

Appendix 2b: Audits Revisited

Purpose of these Audits

To assess whether the actions agreed in the original audits have been implemented and are now effectively embedded into the day-to-day operation of the service.

Emergency Planning

To assess whether the actions agreed in the original audit dated May 2018 have been implemented and are now effectively embedded into the day-to-day operation of the service.

Original Objective

To assess whether the Council has robust arrangements in place for responding to a civil emergency, in line with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) and other relevant good practice / updates.

Action Implementation Level

Opinion: Satisfactory assurance

There was proactive management as well as timely delivery of most actions, with evidence they were embedded into working practices.

Results

Fully implemented	Substantially implemented	Partially implemented	Not implemented	Closed
30	2	0	0	0

Summary

The recommendations raised in the original report are being reported to the Corporate Management Team as being substantially completed.

The Council has already gathered a lot of intelligence about potential civil emergencies via the Essex Resilience Forum and this has been used to inform contingency planning.

The Council has made significant progress in implementing the recommendations raised as part of the previous audit dated May 2018:

- the Council has access to emergency plans which have been produced by the Essex Resilience Forum. These include details and inputs from all key partners.
- a consolidated risk register has been produced, and auxiliary local risk policies have been developed for local circumstances such as specific areas at a high risk of flooding.
- the Council have updated the training schedule to ensure the strategic responders have all attended or are due to attend face-to-face training. An e-learning module has also been rolled out to new joiners as recommended training, to increase the awareness of Emergency Planning across the

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organisation. There are plans for this to become mandatory for all staff, however this is still under review.

- an on-going incident and exercise log have been created, which shows all calls made / incidents reported and includes action taken, outcome and lessons learnt.
- agreements are in place with key suppliers to confirm they will be available when needed in relation to a civil emergency event.

Work is ongoing to:

- decide what training should be added to the schedule of mandatory training for some, or all groups of staff.

assess Rest Centres to ensure facilities within them (e.g. kitchens, washrooms, toilets) meet the required potential need during an incident, given the potential amount of time they could be needed.

Business Continuity

Original Objective

To assess whether the Council has effective arrangements in place to enable services (particularly critical ones) to continue to be provided in the event of a disaster occurring.

Action Implementation Level

Opinion: Satisfactory assurance

There was proactive management as well as timely delivery of most actions, with evidence they were embedded into working practices.

Results

Fully implemented	Substantially implemented	Partially implemented	Not implemented	Closed
3	1	1	0	1

Summary

The recommendations raised in the revisited audit report are being reported to the Corporate Management Team as being substantially completed.

The Council has made good progress in implementing the recommendations raised as part of the previous revisited audit dated March 2018. The Council has prioritised the recommendations accordingly and good progress has been made in respect of the following areas of activity:

- The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity teams have been merged to form the Resilience team, allowing more flexible, reactive team roles and greater collaboration.

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- There has been a shift in the online applications used by the Council to enable more reactive and flexible working in the event of an incident. This includes:
 1. The movement towards use of Microsoft Teams which allows all team members to attend a conference call together which was previously not possible.
 2. The Council are also in the process of adopting Clearview for the use of Business Impact Assessments. These are currently paper based but will be developed into electronic versions. Reminders can be set on Clearview to ensure that all Business Impact Assessments (BIAs) are updated on a regular basis.
 3. The use of Everbridge¹ has also declined due to the cost and system limitations, and a cascade system has instead been trialled and adapted for the lessons learnt during its first test. This system has proven to be much more effective when tested.
- A Business Continuity training module has also been rolled out to new joiners as a recommended e-learn module, to increase the awareness of business continuity across the organisation. There are plans for this to become mandatory for all staff, however this is still under review.
- The Resilience Team have been proactive in ensuring the members of the CMT are booked to attend Business Continuity training.

Further work is being undertaken to:

- update Business Impact Assessments (BIAs) to ensure they are up-to-date and are input into the central database. This will help ensure proper actions are being taken in the event of an incident.
- ensure training of staff responsible for the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Incident Management Strategy (IMS) has taken place and records of this training are up to date.
- ensure key staff and new joiners have received training and decide whether all staff should receive a degree of business continuity training. This will enable the Council to be more robust in the event of an incident occurring.

¹ Emergency communications tool that sends alerts to staff mobile devices