

Audit and Governance Committee Report



Report of Interim Audit Manager

Author: **Craig Pullen**

Telephone: **01235 547615**

Telephone: **01491 823544**

E-mail: craig.pullen@southandvale.gov.uk

Cabinet member responsible: **Councillor Matthew Barber**

Telephone: **07816 481452**

E-mail: matthew.barber@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

To: Audit and Governance Committee

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Business continuity and risk management update

Recommendation

We invite Audit and Governance Committee to note our existing arrangements and the additional work we have undertaken since our last annual update report.

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide committee with an update on our business continuity and risk management arrangements.

Relationship with corporate plan

2. Having effective business continuity arrangements in place will help the council in meeting its strategic objective of 'effective management of resources'.

Background

3. The joint Business Continuity Strategy and the joint Risk Management Strategy require us to present regular reports to this committee on how we are managing our risks and to provide an update on our business continuity arrangements. We presented our last annual update to committee on 20 March 2013. Since November 2013, the management of both business continuity and risk management has been transferred to internal audit. The audit manager has identified clear plans for the management of both services and it has been agreed with the Strategic Director and the Head of Finance that both services will be

monitored each quarter as required by the respective strategies until the Audit Manager returns from maternity leave at which point she will present her plans to Committee.

Business continuity

4. 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.
5. We have a procedure in place which ensures that all business continuity plans are reviewed every quarter and amended where necessary. Officers also update the plans on an ad-hoc basis to ensure leavers are removed and new starters are added.
6. The plans are stored on the general drive as well as remotely in case access to the council network is restricted or unavailable during a disruption.
7. The joint Business Continuity Strategy 2013-2016 was approved by this Committee on 24 June 2013 and next requires updating in 2016.

Risk management

8. The council has seven operational risk registers and seven risk champions, one for each service. We continue to review and update the registers every quarter in accordance with the Risk Management Strategy. We consider the risk registers to be confidential documents and therefore have not attached them to this report, although these are available on the Council's intranet.
9. The strategic management board is currently reviewing the strategic risk register to ensure it is up to date, the risks remain relevant and also if any further action is required. There are currently four strategic risks recorded:
 - partnerships
 - joint working arrangements
 - housing provision
 - recession
10. The joint Risk Management Strategy 2013-2016 was approved by this Committee on 24 June 2013 and next requires updating in 2016.

Financial, legal and any other implications

11. 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

12. We continue to have robust and effective risk management and business continuity arrangements in place. Our business continuity plans are up to date, we are managing our risks effectively and are aware of those risks which need further management.

13. The management of both business continuity and risk management will be reviewed when the audit manager returns from maternity leave and future plans will be presented to this committee.

Recommendation

14. We invite Audit and Governance Committee to note our existing arrangements and the additional work we have undertaken since our last annual update report.