

Executive Report



Report of Head of HR, IT & Customer Services

Report No. 100/09

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Wards Affected: None

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To: EXECUTIVE

DATE: 5 February 2010

Joint Business Continuity Strategy

Recommendation

That Executive approves the joint business continuity strategy accompanying this report.

Purpose of report

1. For Executive to approve a joint South and Vale Business Continuity Strategy 2009 to 2012. Officers will seek separate approval from South's Cabinet on 8 February 2010.

Relationship with corporate plan

2. Having an up to date business continuity strategy will help the councils in meeting their shared strategic objective of 'managing our business effectively'.

Background

3. Business continuity planning involves having arrangements in place that allow us to continue to deliver our services to the public in the event of a disruption or emergency. We have a statutory obligation under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to have adequate business continuity arrangements in place.
4. The business continuity strategy attached to this report sets out the main elements of our arrangements and also addresses how we will deliver our services in the first two weeks of a disruption.
5. Although Vale has no formally adopted business continuity strategy, the then Deputy Director for Commercial Services introduced a Strategy Statement on 1 September 2007. A recent Internal Audit review highlighted that the strategy statement had not been

approved by either the Audit and Governance committee or the Executive. We have implemented this recommendation by presenting this joint strategy to Audit and Governance Committee and Executive.

A joint approach to business continuity

6. Following the departure of the then Deputy Director for Commercial Services, Vale no longer had an officer responsible for business continuity. As a result, management team asked that business continuity arrangements be harmonised at both councils. Business continuity forms part of the shared corporate risk officer's role and the two councils are joint funding this.
7. The approach to business continuity at each council is similar as both councils used the same external contractor to assist in the original implementation of their business continuity arrangements.
8. To rationalise our approach, we have produced a business continuity plan template that is common to both councils and reflects the revised management structure. Each service area has two business continuity plans as there is one for each council, and a nominated plan administrator for each plan. We intend to have two additional plans, one for the facilities team (currently for South only) and one for Cornerstone as the Economy, Leisure and Property service contains widely differing functions from a business continuity perspective.
9. The new joint approach to business continuity to be adopted by both councils is described in the joint business continuity strategy accompanying this report. This:
 - outlines the councils' approach to business continuity
 - illustrates our business continuity arrangements
 - describes the documentation used as part of our arrangement
 - 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
 - will demonstrate the commitment of South's Cabinet, Vale's Executive and management team to effective business continuity arrangements

Financial, legal and any other implications

10. There are no direct financial implications of this report other than both councils are joint funding the corporate risk officer post, within existing budgets. The post is in the budgeted establishment at South, with Vale contributing 10 per cent of salary costs for business continuity and 40 per cent for risk management (total 50 per cent).
11. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 require us to be responsible for ensuring that we have a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the councils' functions. We have to demonstrate our business continuity arrangements in the Annual Governance Statement.

12. In addition, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, places a duty on councils 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. Both councils are already meeting the requirements of this Act by each having (separate to the risk management strategy) an emergency plan and business continuity arrangements.
13. The adoption of the business continuity strategy, together with progress made towards implementing the joint approach, will help the council to meet these duties.

Conclusion

14. The strategy describes how the councils are approaching business continuity, the links to the existing process of risk management, and the benefits of rationalising the process between the two councils.
15. The adoption of the business continuity strategy 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.

Recommendation

16. Executive is recommended to approve the joint business continuity strategy accompanying this report.

Accompanying papers: Business continuity strategy