

Thurrock Council Business Continuity Management Plan and Policy

Author	Maxine Gorman
Version No.	2
Issue Date	July 2013
Review Interval	This document should be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in Council Structure or the scope of critical duties undertaken by the Council

Contents

Section	Title	Page
	Foreword	3
1	Background	4
2	Introduction to Business Continuity Management	4
3	Strategic Aim and Objectives	6
4	Scope	7
5	Purpose	7
6	Definition of Business Continuity Management	7
7	Benefits	8
8	Delivering the Strategy - Methodology	9
9	Responsibilities	12
10	Business Continuity Management Group	13
11	Training and Exercising	14
Appendix A	Business Continuity Management Policy Statement	

Foreword:

As the Chief Executive of Thurrock Council, I can confirm that it is the policy of the Council to ensure continuity of service delivery following an unplanned disruption to normal working.

This will be achieved by the adoption of the recommendations as referenced in the following legislation and guidance:

- Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Emergency Preparedness Chapter 6
- British Standard for Business Continuity ISO 22301
- Business Continuity Institute Good Practice Guidelines 2013

In doing so Thurrock Council will promote greater confidence to the public that the service(s) provided to the communities within the Borough will be sustained as far as is reasonably practicable.

Good plans are essential and we need to ensure that all staff fully understand their roles and prepare themselves and departments for that unexpected event.

This document has been produced by the Council's Emergency Planning Team and Business Continuity Management Group to help meet those responsibilities. Please ensure you understand the contents of this document before an event.

Graham Farrent
Chief Executive

1. Background

- 1.1 The Business Continuity Management (BCM) Strategy and Policy sets the framework for our BCM programme. It is vital to have top management buy-in to the implementation of the BCM programme and to make a public statement of intent, endorsed by the Chief Executive and Leader.
- 1.2 The main elements and purpose of the BCM Strategy and Policy are to:
 1. appoint an executive with overall and accountability for BCM
 2. gain buy-in to and get a strategic statement of support for BCM
 3. identify other key roles and responsibilities
 4. gain assurance that the BCM programme is aligned with the organisations strategic objectives
- 1.3 The key outcomes:
 - Gain strategic, top level management support for the whole BCM programme, signed off by the Chief Executive and Leader
 - Set the framework for compliance with best practice guidelines, produced by Business Continuity Institute 2013

2. Introduction to Business Continuity Management

- 2.1 Business Continuity Management is a management process that helps manage the risks to the smooth running of an organisation or the delivery of a service, ensuring that the business can continue in the event of a disruption.
- 2.2 BCM is a planned process aimed at managing the many and varied operational risks inherent in the day to day activities involved in delivering services. The main purpose of the process is to ensure continuity of service delivery following unexpected disruption to normal working.
- 2.3 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires all Category 1 responders to maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions in the event of a disruption, so far as reasonably practicable.
- 2.4 An 'Emergency' as defined in Section 1 of the Act is "an Event or Situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom – an event or Situation threatens human welfare only if it involves, causes or may cause – loss of human life, human illness or injury, disruption of money, food, water, energy or fuel, systems of communication, facilities for transport or disruption to services relating to health, and other non-health related matters."
- 2.5 This duty relates to all the functions of a Category 1 responder, not just its civil protection functions.

- 2.6 Business Continuity and Emergency Planning are different. Business continuity is about the preparation for and response to specific business related threats to agencies as individual organisations, which pose risks to the ability of that organisation to continue to operate its critical business activities and processes.
- 2.7 BC threats are therefore internal threats or occurrences, or external ones which have a serious impact on the ability of the Council to continue its business activities.
- 2.8 The Council's Major Incident Plan details its response to an external 'Major Incident' and / or co-ordination of multi-agencies/Local Health Economy in response to such an incident.
- 2.9 There are many threats that could impact on the ability of Thurrock Council to deliver its services to the communities within the borough.
- 2.10 The impact is not determined by the cause, but rather the effect on the Council's service delivery. The Philosophy of BCM is geared towards reducing the impact of any interruption to specific resources by restoring critical functions, as quickly as possible, irrespective of the nature of the disaster.
- 2.11 Disasters are impossible to define accurately or to predict, but the more feasible that would affect Thurrock Council are:
- **People** - Loss of staff e.g. as a result of pandemic flu
 - **Premises** - Denial of access to buildings e.g. in the event of a fire or flood
 - **Resources** - Loss of access to data e.g. failure of one or more of the councils servers
 - **Suppliers** - Products and services supplied by third parties e.g. loss of utilities including gas, water, electricity or telecommunications
- 2.12 Whatever the reason for the interruption to normal working, the effect may result in, an inability to provide the core services of Thurrock Council. The effect could be disastrous if a comprehensive Business Continuity Plan(s) are not in place to help mitigate the effects.
- 2.13 The speed and efficiency at which Thurrock Council is able to recover from any disruptive challenge upon our services depends largely on the extent to which services have been pre-identified and prioritised.
- 2.14 The most essential resource/part of the service is the staff. It is imperative that every member of staff is aware of the outline procedures which will be followed should there be a break in service continuity. It is also essential that key members of staff with specific roles to play in both the Crisis and Recovery Phases, clearly understand those roles and responsibilities.

