SOUTH HOLLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of: **Riana Rudland – Community Development and Health Manager**

To: **Governance and Audit Committee – 18 December 2014**

(Author: **Riana Rudland – Community Development and Health Manager)**

Subject: **Business Continuity Update Report**

Purpose: **To provide members of the committee with an update on progress against the Business Continuity Audit of May 2014**

Recommendation:

That Members note the contents of the report and progress made to date

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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Business Continuity is the process that ensures that the council's critical services can continue to operate in the event of a disruption or incident. All authorities should have a procedure in place that is effective, has been thoroughly exercised, is regularly reviewed, and is operated by trained staff. This ensures the council can meet its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

1.2 Audit Lincolnshire undertook an audit in May 2014 which focussed on the following: examination of the Business Continuity plans and procedures currently in place; an assessment of how this process is exercised and reviewed and; a check that key staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities.

1.3 The audit findings provided limited assurance but with improving direction of travel. It was noted that the implementation of sharing and partnership arrangements (shared management and CPBS in particular) had resulted in some plans becoming outdated and in need of review. The audit also recognised that work was underway to ensure that robust plans are in place and that staff are aware of their responsibilities and suitably equipped to respond.

1.4 The audit highlighted 4 high, 3 medium level recommendations. The key areas for improvement were highlighted as being; Completion of all Business Continuity Plans with regular reviews and updates scheduled; Promotion and embedding of processes with greater emphasis placed on business continuity management at senior management level; Regular exercising of the Business Continuity Plans; Training on Business Continuity for all staff.

1.5 Since the audit in May a number of steps have been taken to address the issues highlighted by the audit report. As a result two audit recs have been fully completed and signed off.

1.6 Below is a table detailing progress against all recommendations from the audit.

No	Findings	Recommendations	Actions	Priority	Progress to date
1	There is limited evidence of strong senior management promotion to embed Business Continuity arrangements in SHDC at this time: • It is not clear that the BC framework or updated Corporate BC plan have been approved by CMT • Whilst the framework states BC will be on the CMT agenda at least each quarter we have not been able to confirm that this is the case If the importance of Business Continuity is not communicated to staff and arrangements not embedded there is a risk that the response to a service disruption / business continuity incident will not be effective.	Senior Management should liaise with the JEMS Senior Emergency Planning Officer to ensure that all outstanding work on business continuity arrangements is completed / timetabled and that they are actively involved in its ongoing promotion.	The Corporate BC Plan was presented to CMT on 8th December following a further refresh in October including amendments to contact details of staff as a result of changes in senior management. A few minor amendments are now due to be completed before it is signed off by CMT at their meeting scheduled for 22nd December. A cross council Resilience group has been formed and is led by a member of CMT. This group reviews BC and EP issues and progress and reports back to the Corporate Management Team. This helps ensure more senior management buy-in and awareness.	High	To be Completed 22nd Dec 2014
2	Business Continuity plans are not complete for all service areas. We also found instances of completed versions that were still designated as "draft" versions, had missing information and answers that were not definite. In the absence of complete and up to date plans, there may be a lack of clarity on priorities and procedures should an incident occur.	Service areas should complete their Business Continuity plans as soon as possible, within a deadline agreed by CMT. Managers should ensure they are then updated when required, fully reviewed annually and tested to ensure that they continue to be fit for purpose.	All services have been tasked with reviewing their BC plans. Support is being provided by JEMS Resilience Officer. Service managers have been tasked with amending and testing plans at a team level and the Resilience Group will ensure that these plans are regularly reviewed by the Service. These plans are due for completion in the new year although many services have already reviewed their plans and	High	In progress. External providers also being reviewed

No	Findings	Recommendations	Actions	Priority	Progress to date
			are in the 'exercising phase'. Teams with shared officers are ensuring that plans reflect these arrangements.		
3	The last BC exercise that took place at SHDC was in October 2008.

Exercising of plans is needed to ensure that staff are prepared and understand the procedures to follow should a real life situation occur. This should also identify any "gaps" in procedures and information.

We note that there is an exercise planned during 2014/15. | Ensure that the planned exercise is completed and reviewed so that any issues are highlighted and improvements can be made to plans where necessary.

It is good practice that exercises are completed every few years. These should be supplemented with departmental table top reviews. This will ensure that procedures are embedded. | SHDC had planned to take part in a National Exercise in October 2014, however this was cancelled by national colleagues. SHDC did however undertake a number of cross departmental meetings in the build up to the exercise and shared information and knowledge across services, discuss potential business impacts and began to put in place new mechanisms to test plans. This work was extremely beneficial despite the exercise being cancelled. In addition, Service Managers and CMT undertook a desk top exercise in November to raise awareness of the importance of the plans and to test their preparedness in the event of an issue arising. The lessons learnt from this exercise are being implemented by Service Managers as they review their plans.
SHDC took part in a Lincolnshire Telecoms test during the summer which concluded that we are aware and able to implement the | High | SMT / CMT exercise complete.

Service level exercises in progress |

No	Findings	Recommendations	Actions	Priority	Progress to date
			County Telecoms strategy if required. A number of key staff have been signed up to Resilience Direct and have received training on how to use it. This will act as a remote place to store all BC plans in the event of not being able to access SHDC files. Service Managers have been provided with 13 scenarios to undertake desk top exercises with their teams. Teams have these scheduled in to their team meetings and will be supported by JEMS Resilience Officer when required.		
4	While detailed documentation has been produced on the training requirements for staff at different levels, the Business Continuity training content and delivery is still being planned.

Business Continuity is not currently included in induction processes.

