

REPORT TO: GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Date: 8th September 2020

TOPIC: NDC BUSINESS CONTINUITY PROPOSAL

REPORT BY: ALEX MILES – GRADUATE EMERGENCY PLANNING OFFICER.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the North Devon Council Business Continuity Strategy. This report will set out the approach North Devon Council will adopt and will form the basis of how business continuity is delivered in the future.
- 1.2 The primary objective of Business Continuity Management (BCM) is to ensure that the organisation has a planned and structured response to a major disruption and the ability to continue to provide our critical services. Whilst this must be worthwhile in itself, there are other benefits that can be gained by embracing BCM as a management discipline.
- 1.3 North Devon Council is a Category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the implementation of a robust and effective Business Continuity Strategy will serve to provide additional assurance to North Devon Council's ability to meet our role and responsibilities under duty.
- 1.3 Work towards a comprehensive business continuity programme has been ongoing but there remains an absence of robust business continuity plans. The 2018/19 internal audit report identified the 2016 Business Continuity Policy and the 2016 Business Continuity Incident Management Plan as being due for review. In addition, 11 service resumption plans were identified as due for review back in 2017, but no such review was evident.
- 1.4 Both the Public Protection Manager and Graduate Emergency Planning Officer were tasked with updating the above plans in the audit report dated January 2020 with a completion date of 31st March 2021 set.
- 1.5 In preparation for the onset of COVID19 all service resumption plans were updated by the business continuity leads in each service area. Additional incident specific appendices were completed to aid the response.

- 1.6 Work was then halted to allow the Public Protection Manager and Graduate Emergency Planning Officer to focus on supporting the Incident Management Team in the response to COVID19.
- 1.7 Given that the existing business continuity programme is based on Pre COVID19 working, it is clear that upon recovery from COVID19 and the subsequent adoption of agile working, a new approach to business continuity will be required.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To align North Devon Council's Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) with ISO 22301:2019 and follow Business Continuity Institute (BCI) Good Practice Guidelines 2018.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 COVID19 has accelerated the move towards agile and remote working. NDC Business Continuity Plans need to reflect this change and manage the associated risks.
- 3.2 Implementing a business continuity programme that incorporates good practice and that can be embedded into business as usual activities will increase organisational resilience. This resilience will be measured by a reduction in the impact and frequency of incidents or overall improvement in response.
- 3.3 Aligning North Devon Council's BCMS to ISO 22301 will provide assurance to our customers, partners and Governance boards that we are able to sustain operations when disruptions occur.

4 REPORT

- 4.1 ISO 22301:2019 is an international standard that specifies the requirements for BCMS and provides a framework for maintaining and improving compliance with business continuity requirements and good practice. Following these internationally recognised standards will provide a sound basis upon which to develop our plans.
- 4.2 The seven phases of the ISO 22301:2019 strategy are as follows:
 - 1) Understand the context of the organisation
Establish the context of the BCMS as it applies to the organisation as well as needs, requirements and scope.
 - 2) Leadership

Establish the requirements specific to top management's role in the BCMS and ensure the BCMS achieves its expected outcomes and continual improvement.

3) Planning

Establish strategic objectives and guiding principles for the BCMS.

4) Support

Determine and provide the resources needed for the establishment, maintenance and continual improvement of the BCMS.

5) Operation

Identify the risks to the BCMS not being established, implemented and maintained by the organisation. Bring together Business Impact Assessments and Risk Assessments and implement a Business Continuity Programme with an established response structure.

6) Performance Evaluation – Monitoring, Measurement, Analysis and Evaluation

Ensure that appropriate metrics are in place to effectively manage and evaluate the performance and effectiveness of the BCMS.

7) Improvement

Determine opportunities for continual improvement and implement necessary actions to achieve the intended outcomes of the BCMS.

4.3 This programme of work will be achieved through the following steps in conjunction with the completion of requirements outlined in ISO 22301:2019 and the BCI's Good Practice Guidelines 2018.

- a) Establish a baseline – Carry out a gap analysis against ISO 22301:2019.
- b) Develop a risk based project plan to address key areas of weakness and set the scope for the Business Continuity Management Programme.
- c) Develop a top level overview of NDC services and carry out Business Impact Assessments and Risk Assessments where appropriate.
- d) Embed Business Continuity within North Devon Council. This will be achieved through training, education and awareness programmes.
- e) Align NDC Business Continuity Programme with other risk disciplines such as Disaster Recovery and The Corporate Risk Register.

- f) Implement an annual review and testing schedule. To ensure NDC processes replicate best practice we will undertake an annual review against ISO 22301.

4.4 The aim of the organisation over the medium to long term (5 -10 years) will be to develop the skills and knowledge to enable North Devon Council to champion business continuity and make it an integral part of all activities in which it engages in, including those with partners and in the community.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, MANPOWER

5.1 The work in producing the Business Continuity Programme will incur staff time but should generate benefits in operational efficiency through increasing resilience. Any additional costs required for this programme of work will be subject to a separate reporting process.

6 EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

6.1 No adverse outcomes of this programme of work have been identified.

7 CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Article or Appendix and paragraph	Referred or delegated power?
Part 3, Paragraph 5 (b)	Delegated

8 STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

8.1 This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- ISO 22301:2019. Security and resilience – Business Continuity Management Systems – Requirements.
- The Business Continuity Institutes Good Practice Guidelines 2018 Edition (GPG, 2018)
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004- Legislation.gov.uk
- Emergency Preparedness, Ch. 6 Business Continuity Management, Cabinet Office.

The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report.

10 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE

10.1 The author (below) confirms that advice has been taken from all appropriate Councillors and Officers.

Author: Alex Miles Date: 08.09.2020
Reference: NDC Business Continuity proposal.