

Woughton Community Council

POLICY ON BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

Introduction

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is about identifying those parts of Woughton Community Council (WCC) that we cannot afford to lose – such as services, information, premises, and staff – and planning how to maintain these if an incident occurs.

Any incident, large or small, whether it is natural, accidental, or deliberate, can cause major disruption to WCC. The aim is to plan, rather than wait for it to happen, in order to get back to business in the quickest possible time, thus avoiding delays which could mean loss of valuable business or loss of stakeholder confidence.

Background

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on a **principal authority** (i.e. Milton Keynes Council) to ensure that it is prepared, as far as reasonably practical, to continue to provide critical functions / assistance in the event of a disruption. Whilst this is not a statutory duty for a Town, Community or Parish Council, it is the intention of Woughton Community Council (the Council) to recognise the importance of producing and maintaining a Business Continuity Plan (a BCP) for implementation in the event of disruption to the day to day running of the Council. This paper provides a framework detailing the steps towards developing and maintaining this plan, with process and policy that sits behind this.

BCM Programme Management

Effective programme management will ensure that BCM capability is established and maintained within WCC by:

- assigning responsibilities;
- establishing and implementing BCM in the organisation; and
- ongoing management

a) Responsibilities

In order to instil a sense of value and ownership in the organisation and workforce, the following responsibilities will apply:

- The Council Manager will be accountable for BCM under delegated responsibility from the Council.
- The Operations Manager will be responsible for taking the programme forward.
- The relevant Council Committees will monitor their element of BCM management, with the Operations and Resources Committee taking oversight responsibility.

b) Establishing and implementing BCM in the organisation

The Senior Management Team will ensure that BCM is established and implemented by:

- communicating the programme internally

- arranging appropriate training
- ensuring activities are completed.
- testing of BCM arrangements

c) Ongoing management

The Senior Management team will:

- ensure that business continuity plans and related documents are regularly reviewed and updated.
- promote business continuity across the organisation.
- keep the BCM programme updated through lessons learnt and good practice.

Risk Assessment

The existing Risk Register will inform a risk assessment which looks at the likelihood and impact of a variety of risks that could cause a business interruption e.g.

- Loss of staff
- Loss of systems
- Loss of utilities
- Loss of, or access to, premises
- Loss of key suppliers
- Disruption to transport

By assessing these, risk reduction activities can be prioritised.

Determining BCM Strategy

Having determined the recovery time for each critical activity, a strategy is required for meeting it. Whilst as detailed elsewhere, WCC has limited 'duties', ensuring ongoing support and service delivery is preferred. Possible tactics are:

a) People

- Inventory of staff skills not utilised within their current role – to enable redeployment
- Process mapping and documentation – to allow staff to undertake roles with which they are unfamiliar
- Multi-skill training of each individual
- Cross-training of skills across a number of individuals
- Succession planning
- Use of third party support, backed by contractual agreements
- Geographical separation of individuals or groups with core skills can reduce the likelihood of losing all those capable of undertaking a specific role

b) Premises

- Relocation of staff to other accommodation
- Displacement of staff performing less urgent roles
- Remote working – either from home or other locations
- Use premises provided by other organisations
- Alternative sources of equipment

c) Technology

- Maintaining the same technology at different locations that will not be affected by the same business disruption
- Holding older equipment as emergency replacement or spares

d) Information

- Ensure data is backed up and is kept off site
- Essential documentation is stored securely e.g. fire-proof safe
- Copies of essential documentation are kept elsewhere

e) Suppliers and Partners

- Storage of additional supplies at another location
- Identification of alternative suppliers
- Encouraging or requiring suppliers/partners to have a validated business continuity capability
- Significant penalty clauses on supply contracts

f) Stakeholders

- Mechanisms in place to provide information to stakeholders
- Arrangements to ensure vulnerable groups are accommodated

May 2024

BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS

What, where, when, who. Assess what is needed to deliver.

PEOPLE

- What is the optimum number of staff required to carry out critical activities?
- What is the minimum staffing level required to provide some sort of service?
- What skills/level of expertise is required to undertake these activities?

