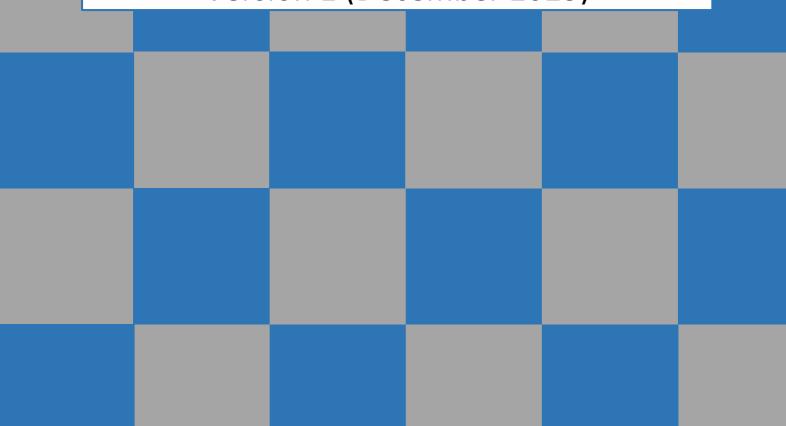# Staffordshire County Council

Business Continuity Management Policy

Version 1 (December 2023)

Version Control

Version	Author	Details	Date
V0 – V05	Karen Poyser (CCU) & Chris Ebberley	Draft Copies prior to formal approval	Jan - Sept 2023
V06	Karen Poyser (CCU) & Chris Ebberley	EPRWG feedback	28/08/2023
V07	Karen Poyser (CCU) & Chris Ebberley	CGWG feedback	23/10/2023
V08	Karen Poyser (CCU) & Chris Ebberley	SLT feedback	27/11/2023
1	Karen Poyser (CCU) & Chris Ebberley	Cabinet approval	

Distribution list

This plan will be distributed to members of the Emergency Planning and Resilience Working Group. Emergency Planning and Resilience Strategic Group, Staffordshire County Council Senior Leadership Team, Staffordshire County Council Corporate Governance Working Group, and Staffordshire County Council Elected Members.

A copy of this plan will be stored securely on Resilience Direct, with a paper copy stored within the SP1 Incident Control Centre.
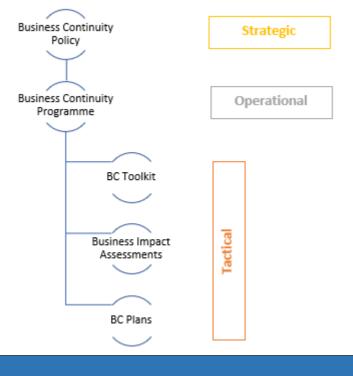
Enquiries and updates

Any enquiries or updates in reference to these arrangements should be directed to the Civil Contingencies Unit at ccu@staffordshirefire.gov.uk.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Staffordshire County Council (SCC) is an Upper Tier Local Authority and is classed as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 20041. Category 1 responders are those organisations at the core of emergency response (e.g. emergency services, local authorities, NHS bodies). Category 1 responders are subject to the full set of civil protection duties as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Staffordshire County Council therefore has wide ranging obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act, and as such has statutory requirements to ensure that certain arrangements, planning and policies are in place.

This policy sits at the highest level of documents as shown below, and outlines the Council's approach to ensuring it has robust Business Continuity Management in place to ensure the continued Day to Day running of critical services in the event of an incident that affects the Council's Business as Usual operations.

2.0 Policy

2.1 Policy

2.1.1 Business Continuity is a key contributor to effective corporate governance and helps interested parties to ask searching questions around:

a. Resilience of the council's business and operating model

b. Key products and services

c. Key dependencies including priority assets and processes

d. How the council would respond to a loss or threat to any of these

e. Main threats today and in the future

f. Evidence that continuity pans work in practice

2.1.2 Staffordshire County Council (SCC) policy is to maintain the continuity of its activities, systems, facilities and processes and where these are disrupted by any event, to enable it to return to 'normal' operations as soon as possible. Taking full account of the impact of any delay on SCC's quality of service, reputation and finances.

2.1.3 This policy is intended to ensure:

a. The concept of Business continuity, policy and approach are understood by all employees and stakeholders.

b. Internal and external dependencies on customers, suppliers, partners and resource implications are identified.

c. Service level plans are then consolidated into a directorate plan (where appropriate), which in turn informs the whole council plan.

d. All plans are developed to ensure recovery continuity is assured to an acceptable level in the event of an interruption to services.

e. Plans are regularly reviewed and systematically tested.

f. A programme of training and communication is put in place.

3.0 Objectives

The objectives of business continuity planning are to ensure that SCC:

a) Understands its prioritised activities and maintains the capability to resume operations within agreed timeframes, following the deployment of a contingency planning response.

b) Increases resilience by protecting prioritised assets and data (electronic and otherwise) through a co-ordinated approach to management and recovery.

c) Minimises impacts using a focused, well-managed response activity.

4.0 Scope

All SCC activities and services wherever conducted, must comply with the requirements of this Policy.

