

Thurrock Council Strategic Business Continuity Plan

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Review Interval	This plan should be reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in Council Structure or the scope of critical duties undertaken by the Council

Personal information included in this plan must be kept confidential to the extent required by the Data Protection Act 1998 or any subsequent legislation making similar requirements.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) places a legal requirement on Category 1 responders to have business continuity management arrangements in place to ensure that during times of disruption, Thurrock Council is able to maintain its critical services.
- 1.2 Further information on the full requirements of effective Business Continuity Management and on the Council's approach is detailed in the Business Continuity Policy.
- 1.3 Generally the effects of a disruptive event can be categorised into two scenarios.
 - A localised event e.g. impacting a single department. It may be resolved by activating part of this plan or service specific plan without the need for a Council wide response.
 - A Council wide event affecting a wider area such as a loss of the ICT infrastructure or severe snow across the Borough

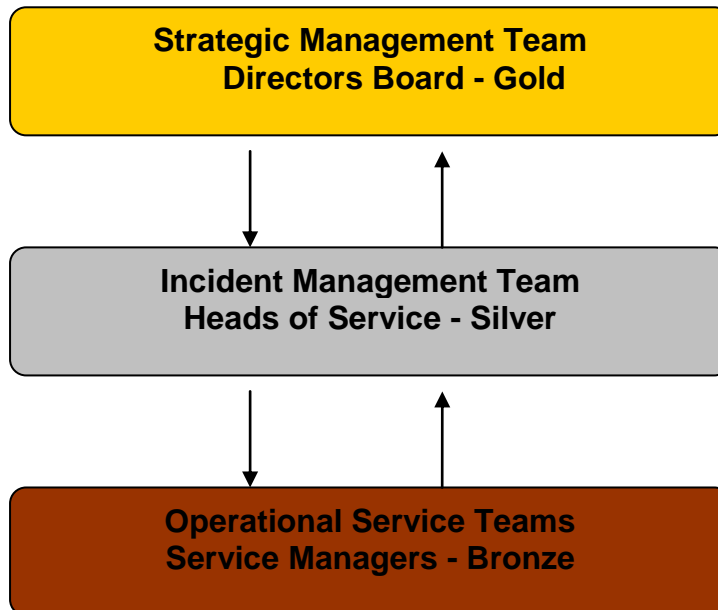
2 Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This Strategic Business Continuity Plan (SBCP) details generic action to be taken in the event of any significant internal or external disruption affecting the Council's ability to continue to operate some or all of its services. It outlines the command and control arrangements needed to coordinate critical services maintenance (business continuity) and return to normal (recovery). The SBCP complements the Council's Major Incident Plan (MIP) which deals primarily with the response phase of major incidents.
- 2.2 The SBCP is supported by Operational Business Continuity Plans (OBCP) that are developed and maintained by individual department heads. These may be activated independently of this plan for localised incidents.

3 Objectives of the Plan

- 3.1 To minimise disruption to Council services by ensuring the continuation of critical services and to return all services to normal in a controlled and timely manner.

4 Management Structure



5 Management Responsibilities

- 5.1 **Strategic Management Team** – During a disruptive incident, the Strategic Level Team are responsible for the organisations stability, continuity and reputation. Their specific responsibilities are to:
- Devise short, medium and long term strategies depending on the nature of the disruptive incident
 - Manage communications with all involved interested parties, including the media
 - Approve external statements before they are issued and monitor and adjust as necessary with a communications strategy
 - Monitor the overall response and recovery

- Ensure the response and recovery is in line with the long term interests of the organisation
- Resolve conflict in the response and recovery
- Identify and maximise opportunities or advantages arising from the incident
- Approve significant expenditure
- Ensure the financial health of the organisation
- Ensure any response and recovery meets the organisations legal and regulatory obligations

This is not a comprehensive list; additional responsibilities will become apparent in relation to specific types of incident.

