



REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC23/010

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	21 st June 2023
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Business Continuity Plan
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval for the adoption of a Business Continuity Plan

2. Recommendations

That the attached plan is considered for adoption.

3. Information

- 3.1. At an earlier meeting, members asked the clerk to consider drafting up a series of policies to reflect the growth of the Town Council as an employer and as a service provider. Some HR policies were approved by Council last month to that effect and the attached business continuity plan is another element of that policy development work.
- 3.2. The plan (below as Appendix One) is intended to provide a resource guide to officers and members where there is an unplanned disruption to the Town Councils work as well as some procedures and policies to apply to ensure safe working arrangements, preservation of assets and continuity of or early restoration of services.
- 3.3. There is some work to be done flowing from the adoption of the plan and under section 14 in particular is a red-amber-green assessment of where strength in depth is currently missing and needs to be addressed.

4. Consultation and Engagement

Internal consultation about the plan has been undertaken.

5. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

Having a plan clearly improves the ability of the Council to make best use of its resources and to cope with change.

6. Climate change implications

None directly

7. Policy Implications

The Council's policy is make best use of its resources.

Background Papers

None

1. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to prepare the Council's business in the event of extended service outages caused by factors beyond the Council's control and to restore services to the widest extent possible in a minimum time frame.

This Plan has been developed to complement the overall risk arrangements, help maintain critical activities during and after any major disruption and promote recovery.

The Business Continuity Plan is intended to provide an overall framework for managing the repercussions of a serious incident which identifies the resource requirements, list of contact names and addresses, and actions that need to be considered and taken, in the event of a serious disruption to the business activities undertaken by the Council.

The outcome of this plan is to ensure that the business is able to maintain a good level of service.

2. Plan objectives

- Serves as a guide for those implementing the Business Continuity Plan
- Assists in avoiding confusion experienced during a crisis by documenting, testing and reviewing recovery procedures.
- References and points to the location of critical data.
- Provides procedures and resources needed to assist in recovery.
- Ensure Councillors are kept up to date should the plan be activated
- To minimize the social, political, legal and financial consequences

3. Structure

The Council must identify and appoint a team which will convene in the event of a disaster and will decide whether to invoke the necessary recovery plans.

The team will include all or some of the following:

- The Clerk
- The Deputy Clerk
- The Leader of the Council
- The Chairs of Finance and Governance Committee, Markets and Events Committee and Staffing Committee
- Other Group Leaders
- The Mayor

The team priorities will be:

- Staff safety and welfare
- Customer/resident safety
- Recovery of all services and/or assets
- Legal compliance
- Minimisation of financial loss

4. Documentation

This Business Continuity Plan will be kept as an electronic and hard copy by the Clerk and the Leader of the Council. Copies of the plan will be distributed to all staff and Councillors.

5. Definitions of Incidents

Three levels of incident have been defined, the most serious being a Level 3 incident: a major incident.

Level 1 Incident: Local Incident: Defined as a local incident that is not an emergency and does not cause serious physical threat to people or property. Results are likely to be limited disruption to services.

Level 2 Incident: Minor Incident: Defined as an incident that could pose an actual threat to people or property but does not seriously affect the overall functioning of the Council or its services.. This might include the isolation or evacuation of open spaces or buildings in use by the Council, with the assistance of the Emergency Services.

Level 3 Incident: Major Incident: Defined as an incident causing significant disruption to a locality or event, with the potential to escalate and involve external Emergency Services who would probably take operational control of the incident which would necessitate the invocation of the Business Continuity Action Plan.

6. Staff Welfare

It must be recognised that an incident that results in the enacting of this plan may also cause additional pressures for staff. Staff members need to be given clear direction about the priorities of the business. Managers must ensure that they monitor staff more closely to ensure that their welfare is maintained. Staff should be aware of what their role is when a major incident occurs. Clear and concise communication with staff is pivotal to having an organised response. Staff must be made aware of what communication methods are going to be used so they can find out the latest information if they are going to be working from a different location than normal. Managers who suspect that staff

members have suffered undue stress or even trauma from the business disruption must consider aiding those staff who have been affected.

7. Communication

Employees – the Clerk will communicate with staff all updates and news regarding any emergency incident.

Councillors – the Clerk will notify the Leader of the Council of any updates and news regarding an emergency incident followed by communication to all Councillors.

Public - communications with the public will be via the Council’s website, social media, local news outlets and notice boards. All communication with the press will be dealt with in accordance with the Council’s communications strategy and social media policy.

8. IT Equipment

All permanent staff have a work laptop or other IT equipment at home to enable them to work away from the office in an emergency. Phone numbers are shared with all members of staff.

Staff will be reimbursed for any out of pocket expenses incurred (with the approval of the Clerk).

9. Other equipment and assets

The Council has a variety of other equipment; principally

- Markets stalls, weights and tables
- Events equipment, including tables and chairs, first aid kit, banners and signage, portable picket fencing, display equipment
- 3 x speed devices in permanent locations

There are sufficient market stalls that the loss of some of them will not endanger the provision of the general market, but may endanger the provision of specialist markets at short notice.

