Cabinet Office

Chapter 8 Business continuity advice and assistance to business and the voluntary sector

Revision to *Emergency Preparedness*

Civil Contingencies Act Enhancement Programme

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Chapter 8 (Business continuity advice and assistance to business and the voluntary sector) of *Emergency Preparedness*, Revised Version

Summary

- The Act requires local authorities to provide advice and assistance to those undertaking commercial activities and to voluntary organisations in relation to business continuity management (BCM) in the event of an emergency (as defined by the Act) (*paragraphs 8.1-8.8*).

- Local authorities must provide general advice and assistance to the business and voluntary sector communities at large; may provide specific advice and assistance to individual organisations; and may give advice and assistance to individual businesses in relation to the engagement of business continuity consultants (*paragraphs 8.8-8.22*).

- Not all voluntary organisations would want - or benefit from - business continuity advice. A local authority may therefore define its own voluntary sector audience, targeting efforts where they will add most value (*paragraphs 8.28-8.31*).

- Local authorities may charge for advice and assistance provided on request, on a cost-recovery basis (*paragraphs 8.34-8.35*).

- Local authorities should have regard to relevant Community Risk Registers (CRRs) when developing an advice and assistance programme (*paragraphs 8.36-8.37*).

- Local authorities may enter into collaborative arrangements with other Category 1 and 2 responders in fulfilling their duties (*paragraphs 8.38-8.41*).

- Local authorities within a Local Resilience Forum (LRF) area are required to co-operate with each other in performing their duties; other Category 1 and 2 responders within a Local Resilience Forum are required to co-operate with local authorities (*paragraphs 8.42-8.52*).

- Local authorities are required to have regard to the BCM advice and assistance provided by other Category 1 and 2 responders to business and voluntary organisations in their areas (*paragraphs 8.46-8.52*).

- This chapter also sets out the considerations local authorities should take into account when developing a programme of advice and assistance (e.g. key messages, established support networks) (*paragraphs 8.57-8.74*).

- Local authorities should consider how to use the arrangements for multi-agency co-operation established by the Act to ensure BCM advice and assistance programmes are co-ordinated and effective (*paragraphs 8.70-8.72*).

- Local authorities have been discharging the business continuity duty since its commencement in May 2006. In this time a number of different methods have been used to reach out to local businesses. Some of these have been recorded as case studies, attached as an annex to this chapter.

WHAT THE ACT AND THE REGULATIONS REQUIRE

8.1. **Scope of the duty**

The Act requires local authorities to provide advice and assistance to those undertaking commercial activities and to voluntary organisations in their areas in relation to BCM in the event of emergencies (as defined in the Act).[1] This activity is undertaken to ensure preparedness.

Rationale for the duty

8.2. The duty on local authorities to give advice and assistance to business and voluntary organisations in relation to business continuity management (BCM) is an integral part of the Act's wider contribution to building the UK's resilience to disruptive challenges.

8.3. In the event of an emergency, Category 1 responders will give all the assistance they can, but there is merit in ensuring that communities themselves are resilient. In particular, it is important to ensure that the impact of an emergency on the continuity of commercial and voluntary organisations is kept to a minimum. This will lessen the economic and social impact of emergencies and speed up recovery.

8.4. Establishing a source of BCM advice and assistance prior to an emergency occurring will raise business continuity awareness in the community, and help organisations to help themselves in case of an incident.

[1] s.4

8.5. A programme of business continuity advice and assistance will help in building community resilience; it will reduce reliance on public sector bodies in the event of an emergency and enable Category 1 and 2 responders to focus their resources on the most vulnerable. It will also help improve links between Category 1 and 2 responders and the business community and voluntary sector, which are crucial to effective emergency management arrangements.

Advice and assistance duty in context

8.6. As Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1 illustrates, the business continuity advice and assistance duty is closely related to other duties in the Act, and should not be seen as a stand-alone duty. Developing and exercising emergency plans may require close liaison with organisations that carry out commercial or voluntary activities - for example in the preparation of city centre evacuation plans. There is a clear link between this work and the duty to give BCM advice and assistance to businesses, in many ways, it is a logical extension of this work.

8.7. In fulfilling their duty to assess risks in their area and collaborate in the preparation of the Community Risk Register, local authorities will have a good overview of the risk profile in an area. Furthermore, emergency planning work - and co-operation with other Category 1 and 2 responders through Local Resilience Forums (LRF's) - will leave local authorities well-sighted on the arrangements that are in place to deal with emergencies (see Chapters 2 and 4).