5.2 Incident Management Team – The Incident Management Team will be formed from Heads of Service and other Senior Managers as deemed appropriate to respond to circumstances causing the disruption. Their specific responsibilities are to:

- Co-ordinate and monitor the response and recovery of subordinate teams
- Promptly respond to activation
- Allocate available resources to subordinate teams
- Change the agreed priorities and recovery actions (agreed by the SMT) to take into account any business conditions (weather, power outage etc?) or on direction from strategic level
- Monitor the main support functions of ICT, Human Resources (HR), Facilities and Finance
- Communicate and receive information from other teams
- Assess information and make decisions
- Monitor progress and report status to the strategic level

This is not a comprehensive list; additional responsibilities will become apparent in relation to specific types of incident.

5.3 Operational Service Teams – Each service affected by disruption will form a team including the service manager and selected staff from the service. The members of the Operational Service Teams will cover the response by individual departments to the incident. Their specific responsibilities are to:

- Resume functions of the departments within a defined timescale also known as a Recovery Time Objective (RTO)
- Respond to staff welfare (HR led)
- Ensure access to and use of facilities
- Liaise with the Incident Management Team
- Liaise with the ICT service teams
- Mobilise teams and resources required for recovery purposes
- Monitor progress and report status to the Incident Management Team

5.4 Functional Roles and Responsibilities

5.4.1 Facilities

- To work with various agencies and report to the Strategic Management Team on the technical aspects of the buildings, power and other utilities
- To liaise with Security Management on security matters
- To organise technical experts in the event of a crisis relating to the building and report progress back to the Strategic Management Team
- To liaise with Health and Safety (H&S) Manager on any Health and Safety matters
- To liaise with insurers
- To report progress to the Strategic Management Team

5.4.2 ICT

- To organise the recovery of essential computer systems in the shortest time possible, either on site or at alternative site(s), in the event of a crisis
- To identify and replace server(s) as necessary

- To identify and replace PC's/workstations as required within the priorities of the critical functions identified
- To organise additional labour to reinstate the system(s) as necessary
- Report progress to the Strategic Management Team

5.4.3 HR

- To ensure maintenance of contact numbers for all key staff
- To ensure immediate access to staff records is maintained
- To ensure all section heads have contact numbers for their staff
- To advise staff of their rights in a crisis and deal with any issues arising
- To ensure the welfare of individuals and arrange for staff support as required
- To report progress back to the Strategic Management Team

