

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING; COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 19th September 2011 the Council's Strategic Management Team approved the establishment of a project to undertake the review of the Council's Business Continuity arrangements. The project was initiated on 1st February and is due to be completed by the 31st July 2012. This report provides details of consultation arrangements incorporated as part of the approved project plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note current plans to incorporate feedback with communities and other stakeholders at this stage of the review
- 2.2 To help facilitate local arrangements in order to maximise input from local groups and organisations.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 During 2008 and 2009, the Council initiated a programme to develop and establish Business Continuity Management within the Council, to ensure that 'critical' activities can be recovered quickly following any major incident which causes disruption of normal business. A critical activity has been defined as *'any activity which MUST be delivered following an unexpected event...'*
- 3.2 In December 2011 an internal audit report identified that improvements should be made to the existing plans and processes for Business Continuity Planning; including;
 - A review of the critical activities for each service
 - More comprehensive recovery plans
 - A requirement to engage with stakeholders and local communities.
- 3.3 The requirement to involve communities and partners in the development of recovery plans aims to make it easier to engage with them and enlist their support, should an emergency arise.

4. PROJECT PROGRESS

- 4.1 Since the project was initiated in February this year, a comprehensive mapping exercise has been completed to take account of changes in the Council's structure.
- 4.2 The scope and nature of critical activities has been scrutinised, resulting in a significant reduction of the number of activities confirmed as critical. The revised list has not yet been confirmed but will undoubtedly include services to protect and assist vulnerable people e.g. children and elderly.
- 4.3 The template has been reviewed to ensure that all statutory requirements and the recommendations in the audit report will now be addressed.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The planned consultation includes gathering feedback from;
- Community groups and organisations based in local areas
 - Other Councils in Scotland
 - Partners closely involved in delivering critical services
- 5.2 Since the time available is very limited (project ends on 31st July 2012) it has been agreed that a survey will be issued to relevant groups and committees to maximise the extent of the input received. By directing this survey through the Local Area Community Planning groups it is hoped to maximise this feedback e.g. from Community Councils, the voluntary sector etc.
- 5.3 The attached covering letter, survey and draft recovery plan template will be issued as part of the consultation. The intention is that groups review the draft recovery plan template in relation to their own role in the community and then complete the survey from that perspective e.g. adding comment on additional issues or support that they could potentially provide to relevant Council services. **A fuller explanation of this approach will be available through discussion with the project officer at the Local Community Planning Group meeting.**

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The new arrangements will result in significant improvements to the systems currently in place; community consultation is an important aspect of those enhancements.

- 6.2 Although it is recognised that community involvement in this process is relatively new for the Council, it is intended that further initiatives will be implemented to increase the scope of this involvement e.g. local awareness raising sessions.
- 6.3 The role of Local Community Planning groups is very important in supporting the Council in this project and will help to improve the effectiveness of our response to emergency incidents which would otherwise disrupt vital services.

For further information contact: Kate Connelly, Project Officer – 01546 604116