PREMISES

- What locations do critical activities operate from?
- What alternative premises are there?
- What equipment is essential to carry out critical activities?

TECHNOLOGY

- What IT is essential to carry out critical activities?
- What systems and means of voice and data communication are required to carry out critical activities?

INFORMATION

- What information is essential to carry out critical activities?
- How is this information stored?

SUPPLIERS AND PARTNERS

- Who are priority suppliers/partners depended on to undertake critical activities?
- Are key services contracted out – to whom and for what?
- Are there any reciprocal arrangements with other organisations?

EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

- What are essential pieces of equipment or wider resources that are key to your service delivery?
- How easy would it be to replace / cover / manage without these?
- Could you continue to deliver services without them?

Business Continuity Planning

To effectively plan, risk manage and ensure as limited disruption as possible, a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) will be created. This will include:

- Individual service assessments from key directorates:
 - o Community
 - o Youth
 - o Landscape
 - o Environment
 - o Community Centres
 - o Democracy
 - o HQ
- Whole organisational elements, such as IT, telephony, systems, policies
- Any external considerations and partnerships that may be impacted.

These will then be collated into the wider BCP, with detailed responses to cover immediate, short-term, medium-term and longer terms actions.

It should be noted that, unlike the principal authority, WCC doesn't provide any services that are 'statutory' in nature, other than the minimal standards needed for any local council (3 meetings per year, completion of relevant documentation, etc.).

Despite this, WCC DOES have some contractual agreements that will need to be met. It should be noted that this means that our services are NOT 'essential' in a legal sense, but due to the support they offer our residents, are considered 'essential' by the council.

Whilst ceasing to deliver for a short period is unlikely to have significant impact (unlike, for example, waste collection or safeguarding services at principal level), long term loss of services would be felt.

This plan should run alongside the 'Risk Register', which lists all relevant risks, mitigation in place and further actions that may be needed. To avoid replication, the BCP should build upon this, detailing:

- Specific risk / occurrence
- Mitigation that is in place to reduce impact
- Immediate actions (i.e. within 24 hours)
- Short term actions (i.e. within a week)
- Medium term actions (i.e. within a month)
- Long term actions (within 3 months)

This should also detail who is responsible for the actions, who oversees the plan as a whole (with specific directorates or within the council as a whole)

Appendices - Service Level Contingency Plans

This continuity plan works alongside the existing 'Risk Register', building upon the information included within. The items below are specifically around whole organisation elements, with service specific plans attached as addendums towards the end of this document.

This plan will need to be reviewed and updated alongside the risk register, creating a suite of approaches that identify and address risks and actions needed across the council.

This plan will sit under the Operations Committee, overseen at Officer level by the Council and Operations Manager, with support from the senior team (service managers).

Organisational Contingency Plan

Ref	Specific Risk Area	Controls in place	Officer / committee responsible	Immediate actions (24 hours)	Short term actions (within a week)	Medium term actions (within a month)	Long term actions (within 3 months)
1	Building(s) rendered wholly or partly unusable due to fire, flood, infestation, or another event The Hub Offices No 95 – see service specific Landscape Depot – see service specific	Effective building design, fire systems, security systems, regular checks, pest control, business continuity plan, emergency plan, insurance	Council Manager / Operations	Inform all officers and councillors Move officers to WFH / available meeting place Contact insurance company* Inform partner organisations and contractors (e.g. IT) Inform residents via website / social media Secure building, equipment, IT, etc. either via removal or security fencing / personnel, etc	Arrange contractors to undertake repairs Set up mail redirect Refer to Operations BCP	Manage repairs / replacement building	Return to normal
2	Vehicles: Landscape Van Landscape Mowers Environment EV Tractor, Trailer - Vehicles involved in accident, damaged through fire / vandalism or otherwise unusable	Suitable vehicle checks in place daily. Insurance is in place. Parked in CCTV area. Driving policy is enforced. Checks in place	Landscape Manager / Council Manager / Services	Inform insurance company and relevant officers. Arrange collection / repairs	If necessary, hire alternative vehicles If 'write offs', research replacement vehicles	Take proposal to committee for actions Action ratified decisions	Continue as usual.
3	Equipment failure – IT or comms equipment (telephony system) fails for more than a day, leading to inability to provide services / contracts effectively. Public unable to contact us. Officers / members unable to	Multiple backup systems in place, ensuring that information is securely stored and accessible from other venues. Alternative premises available with IT in place in event of systemic failure. Both landline and mobile phones in case one single system failure. IT based telephony also possible if necessary.	Ops Manager / Operations	Contact IT provider for urgent action Use alternative equipment to share situation with public (via website / social media) Make use of alternative systems (e.g. mobile phones) and provide information of short-term contact numbers	Unlikely to be an issue for this long, but review of systems, reason for failures, prevention of further occurrences to take place.	Review IT provision to ensure alternatives aren't better. Change provision if appropriate	Any long term proposals to committee / council for ratification.