3 Strategic Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The Business Continuity Management System aims to improve the organisations resilience by identifying in advance, and planning for, the potential impacts of sudden disruptions to the organisations time critical services.
- 3.2 This will be achieved by the adoption of the recommendations as referenced in the following legislation and guidance:
- Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Emergency Preparedness Chapter 6
 - British Standard for Business Continuity ISO 22301
 - Business Continuity Institute Good Practice Guidelines 2013
- 3.3 In doing so Thurrock Council will aim to comply with the requirements of the British Standard ISO 22301 in order to provide a service resilient to disruption and to promote greater confidence of the public that the level of service provided to the communities of Thurrock will be sustained as far as reasonably practicable.

4 Scope

- 4.1 The policy applies to all directorates of the organisation. All employees within these directorates must be made aware of the policy. The policy applies in particular to directorate heads, their nominated representatives, heads of departments and service managers.

5 Purpose

- 5.1 The purpose of this document is to provide a structure through which Thurrock Council will be able to:
- Establish and maintain a BCMS (Business Continuity Management System)
 - Identify and prioritise key activities and responsibilities which are essential to the Council to seek to restore those key activities, should they be disrupted
 - Provide a mechanism to establish a Command Centre with a supporting structure to be able to prioritise the strategic issues facing the Council and be able to manage the initial response to the crisis. Including communications to all stake holders within and external to the Council
 - Develop plans to ensure continuity of key activities at a minimum acceptable standard following a disruption, this may include plans both corporate and/or for individual directorate, department or location
 - Activation of business continuity plans can be managed
 - Plans are subject to ongoing exercising and revision

- The executive board can be assured that the BCMS remains up to date and relevant.

6 Definition of Business Continuity Management

6.1 Business Continuity Management can be defined as:

'A holistic management process that identifies potential threats to an organisation and the impacts to business operations those threats, if realized, 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'

BCI Good Practice Guidelines 2013

6.2 It is therefore about the council preparing for a disaster, incident or event that could affect the delivery of services. The aim being that at all times key elements of service are maintained at an emergency level and brought back up to an acceptable level as soon as possible.

