



BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

WRITTEN BY:

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REVIEW DATE:

May 2024

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Business Continuity Plan is intended to provide an overall framework for managing the repercussions of a serious incident, which may cause disruption to the business activities undertaken by the Council.
- 1.2 This document is not intended to be a step-by-step guide, but to provide an overview that guides decision-making.
- 1.3 This document will be reviewed annually by the Council or in the event of new information.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

2.1 The objectives of the Business Continuity Plan are:

- To help ensure the continuity of service provision in the event of a business disruption.
- To save time and reduce any initial confusion.
- To preserve the Council's image and reputation.
- To ensure control is established as quickly as possible.
- To minimise the social, political, legal and financial consequences of the incident.

WHAT SERVICES MAY BE AFFECTED?

3.1 The Council provides services to the residents of Biddulph and raises funds for the provision of those services through the precept, charges/ fees and grants. The services include:

- Information sited at the Town Hall
- Provision of markets
- Provision of Council events
- Room hire at the Town Hall
- Maintenance of the Biddulph Grange Country Park Visitor Centre
- Maintenance of the Wharf Road bus hub and public conveniences
- Management of the burial grounds

3.2 The Council also provides administrative services including:

- Review of Planning applications
- Policy and Financial Management
- Public Relations / Information provision
- Civic and Democratic assistance
- Community Event organisation and promotion
- Neighbourhood Plan development
- Business support

3.3 The residents and businesses of the town are represented by 22 Councillors. There are committees which meet on a cyclical basis plus Full Council which meets ten times a year. All meetings are held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

DISRUPTION SCENARIOS

4.1 The approach to developing a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is firstly to identify different disruption scenarios and then to plan how to deal with them. To assess these issues and ensure the BCP covers them, the staff team have completed a Business Impact Analysis (BIA) exercise using the document in Appendix A. The purpose of this exercise was to consider the necessary action that should be considered to enable the recovery of services or system.

4.2 A number of incidents can affect council operations, for example fire, flood, server failure, acts of terrorism, pandemics or prolonged loss of power. Each of these could result in a disruption. The disruptions have been grouped into three categories:

- I. Council buildings – denial of access to the building or loss of the building
- II. Failure of IT or telephone system
- III. Unavailability of key or sufficient staff (e.g., to attend burials)

These issues are dealt with in more detail below.

4.3 In planning an approach to dealing with each of these scenarios, there are a number of key priorities:

- Staff safety and welfare
- Customer/ User safety
- Recovery of essential services
- Legal compliance
- Minimisation of financial loss
- Recovery of all other activities

COUNCIL BUILDINGS

5.1 Following a business disruption or incident, the Town Hall (or other venue) could be inaccessible for two main reasons:

- 1) Denial of access, meaning that though systems and services are unaffected, staff are unable to gain access to the building. This could happen following incidents such as a security threat, environmental contamination, or a serious event nearby.
- 2) Fire, flood or structural damage could damage or destroy all or part of the building. This could also affect systems.

5.2 In the event that the Town Hall is not available, staff will be relocated to an alternative building. If both the Town Hall and the Visitor Centre are unavailable for use, then another building will need to be sourced to enable short term relocation for staff and council services. It is envisaged that this will be a town centre community building with internet connectivity. However, other buildings could include the Biddulph Youth and Community Zone, School Halls, Church Halls or Village Halls.

5.3 Some staff will not be relocated and will be expected to work from home.

FAILURE OF CRITICAL IT SERVICE OR TELEPHONE SYSTEM

- 6.1 Some or all critical IT or the telephone systems could be unavailable; for example, a server failure, a cyber attack, a network problem or the cutting of a communications cable supplying the Town Hall.
- 6.2 The Council must be able to respond and recover from a disruption to its information and communications technology, i.e., if relocation is required, additional IT and telephones would be required.
- 6.3 The Council must ensure that regular proper back-ups of our IT software are undertaken, and that this information can be restored with immediate effect if required. Since February 2021, back-ups are managed off-site and storage is cloud-based. This should enable the team to relocate at short notice, with minimum disruption. If the team are unable to access laptops and phones, temporary devices may be sourced from the IT provider.

