Charman (01992 564176).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations

- (1) That the criteria for determining critical services and activities for the purpose of Business Continuity planning and recovery from an incident be agreed; and**
- (2) That the list of Critical Services and activities as set out in the report be agreed.**

Executive Summary:

The Authority is required to undertake Business Continuity planning in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Act requires that as far as is reasonably practicable, critical services (and activities needed to deliver services) can continue to be provided in the event of a long term, unplanned interruption to normal operations. However, there is no accepted definition of critical services or activities.

The report details the criteria used by the Council to identify critical services and activities and also provides a list of those services and activities determined to be critical (as agreed by the Corporate Risk Management Group).

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

- To comply with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- To mitigate the Business Continuity risks identified in the Corporate Risk Register.
- To enable further Business Continuity planning for critical services and activities.

Other Options for Action:

Do nothing which may result in the Authority either failing to meet its statutory duty or being severely delayed in doing so should an incident occur.

Report:

1. Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) is designated as a Category 1 responder in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (the CCA).
2. The CCA requires Category 1 responders to be able to maintain delivery of critical services in the event of a long term, unplanned interruption to normal operations. Examples

might include; loss of buildings through fire or flood; loss of staff due to pandemics, fuel shortage or lottery win; long term ICT failure.

3. The current Corporate Business Continuity plan contains an outdated list of prioritised services and activities. This list was developed over ten years ago and needs to be updated to reflect current business operations.

4. During 2012, the Emergency Planning Officer undertook a Business Impact Analysis of all services following guidelines laid out in British Standard BS25999. All service managers were interviewed to determine how the loss of their service would impact the Authority in a number of areas (finance, reputation, legal etc). Service managers were also asked to consider the minimum resources they would need to operate a basic service. The resulting analysis has been used to inform the updated list of priority services.

5. In addition, the Emergency Planning Officer proposed a set of criteria to determine the criticality of services. After some debate the criteria agreed by Risk Management Group to identify service priorities are as follows;

(a) 1 - Critical Services – any service which, if interrupted for whatever reason, would result in an immediate impact on the health or welfare of EFDC residents, plus any corporate activity required to support the delivery of critical services;

(b) 2 – Important services – any service which if interrupted for an extended period, would result in damage to the reputation of the Authority and/or impact on the health and welfare of EFDC residents; and

(c) 3 – Routine services – any service which could withstand longer term interruption and whose staff may be redeployed to assist with the recovery of higher priority services in the event of an incident.

6. The following services have been identified as Critical – priority 1:

- Benefits;
- Homelessness;
- Emergency Housing Repairs;
- Waste & Recycling;
- Facilities Management;
- Telephone Switchboard;
- Careline;
- ICT Infrastructure;
- HR Payroll;
- Business Administration (post/messenger service);
- Public Relations & Marketing; and
- Emergency Response.

7. The following services are categorised as Important – priority 2:

- Emergency Planning/Business Continuity;
- Safer Communities;
- Licensing;
- Land Charges;
- Contaminated Land;
- Building Control;
- HR General;
- Housing - Planned Repairs & Maintenance;

- Neighbourhoods;
- Public Health;
- Housing Allocations;
- Housing Resources;
- Community Services;
- Planning Development Control;
- Planning Enforcement;
- Estates Management;
- Area Housing;
- Land Drainage;
- Museums Service;
- Legal;
- Older People;
- Parking;
- Local Taxation;
- Reprographics;
- Democratic Services; and
- Environment & Street Scene – Customer Services.

8. All remaining services are categorised as Routine – priority 3.

9. Should recommendations 1 and 2 be agreed then more detailed planning will be undertaken for critical services during 2013/14. A generic business continuity plan will be prepared for all other services.

Resource Implications:

No additional resources are required.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The recommendations will assist the Authority in meeting its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Having pre-identified priorities for service recovery will assist the Incident Management Team with decision making during a potentially stressful time.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Having a robust Corporate Business Continuity plan will mean that in the event of a major incident, the Authority will be better able to continue to provide critical services to the community albeit at a possibly reduced level.

Consultation Undertaken:

All members of the Corporate Risk Management group. A wide range of Service Managers in all Directorates.

Background Papers:

None.

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

The likelihood of a long term interruption to business operations is very low. However, should such an incident occur the Authority must be able to cope if it is to meet its statutory obligation under the Civil Contingencies Act.

The Corporate Risk register identifies the inability to cope with a business interruption as an 'above the line' risk. Putting in place robust business continuity plans at the Corporate and Service levels will reduce the overall level of risk to the Authority.

Equality and Diversity

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?
N/A.

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?
N/A.