

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Agenda Item 8
Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: ICT Risk – business continuity
Date of Meeting: 2 June 2009
Report of: Interim Director of Finance and Resources
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 The Audit Committee meeting on 24th February 2009 considered the Business Continuity risks around ICT services, and resolved to refer ICT risks to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider in the 2009-10 work plan.

1.2 This report sets out the current position and future moves for ICT resilience.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 That the Commission consider and comment on the progress being made.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The current position with ICT and Business Continuity

3.1 ICT had been without a permanent Assistant Director for approximately 1 year, and during this time there had been limited clarity over the work that has been undertaken to mitigate ICT risks around Business Continuity.

3.2 The council's Business continuity manager reported that he was optimistic that the situation would improve with the appointment of a new Assistant Director.

3.3 ICT have designed the current base infrastructure with a view to maintaining resilience for core key systems. The current base however, while capable of maintaining core services in the event of a disaster, still requires some work to improve the systems covered.

3.4 Core services are those services that have been identified by the Business Continuity Manager in consultation with service areas and for these services there are specific disaster recovery plans in place that are tested on an annual basis.

3.5 Currently ICT systems have improved resilience by:

- Running from two main computing facilities – each using different parts of the main electricity grid
- In each facility, a data store that has data replicated between the two sites and a number of servers that are not fully utilised
- A program of server virtualisation (this allows faster moving of applications from one facility to the other)
- Contracts in place with external business continuity service providers

3.6 Telephone resilience is catered for by:

- Operating two different telephony systems, one hosted externally
- Having the internal system designed to be resilient and removing single points of failure.

3.7 All these systems are supported by documentation to allow straightforward changes and recovery by skilled ICT technical staff, although without requiring high level specialist skills in the given system.

Future moves for ICT resilience

3.8 In the ICT plan for the coming year there is some additional work planned to improve the resilience:

- Moving our telephone lines onto the most appropriate system – for example moving the public facing lines to the internal system
- Investigating non-geographic numbering (0845, 0844)
- Improved document management, ensuring that the appropriate recovery documentation remains current and accessible
- Investigating new locations for the main facilities

Continuity for the support of ICT

3.9 In order for these Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery plans to be useful and relevant, there is a supporting ICT Business Continuity plan. This concentrates on being able to maintain the ability for council staff and elected members to be able to contact ICT. The ICT service desk is the key point of contact and there is a tested business continuity plan around this.

3.10 This is supplemented by key ICT staff having the ability to work from any location, including their own home. These staff have council installed equipment to enable this and also to support the continued operation of ICT.

4. CONSULTATION

None directly in relation to this report

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

To follow

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

None