UNAVAILABILITY OF KEY OR SUFFICIENT STAFF

- 7.1 Staff that support business critical activities could become unavailable. Examples are personal injuries to key members of staff, or flu pandemic affecting a group of staff. Key people are those identified as being critical to the completion of key activities.
- 7.2 The Biddulph Town Council staff team is relatively small, with each individual carrying out a specific role. The Chief Officer is a key member of staff, but is supported by caretaking staff and a team within the office. For the purpose of this document, business critical activities are felt to be management of buildings, liaison with elected representatives and administration of burials. A number of members of the team are trained to complete each of these activities, and 'How To' folders ensure that internal processes are documented.
- 7.3 For longer periods of time, it may be necessary to enlist the support of a Locum Town Clerk. The Town Council is a member of the Society for Local Council Clerks, which offers this service: <https://www.slcc.co.uk/locum-interim-services/>

DEFINITIONS OF INCIDENTS

8.1 Three levels of incident have been defined; the Chief Officer will liaise with the Mayor to determine what level of incident has taken place. This will then determine whether the incident can be managed through the Business Continuity Plan, or whether the Emergency Plan should be considered.

Level 1 Incident: Local Incident:

Defined as a local incident that is not an emergency and does not cause serious physical threat to people or property. Results are likely to be limited disruption to services.

Level 2 Incident: Minor Incident:

Defined as an incident that could pose an actual threat to people or property, but does not seriously affect the overall functioning of the Town Council. This might include the isolation or evacuation of part of the Town Hall with the assistance of the Emergency Services.

Level 3 Incident: Major Incident:

Defined as an incident causing significant disruption to Town Hall operations. It may affect the entire building, and staff, with the potential to escalate and involve external Emergency Services who would probably take operational control of the incident which would necessitate the invocation of the Emergency Plan.

INSURANCE

The Chief Officer will be responsible for contacting the Council's insurance company, to provide details regarding the incident and the level of the losses. The Town Council is not responsible for the Buildings Cover for the buildings it manages, but has sufficient levels of contents insurance and cover for other activities.

CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS

Below is a list of actions, which may be considered in response to incidents that affect Council services, these will be completed by or delegated by the Chief Officer:

Staffing

1. Ensure all members of staff are contacted, advised of the situation and either put on standby or advised of the action required.
2. Convene any necessary meetings of staff.
3. Consider staff welfare issues and take necessary action.
4. Deploy staff in non-critical service areas as required.
5. Keep staff informed.
6. Determine any short-term training needs for re-deployment.
7. Keep a log of actions taken by all staff.

Members

1. Advise members by email.
2. Convene any necessary meetings of Members.

Other actions

1. Advise statutory authorities (e.g. emergency services, HSE etc.) and insurance company as necessary.
2. Request support from principal council & other partners.
3. Issue any immediate press statements deemed necessary.
4. Advise clients that facilities are unavailable.
5. Secure any areas affected and advise users (e.g., at Burial Grounds or allotment sites)
6. Identifying any problems and vulnerabilities of the community.

Detailed recovery plans for each service area form part of the Business Impact Analysis.

APPENDIX A

Business Impact Analysis:

1. Contact Information

Name:	
Position:	
Section:	
Tel:	
Email:	

2. Service Activity

2.1 - Description of Critical Service Activity

2.1.1 - Description of Key Functions and Outputs:

2.2 - Resources normally utilised within the provision of the service activity:

	Location	Resources		Service Users
		Office	Field	

2.2- Impacts on Service activity and/or Stakeholders:

2.3.1 - Financial Impacts:

Stage:	Timeframe:	Impact:

2.3.2 - Non-financial Impacts:

Stage:	Timeframe:	Impact:

2.4 - Recovery Objectives:

Priorities have been determined against the following categories:

Category 1 (C1) – Resume output within ***ONE HOUR***

Category 2 (C2) – Resume output within ***THREE HOURS***

Category 3 (C3) – Resume output within ***ONE DAY***

Category 4 (C4) – Resume output within ***ONE WEEK***

Category 5 (C5) – Resume output within ***ONE MONTH***

	Stage:	Hours/Days following Disruption:	CATEGORY:

2.5 - Resource Requirements:

C1 - Total requirements within: *ONE HOUR*

Stages of process / Functions:	
Office Staff:	
Accommodation:	
Systems (IT & IS):	
Hard Data:	
Other Resources:	

C2 - Total requirements within: THREE HOURS

Stage of process / Function:	
Staff:	
Accommodation:	
Systems (IT & IS):	
Hard Data:	
Other Resources:	

C3 - Total requirements within: ONE DAY

Stage of process / Function:	
Staff:	
Accommodation:	

Systems (IT & IS):	
Hard Data:	
Other Resources:	

C4 - Total requirements within: ONE WEEK

Stage of process / Function:	
Staff:	
Accommodation:	
Systems (IT & IS):	
Hard Data:	
Other Resources:	

C5 - Total requirements within: ONE MONTH

Stage of process / Function:	
Staff:	
Accommodation:	
Systems (IT & IS):	
Hard Data:	
Other Resources:	