

WHITCHURCH TOWN COUNCIL

CORPORATE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

Introduction

The Council is a major business in the Town, and as part of its Chamber Assure Quality Management System, must ensure that it can recover quickly from a disaster which affects its ability to deliver services and continue to function as far as is reasonably practicable in the meantime.

The Council's Business Plan is produced annually and includes an assessment of business risks and actions to lower identified risks. This Plan has been developed to compliment the overall risk arrangements, help maintain critical services during and after any major disruption and promote recovery.

The Council is also the most accessible tier of local government and community leader, and as such would have a key role in helping the Town deal with and recover from a major emergency. The statutory responsibility under the civil contingencies Act 2004 to prepare a Major Emergency Plan lies with Shropshire Council in conjunction with various other agencies, including the emergency services. The Town Council will support the principal authority in implementing their Major Emergency Plan and make its resources available to them.

Organisation

Council have overall responsibility for both disaster recovery and emergency planning, but have delegated all powers in both cases of civil emergency and other cases of urgency to the Town Clerk in consultation with two of: The Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman of Finance & Strategy Committee, subject to reporting to the next council meeting.

The Community and Environment Committee has the responsibility for working with the principal authority in preparing and implementing Major Emergency Plans.

Finance & Policy Committee is responsible for the overall management and control of the Council's finances.

As part of the Chamber Assure System, there are Operating Procedures on both Disaster Recovery and Emergency Planning.

Business Continuity Plan

Responsibility for maintaining services is primarily the responsibility of the relevant section manager, with overall responsibility lying with the Town Clerk.

The Business Continuity Plan identifies the critical service areas and details actions to be taken to continue or recover delivery of the services within identified timescales,

Priority 1. (0-24hours), Priority 2. (3 days) and Priority 3. (14 days).

Each member of staff will have a list of contract details of members, other staff and key consultants. On discovering or being advised of a disaster which might affect business continuity or a major civil emergency, the officer or member of staff will contact the Town Clerk or most senior officer available.

The most senior officer will then:-

- Ensure all members of staff are contacted, advised of the situation and either put on standby or advised of the action required.
- Convene any necessary meetings of staff and or Members
- Consider staff welfare issues and take necessary action
- Deploy staff in non-critical service areas as required.
- Advise statutory authorities (e.g. emergency services, HSE etc) and insurance company as necessary.
- Advise 3 named councillors and other committee chairmen
- Advise other members by cascade system/e-mail.
- Keep staff informed.
- Invoke process of determining loss or damage, and minimising it.

Disaster Recovery-Specific losses

1. Early tasks of the Town Clerk, after damage has been assessed, will be:
 - Determine any short term training needs for re-deployment
 - Request Consultant to assess any additional health and safety risks and actions to be taken.
 - Keep a log of actions taken by all staff.
 - Issue any immediate press statements deemed necessary.

Total or partial loss of the Civic Centre through fire or other disaster would extinguish the hub of the organisation as well as losing a key facility for the Town.

- a. Notify insurance and any statutory authorities (e.g. HSE) **Priority 1**
- b. See 3. below for IT recovery **Priority 1**
- c. Establish Virtual office with staff working from home **Priority 1**
- d. Establish temporary office and telephone and advise public & stakeholders (most likely Council Offices or Heritage Centre) **Priority 2**
- e. Salvage any physical records/files and make list of actions with priorities **Priority 2**
- f. Advise clients that facility is unavailable **Priority 2**
- g. Advise Bank & ensure key banking services are protected. **Priority 1**
- h. Request support from principal council & other partners **Priority 1**
- i. Re-establish Council Meetings **Priority 2**
- j. Re-establish committee meetings **Priority 3**
- k. Prioritise service recovery actions **Priority 2**
- l. Assess financial loss, income etc for insurance claim **Priority 3**
- m. Issue press release **Priority 1**
- n. Re-establish internal key financial procedures **Priority 2**, other financial procedures **Priority 3**
- o. Assess any contractual obligations **Priority 2**
- p. Can alternative venues be found for hirers? **Priority 3**

Loss if IT System either as part of Town Hall damages, system crash or theft.

- a. Notify insurance, police etc **Priority 1**
- b. Contact support contractors to get systems operational & provide alternative hardware **Priority 2**
- c. Re-locate back up tapes **Priority 1**
- d. Take copy from Consultant's lap top and memory sticks **Priority 3**
- e. If theft, consider potential security issues such as bank details & confidential information **Priority 1**
- f. If necessary get latest Omega information from RBS accountant **Priority 3**

- g. Advise clients and stakeholders of loss of service/information **Priority 3.**

Damage to Park or other Amenity Area

- a. Secure Park or part of and advise Allotment Association **Priority 1**
- b. Advise statutory authorities **Priority 1**
- c. Assess damage, and advise insurance **Priority 2**
- d. Prepare recovery programme **Priority 3**

