

Title of Report	CORPORATE BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY	
Presented by	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Infrastructure Portfolio Holder PH Briefed <input type="checkbox" value="Y"/>	
Background Papers	None	Public Report: Yes
		Key Decision: No
Financial Implications	The policy itself has no direct financial implications. Any costs associated with training, exercises, or improvements identified through testing will be managed within existing resources unless reported otherwise.	
	Signed off by the Acting Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	The policy supports the Council's statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 by strengthening preparedness, resilience, and continuity of critical services.	
	Signed off by the Interim Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	The policy has minimal direct staffing implications, however, there may be a need for periodic training, awareness, and contingency planning to ensure staff are prepared to respond effectively during disruptions. From a corporate perspective, implementing the policy strengthens organisational resilience, supports statutory and regulatory compliance, and helps safeguard service delivery, reputation, and stakeholder confidence in the event of an incident.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	This report seeks Cabinet approval of the Business Continuity Policy at Appendix 1. The policy provides a consistent, Council-wide framework to support resilience, assurance, and continuous improvement. Business continuity management complements, rather than replaces, the Council's statutory role in civil contingencies and emergency planning.	
Reason for Decision	<i>This is a corporate policy which requires Cabinet approval in accordance with the Constitution.</i>	

Recommendations	THAT CABINET: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) APPROVES THE ADOPTION OF THE COUNCIL'S BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY, ATTACHED AT APPENDIX 1. 2) NOTES THAT SERVICE-LEVEL BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANS ARE ALREADY IN PLACE, AND THAT THE POLICY PROVIDES ORGANISATION-WIDE GOVERNANCE, CONSISTENCY, AND BEST-PRACTICE ASSURANCE. 3) NOTES THAT BUSINESS CONTINUITY TRAINING FOR SENIOR LEADERSHIP IS BEING PROCURED TO STRENGTHEN STRATEGIC READINESS AND RESPONSE. 4) DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE TO MAKE ANY NECESSARY MINOR, NON-MATERIAL AMENDMENTS TO THE POLICY PRIOR TO PUBLICATION.
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1.0 BACKGROUND

Business Continuity Management (BCM) describes how the Council prepares for, responds to, and recovers from disruptions that affect the delivery of services, such as loss of premises, ICT failure, supplier disruption, or severe staff shortages.

While service-level Business Continuity Plans (BCPs) are already in place, the absence of a single corporate policy means there is no formal organisation-wide standard covering governance, accountability, training, testing, and review. Introducing a corporate policy aligns the Council with recognised good practice, strengthens assurance, and supports consistent implementation across all directorates, including commissioned and outsourced services.

The Council's BCM arrangements sit alongside and in support of its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Business continuity focuses on maintaining and restoring critical services and internal operations, enabling the Council to continue to function effectively while also contributing to wider emergency response arrangements led through civil contingencies and emergency planning.

2.0 PROPOSED POLICY – KEY POINTS

The Business Continuity Policy (Appendix 1):

- Sets out a clear organisational framework for business continuity management.
- Defines roles and responsibilities for Members, Senior Leadership, Directors, managers, staff, and the Business Continuity Lead.
- Establishes expectations for service-level BCPs, including business impact assessment and alignment with incident management and ICT disaster recovery.

- Covers supply-chain resilience, including commissioned and outsourced services.
- Commits the Council to training, exercising, and testing of plans.
- Introduces consistent monitoring and review of arrangements to provide assurance and drive improvement.

3.0 EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

Service Business Continuity Plans are already in place and are used operationally when disruptions occur. The proposed policy does not replace these plans; instead, it:

- Consolidates existing practice into a single, approved corporate framework.
- Provides clarity on expectations and accountability.
- Supports consistent quality, review, and testing of plans across the organisation.

4.0 TRAINING AND EMBEDDING

To strengthen strategic capability, business continuity training for Senior Leadership is being procured. This will support leaders to:

- Understand their roles during significant disruption.
- Set recovery priorities for critical services.
- Operate effectively at the interface between incident management, business continuity activation, and wider emergency planning arrangements.

This will be complemented by ongoing awareness, training, and exercising for relevant officers to ensure arrangements are understood and kept up to date.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Subject to approval, the policy will be published and communicated across the organisation. Directors and Heads of Service will remain responsible for maintaining service-level BCPs in line with the policy.

The Policy was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 18 June 2026 and a verbal update will be given as to any comments provided by the Committee.

The Business Continuity Policy will be reviewed on a three yearly cycle, or earlier where significant organisational or external change occurs.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	- A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	The policy has a positive, indirect safeguarding implication by helping ensure continuity of critical services that support children and adults at risk during disruption.
Equalities/Diversity:	Effective business continuity planning supports fair access to services during disruption, including for vulnerable groups.
Customer Impact:	The policy supports continuity of customer-facing services and communications during disruption, helping residents and service users access information, report issues, and receive support (including alternative contact routes where normal channels are unavailable).
Economic and Social Impact:	By strengthening service resilience, the policy helps minimise disruption that can impact local residents, communities, and businesses (for example, delays to statutory services, advice, or operational responses).
Environment, Climate Change and Zero Carbon:	N/A
Consultation/Community/Tenant Engagement:	N/A
Risks:	Adoption of the policy reduces the likelihood and impact of service disruption. Risks relating to inconsistent coverage or plan quality will be managed through monitoring, review, and training.
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