Where any of the above equipment is lost or out of use for a period, the following measures should be taken:-

Action		Person responsible
Loss of market stalls due to damage, fire, flood	Assess damage and source replacement stalls from a third party	Town Clerk /Market staff
	Ask as many traders as possible to bring their own	Town Clerk/ Admin Officer

	gazebos for a temporary period	
Breakdown of vehicle used to transport market stalls to and from site	NNC to source other vehicle and KTC to recompense NNC for costs involved	Market Staff/ Town Clerk
Loss of equipment for events	Assess damage and determine if event can proceed anyway with adjustments If not, cancel event and advice all relevant parties and councillors Replace lost equipment as soon as possible, subject to committee approval for less urgent and more expensive items	Deputy Town Clerk/ staff on site Deputy Town Clerk/ staff on site Town Clerk/All staff

10. Data Protection and passwords

All data in electronic format is held on a cloud based system and information relating to the Council's services and activities or which detail personal data of suppliers, customers and members of the public should not be stored on any device not linked to the cloud based system utilised by the Council.

All connections by a work laptop to the internet, when away from the workplace, must be made using a secure password protected internet VPN connection.

All data held in paper format should be stored in the Council's offices and not left at home or in other locations for any longer than necessary; i.e. it should be brought into the office each time the staff member returns there.

Compliance with the Council's data protection policy shall be maintained throughout and practises must be in line with General Data Protection Regulations

A information sheet detailing all the passwords need to access the Councils' systems, data and on line accounts will be maintained by the administrative officer and kept securely off site, as well as on site, for use by any member of staff handling an emergency or business continuity matter.

11. Premises incident

A premises incident can include flood, fire, or any other disaster that renders the premises inaccessible. The Council does not own any of the premises it currently relies on for the delivery of its functions, but they are

- Office owned by Headlands Business Centre
- Market store owned by NNC
- Meetings venues owned by Toller Church
- Outdoor Events spaces owned by NNC in the main

Whilst the Council is a tenant of, or using the accommodation provided by a third party, whether for office, meeting space or storage of equipment, its staff and councillors will comply with the arrangements and procedures of the premises owner.

Wherever possible and in compliance with the need to remain safe, the Council will seek to remove items of value from the premises affected, including, as a priority

- All laptops and cabling
- All Mayoral insignia, robes and plate collection
- Signed copies of minutes of meetings
- All other equipment with a value greater than £500

Paperwork and IT equipment can be taken home with staff in the short term. Mayoral insignia, robes and items from the plate collection can be temporarily stored within the Mayoral safe retained at the Municipal Offices, Kettering, or elsewhere within that building, with the agreement of NNC.

When a premises incident occurs during office hours or when a meeting is underway or about to commence:-

Action	Person responsible
Evacuate the building Follow normal fire drill procedure	Town Clerk
Check evacuation is complete Staff and visitor safety is the priority. Check everyone on-site has been evacuated	Town Clerk
Verify if incident is real If false alarm, resume business as normal	Town Clerk/ staff on site
Call emergency services 999	Staff on site
Record details of any injuries sustained in the incident Record in Incident Book	Town Clerk
Alert staff, visitors and Councillors Alert any staff due to arrive on-site soon of the incident, and tell them to await further instructions	Town Clerk

Assess impact re the scale of the incident and decide next steps	Town Clerk
Inform all Councillors	Town Clerk
Identify what equipment, materials or records need to be removed from the site and to where	Town Clerk

Where an incident occurs outside office hours or where there is no-one within the office:-

Action	Person responsible
First person on-site to notify Clerk Do not enter the building	All staff
Alert any staff due to arrive on-site soon of the incident, and tell them to await further instructions	All staff
Assess impact contact building owner or manager to assess scale of incident and decide next steps	Town Clerk/ staff on site
Assess if materials or equipment can be removed from premises to secure them and identify to where they can be relocated	Town Clerk/staff on site
Inform all Councillors	Town Clerk/Staff on site
Move any scheduled meetings and ensure that councillors, press and other known attendees are informed of the change of meeting. Post a notice on the original meeting venue, if possible, to advise of the change of meeting.	Town Clerk

12. Business Continuity

Where the loss of premises or facilities results in a threat to the Council's ability to function, the following actions will be applied

Issue	Action	Person responsible
Phones	Staff to use personal mobile phones to maintain contact with each other, with suppliers, customers and councillors	All staff
Corporate landline	Greeting on corporate landline to be amended	Deputy Town Clerk
Post redirection	Arrange with Royal Mail, including payment of redirection fee using corporate payments card	Town Clerk
Internet	staff to use home internet connections	All staff

Insurance	Zurich Municipal to be advised – policy number YLL-2720865683. Phone 0800 028 0336 farnboroughpropertyclaims@uk.zurich.com	Town Clerk
Communications	Inform service providers, residents and others Website, social media, local news outlets and noticeboards	Deputy Town Clerk
Communications	Ensure all councillors are aware of incident and actions taken to address disruption caused by it.	Deputy Town Clerk

13. Infrastructure Incident

An infrastructure incident can include the loss of computer / telephony systems, internet access or power. If the outage is temporary, inform staff to remain and await further instructions. Refer to actions in the business continuity section above for managing the incident.

