



SHREWSBURY TOWN COUNCIL

Business Continuity Plan

INTRODUCTION

Experience indicates that the probability that disasters might occur is extremely remote. However, due to the present dependency on such matters as technology, staff, equipment, geographic locations, interim strategies and guidelines need to be developed to ensure that critical council services can continue to operate until full capability is restored.

This plan is primarily designed to address a localised disaster specific to the functioning of Shrewsbury Town Council or the community welfare attached to the running of those services.

Should a disaster have a wider impact beyond that of the Town Council, reference shall be made to the Emergency Planning Unit at Shropshire Council.

DEFINITION OF A DISASTER

For the purpose of this exercise a disaster is defined as ***“an incident of such severity and magnitude that emergency steps are needed to stay in business.”***

Shrewsbury Town Council has determined that a disaster shall be defined as:

- An unplanned incident;
- Which results in a disruption of normal operations and is expected to last longer than 3 working days; and
- And could have a significant impact on the Town Council’s ability to deliver its services.

The following have been identified as potential hazards/disasters which are likely to have an impact on the Town Council and its service delivery

- Extreme weather including snow and flooding
- Explosion / Fire
- Contamination
- Communications/IT
- Power / Utilities
- Global pandemic
- Arson
- Vandalism
- Disruption to transport networks
- Loss of key suppliers
- Loss of premises
- Staffing Issues

All identified disasters may render the Council vulnerable to the following:

- Loss of communications capability;
- Loss of computer processing capability;
- Loss of primary work space
- Loss of key personnel

Reference should be made to the Town Council's Risk Management Strategy as those risks identified as part of normal service delivery will apply in the event of a disaster.

WHY SHOULD THE TOWN COUNCIL HAVE A BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN?

The aim of the Business Continuity Plan is to:

- Take preventative measures to minimise the likelihood of a disaster;
- Ensure an organised and effective response to an isolated disaster that would render communications, data access and equipment inaccessible or inoperable or normal working locations inaccessible;
- Ensure business continuity for the delivery of Council services dependent on technology, equipment and/or a specific location until full capability is restored.
- Protect the Council's reputation

This shall be achieved by:

- Ensuring that all relevant electronic data and important paper records are duplicated and stored in a secure off-site location for use in recovery;
- Alternative processing guidelines are prepared to support essential council functions during a recovery period;
- An organised plan is prepared that can be used as a reference should a disaster actually occur.
- Identification of the key personnel to be charged with responsibility for full service recovery
- Identification of the necessary resources to restore normal operations
- Development of a maintenance plan for environmental and system changes

The plan must be:

- **Workable** – developed by line managers
- **Cost Effective** – in relation to the probability
- **Flexible** – Same plan for any disaster
- **Easy to maintain** – Keep it simple
- **Deals in Guidelines** – Rather than detailed procedures

WHAT IS A BUSINESS IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

It is necessary to understand what the impact might be to service delivery under worst case conditions of any disaster and to determine at what point the unavailability of the necessary resources to fulfil service delivery would render that service untenable.

A Business Impact Assessment encourages managers to visualise, anticipate problem areas, to document the exposure and to formulate guidelines that will either prevent or minimise the impact of a particular type of disaster.

- What services are performed?
- What services are vital?
- What alternative methods could be used?
- What are the most cost-effective solutions to resume service?

The completion of the Town Council's Business Impact Assessment shall be the responsibility of the Head of Operations as the officer with overall responsibility of the day-to-day delivery of grounds maintenance services. The Office Manager shall provide assistance in determining any impact on the administrative functions of the Town Council.

COUNCIL RESOURCES

In determining the impact of any disaster to the Town Council, it is necessary to consider the various resources available, which are not only utilised during normal service delivery, but would, through possible re-distribution form the basis of any service recovery plan. In preparing these resources to fulfil varying tasks to normal service delivery, it is necessary to consider the following:

People

- The way activities are performed and ensuring the necessary procedure manual is prepared
- Multi-skilling staff
- Separation of skills to avoid concentration risk
- Use of third parties
- Succession Planning
- Knowledge management

Premises

- What alternative premises are available?
- What casual/formal reciprocal arrangements are available with other organisations (E.g. Shropshire Council and neighbouring parish and town councils etc)?
- Will tasks facilitate working remotely or home-working?

Technology/Equipment

- Off-site storage
- Short-term procurement for replacement equipment
- Stand-by facilities
- Preventative maintenance

Digital Information

- Back-up and restoration discs stored off-site

Physical Information

- Essential documents copied and stored in a secure off-site location
- Regular review of the Document Retention Policy
- Retention of documents in accordance with the Document Retention Policy
- Programme of digital archiving

Supplies

- Liaison with Town Council contractors and suppliers
- Arrangements for diverting deliveries
- Sourcing alternative supplies
- Maintaining contingency stocks

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important that business continuity planning becomes embedded into the everyday culture and performance management process of the Town Council. The roles and responsibilities set out below, are designed to ensure that disaster management is managed effectively right across the Town Council and its operations, and responsibility for restoration of service delivery is located in the right place. Those who best know the particular service are those responsible for it. The process must be driven from the top but must also involve employees throughout the organisation.

Elected Members – play a key role in business continuity planning as they need to have an understanding of the impact on their electorate and the Town Council of a potential loss of service delivery. Additionally, there is an expectation that Elected Members will lead and monitor the approach adopted, support any disaster recovery and restoration process and provide the necessary reassurance to the communities they serve. This will include:

- Gaining an understanding of business continuity planning;
- Ensuring that officers develop and implement a corporate approach to business continuity planning;
- Approval of the Business Continuity Plan;

Emergency Response Team - shall be the following key personnel:

- Town Clerk – responsibility for external relations
- Deputy Town Clerk – responsibility for HR matters
- Head of Resources/RFO – responsibility for financial matters
- Head of Operations – responsibility for operational matters
- Office Manager – responsibility for administrative matters

Those officers shall have mobile access to telephone/email at all times and co-ordinate the initial response to a disaster. The various roles of those key personnel is documented below.