	communicate effectively. Lack of access to Company Drive / Shared information. Email communications being missed, Potential for essential and urgent communications to be overlooked, leading to additional damage to reputation / activities / etc.						
4	Staff absence / long term sickness - Financial impact on council, inability to deliver agreed services / contracts, reputation risks with partners / public, impact on key areas of responsibility (e.g. cleanliness, provision of youth activities, etc.)	Current staffing provision allows for sufficient 'cover' in the event of most service-based staff. Senior Managers absence can be managed in the short-term through 'upgrading' of other officers and use of external support. Systems in place to ensure effective support / management of absences where appropriate.	Ops Manager / Operations	Unlikely to be any direct impact within first 24 hours – check on individuals calendars and checks made when absence is notified (e.g. when phone call is made to report illness). If no contact is made, access to relevant calendar can be arranged, but likely to be unnecessary on first day.	Dependent on officer – see Service based BCP for details. If Council Manager or Ops / RFO are absent, covered by service managers and officers. Advice can be sought via BMKALC, Chair of Council and other Clerks (e.g. CPPC, WBPC).	For up to a month, an 'acting up' arrangement could be made with existing officers (e.g. RFO is Acting Clerk) and / or additional hours / duties passed to other officers (with associated recompense). This, combined with external advice	Longer than a month would mean looking for a 'locum' approach – this may be that 'acting up' is made more permanent, with backfilling accordingly, or buying in a locum clerk to cover. This would be a decision made by council (whole council) dependent on prognosis and specific situation.
5	Loss of monies due to fraud, theft, bank failure, etc. meaning council is unable to meet fiscal liabilities	Finances spread across institutions to reduce risk – sufficient within different providers to enable three months delivery (six months delivery in total – sufficient to continue until next precept payment) Suitable safety precautions in place – audit trails, signatory demands, etc.	RFO / Operations	Immediate hold on all payments and spending (excepting essential) Liaison with banking provider(s) and other financial institutions (e.g. CCLA) Liaison with MKCC regarding any precept payments due Reports made to police, action fraud, etc. depending on relevance	Review of all banking and financial arrangements, signatories, etc. Investigation into circumstances and any officer / councillor involvement	Reports made to any relevant authorities and actions noted from investigation	Review of all spending and services, reducing where necessary and making changes to spending patterns accordingly. This may include loss of staff, loss of specific services and a temporary change in approach whilst income and fiscal security is improved.
6	Proper Officer isn't available	Relatively easy to manage in the very short term, but decisions may be needed urgently in the absence of Proper Officer or suitable deputy. Scheme of delegation in place, good communication channels, managers and councillors kept abreast of situations and issues and support available from BMKALC, NALC, SLCC and others in the event that urgent advice and / or support is needed, and no suitable decision maker is present.	Council Manager / Full Council	In the absence of the Council Manager, RFO / Ops Manager deputises. Chair of Council / Leader of Council for liaison and agreement if controversial or possible significant impacts. In the absence of both CM and RFO, managers will liaise with each other and / or councillors to reach agreement, contacting CM / RFO if possible If no managers, officers to contact Chair of Council / Vice Chair of Council /	In the absence of the Council Manager, RFO / Ops Manager deputises. Chair of Council / Leader of Council for liaison and agreement if controversial or possible significant impacts. In the absence of both CM and RFO, managers will liaise with each other and / or councillors to reach	Appoint as detailed in 4 above. Nominate agreed sub committee of the council for weekly agreement and devolved decision making. Look for locum cover	Locum cover necessary.