5.4.4 Health and Safety

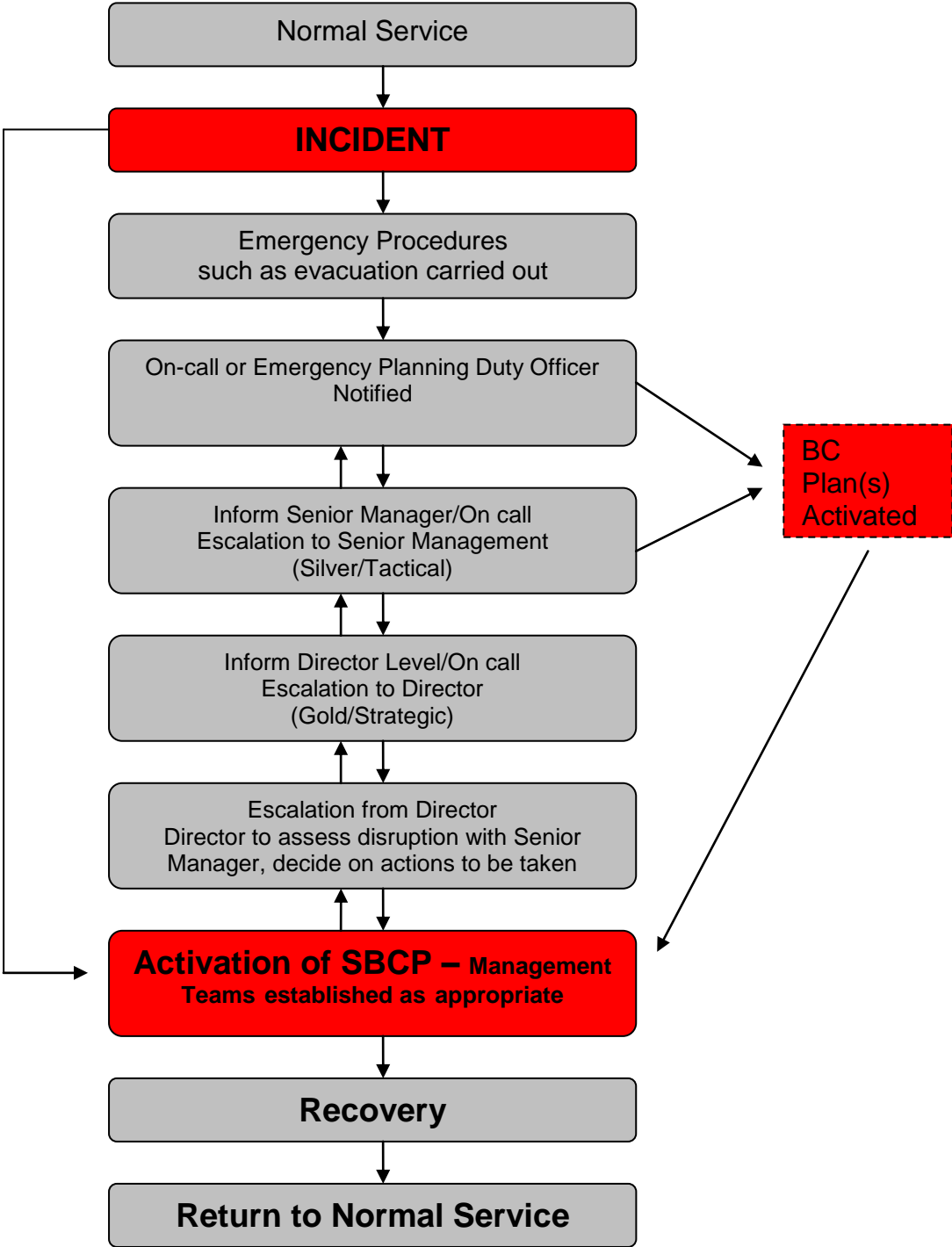
- To liaise with Facilities Management on any H&S matters
- To ensure that H&S rules are not contravened at any stage of the crisis bearing in mind the immediate situation
- To liaise with Health and Safety Executive
- To report progress to the Strategic Management Team

5.4.5 Communications

- Process regular media statements via the strategic management team
- Use 'Warning and Informing' methods on the developing implications of the disruption facing the council in conjunction with other Category 1 responders
- Update the Council's website at regular intervals

- Take enquiries from the public and other stakeholders as necessary
- Deal with press enquiries as appropriate
- Ensure all Members are kept up to date through regular briefings

6 Notification and Activation Procedures
6.1 Business Continuity Event Notification Flowchart



6.2 The Chief Executive or in his absence a Director or Senior Manager in consultation with the Emergency Planning Team will have the authority to activate the SBCP.

6.3 The Strategic Business Continuity Plan will be become effective where:

- A Major incident is declared
- The incident is more than likely to last for more than half a working day
- The incident will impact on the delivery of critical functions
- The incident affects a vulnerable group of service users
- The incident may generate negative publicity
- The incident is likely to escalate into one of the above categories

6.4 In the event that any staff member/manager becomes aware of a potential disruptive event they should:

- Ensure relevant emergency procedures are followed e.g. building evacuation
- Gather as much available information as quickly as possible
- Escalate to a senior manager, providing a detailed and accurate situation report

6.5 The Senior Manager will be responsible for:

- Instigating the relevant emergency response
- Escalation to the Head of Service / (on-call) Director, the Emergency Planning team or duty officer and other managers as appropriate to the incident.

6.6 The Director will assess the details of the disruptive event in conjunction with the above and decide what further action(s) should be taken.

7 Stand Down

7.1 This plan will be stood down when services are able to function at normal levels or when the Strategic Management Team considers it appropriate.

7.2 Managers will continually assess the situation and decide when it is appropriate for their department to stand down any additional resources or staff deployed during a disruption. Decisions to stand down will be agreed with the Strategic Management Team.