Loss of Handyman Service

- a. Advise Public **Priority 3**
- b. Not a statutory service and **Priority 3** service to reinstate unless civil emergency, then **Priority 1**
- c. Assess what needs to be done to re-establish service e.g. vehicles, personnel **Priority 1**
- d. Advise principal authority **Priority 3**
- e. Prepare recovery programme **Priority 3**

Loss of key personnel

- a. Assess implications to services. **Priority 1**
- b. Consider succession planning, either permanent or temporary. **Priority 1**
- c. Contact other agencies who can provide personnel if a priority. **Priority 2**
- d. Use consultancy **Priority 3**
- e. Look at permanent alternatives if necessary **Priority 3**

Loss of Investment Money

- a. Quantify loss & understand cause **Priority 1**
- b. Take any immediate action to minimise loss. **Priority 1**
- c. Assess implications on services for remainder of year. **Priority 2**
- d. Review investment Policy **Priority 3**
- e. Establish likely protection from Government, principal council, bank or insurer **Priority 3**
- f. Take action to adjust costs & make provision for any necessary loan/ change of priorities **Priority 3**

Major Civil Emergency

1. Shropshire Council have a statutory responsibility under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to prepare a Major Emergency Plan which sets out how it will, in conjunction with various other agencies, including emergency services, respond to major and other serious civil incidents. At the time of an incident, the principal Council acts in support of the emergency services, and aims wherever possible to lessen the effects on the people, property and the environment, and to assist with the restoration of normality. It would be the lead organisation for the recovery stage.
2. The Town Council do not have such a duty but have resolved to support the principal Council by identifying resources which they can deploy if necessary during an incident, which may range from a minor, locally contained incident to a major emergency crossing the Shropshire boundary.

3. The Town Council's resources and contact details are to be included on the Major Emergency Plan. Its role would vary depending on the scale and nature of the incident, but may include:-
 - Local town control of certain operations, or provision of a local emergency control.
 - Use of the Civic Centre as a rest centre
 - Staff to help man the local DOSEC if a shift system became necessary.
 - Use of staff already trained in Emergency Planning.
 - Help with Public Relations and keeping local councillors informed.
 - Use of Facilities staff, vehicles and equipment to supplement other resources.
 - Help in coordinating the use of volunteers & voluntary organisations.
4. Each member of staff will have a list of contract details of members, other staff and key consultants. On discovering or being advised of a civil a major civil emergency, the officer (or member) will contact the Town Clerk or most senior officer available.

The most senior officer will then carry out the role in Business Continuity Plan above and:-

- Make contact with principal council to offer help and await instructions. Advise them whether operating from office or somewhere else.
5. Elected Members have an important role in keeping local communities informed, representing their views and concerns back to statutory authorities and helping to keep calm. Some may volunteer for practical roles.

Flood Incident Response Plan

1. The Town Council receive adverse weather warnings from Shropshire Council by e-mail. The Environmental Agency has a system of automatically generating flood warnings. Reactions to warnings are again a multi-agency response.
2. The Town Council is best able to help support the Flood Incident Response Plan by making the principal Council aware of its resources and contacts, so that it can be requested to help at times of flooding or potential flooding. As in the case of other aspects of Emergency Planning, it is important for the Town Council to work at the request of the principal Council so that responses can be coordinated and properly prioritised.
3. The roles the Town Council would perform include:-
 - Monitoring water courses and known flooding points at times of potential flood.
 - Use of Facilities staff for preventative maintenance or distribution of sandbags.
 - Use of Handymen in case of flooding.
 - Supporting the operation of an emergency centre by providing staff and/or premises.

Major Civil Emergency-Recovery Process

1. It may be necessary following a major civil emergency to work with the principal council in aiding recovery. Shropshire Council may establish a Community Recovery Committee, which is a group drawn from the local community to reflect community concerns, and assist in informing the community. It will most likely assist in Impact Assessment of the affected community. Town Council elected representatives would be included in the Membership.

Its role is non executive. If the disaster was limited to the Town, Whitchurch Town Council and volunteers may be asked to play this role of engaging with the community in the recovery process.

An important role would be engaging with the Business Community and taking their concerns to the principal council's main Recovery Coordinating Group.

2. Elected Members, as community leaders again have an important role to play in assisting the recovery process:
 - A focus for community concerns
 - Identifying problems and vulnerabilities of their community
 - knowledge of local personalities and resources
 - Enhancing local community liaison
 - Visiting people affected and giving reassurance
 - Consultation on re-builds or modernisation
 - Assisting with the media in getting messages to the community (following established policy guidelines)
 - Assisting with VIP visits
 - Liaising with elected representatives (Shropshire Councillors, MP, MEP)

In the worse circumstances, recovery may take months or even years and staff will need to support councillors in these roles as a priority duty.

3. Council will need not only to help with damage assessment but use local knowledge to draw up a Recovery Action Plan and to give each action a priority rating of Essential; Important or Desirable. This will need to be done with the myriad of partners who will be involved in the recovery process.

Testing & Reviewing the Plan

The Council will periodically test the Plan through scenario based exercises and will review its effectiveness.