				Leader / Chair of Committee for advice, alongside BMKALC, etc. if necessary	agreement, contacting CM / RFO if possible If no managers, officers to contact Chair of Council / Vice Chair of Council / Leader / Chair of Committee for advice, alongside BMKALC, etc. if necessary		
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Community Services Contingency Plan

Ref	Specific risk area	Controls in place	Officer/com mittee responsible	Immediate actions (24hrs)	Short term actions (within a week)	Medium term actions (within a month)	Long term actions (within 3 months)
CS1	Staff absence – Events Coordinator, Café/Fridge Coordinator, Advice Officers	All these roles are regularly covered in the short term ie. holiday cover	Community Services Manager	Cover as normal ie. holiday cover	Cover as normal ie. holiday cover	Cover as normal ie. holiday cover	Look at temporary employment
CS2	Building closed/partially closed, affecting fridge, café, larder, advice service		Council Manager	Possible to use other parts of building that aren't closed. If entire building closed, it is possible to run limited services from the trailer/other meeting places	Possible to use other parts of building that aren't closed. If entire building closed, it is possible to run limited services from the trailer/other meeting places	Possible to use other parts of building that aren't closed. If entire building closed, it is possible to run limited services from the trailer/other meeting places	Return to normal
CS3	Equipment failure – chilled storage	Fridges checked daily as part of fridge sessions	Community Services Manager/Fridge Coordinator	Use other chilled storage on site. Use other chilled storage within fridge network	Use other chilled storage on site. Use other chilled storage within fridge network	Replace chilled storage with new equipment subject to approval from council	Return to normal
CS4	Equipment failure – cooking	Checked during use	Community Services Manager/Fridge Coordinator	Use other cooking options – portable hobs, microwaves, staff cooker	Use other cooking options – portable hobs, microwaves, staff cooker	Replace cooking equipment with new, subject to approval from council	Return to normal
CS5	Equipment failure – miscellaneous café/fridge	Checked during use	Community Services Manager/Fridge Coordinator	This relates to relatively small items (less than £50 value) and readily available. Purchase replacements through budget	Return to normal	Return to normal	Return to normal
CS6	Equipment failure - events	Checked during use	Community Services Manager/Community Development	Hire replacement equipment	Hire replacement equipment	Replace equipment with new, subject to approval from council	Return to normal

			& Events Coordinator				
CS7	Community fridge runs out of food	Monitored during session	Community Services Manager/Fridge Coordinator	Collect food from other fridges	Collect food from other fridges	Return to normal	Return to normal
CS8	Café runs out of food	Monitored during session	Community Services Manager/Fridge Coordinator	Use frozen food reserves and money from café 'float'	Use frozen food reserves and money from café 'float'	Use frozen food reserves and money from café 'float'	Return to normal