Without adequate training, there is a risk that staff at all levels will not understand their roles and responsibilities. | SHDC need to ensure that:
• business continuity training material is produced as quickly as possible for the different audiences within SHDC
• training sessions are established in conjunction with relevant risk management and BC managers/experts, and agreed by the senior management team
• there are adequate procedures in place to | Information regarding Business Continuity has been added to SHINE for all staff to raise awareness. All teams are participating in refresh of their plans which will also raises awareness. HR have been tasked with ensuring that it is included in an induction information for new staff. Key Officers have recently undertaken 'Silver' command level training which helps them understand what roles they will undertake in the event of an | High | Training of key staff complete

Further training planned

Team level awareness raising – complete |

No	Findings	Recommendations	Actions	Priority	Progress to date
		ensure that any changes, amendments, updates to the BC policy, processes or procedures are promptly identified and assessed, and result in appropriate changes to the training programmes • awareness of BC is included in staff inductions	incident that affects the functioning of the Council. Further training is to be rolled out in the new year. Gold refresher Training for CMT is being undertaken in Jan and Feb 2015. BC awareness has been highlighted through recent staff newsletters. Further training for service managers will be scheduled once all plans have been signed off and based on the needs of the service.		
5	The Business Continuity Framework for SHDC and Breckland is dated August 2011 and still appears to be a draft version. We could not find evidence that the Business Continuity framework had been signed off and agreed.	Ensure that this document is reviewed to confirm it is up to date. This should be formally approved by CMT. This should then be made available to all staff so that they understand the role of Business Continuity in the council. The framework should be then reviewed annually and updated via version number to confirm this has been completed.	This has now been completed. A 2014 version has been agreed and is now available for staff.	Medium	Completed
6	There is no reminder system in place to ensure that Service Managers keep their Business Continuity Plans up to date.	Create a standing agenda item for all Business Continuity Project Group meetings for this reminder.	All Service Managers are responsible for updating their plans when staff changes occur. The performance system can act	Medium	Completed

No	Findings	Recommendations	Actions	Priority	Progress to date
	Key roles in the plans could be vacant if they are not updated following staff departures.	This will ensure that all of the individual service plans remain up to date.	as a reminder for managers. The resilience group will initiate spot checks on team plans on a regular basis. Key officers are responsible for ensuring operational changes are reflected in plans.		
7	There is inadequate information on Business Continuity available to staff at the moment on SHINE. The various plans are not accessible to staff and there are a limited number of updates sent to all staff. There is a risk that staff at all levels will therefore not understand their roles and responsibilities in the event of a genuine Business Continuity event.	Once the Business Continuity Plans are updated, all staff should be able to access versions of the Plans that do not contain staff contact details to ensure that they are aware of the roles they may be required to perform. Regular Business Continuity updates should also be provided via email and SHINE to keep staff informed.	SHINE has been updated with relevant information for staff. This also shows any updates on the front page so that users can see all changes. Key updates will be circulated via the staff newsletter. Further updates can be provided by the Chief Executive at All Staff Briefings if required. Teams are to undertake a scenario exercise every year to ensure all staff remain informed and plans are tested. Team plans (without contact details) will be stored on SHINE once signed off by Managers. CMT will have access to the Corporate BC plan, Emergency Plan and contacts list on a memory stick so they can access the info at any time. All plans once complete will be entered on Resilience Direct for Key Officers to access.	Medium	CMT – completed All staff – in progress

2.0   **OPTIONS**

2.1   To note the contents of the report and progress made to date

3.0   **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3.1   Significant progress has been made since the Business Continuity Audit in May 2014. It should be noted that plans require continuous updating and monitoring to reflect changes in staffing and service priorities. The Resilience group will continue to monitor team plan reviews to give assurance that they are up to date and fit for purpose.

3.2   Compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

3.3   More resilient service delivery.

4.0   **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1   The development of resilience within South Holland gives us the confidence to be able to continue to deliver services even if an incident occurs which may have an impact on its delivery.

5.0   **IMPLICATIONS**

5.1   **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

5.1.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.2   **Constitution & Legal**

5.2.1 Compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

5.3   **Contracts**

5.3.1 It remains the responsibility of the Council to ensure that Business Continuity Plans are in place for any service which is contracted. The contractors should be able to demonstrate how they are building resilience in to their service delivery processes and how they would continue to deliver the required services during and after an incident.

5.4   **Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 The Corporate Business Continuity Plan details the services which are required to deliver the corporate priorities.

5.5   **Crime and Disorder**

5.5.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.6   **Equality and Diversity / Human Rights**

5.6.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.7   **Health & Wellbeing**

5.7.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.8   **Financial**

5.8.1   There may be some financial implications in building resilience in to our service delivery. However these will be assessed on an individual cost benefit analysis before implementation. There may be financial penalties if service delivery is compromised.

5.9   **Risk Management**

5.9.1   The formal development of a corporate Business Continuity Plan has allowed the Council to identify risks involved with service delivery, manage their impact, and determine actions to develop resilience against their effects.

5.10   **Staffing**

5.10.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

5.11   **Stakeholders / Consultation / Timescales**

5.11.1 It is the opinion of the Report Author that there are no implications.

6.0   **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1   Service disruption has the potential to affect all wards and communities.

7.0   **ACRONYMS**

7.1   BC – Business Continuity
        EP – Emergency Planning
        JEMS – Joint Emergency Management Service
        CMT – Corporate Management Team
        SMT – Service Manager Team
        CBPS – Compass Point Business Services

Background papers:- None

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Key Decision:
No, report is for information only

This report refers to a Mandatory Service