



BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY

OVERVIEW

The objectives of a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) are:

- to provide guidance, establish actions to be taken and develop procedures that will allow the Council to manage any incident;
- to ensure the continued operation of key services;
- to keep the organisation working effectively;
- to inform the community and customers of the Council.

The BCP must cover all areas of the Council's business, including issues for the:

- staff – operational issues; to ensure their ability to undertake their day-to-day duties;
- council – statutory requirements, Councillors' business, service provider to customers (residents, visitors); to ensure they are undertaken with minimal disruption, and stakeholders kept informed and details and updates are well communicated.

Responsibility for implementing the BCP rests with the Proper Officer (PO), or, in their absence, the Operations & Compliance Officer. Access to the BCP, including appendices, should not be dependent upon access to the council's administrative offices. Appendices to the BCP should be updated as soon as any aspect changes. The BCP is held on the GTC server and can be accessed by login into the GTC remote server from the Council's Offices, Eashing Workshop, Broadwater Park Youth & Community Centre or from a remote location using a GTC laptop. Additionally, hardcopies of the BCP and appendices should be held at the locations indicated above.

There are many scenarios that may result in the need to implement aspects of the BCP, but this document focuses on loss of:

- administrative office location;
- any of the main community buildings; WNC, Broadwater, The Pepperpot or Ockfords & Aarons Hill Hub;
- Godalming Museum;
- IT capabilities from internal or external causes;
- Town Clerk or RFO.

In each scenario there will be a series of immediate actions to be considered and undertaken where relevant. There will then be additional considerations specific to each. It is recognised that those listed here are not exhaustive, as there is a balance to be struck between the benefits of preparedness and the investment of effort in planning for an event that might never happen.

The appendices to the BCP contain emergency contact details and other key information where immediate access may be required. For GDPR and other security reasons the actual details will only be included in restricted access versions of the BCP.

IMMEDIATE STEPS – ALL SCENARIOS

1. Follow any relevant guidelines, such as
 - fire – evacuate and contact emergency services;
 - smell gas – turn off and phone 0800 111 999;
 - malicious threat – bomb warning.
2. Under no circumstances should staff or others be put at risk.
3. Contact the PO and Operations & Compliance Officer, who will then take control of the situation unless the emergency services are involved.
4. Make a quick assessment or value judgement of the seriousness of the situation and issues likely to be involved.
5. Notify key stakeholders, using details in Appendices
 - staff;
 - Leader, Mayor and political group leaders, who should be requested to notify the remainder of their group;
 - insurers, if the incident is likely to give rise to a claim.
6. In conjunction with the Leader, decide roles and responsibilities for staff and other elected members, as appropriate.
7. Arrange more detailed briefings for staff and councilors.
8. Decide the nature and extent of more extensive communication with residents and other relevant stakeholders.

SUBSEQUENT STEPS – ALL SCENARIOS

1. Ensure adequate resources are input to assist the recovery of the service, including those available from insurers.
2. Appropriate reviews of the situation are undertaken, through regular updates and Officers, Councillors and customers are kept updated and informed.
3. Officers are utilised effectively and efficiently, particularly in the event of providing cover, to expedite a prompt return to normal service.
4. Adequate checks are carried out when the services and systems are recovered when systems are restored from back-up records, so that they are fully restored and reinstated and operating correctly.
5. All details, i.e. resources, additional costs etc., are recorded and where applicable photographed.
6. If an insurance claim is to be made
 - ideally retain all damaged property until insurers have the opportunity to inspect;
 - establish a separate cost centre so that all costs associated with service recovery are recorded for submission to insurers/loss adjusters as appropriate. Any aspect not covered by insurers can subsequently be reassigned to normal cost centre.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS – LOSS OF GTC ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

1. Are alternative premises needed or can staff work from home for the expected duration of the interruption? If it is not currently feasible for them to do so for up to a week, are there sensible steps that can be taken now to ensure that they can do so for a few days, at least?
2. Options for alternative premises include adaptation of all or part of a community building for office use. Where feasible the the Proper Officer, RFO, Support Service Executive and Finance Assistant should be co-located, with the order of preference of location being The Pepperpot, Oglethorpe Hall, Ockford & Aarons Hill Hub. The Operations & Compliance Officer is to be located at the Eashing Cemetery Workshops with the Communications & Community continuing with remote working. If the loss also affects the Godalming Museum, Museum staff are to relocate as identified in the Museum Business Continuity & Recovery Plan.
3. If required, engage the Council's IT support contractors at an early stage to enable re-establishment of connectivity at staff's alternative workstations.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS – LOSS OF COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

1. Repair or reinstatement should be arranged as expeditiously as possible, in conjunction with insurers where appropriate.
2. All customers with bookings in the affected building should be included in the list of stakeholders for immediate contact, even if the booking is beyond the expected period of interruption.
3. Assistance should be offered to affected customers to secure alternative facilities in Council buildings or elsewhere.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS – LOSS OF BROADWATER YOUTH & COMMUNITY CENTRE

1. Actions relating to loss of other community building should be followed as well as the specific actions relating to the youth service.
2. Youth Service staff are, in the first instance, to relocate and establish themselves at an appropriate location as informed by either the PO or Operations & Compliance Officer.
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3. Head of Youth Service, supported by the Youth Service Manager and Youth Support staff are to establish an initial program of activities based on use of available mobile facilities & the Ockford & Aarons Hill Hub.
4. Once the extent and duration of the of loss of Broadwater Youth & Community Centre is known, the Youth Support Committee is to establish proposals for Council to consider for stable alternative provision.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS – LOSS OF KEY PERSONNEL

1. On the loss of the PO, the Chair of Staffing is to contact a locum service provider to arrange suitable cover until such time as the situation is recovered. If required, SALC/NALC should be contacted for advice including on calling an Extra-ordinary meeting of the Council to gain authority to appoint a Locum PO
2. On the loss of the RFO, the PO should contact the Chair and Leader of the Council to establish a plan of action that could include the appointment of a Locum RFO,

3. Depending on which loss is being managed, the senior officer available and the Chair of Staffing should review the Job Description of the position of concern to identify which aspects can be assigned to other staff, and the adjustments that might be necessary to allow for this. These might include:
 - delegation of aspects of their normal role to others;
 - additional training to enable this to happen, especially where this might be an aide to career development;
 - identify aspects of activity that could be suspended altogether or scaled back for the duration.

APPENDICES

The secure master copy of the BCP should contain appendices with the details listed below. PO and Operations & Compliance Officer must ensure that they have remote access to these details.

- staff phone numbers and private emails addresses;
- elected Member phone numbers and private email addresses, albeit that the initial communication requirement envisages that political group leaders will be responsible for cascading information to their peers;
- entry access codes and alarm codes for all buildings;
- 24/7 contact details for insurers – for use in the event of a major loss;
- office contact details for insurance broker and insurers;
- contact details for all IT service providers;
- details of any pre-planning as outlined in the BCP, including contact details for any potential service providers identified;
- remote access of standard operating procedures and emergency operating procedures