Youth Services Contingency Plan

Ref	Specific Risk Area	Controls in Place	Officer / Committee responsible	Immediate actions (24hrs)	Short term actions (1 week)	Medium term actions (1 month)	Long term Actions
YS 01	Youth team staff absence- due to sickness or other. Resulting in failure to deliver services as planned and impact of rest of team, the project outcomes, the public & partners. Financial impact of cover staff, cancellations, wasted resources. Risk to reputation/ reliability of service & WCC more widely.	When staffed at full capacity, there is some room for cover. *we do not currently have this level of capacity and all absence is felt acutely	Youth Manager / Services	Inform Operations manager of absence and affected staff. Youth Manager to redeploy staff where possible to cover. If cover not possible, project to be cancelled, Council Manager and public informed through all channels	Inform Operations manager of absence and affected staff. Youth Manager to adjust and redeploy staff where possible to enable greatest cover of service delivery. Prioritising projects as necessary. If cover not possible, project to be cancelled, Council Manager and public informed through all channels & be led by Operations Manager in terms of bank staff	Youth Manager to liaise with Operations Manager & Operations Manager to develop a plan to back fill hours or instigate fixed term contracts for replacement staff if cover not manageable	Youth Manager to liaise with senior management and instigate an agreed recruitment process.
YS 02	Youth Manager absence- due to sickness or other.	Most actions can be carried out in the short term between the Council Manager and/ or the Senior Youth Officer.	Council Manager/ Services	Inform Ops Manager Senior Youth Officer will cover or arrange cover for projects or cancel & inform Council Manager as necessary.	Senior Youth Officer to liaise with Council, Council Manager & Ops Manager as necessary for support.	See Service Based Contingency Plan	Senior Management team to take on responsibility and develop action plan, keeping Senior Youth Officer informed
YS 03	Senior Youth team absence- due to sickness or other.	In the absence of both YM & SYO	Council/ Ops Manager. Services	Any projects unstaffed or without pre-arranged teams in place will be closed by Council Manager and public informed.	Any projects unstaffed or without pre- arranged teams in place will be closed by Council Manager and public informed. Work started to look at resources remaining and a	Reduced service provision offer, utilising remaining officers. Support from wider organisation (e.g. line management via CM,	If likely to be longer, reappointment of staff on temp contracts to ensure safe delivery and re-expansion of services

					revamped / rescheduled / reprovisioned service plan	support from Community Team, etc.)	
YS 04	IT/ Comms Equipment failure- Central or youth specific telephony or IT Comms systems failure, resulting in inability to communicate within and across teams and with eh public.	Defer to the multiple back up systems in place. Defer to using Comms and IT systems at the HUB. If all systems are down. Refer to Operations Manager for guidance	Youth Manager/ Operations Manager Operations	Contact IT provider for urgent action. Use alternative equipment to share situation with public (via website / social media) Make use of alternative systems (e.g. mobile phones) and provide information of short-term contact numbers	Unlikely to last this long but if issues continue review systems, reasons for failures and implement changes to prevent reoccurrence		
YS 05	Equipment/ resources failure- inability to secure planned resources or equipment for project or damage or fault to equipment/ resources.	Each setting has designated resources for project. Team are adaptive through training.	Youth Manager/ SYO	If resources are a necessity to deliver the project session may need to be adapted or postponed. Expect team to adapt session plan	Utilise the time to move resources between settings, chase orders and secure replacements. Adapt session plans in short term	As before. If long term delivery is likely to be impacted. Budget use should be considered to replace to continue service delivery	
YS 06	No95- being unusable - either fully or partially, either due to fire, water or other damage. Scheduled repairs/ maintenance or human error in bookings/ comms.	Fire, Flood & Security systems in place. Regular checks and maintenance. Checks enforced	Youth Manager/ Operations Manager	Report to Operations Manager Adapt session location if possible. Relocate Staff and transfer of necessary resources. Action insurance as necessary for damages Action inspection and repairs	Most sessions are weekly and so are equivalent to 24 hrs. However, for those with daily usage an alternative will be implemented, or projects cancelled (hirer's refunded). Contractors should be booked and insurance claims ongoing Manage repairs/ replacements		Unlikely but the service delivery and associated staffing & resources will need to be reassessed. Project priorities made to continue potential reduced service delivery in line with service plan. Should return to usual service delivery
YS 07	WCC Buildings- being unusable, either fully or partially due to fire, water or other damage. Scheduled repairs/ maintenance or Human error in bookings/ comms.	Fire, Flood & Security systems in place. Regular checks and maintenance. Checks enforced	Youth Manager/ Caretaker Manager & Operations Manager	Report to Operations Manager Youth Manager to Adapt session location if possible. Relocate Staff and transfer of necessary resources. Ops Manager to Action inspection and repairs	Arrange contractors. Manage repairs and replacements. Manager insurance as necessary		Return to usual service
YS 07	Vehicles- breakdown, accidental or criminal damage = inaccessible or unusable	Suitable vehicle checks in place daily. Insurance is in place. Parked in CCTV area. Driving policy is enforced. Checks in place	Council Manager	Inform insurance company and relevant officers. Arrange collection / repairs	If necessary, hire alternative vehicles If 'write offs', research replacement vehicles	Take proposal to committee for actions Action ratified decisions	Continue as usual
YS 08	Partner's operational failure/ breakdown. Project delivery at risk due to factors a partner controls failing: staff, facilities, resources etc	Clarity around joint working. SLA to be implemented and checks enforced. Exit strategies created for when reconciliation not possible	Youth Manager/ Council Manager Services	Record actions and referring to SLAs have conversations to implement actions quickly.	Escalate as necessary	Implement exit strategies and seek alternatives or put in place alternatives.	