5.0 Requirements

5.1 SCC requirements:

a) Senior Leadership Team (SLT) as top management hold the responsibility to recover generic facilities, corporately managed systems and central data security but each team leader, service manager and Assistant Director hold the responsibility to ensure that plans are maintained, updated and validated in conjunction with each other to ensure no information is lost as part of each consolidation exercise and;

b) The maintenance of an Incident Response Guide, with Response and Recovery Guides to guide the team on the recovery from major incidents which are wider than operational disruption, including call out arrangements and operational requirements. This Business Continuity Policy & Business Continuity Toolkit have been developed to support the writing of Business Continuity Plans, with a plan being subject to testing at least bi-annually;

c) SLT, Wider Leadership Team (WLT) and Emergency Planning & Resilience Working Group (EPRWG) to support service areas in carrying out a business impact analysis (BIA) and setting parameters on acceptable recovery times for each, including mitigating actions required. Directorate teams are responsible for completing a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) in response to their BIA.

d) Registers, BCP's and BIA's must be reviewed annually by each team leader, service manager and Assistant Director or following invocation of a plan so as to implement any lessons learnt.

In compiling plans due consideration must be given to:

a) Taking all reasonable measures to prevent and avoid any disruption to normal operations.

b) Including, where relevant, continuity planning and resilience implications in all process, project, change and system developments.

c) Making advance arrangements for the recovery of infrastructure components (e.g. accommodation, transport, telecommunications, equipment and supplies).

d) Making advance arrangements to re-locate or re-organise operations to allow critical processes to continue.

e) Providing resilience for information systems and data, or alternative ways of working in the event of their failure. All new systems and processes to be in line with Policy.

f) Protecting staff, members, visitor and third-party health, safety and wellbeing during and following an incident.

g) Ensuring the effectiveness of plans and recovery arrangements through robust and regular testing and training. Consider at what point recovery arrangements need to be implemented.

h) Updating plans following significant changes to contingency planning requirements. Such changes may occur as part of organisation structural change, planning and management.

i) Ensure resilience by using alternative communication channels such as phone, email and social media to contact staff, learners and stakeholders.

j) Use of cloud-based business critical systems ensures resilience by limiting down time of systems and accessed anyway with Wi-Fi or 4G/5G tethering.

k) ICT will support the recovery time objectives and ensure they are streamlined across the organisation in accordance with ICT Business objectives with any hosted systems

l) All commissioned and contracted services must be considered as part of a team level BIA to ensure that there is supply chain resilience with the organisation. The responsibility for this sits with relevant service manager and Assistant Director.

6.0 Approval and review

Business Continuity Policy approved by Cabinet and will be update every 2 years, unless there is reason for an update (e.g. Change in Legislation/ Guidance).

7.0 Business Continuity documents

- Business Continuity Plans
- Business Continuity Toolkit
- Business Impact Assessments
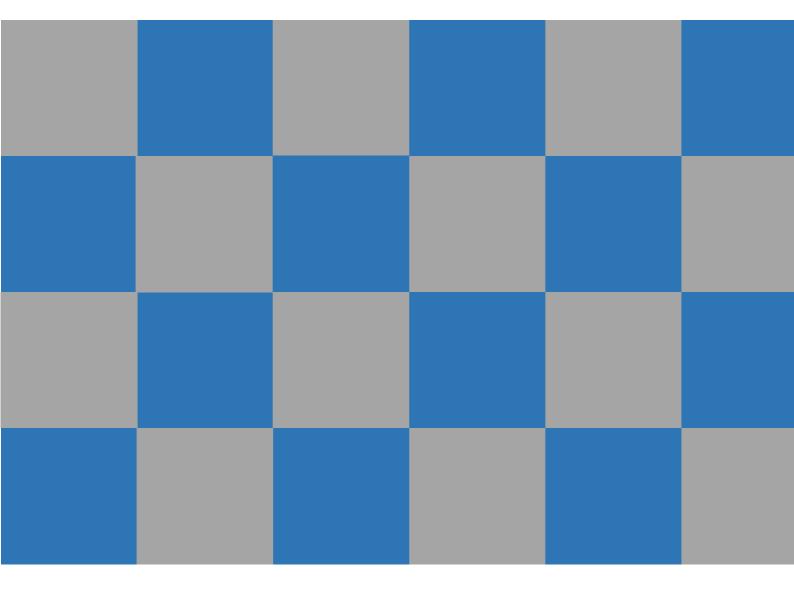
8.0 Relevant standards and indicators

8.1 UK Resilience Standards: 9, 10

8.2 Indicators of Good Practice: 1C, 1E, 3B

8.3 British and International Standards: ISO 22313, 22317, 22301, 22318, 22331,22332, 22361, 31000 BS65000, BS 11200, BS 31000

8.4 Relevant Groups:

a) Local Resilience Forum
b) Risk Assessment Working Group
c) Emergency Planning and Resilience Strategic Group
d) Emergency Planning and Resilience Working Group
e) Business Continuity sub-group