8 Types of Business Continuity Disruptive Events

Disruptive Event	Description
People	Loss of staff e.g. as a result of pandemic flu
Premises	Denial of access to buildings e.g. in the event of a fire or flood
Resources	Loss of access to data e.g. failure of one or more of the councils servers
Suppliers	Products and services supplied by third parties e.g. loss of utilities including gas, water, electricity or telecommunications

8.1 People

Loss of staff e.g. as a result of pandemic flu, causing implications for the continued delivery of service. Where services are time critical this can give rise to severe disruption in care for vulnerable residents. In such circumstances the Council should consider the following options:

- Use of appropriate agency staff as available
- Skills matching exercise to identify staff across the authority that could be diverted from their day to day work to continue the provision of critical services
- Alter intervals at which services are provided to the extent that it is safe to do so
- Suspension of non essential activity
- Use staff from other local authorities if available as part of mutual aid agreements

8.2 Premises

Denial of access to buildings e.g. in the event of fire or flood or similar events at individual or multiple buildings. In these circumstances the Council should consider the following options:

- If an individual building is inaccessible then the staff and functions from this building should be relocated to an alternative site
- To allow for sufficient room for staff in a reduced number of buildings the council should refer to **Critical Functions of the Council** spreadsheet and determine what functions can be suspended in the short term

- Refer to the **Operational Properties** list to identify potentially suitable alternative accommodation for critical services
- Instruct staff to work from home / remotely where possible therefore freeing additional office space for workers whose role depends on computer systems inaccessible from outside the Councils network
- If necessary identify suitable office facilities from an outside company
- Contact surrounding Councils or public sector organisations and request access to their office facilities as mutual aid

8.3 **Suppliers (products and services supplied by third parties)**

Loss of utilities including gas, water, electricity or telecommunications, the nature of the response to a loss of utilities will depend on the utility and the degree and duration of loss. Should such a loss occur the Council should consider the following options:

- Contact the utility company and determine the time period within which the utility will be restored.
- Investigate any temporary supply or bypass that can be applied
- Make alternative arrangements for critical service delivery if the period during which the disruption to supply is longer than maximum times given for critical service recovery (see Critical Functions of the Council spreadsheet)

Loss of key partner / supplier: The use of outside suppliers and partners from the commercial sector means that business failures could result in the sudden loss of a partner providing essential services. Should this occur the Council should consider the following options:

- Devise a prioritised list of the functions undertaken by the partner or of goods provided by the supplier.
- Arrange with Procurement to identify alternative partners or suppliers in priority order by reference to the Critical Functions of the Council spreadsheet that forms part of this plan.
- Arrange for a short term delivery of essential supplies and services seeking appropriate dispensation from normal procurement rules as necessary to address any immediate difficulties.
- Arrange with Procurement and Legal the drafting and application of suitable contracts for alternative providers / suppliers.

8.4 Resources

Loss of access to data: Staff could lose access to data in the event of individual computer failure or failure of one or more of the Councils servers. Should this occur the Council should consider the following options:

- Advise staff to revert to copies of procedures and standard documents stored on laptops and other portable storage media.
- Consider the order in which the recovery of records will be undertaken, prioritising the recovery of records that are essential for critical services and/or impact seriously on the wellbeing of residents vulnerable or otherwise. Refer to the ICT tab on the Critical Functions of the Council spreadsheet

9 Recovery

- 9.1 Recovery is the stage where the Council is returning to normal working; a time to review actions taken and consider whether changes and improvements could be made to the Council’s plans. If the business continuity incident was the result of a national situation, it is likely that at a Government level the national plans would be reviewed and possibly revised affecting Council plan amendments.
- 9.2 Reference should be made to the Essex Resilience Forum ‘Recovery Strategy’ for a detailed recovery strategy which will depend on the nature of the incident.
- 9.3 A list of possible issues for recovery should be put together alongside the incident to specify all aspects (Appendix E)
- 9.4 Heads of services that had a particular role to play in the response will hold a debrief for their staff within one month after the incident has been declared over, or at the end of their involvement, which ever is sooner. They will identify where things went well, where they had problems and what could be done better. They will implement any changes that need to be made and advise Emergency Planning.
- 9.5 The Strategic Level Team will hold a debriefing within one month of the incident being declared over. They will identify where things went well, where they had problems and what could be done better in the future. Business Continuity Plans will be amended accordingly.
- 9.6 If a Strategic Coordinating Group has been set up, Thurrock Council will attend the multi-agency debrief represented by a Strategic representative or Emergency Planning Officer
- 9.7 Table of Actions for Recovery