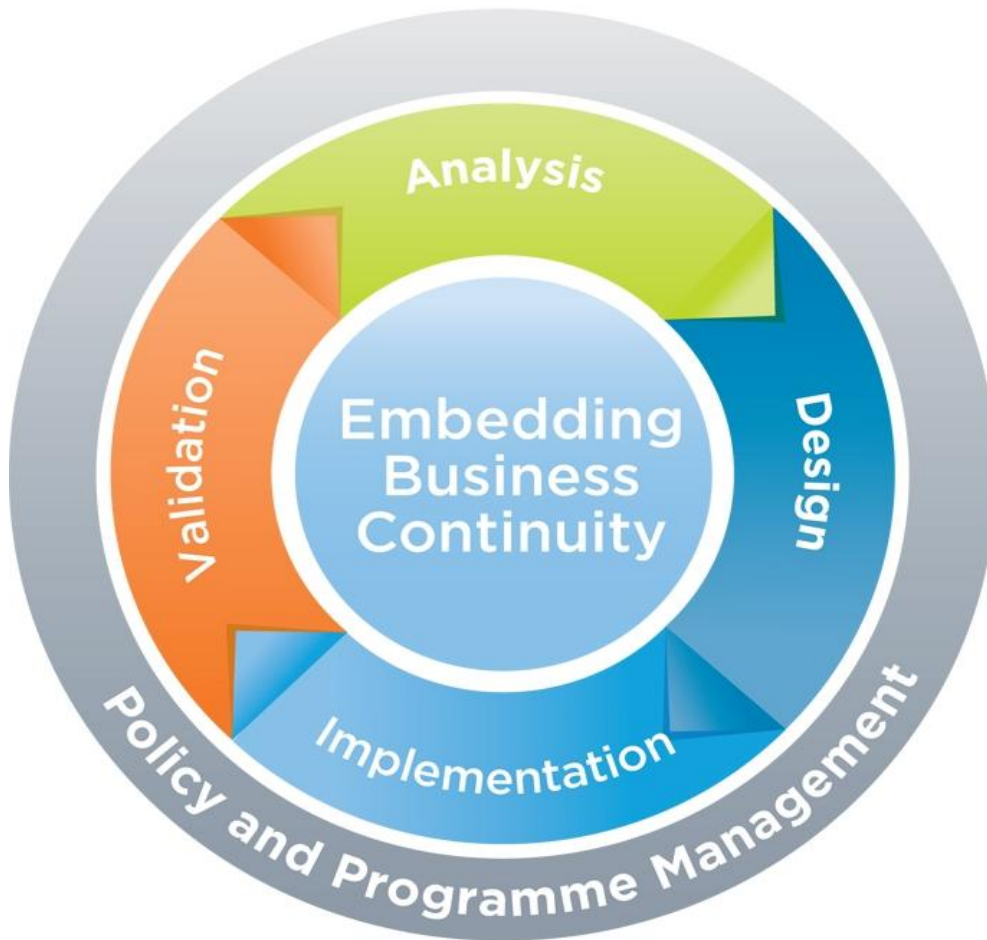
7 Benefits

7.1 Effective business continuity management delivers a number of tangible and intangible benefits to individual services and to the council as a whole, including:

- a. develops a clearer understanding of how the council works (business process analysis)
- b. protects the council, ensuring that it can help others in an emergency (facilitated by the BCP)
- c. protects the reputation of the council (facilitated by the BCP)
- d. produces clear cost benefits (business impact analysis)
- e. facilitates legislative compliance and good corporate governance (implementation of BCP and subsequent management).

8 Delivering the Strategy - Methodology

- 8.1 The process being used within the council is based on the BCM model outlined in The BCI Good Practice Guidelines 2013. The BCM Lifecycle shows the stages of activity that an organisation moves through and repeats with the overall aim of improving organisation resilience.



Generic Life Cycle

8.2 This process involves the following activities:

PP1 - Policy and Programme Management

Is at the start of the Business Continuity Management (BCM) lifecycle. It is the Professional Practice that defines the organisational policy relating to Business Continuity (BC) and how that policy will be implemented, controlled and validated through a BCM programme.

This includes:

- Assigning responsibilities for implementing and maintaining the BCM programme within the council
- Implementing business continuity in the council – including the design, build and implementation of the programme
- The ongoing management of business continuity – including regular review and updates of business continuity arrangements and plans.

PP2 - Embedding Business Continuity

Is the Professional Practice that continually seeks to integrate BC into day to day business activities and organisational culture.

This will be achieved through:

- Incorporating BCM in the staff induction process
- E-mail bulletins
- Pages on Thurrock In-Form
- Booklets and Prompt Cards
- Staff Development Sessions

PP3 - Analysis

Is the Professional Practice within the BCM Lifecycle that reviews and assesses an organisation in terms of what its objectives are, how it functions and the constraints of the environment in which it operates. The use of business impact and risk assessments (see below) to identify critical services, evaluates priorities and assesses risk to service delivery.

- Business Impact Analysis (BIA) – identifying the critical processes and functions and assessing the impacts on the council if these were disrupted or lost. BIA is the crucial first stage in implementing BCM, and helps measure the impact disruptions on the organisation.
- Risk Assessment – once those critical processes and functions have been identified, a risk assessment can be conducted to identify the potential threats to those processes.

PP4 – Design

Design is the Professional Practice within the BCM lifecycle that identifies and selects appropriate strategies and tactics to determine how continuity and recovery from disruption will be achieved.

The Councils approach to determining BCM strategies will involve:

- Implementing appropriate measures to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring and /or reduce the potential effects of those incidents

- Taking account of mitigation measures in place
- Providing continuity for critical services during and following an incident
- Taking account of services that have not been identified as critical

PP5 – Implementation

Is the Professional Practice within the BCM Lifecycle that executes the agreed strategies and tactics through the process of developing the Business Continuity Plan (BCP).

The Business Continuity Plan ensures that actions are considered for:

- The immediate response to the incident
- Interim solutions or maintaining an emergency level of service, leading on to reinstating full services

PP6 – Validation

Is the Professional Practice within the BCM Lifecycle that confirms that the BCM Programme meets the objectives set in the BC Policy and that the organisations BCP is fit for purpose.

This will be achieved through:

- Exercising
- Maintaining
- Reviewing

9 Responsibilities

- 9.1 The Director of Environmental and Public Protection is responsible to the executive board for business continuity issues.

This document is owned by the Business Continuity Management Group.

The Civil Protection Team is the professional leads within the organisation and will:

- Review and develop the policy in line with best practice and the needs of the organisation
- Monitor standards and compliance with the policy

9.2 Review of Policy and BCM Processes and Procedures

- 9.2.1 As the Business Continuity Policy is contained within the Business Continuity Management Plan it will be subject to review annually and will be approved by the Directors Board.

