Audit and Governance Committee Report

Report of Head of HR, IT & Customer Services

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To: AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

DATE: 24 June 2013

Business continuity and risk management strategy update

Recommendation

We invite Audit and Governance Committee to approve the business continuity strategy and risk management strategy for 2013 to 2016.

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide committee with the updated business continuity strategy and the risk management strategy for 2013 to 2016.

Relationship with corporate plan

2. Having effective business continuity arrangements in place will help the council in meeting its strategic objective of 'an efficiently run council, keeping council tax low'.

Background

3. At the last meeting of this committee on 20 March 2013, we presented our annual update report on business continuity and risk management. We advised that the updated strategies needed committee approval and that we would be presenting them at the next committee meeting.

The difference between business continuity and risk management

4. Business continuity is the process of continuing to provide public services if a disruption or other unforeseen event occurs.

5. Risk management is the process of understanding risks to the councils' operations, and acting to reduce their likelihood and/or consequence.

Business continuity strategy

6. In compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and accompanying regulations, we are required to 'assess the risk of an emergency occurring and to maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs, the councils are able to perform their functions'. In other words, we need to ensure that we would be able to continue to deliver our services to residents in the event of a disruption.

7. This committee recommended the business continuity strategy for 2009 to 2012 for approval to Executive on 15 December 2009.   It was approved by Executive on 5 February 2010.

8. The approach to business continuity adopted by both councils is described in the updated joint business continuity strategy for 2013 to 2016 accompanying this report. This:

- outlines the councils' approach to business continuity
- illustrates our business continuity arrangements
- describes the documentation used as part of our arrangements
- describes disruption scenarios
- provides guidance on recovery strategy elements
- sets out how plans are tested, maintained and reviewed
- provides an overview of the key roles, responsibilities and structures in place for our business continuity arrangements
- complies with government guidance and Statutory Instruments relating to business continuity

9. We have updated the strategy to reflect current arrangements and to take into account name changes. There are no significant amendments within the strategy.

10. Please note that we need to review target recovery times for IT as systems and priorities have changed. This will be included as part of the work to refresh IT infrastructure.

Risk management strategy

11. This committee recommended the approval of the risk management strategy for 2009 to 2012 to Executive on 30 June 2009. It was approved by Executive on 7 August 2009.

12. The risk management approach adopted by both councils is described in the updated joint risk management strategy for 2013 to 2016 accompanying this report. This:

- outlines the councils' approach to risk management
- sets out the contribution of risk management to the effective management of the councils
- sets out the means of identifying, analysing, managing, controlling and monitoring risks

- provides an overview of the key roles, responsibilities and structures in place for managing risk
- helps the councils meet their corporate priorities, local and national targets, improve service delivery and support better project management
- achieves better decision making through an understanding of relevant risks
- protects the councils' assets, including property, equipment, vehicles etc and reduce associated losses
- complies with government guidance and Statutory Instruments relating to risk management
- maintains effective control of public funds, minimise waste, fraud and poor value for money

13. We have not made any significant changes to the updated strategy.

Financial, legal and any other implications

14. There are no financial or legal implications arising from this report, other than to note that by having business continuity arrangements in place, the council is meeting its obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Conclusion

15. The adoption of the updated strategies will help the councils to:

- continue public services in the event of a business disruption
- embed business continuity arrangements by setting out the means of continuing service delivery in the event of a disruption
- meet their strategic and operational objectives and improve service delivery
- simplify arrangements and achieve economies of effort through having a single process at both councils
- comply with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and audit regulations
- embed the risk management process by setting out the means of identifying and managing risks
- meet their strategic and operational objectives, improve service delivery and support better project management

Recommendation

16. We invite Audit and Governance Committee to approve the business continuity strategy and risk management strategy accompanying this report.