

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY STATEMENT

Cheshire East Council's Corporate Plan sets out the Councils' corporate objectives, priorities and outcomes. In this regard the Council recognises it has a duty of care to its stakeholders, residents, employees, members and partners. It is therefore essential that the Council protects and preserves its ability to provide services and achieve its long-term strategic goals.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to maintain plans for the continuation of services in the event of an emergency, so far as is reasonably practicable. Therefore, the Council is committed to ensuring it can deliver continuity and restore key services as efficiently as possible in the event of a disruption, such as fire, flood, staff absence, power and communication failure.

In order to achieve this, the Council recognises the importance of having effective business continuity management arrangements to ensure the effective identification, evaluation and management of business critical services.

This policy has the full support of the Council's Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team. As such, they see effective business continuity management as part of our responsibility to deliver an effective service to the residents of Cheshire East.

## BUSINESS CONTINUITY STRATEGY

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's has adopted a Business Continuity policy statement, strategy and framework to ensure a focused and structure approach to business continuity arrangements. The policy statement sets out the rationale and mandate for business continuity and the strategy aims to set the priorities for business continuity.
- 1.2 The main purpose of Business Continuity Management is to ensure continuity of service delivery following an unexpected disruption to normal working. This document defines how the Council will plan for maintaining continuity of service delivery in the event of serious interruption or disruption. Further details are embodied in the Business Continuity Management Framework.
- 1.3 The policy statement, strategy and framework have the full support of Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team.

### 2.0 What do we mean by "Business Continuity"?

#### 2.1 Business Continuity

The capability to continue delivery of products or services at acceptable predefined levels following a disruptive incident.

## 2.2 Business Continuity Management

A holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations those threats, if realised, might cause, and which provides a framework for building organisational resilience with the capability of an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, reputation, brand and value-creating activities. (Source: ISO 22301:2012)

## 2.3 Business Continuity Plan

A plan that when activated provides for the orderly cost-effective continuity of an organisation's essential services, programs and operations if and when a disruption occurs. Plans may be for use at the operational level (Service Plans) or at a strategic level (The Corporate Business Continuity Plan).

## 2.4 Critical Activity

An activity, the continuity of which, an organisation needs to ensure, in order to meet its business objectives. Activities can be categorised into the following:

Priority:	Activity must be restored by:
1 – Critical	0 – 24 hours
2 – Serious	2 – 5 days
3 – Non Urgent	Can be suspended up to 14 days

## 2.5 Business Impact Analysis

The process of analysing activities, and the effect that a business disruption may have upon them. The Business Impact Analysis identifies consequences of an incident in terms of loss of operations or services, revenue loss, confidence/reputation, and the expected length of the interruption.

## 3.0 Principles of Business Continuity Management

### 3.1 Business Continuity Management should:

- Use a risk based approach to strike the right balance between increasing resilience and tying up resources
- Identify and prioritise the business critical activities with the aim of responding to an incident and ensuring all critical activities are up and running to an acceptable level within 24 hours
- Ensure arrangements can integrate with the Council's Major Emergency Response Plan for external incidents, but be capable of operating as a stand-alone process for those incidents that affect the Council
- Ensure business continuity plans are in place for all services and are regularly tested to give assurance as to their effectiveness and to incorporate lessons learned from their application
- Help to ensure the Council complies with its duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and with current best practice.

#### **4.0 What are the real benefits of Business Continuity Management?**

4.1 Effective Business Continuity Management will:

- Ensure the Council can maintain its business critical activities in the event of disruption
- Ensure the welfare, safety and security of staff, their environment and members of the public who use those services

#### **5.0 What do we want to achieve with Business Continuity?**

5.1 To embed the business continuity culture within the Council in order to:

- Comply with legislation
- Improve resilience against disruption to services and;
- Minimise costs in the event of a disruption
- Ensure effective business continuity arrangements are in place in the event of a disruption

#### **6.0 Business Continuity priorities over the next 12 months;**

6.1 In order to develop and embed effective business continuity management arrangements across the Council, the following actions are priorities for the next 12 months;

6.2 Development of a business continuity framework underpinning the policy statement and strategy that clarifies;

- how the Council's Senior Managers and elected members intend to manage business continuity – being explicit about what needs to be accomplished, how, by when, and who is responsible for what, recognising that embedding the business continuity culture and strong controls in the daily and regular business of the Council is an iterative process.
- the scope of the business continuity management activity in the Council – being explicit about how all services plan for continuity of business in the event of a disruption.
- how the Council will identify its critical activities and ensure business continuity plans are developed for these areas
- a consistent approach to the development of business continuity plans and ensuring the plans are shared with the appropriate people and can be easily accessed in the event of disruption.
- Identify 'business continuity champions', who will be responsible for co-ordinating and communicating the directorate's business continuity planning arrangements.

6.3 These will be achieved by:

- The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) having primary responsibility for ensuring that the Council's business continuity management framework is fit for purpose and operates as intended.
- CLT providing leadership and direction to the employees in respect of business continuity management.

- Heads of service and service managers taking ownership, responsibility and accountability for business continuity in their own area of activity in accordance with the requirements of the framework.
- Establishing a centralised business continuity framework with the Business Governance and Risk Manager monitoring and facilitating the implementation of effective business continuity management
- Reporting the relevant business continuity information up and down the organisation
- Review the current business continuity planning template to ensure it is fit for purpose
- The introduction of a quality review and testing regime of business critical business continuity plans.
- The Business Governance and Risk Manager will objectively examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy of the Council's business continuity management arrangements
- Encouraging the Council's ASDV's, key external providers and partners to adopt robust business continuity management processes
- Ensuring appropriate guidance is readily available to staff on business continuity planning and devising a training programme to suit the needs of staff involved with business continuity