Principal contacts are:-

Phones and ITC	Cloudy IT	Support@cloudyIT.co.uk Phone 01280 814684
Mains power	Western Power Distribution	Either online reporting of Power loss or call 0800 6783 105
Building power supply	Property owner	Bazaas Ltd, 17 Station Rd, Kettering NN15 7HH info@headlandsbusiness.com 01536 510431;
Website	2Commune Ltd	Tina Britt : 0116 412 0034: 07837 448807 tinabritt@2commune.com
Meeting venue	Toller Church	Beci Carter (during office hours) 01536 522090 Keith Riddle 01536-429308; 07442 164777 (outside office hours)
Market store	NNC	Richard Kibble (NNC) 07795828112 Jonathan Waterworth (NNC) 01536-464287

If power outage is widespread and staff homes are also affected contact local shared office providers to rent desk space.

14. Staff Incident and loss of key staff

A staff incident can include a sudden family emergency, injury or other event which renders a key member of staff suddenly unable to work. Given the modest numbers of employees the Town Council has, any reduction in staff availability will have an immediate and direct effect on service delivery.

Action	Person responsible
Identify interchangeable staff All members of staff should have colleagues who can perform their roles, even if it is in a reduced capacity. Identify the relevant person and support them in carrying out business-critical activities.*	Town Clerk – all staff
Assess extent of loss Identify whether the affected staff member's absence is likely to be temporary, longer-term, or permanent	Town Clerk
Longer term loss of staff Alert Staffing and Finance committees to discuss appropriate action	Town Clerk
Recruit temporary or fulltime replacement Follow the standard recruitment procedure to find a full-time, part-time, or fixed-term contract (as appropriate) replacement. Speak to SLCC about their ability to supply locum staff to fill vacancies	Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk; Chair of Staffing Committee.

This is a list of business critical activities where more than one person should be familiar with the work involved the final column is colour coded to indicate strength in depth.

Activity	Key knowledge	Staff currently able to pick up function
Meetings arrangements	Issue of agendas and preparation of minutes	TC, some support from DTC
Financial management systems	Use of Scribe Access to bank accounts Access to payment card	TC, DTC, AO TC, DTC, AO TC, DTC
Access to website	Ability to edit content	TC, DTC, AO
Access to social media accounts	Ability to edit content	DTC
Event management	Ability to manage event on day Bookings and arrangements	ES x 4 staff; DTC TC, DTC and AO
Market management	Bookings Erection of stalls	TC, DTC and AO MS x 2 with potential for emergency sourcing of staff by CDR Ltd
Mayoral engagements	Taking engagement bookings/maintain diary	TC, DTC
Consultation responses	Responding to planning applications and licensing consultations	TC

15. Recovery phase

The purpose of the recovery phase is to resume normal working practices for the entire organisation. Where the impact of the incident is prolonged, normal operations may need to be delivered under new circumstances, different location etc.

Action	Details	Responsible person
Agree and plan the actions required to enable recovery of normal working	Agreed actions will be detailed in an action plan and set against time scales with responsibility for completion clearly indicated	Town Clerk
Respond to any long-term support needs of staff	Depending on the nature of the incident, Council may need to consider providing support services	Town Clerk
Publicise that there is now 'business as usual'	Inform public/customers through normal channels	Deputy Town Clerk
Carry out a debrief of the incident and complete report to document opportunities for improvement and any lessons identified	This should be reviewed to ensure key actions resulting from the incident are implemented within designated time scales	Town Clerk
Review this Continuity Plan considering lessons learned from incident and the response to it	Implement recommendations for improvement and update the plan Communicate revised version of the plan to all members of staff	Town Clerk/ Finance and Governance Ctte
Report to full Council	Ensure Councillors are aware of any recommendations arising from a review of the incident	Town Clerk

16. Maintenance and Review of Plan

Any changes in personnel which affect the plan should be addressed immediately.

The plan should also be checked and reviewed as follows:

- When there has been an incident which necessitates the utilisation of the plan, an incident report should be prepared and an assessment of the plans performance should be carried out;
- When there is a significant change in the way that the Town Council is run because of a change in legislation etc. the effects should be evaluated with respect to the plan.

Plan adopted by Town Council on (date)

Appendix Abbreviations

TC Town Clerk

DTC Deputy Town Clerk

AO Admin Officer

ES Event supervisors

MS Market staff

CDR Career Drive Resourcing Ltd – supplier of staff for market

SLCC Society of Local Council Clerks.

