



Internal Audit Report

FINAL

Chief Executive's
Departmental Business Continuity Planning

April 2010

1 INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared as a result of an Internal Audit Review of Departmental Business Continuity Planning as part of the 2009/10 Internal Audit programme.

2 AUDIT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

Objectives

The objective of the audit assignment was to assess and report on what progress has been made by departments in the implementation of Business Continuity Planning within services.

The main areas covered in this audit were to establish:

1. How services are developing the business continuity planning framework;
2. What testing has been undertaken; and
3. What has been learnt from the testing and whether this has been reported to the departmental management teams (DMTs) and Risk Management Group (RMG).

Scope

The work involved contact and discussion with the officers listed below. The Departments involved in this audit and main contacts were:

Corporate Services

- Governance & Risk Manager

Community Services

- Health, Safety & Training Manager (RMG representative)

Development Services

- Performance and Business Manager (RMG representative)

Operational Services

- Central Services Manager (RMG representative)

Initial discussions were held with the Governance & Risk Manager to discuss the scope of the audit and to identify the appropriate staff to be contacted and documents to be reviewed in order to assess what progress has been made

by departments in the implementation of Business Continuity, within services and subsequent plan testing. Interviews and desktop exercises were carried out with the appropriate staff using the relevant documents and covered the following areas; development of departmental business continuity planning, testing of departmental recovery plans (DRPs) and the lessons learnt from such testing.

It was decided that the audit would concentrate on the following departments; Community Services, Operational Services and Development Services. A sample of meeting agenda and minutes from Community Services departmental loss control group (LCG), the corporate Risk Management Group (RMG) and Operational Services departmental management team (DMT) meetings were reviewed to assess the level of discussion which took place regarding departmental business continuity planning.

Discussions were held with staff involved in the business continuity planning process from the following services; Community, Development and Operational. All three staff interviewed are familiar with business continuity planning and are members of the corporate RMG.

The discussions focused on what arrangements were in place on a departmental level for business continuity planning, in particular the extent to which business continuity planning has been developed, testing of Departmental Recovery Plans (DRPs) and the lessons learnt from such testing. As Development Services was the only department throughout the Council which has actually had to invoke one of their DRPs, discussion focused on the invocation of their plans and subsequently the lessons learnt from this.

A desktop exercise was carried out to review a sample of DRPs from across the Council to determine the level of consistency across the departments and the extent of detail behind each plan.

3 MAIN FINDINGS

Over recent years the Council has developed its business continuity planning across the services. A combination of the identification and control of activities identified by the services as critical and the development of DRPs have ensured the Council has made provision for business continuity planning on a departmental level. Nonetheless, there are areas for improvement in both the review and testing of DRPs and this must be addressed.

4 AUDIT OPINION

Based on the findings we can conclude that departmental business continuity planning has developed well over recent years throughout the Council. Each service has gone through a process which involved the identification and

prioritisation of critical activities and the development and implementation of departmental recovery plans (DRPs).

Departmental BCP is being discussed by the RMG and the various versions of the departmental Loss Control Groups on a regular basis. Where issues arise on a corporate level at the RMG meeting, this is fed through to departments through each departmental representative on the RMG and vice versa from departmental level to corporate level through each service's RMG representative.

However, Internal Audit found that there did not appear to be formal controls in place to ensure DRPs are being reviewed and updated as initially agreed at the RMG meeting of April 2009.

Initial discussions with the Governance & Risk Manager identified testing of DRPs had not taken place across the departments. However, BCP testing has occurred on a corporate level, with 2 scenario exercises having been carried out to date to test the robustness of the Council's Business Continuity Plan.

This was an initial review carried out over a relatively short period of time. It identified a number of areas of good practice and identified areas where further improvements can be made. In the view that departments are developing their approach to business continuity planning we have produced an action plan based on our findings from this initial review. It is required that management take account of this report.

DRPs are due to be reviewed by the end of June 2010. In light of this and the current organisational restructure it is intended to carry out further work as part of the 2010/2011 Audit plan.

5 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to staff within Governance & Risk, Community Services, Development Services and Operational Services for their co-operation and assistance during the Audit and the preparation of the report and action plan.

Argyll & Bute Council's Internal Audit section has prepared this report. Our work was limited to the objectives in section 2. We cannot be held responsible or liable if information material to our task was withheld or concealed from us, or misrepresented to us.

This report is private and confidential for the Council's information only and is solely for use in the provision of an internal audit service to the Council. The report is not to be copied, quoted or referred to, in whole or in part, without prior written consent.

APPENDIX 2 ACTION PLAN

No.	FINDINGS	PRIORITY	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	IMPLEMENTATION DATE
1	The accuracy of information held within DRPs is not being reviewed in a periodic manner.	High	The content of DRPs should be reviewed and amended on a 6 monthly basis as agreed by the RMG. The Governance & Risk Manager to issue instructions to RMG that this be carried out.	Governance & Risk Manager	June 2010
2	No formal testing of the DRPs has been carried out.	High	The Governance & Risk Manager should undertake a programme of testing across the Council with assistance from departmental representatives on the RMG.	Governance & Risk Manager	August 2010