Landscape Contingency Plan

Loss of Staff.

If staff are off due to holiday/sickness operatives are trained accordingly so that the Landscape team can still operate at a reduced level. Staff are trained or undergoing training to improve their skill set to enable rotation of staff. If long term sickness or injury is predicted operatives could be available from various employment agencies. Timescale for replacement staff is potentially a week to get an agency worker in. Potentially looking at 1 to 2 months to replace full time employee and ongoing for training. If necessary, 'buying in' external contractors to cover whilst arrangements are made could also be investigated.

Loss of premises.

In the event of loss of premises due to fire or other emergency circumstances we could call on one or two of our neighbouring parishes to accommodate equipment and tools for an interim period. None of this is written in stone, but we have good relationships with the neighbouring parishes. These premises would not be a long-term issue so repairs or relocation could be sought with rental units in surrounding areas within a couple of months being investigated and occupancy.

Loss of suppliers or partnerships.

The suppliers we use are multi-functional, so we do not rely on any one specific company for supply of spares and/or repair. We have several contracts with suppliers where parts or repairs can be acquired or made to get the operations back on track in as little time as possible. At this moment in time our network of suppliers is as such that if one company were to go into liquidation, we could have conversations with another within a day or two to secure future service.

Loss of equipment.

Any loss of equipment can be replaced quickly as we have a network of suppliers who can get replacement kit within 24 hours of being ordered. Some of the bigger equipment such as mowers, chipper and vehicles would take longer to replace but in the interim period hire machines/vehicles would be available to have continuity in our service.

Democracy Contingency Plan

Loss of staff.

The only specific staff member is the Committee and Member Services Officer (CMSO). In the absence of this person, the relevant work would be covered by the Council Manager and other members of the senior team. This happens periodically at the current time and is relatively straightforward to manage.

In the event that both CMSO and the Council Manager were absent, meetings could still be held with councillors managing the delivery. Advice regarding the publishing of agendas and minutes could be offered by BMKALC, NALC or neighbouring parishes. A locum clerk (via an agency or through 'borrowing' an officer from a local council) would be an acceptable alternative in the short term.

Community Centres Contingency Plan

Loss of staff.

The Community Centres team includes four (4) officers who are all expected to work across parish where necessary. Additional hours and travel costs would be offered to enable suitable coverage in the event that one officer was absent for any length of time. The Caretaker Manager is also in touch with 'ad hoc' options, which could be bought in if necessary.

Loss of building.

If any one of our community buildings became unusable, space in others would be investigated and offered as a short-term option, whilst repairs were undertaken. This would include any of the community centres, the Chambers and No 95. If there was a longer-term issue, we would work with the renters to source alternative premises, but WCC would not be liable for any losses or issues arising.

Issues within buildings (e.g. loss of heating, loss of water) would be addressed dependent on individual circumstances. Loss of heating could be mitigated through use of electric heaters. Loss of water could be mitigated through provision of bottled water (although toilet usage may be an issue). Renting suitable equipment if not in place would also be an option.

Last review date:	May 2024
Next review date:	May 2025
Lead:	Council Manager
Overseeing Committee:	Full Council
Approved:	<i>FC 96/24f – 7th May 2024</i>
Review cycle:	Annually (as part of the Annual Meeting)