Action by:	Action required
Strategic	Declares the emergency has moved to recovery phase and

Management Team	oversee the response
Incident Management Team	Coordinates recovery and re-instatement of services and prepares updates for the Strategic Management Team
Communications Team	In liaison with the Strategic Level Team, uploads information for staff and service users on recovery arrangements
Heads of Service/ Team Managers	Review implementation of Critical Service BC Plans
Emergency Planning Team	Coordinates corporate debrief, prepares report reviewing actions taken with recommendations for improvements

Appendix A - List of working documents relevant to this plan (updated regularly)

Critical Functions of the Council

The critical functions of the Council are listed on the spreadsheet below along with service manager contact telephone numbers. Business Continuity Critical IT systems are prioritised on a separate worksheet on this spreadsheet.

List of Council Services with business continuity plans

The services provided by Council departments are listed in the following spreadsheet. The list indicates those services having a business continuity plan.

List of Serco Services

The services provided on behalf of the Council by the Strategic Partner Serco are listed in the following spreadsheet. The list indicates those services having submitted a Business Continuity Plan.

Operational Properties List

This spreadsheet provides a list of Thurrock Council and Strategic Partner Properties that could be considered for use as alternative accommodation for critical services if council buildings accommodating such services become unavailable.

Recovery Contacts

Contact details for officers who are likely to be required to assist in recovery efforts (updated every 3-6 months stored on J Drive)

Appendix B - AGENDA for Strategic Management Team

Strategic Management Team

In response to an incident causing a significant issue for business continuity

Date.....Time.....Location.....

Attendees	

1	Situation update
2	Extent of the departments / critical services affected
3	Initial response strategy
4	Liaison with emergency services
5	Liaison with external agencies
6	Accommodation issues
7	ICT issues
8	Staffing issues
9	Financial issues
10	Communication issues internal – message to staff / councillors
11	Communication issues external – messages to stakeholders
12	Establishment of operational service teams
13	Support for critical services
14	Reduction of non-critical services
15	Longer- term issues and recovery process
16	AOB
17	Time and location of next meeting

Appendix C - AGENDA for Incident Management Team

Incident Management Team

In response to an incident causing a significant issue for business continuity

Date.....Time.....Location.....

Attendees

1	Situation update
2	Extent of the departments / critical services affected
3	Initial response strategy discussed with SMT
4	Liaison with emergency services
5	Liaison with external agencies
6	Updates from SMT and Service Teams
7	ICT issues
8	Staffing issues
9	Financial issues (Agreed with SMT)
10	Communication issues internal – message to staff / councillors
11	Communication issues external – messages to stakeholders
12	Establishment of operational service teams
13	Support for critical services
14	Reduction of non-critical services
15	Longer- term issues and recovery process
16	AOB
17	Time and location of next meeting

Appendix D - AGENDA for Operational Service Team(s)

Operational Management Team

In response to an incident causing a significant issue for business continuity

Date.....Time.....Location.....

Attendees	

Thurrock Council Strategic Business Continuity Plan

1	Situation update
2	Extent of the departments / critical services affected
4	Liaison with emergency services
5	Liaison with external agencies
6	Updates from SMT and Incident Management Team
7	ICT issues
8	Staffing issues
9	Financial issues
13	Support needed for critical services
14	Reduction of non-critical services
15	Longer- term issues and recovery process
16	AOB
17	Time and location of next meeting

Appendix E– Log of actions taken to facilitate response and recovery

IncidentDate.....Loggist Name.....

Date & Time	INFO / MESSAGE RECEIVED PLUS REASONS FOR DECISIONS MADE – IF GIVEN) No assumptions / comments / opinion unless based on facts)	FROM (Full Name & Contact)	TO (Full Name & Contact)	Service affected (critical / non-critical)	Post Recovery steps needed to address consequences of taking the action	FOR ACTION / INFO (A / I)	ACTIONED Y/N	DATE / TIME / INITIALS