



AGENDA ITEM: 6

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

3 APRIL 2007

BUSINESS CONTINUITY AND FLU PANDEMIC PLAN

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - advise Overview and Scrutiny Board of the newly adopted corporate Business Continuity plan and the Council's Flu Pandemic plan;
 - outline the continued work being undertaken on both plans; and
 - seek Overview and Scrutiny Board's views on the process followed to date and the planned actions outlined within the report to further embed Business Continuity Management within the culture of Middlesbrough Council.

INTRODUCTION

2. The Council has a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to maintain Business Continuity plans to ensure that it can continue to deliver its key critical services during a business interruption event. This report sets out in detail those plans that have been developed to address this requirement and outlines proposals to embed Business Continuity within Middlesbrough Council. The plans are:
 - the corporate Business Continuity plan;
 - the supporting Service Area Departmental plans; and
 - the Flu Pandemic Plan.
3. The above plans are supported by the range of policies that have been specifically designed for use during an interruption event. These policies address issues of

workforce flexibility, working from home, emergency ordering procedures and procedures for emergency incident officers.

EVIDENCE / DISCUSSION

Corporate Business Continuity Process

4. Initially a series of Business Impact Analysis workshops were held, which were attended by CMT members and heads of service. The information provided during the workshops established the baseline data, which was subsequently used to identify the key critical services provided by the Council. As part of the workshop, those attending were asked to identify the tolerance for an interruption for each service; this was then correlated into a service recovery priority table (appendix 1). The table was subsequently refined to include those services delivered by HBS on behalf of the Council. It was then circulated for comment to Heads of Service and CMT.
5. Following agreement of the priorities for service recovery, the Business Continuity Steering Group was established. The remit of the group was to address those issues raised during the series of workshops and reflect them where necessary within the corporate Business Continuity plan, supporting policies and the Service Area Departmental Business Continuity plans. Issues covered by the Steering Group include:
 - the provision of a relocation centre;
 - the need to ensure HBS and Council Business Continuity plans were coherent;
 - review of the current IT strategy;
 - development of working at home and workforce flexibility policies to be used during a business interruption event;
 - document management issues;
 - procurement management; and
 - emergency planning links.

Development of the Flu Pandemic Plan

6. Given the unique impact that a flu pandemic would have on the Council's ability to deliver its key services, the Flu Pandemic plan is being developed to outline the Council's proposed response for this unique interruption event. The plan is being developed alongside the suite of Business Continuity plans to ensure that they are coherent and appropriately cross-referenced where appropriate.
7. The first version of the Flu Pandemic Plan for the Council was submitted to CMT on 5 October 2006. This established the Council's basic approach to tackling a Flu pandemic. This version has been expanded utilising the work undertaken in relation to Business Continuity, which has established the key critical service activities delivered by the Council.
8. The second version of the plan has been developed following consultation with CMT, Heads of Service, members of the Risk and Business Continuity Forum and

the Business Continuity Steering group. In addition to the consultations, further guidance received from the Cleveland Emergency Planning unit on a Cleveland wide response has either been incorporated or cross-referenced within the second version of the plan.

9. Many of the outstanding issues detailed within the first version have been addressed by work undertaken on Business Continuity, which is outlined above.
10. The third version of the plan is timetabled to be submitted to CMT for approval in September 2007 at which point it is anticipated that the Council will have a preparedness level of 90%. This progress will be built on further by a 4th version due to be completed by March 2008. This plan will then be scenario tested on an annual basis.

Supporting departmental plans

11. A linked exercise has been undertaken to develop Service Area Departmental Business Continuity plans which will sit beneath the corporate Business Continuity plan. In addition to the overarching Departmental Service Plan, there are service specific Continuity plans for all services identified within the Priority Service Recovery table (Appendix 1). The supporting Service Area Departmental Business Continuity plans will be submitted for approval through the existing Service planning processes.

Embedding Business Continuity Management

12. To ensure that a culture of Business Continuity Management is successfully embedded within the Council, a programme of planned actions (Appendix 2) has been developed by officers to promote awareness of the plan amongst staff, members and strategic partners.
13. In addition to this a scenario test will be utilised to assess the Corporate Plan, Service Department plans, supporting documents and the Flu Pandemic plan. All the documents will then be reviewed to ensure that lessons learned are fully incorporated. This should further strengthen the Council's Business Continuity Management arrangements. Copies of the corporate Business Continuity plan and the flu pandemic plan are available on the Commis system or from Performance Management and diversity officers, should members wish to inspect them.

CONCLUSIONS

14. As outlined above, development of the plans is an ongoing process. The process of awareness raising exercises, testing and regularly reviewing the plans should ensure the Council's preparedness for any event is high.

15. Overview and Scrutiny Board's comments are sought on the process followed to date and the planned actions outlined within the report to further embed Business Continuity Management within the culture of Middlesbrough Council.

Author: Ann-Marie Johnstone
Tel: 01642 729204