9.2.2 All BCM processes and procedures will be documented and subjected to continual review and development, especially after a significant BC incident.

9.2.3 The Business Continuity Management Plan must be approved by the Directors Board with the Chief Executive Officer as the accountable officer.

9.3 Management of the Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) and the Business Continuity Management Plan (BCMP)

9.3.1 Thurrock Council has appointed the Civil Protection Team as responsible for the maintenance of the Business Continuity Management System and Business Continuity Management Plan, including ensuring that all documentation required for compliance with the British Standard are maintained and that reviewing, updating, training and exercising of the plan are undertaken.

9.4 Business Continuity Plans

9.4.1 Thurrock Council's BCMP will require Business Continuity Plans produced by Directorates and / or Departments that provide direct and vital support to the maintenance of critical service delivery. It is the responsibility of individual directors to ensure that they have appropriate BC Plan(s) in place.

9.4.2 Once those plans are in place it is necessary to ensure that the plan/s are regularly reviewed and updated and appropriate training and exercising is provided to relevant key personnel, together with the opportunity to exercise all or individual elements.

9.4.3 There are a number of other Thurrock Council and Essex Resilience Forum Plans which support Business Continuity and neither this policy, or plan displaces those plans, but will be co-ordinated alongside them; i.e. Major Incident Plan, Pandemic Flu Contingency Plan, NEP-Fuel Contingency Plan & Heat-wave Plan.

10 Business Continuity Management Group

10.1 The Business Continuity Management Group will support the development of Business Continuity Management activity across the Council.

10.2 Membership of the Business Continuity Management Group will comprise of members of the Civil Protection Team and an appropriate representative from relevant Directorates/departments. They will act as the point of contact for the departments in the production of specific Department Business Continuity Plan(s), training and exercising.

10.3 The aim and objectives of the Business Continuity Management Group are:

Aim

To meet Thurrock Council's Business Continuity obligations as a Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Sect 6.1 – “the act requires Category 1 responders to maintain plans to ensure that they can continue to perform their functions in the event of an emergency, so far as is reasonably practicable”

Sect 6.2 – requires Category 1 responders “to continue to exercise their civil protection functions as well as continuing to perform their ordinary functions”

Objectives

- Act as project management board for Business Continuity.
- To coordinate Thurrock Council's Business Continuity Program.
- To act as Single Points of Contact (SPOC) for your directorate.
- To maintain awareness of and raise any potential business continuity issues.
- To assist in embedding a business continuity culture at Thurrock Council.
- To assist in the development of and continued effectiveness of Business Continuity Strategies.
- To assist in response to a Business Continuity incident.

11 Training and Exercising

11.1 It is a requirement under the Civil Contingencies Act for the Council to ensure that arrangements are in place for us to both exercise and train staff, in order to validate Business Continuity Plans and ensure staff, *“are confident and competent concerning the plan”*

11.2 Training

11.2.1 All Council staff will receive an appropriate introduction to Business Continuity during their induction period.

11.2.2 Additional Training will be incorporated into staff development programmes from time to time to ensure a continued awareness of roles and responsibilities.

11.2.3 Key staff that has responsibilities in relation to Thurrock Council's BCM Programme will be required to undertake additional BC training courses to attain competencies as required under the British Standard

11.2.4 Upon deployment to a particular area of service delivery, all staff will be familiarised with the relevant business area Business Continuity Plans / Schedules. Should any changes to the BC Plans be made, staff will receive

appropriate training and development to ensure the continued effectiveness of the BCM response.

11.3 Exercising

11.3.1 Exercising is essential to developing teamwork, competence, confidence and knowledge which is vital at the time of an incident. Guidance recommends that plans should be exercised at least annually; however, any live activations of a continuity plan can be recorded as part of the testing schedule.

11.3.2 Exercising of the BCM response to any element of service delivery will be held as a regular feature of the on-going management of the Council's Business Continuity Management Plan.

11.3.3 Exercises will be held to validate any alteration, either in part or whole, to any element of the plans.

Appendix A – Business Continuity Management Policy Statement

Each key activity within our organisation is to be owned by a designated directorate. The Director will ensure, with their Heads of Service and Service Managers that plans capable of maintaining a minimum acceptable standard of service delivery are in place for each key activity.

All departments will provide professional support to improve resilience of critical activities and resources that support Thurrock Council's critical activities.

Each directorate will carry out an annual review of its business continuity process and plan(s). The Business Continuity Management Group will monitor the review process and provide support where necessary.

Each directorate must aim to test/exercise its business continuity plan(s) at least once a year and make modifications where necessary.

Contracts with suppliers of critical goods and services to the organisation must include a requirement to have in place a validated Business Continuity Plan.

All employees must be made aware of the plans that affect their directorate, unit, office and their role following activation of business continuity plans.