

**Agenda Item No:** 10  
**Report To:** Audit Committee  
**Date:** 20 March 2018  
**Report Title:** Business Continuity Planning Audit Report  
**Report Author:** Rich Clarke – Head of Audit Partnership



<b>Summary:</b>	An update to Members of the Committee on progress towards completing the audit actions arising from the review of Business Continuity published in September 2017.
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**Key Decision:** NO

**Affected Wards:** All

**Recommendations:** The Committee **notes** progress.

**Policy Overview:** N/A

**Finance:** N/A  
**Risk Assessment** N/A

**EIA** N/A

**Other Matters:** N/A

**Exemption Clauses:** N/A

**Background Papers:** None

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## **Report Title: Business Continuity Planning Audit Report**

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To update Members on progress towards completing actions arising from the audit review of Business Continuity published in September 2017. Members received the first report in September and a verbal update in December 2017. At that latter update, officers advised that they could not meet some of the original action dates set for the end of December, and so suggested alternative dates towards Spring 2018. As audit, we believed no extra risk accrued from the delay when considering the increased focus on the subject during the period of addressing recommendations. Members accepted the request.
2. This report provides a further update on progress up to March 2018.

### **Background**

3. We undertook our review of the Council's Business Continuity Planning arrangements during June 2017. We issued our draft report in early August following discussions with officers. The objective was to provide assurance the Council has properly developed and formalised business continuity arrangements in place.
4. We noted that while the Council has had some success in managing recent business continuity events, the formal business continuity arrangements could not claim the credit. Instead the Council largely relied on the expertise and commitment of individual staff. We found in particular that the corporate and service level business continuity plans were out-of-date and not connected to a policy statement.
5. We raised twelve recommendations to support improvements to the service. We rated five as high priority, meaning the Council must take remedial action at the next available opportunity. A further three recommendations we rated as medium priority, meaning the Council should take remedial action normally within six months to a year. The remaining four received low or advisory ratings.
6. Officers agreed all the recommendations raised and put in place actions to address them. An important part of our approach is to agree implementation dates in a discussion between audit and management. Although our ratings give our view on urgency of action, we do not impose implementation dates. We recognise officers must assess each action on its specifics and so regularly vary these timescales for practical, risk, capacity or cost reasons.

## Action Plan

7. The original action plan saw the Council addressing all matters within 7 months of final report, and all but one within 3 months.
8. In December, officers advised Members of a plan to delay some of the agreed actions to allow effective completion. In audit, we agreed the delays were reasonable and posed no significant added risk.
9. The table below summarises progress so far (note that R10 and R11 were advisory recommendations only so not subject to follow up review):

Rec & Rating	Original Date	Changed Date	Completed Date	Audit Verified?
<b>R1: Business Continuity Policy</b> (High)	19/10/17	n/a	12/10/17	✓
<b>R2: Update Overarching BC Plan</b> (High)	5/10/17 (main) 29/10/17 (appendix)	7/12/17 (main) 31/1/18 (appendix)	12/12/17 (main) 31/1/18 (appendix)	✓
<b>R4: Risk Assessment</b> (High)	05/10/17	07/12/17	31/01/18	✓
<b>R7: Alternative Site</b> (High)	29/10/17	31/03/18	01/02/18	✓ (see note)
<b>R9: Updated Service Plans</b> (High)	29/09/17	31/01/18	23/01/18	✓
<b>R5: Restoration Priorities</b> (Med)	29/10/17	31/01/18	n/a, see below	Awaited
<b>R8: Testing</b> (Med)	31/03/18	n/a	06/02/18	✓
<b>R12: Service Testing</b> (Med)	19/10/17	31/03/18	n/a	Awaited
<b>R3: Steering Group</b> (Low)	30/11/17	n/a	30/11/17	✓
<b>R6: Guidance Notes</b> (Low)	29/08/17	n/a	29/08/17	✓

10. On R7 (Alternative Site), the Council has identified alternative sites, namely Aspire Depot for the immediate response and use by the Business Continuity Incident Management Team and Repton Connect Community Centre for a full

back-up facility. Supplementary Office Accommodation has also been identified and referenced within the Overarching Business Continuity Plan. Reciprocal arrangements are also in place with regard to telephone provision. While the Aspire Depot is already equipped, Repton needs some cabling work to make it fully viable as an alternative setting. That work is underway and due to complete by the end of March. However, we have agreed the recommendation as completed based on officers' identification and assessment of the Aspire Depot as an alternative setting.

11. On R5 (Restoration Priorities), the council has updated all service area priorities. These are being scrutinised by the Business Continuity Steering Group to ensure effective business continuity response. This will be an on-going process.
12. On R8 (Testing), we have verified a commitment to test within the new policy approved by Cabinet in October 2017. The first of what is to be a regular series of full tests will take place, supported by Zurich Municipal, during March 2018.
13. We will complete our follow-up work on remaining recommendations as they fall due. For recommendations completed between January and March 2018 we will review in June/July. This is the point where we will examine and verify implementation of medium priority recommendations such as R5.
14. On the basis of the action taken, and completion of all high priority recommendations, the assurance rating has been reassessed as 'sound'.

### General Progress of 'Weak' Rated Reports

15. Since 2014, the Committee has received updates on four other reports originally rated as offering only 'weak' assurance. For completeness, the table below summarises the current position on the others.

Report & Date	Actions Due for Completion	Actions Completed & Verified <sup>1</sup>	Notes
ICT Disaster Recovery (October 2014)	Oct-14	Jan-15	New review in 2017/18 concluded with 'Sound' assurance rating.
Safeguarding (December 2015)	Apr-16	Sep-16	New review scheduled in 2018/19
Data Protection (February 2016)	Jul-16	Aug-17	GDPR review scheduled in 2018/19
Property Management (May 2017)	Nov-17	Mar-18	New review scheduled in 2019/20

<sup>1</sup> Note that we undertake verification quarterly, so dates shown are up to three months after the service acted to implement.

## **Risk Assessment**

16. N/A

## **Equalities Impact Assessment**

17. N/A

## **Other Options Considered**

18. N/A

## **Consultation**

19. We have continued to get information from the Service as part of our routine follow up of agreed audit actions. We circulated this report to the service immediately before presentation to Members to ensure currency.

## **Implications Assessment**

20. N/A

## **Handling**

21. N/A

## **Conclusion**

22. Management continue to take prompt action against agreed audit actions. The service has met the changed timelines suggested to Members in December.

## **Portfolio Holder's Views**

23. N/A

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