Senior Officers - will act as the champions for their areas of specialty, assisting with identifying any impact to service delivery and formulating plans for recovery. As part of their normal functions they will manage risk effectively in their particular service areas or projects and report how threats/vulnerabilities to service delivery and risks have been managed to the Town Clerk. This includes identifying, analysing, prioritising, monitoring and reporting on service risks and any control actions taken.

Employees will play an important role in business continuity planning. As a key resource to the Town Council they may be required to undertake alternative tasks to support the overall operations of the Town Council. They will work to control risks or threats/vulnerabilities to service delivery within their day-to-day jobs, monitor progress and report on job related risks to their line manager.

SPECIFIC ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles & Responsibilities during Normal Operations

Listed below are the tasks and responsibilities necessary to support and maintain an effective ongoing disaster recovery and business continuity plan before a localised disaster occurs.

Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain a copy of the Business Continuity Plan • Arrange for the annual review of the Business Continuity Plan • Maintain details of the Emergency Services and Shropshire Council's Emergency Planning Unit • Investigate reciprocal arrangements with other partners/stakeholders
Deputy Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that staff records are accessible in a number of formats • Maintain Town Council HR policies • Ensure that staff welfare
Head of Resources/RFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the means are access to systems are available to maintain the smooth running of the Town Council • Maintain up-to-date list of Council Contractors & Suppliers • Maintain details of the banking arrangements of the Council • Maintain details of the Councils Insurance arrangements together with necessary contact information
Head of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain up-to-date documentation to support service delivery • Maintain an inventory of all equipment available to support service delivery • Annually review the Council's Business Impact Assessment to maintain details of the minimum resources required to ensure service delivery • Maintain a list of key-holders to access other council locations
Office Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a secure off-site filing system as well as the core filing system maintained at Riggs Hall • Ensure that all relevant files (both electronic and paper) are retained in accordance with the Council's Document Retention Policy • Ensure that all electronic files are consistently backed-up and files for restoration purposes are stored in a secure off-site location • Any valuable paper documents (staffing files, payroll, contracts etc) necessary to the continuity of business are digitally copied, the copies of which are stored in a secure off-site location • Regularly review the contents of the "Battle Box" stored in a secure off-site location • Annually update the Organisational Chart of the Council and Contact List of employees with home & mobile numbers • Maintain the necessary user name and passwords to access the Council's electronic filing system, website and email facilities
Buildings Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain plans of land and buildings utilised by the Town Council as part of its service delivery
Fleet Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain specifications of fleet and equipment

Roles & Responsibilities during Emergency Response

Listed below are the tasks required and responsibilities that (i) must be addressed at the time a specific disaster occurs and (ii) are needed to establish temporary services utilising alternative resources.

Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To determine that the Business Continuity Plan will be activated and initiate the Emergency Response Team • Documents a chronological list of key events surrounding the disaster emergency response • Authorises emergency replacement orders & overtime, in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations • Liaise with the media
Deputy Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that staff records are accessible in a number of formats • Ensure that staff welfare is maintained during disaster recovery • Regularly update employees on activities/developments
Head of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify appropriate personnel • Notify proper authorities/emergency services • Survey Damage/Loss • Determine which areas of service delivery are affected and allocate resources in accordance with the priorities of the Business Impact Assessment
Head of Resources/RFO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee all accounts payable/receivable • Notify Insurance Company • Set up arrangements for paper accounting/ ordering system • Liaise with Council's Contractors & Suppliers
Office Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrieve the Battle Box • Notify IT of any changes/re-directions for IT Infrastructure • Update the Council Website
Buildings Manager & Fleet Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Damage/Loss • Instruct Emergency Contractors

Roles & Responsibilities during Restoration

Involves the steps necessary to restore Council services and functions

Town Clerk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate de-brief following restoration
Head of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate reconstruction & equipment installation
Office Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring contact details have been updated

TESTING THE PLAN

Continual testing of the effectiveness of the Business Continuity Plan is essential to ensure that all staff remain aware of their responsibilities. Additionally it will aid the mutual understanding of the importance of the services delivered by the Town Council and the resources needed to achieve the common goal of business recovery.

REVIEW

Organisations such as the Town Council, constantly evolve and change and recovery plans need to reflect those changes.

- The Town Council's services and methods of delivery change
- People join and leave
- New technology brings different methods of working
- New IT systems differently support council service delivery
- Ongoing training may introduce different methods of working
- Testing plans and procedures may affect service delivery

The Business Continuity Plan shall be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the Town Council's annual Risk Management Review and recommendations for change shall be reported to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

TRAINING

Where appropriate business continuity training will be provided to Elected Members, senior officers and key staff via facilitated workshops. The aim will be to ensure that both Elected Members and staff have the skills necessary to identify, evaluate and control emergencies associated with the services they provide and report adverse incidents promptly and openly.

CONCLUSION

The adoption of a robust Business Continuity Plan allows the Council to maintain adequate service delivery and recover to normal service quicker and more cost efficiently.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THE COUNCIL

This Business Continuity Plan should be read in conjunction with the following policies of the Town Council:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Risk Management Strategy
- Asset Registers / Stock & Equipment Inventory
- Corporate Governance Policy
- Document Retention Policy

Approved by Financial and General Purposes Committee	
Adopted by Council	
Review Date	