8.8. There is also a strong relationship with the warning and informing duty (see Chapter 7). This requires Category 1 responders to publish aspects of risk assessments and contingency plans, and to maintain arrangements to issue advice, information and warnings in the event of an emergency. The section 4 duty builds on this work, by requiring local authorities to provide information, advice and assistance targeted at organisations that carry out commercial activities and voluntary activities.

Box 8.1: Further advice and information

Also included in this chapter is further advice about business continuity promotion and information that is not supported directly by the Act, but responders may find it useful in fulfilling their duties under the Act. These sections of text are distinguished by inclusion in a text box like this one

Generic advice and assistance

8.9. The Regulations specify that local authorities have a duty to provide generic advice and assistance to the business community at large[2]; but its duty regarding voluntary organisations is to provide advice and assistance to those organisations it considers appropriate and in a way it considers appropriate.[3]

8.10. While the Act imposes a duty on local authorities to offer advice and assistance, it does not impose a corresponding obligation on those organisations to act upon it.

8.11. In complying with this duty, local authorities must demonstrate that they have taken reasonable steps to promote BCM advice in their areas. This will involve developing a strategy that:

- identifies what organisations need to know;
- selects appropriate means of delivery; and
- targets the message at its audience.

[See the case studies at Box 8.3 for examples of how some local authorities have undertaken this.]

2 regulation 39(3)(a)
3 regulation 40(2) and 40(3)

8.12. As a result of local authorities' generic awareness-raising work, individual firms may turn to the local authority for specific advice and assistance in relation to BCM. The Regulations permit local authorities to provide specific BCM services to organisations or groups of organisations, but do not oblige them to do so.[4]

8.13. Local authority officials can undertake this type of work themselves if they have the experience and competence to do so. Local authorities can work with individual organisations or other local authorities to establish the nature of the risks they face and the steps they can take to manage these risks. This might include, for example:

- assistance with risk assessment;
- provision of information and advice about local civil protection arrangements;
- support in the development and validation of plans.

8.14. With local authorities wishing to ensure value-for-money, it is reasonable that this applies in the area of promoting business continuity. Since the duty to advise and assist was introduced, local authorities, working in conjunction with partners such as police and fire services, have produced some good work that has made significant steps in building resilience in their communities. The result is that we now have a body of knowledge and experience within local authorities that can be used by others to discharge this duty in a cost effective way that has delivered demonstrably greater uptake.

Signposting third party advice

8.15. Alternatively, the local authority may give advice and assistance to individual organisations to facilitate the engagement of a business continuity consultant, who may be better placed to provide the support required. However, undertaking this work is discretionary, and is not a requirement of the regulations.[5]

4 regulations 39(3)(b) and 40(3)(b)
5 regulations 39(3)(c) and 40(3)(c)

8.16. Outside large organisations, most of the people responsible for business continuity are not professionals, and may require guidance when purchasing business continuity advice, services or facilities.

8.17. Where it chooses to go down this path, the local authority must remain impartial and take steps to ensure firms are referred to practitioners that have the competence and experience to advise them.[6] Failure to do so could, in certain circumstances, give rise to legal challenge.

Definition of an emergency

8.18. BCM arrangements can be put in place to manage the risks associated with the full range of business interruptions, which could comprise anything from minor supplier or technology failure through to the potentially catastrophic effects of terrorism or natural disaster. BCM is a flexible framework designed to help organisations develop resilience to the full spectrum of events. However, the Act imposes a duty on local authorities to give advice and assistance to commercial and voluntary organisations on developing arrangements to deal with a much narrower range of disruptive challenges.

8.19. The duty applies only to those events or situations defined as an emergency in the Act.[7] It does not extend to the wider range of day-to-day disruptions which can threaten the smooth running - or even the very existence - of an organisation. The Act does not require local authorities to give advice and assistance in managing risks that are purely internal to the organisation (e.g. technical, commercial or financial aspects of running the organisation). Nor does it require local authorities to give advice on dealing with smaller-scale incidents (e.g. minor fires or theft).

6 regulations 39(4) and 40(4)
7 S.1

8.20. An emergency is likely to affect a number of organisations, which may in turn threaten to seriously disrupt the effective functioning of the community at large. Advice and assistance to the business and voluntary sector community at large should therefore focus on generic disruptions that affect a significant part of the community. In this respect, the BCM duty will enhance community resilience by encouraging a local business climate able to withstand the disruptions caused by an emergency.

8.21. A key objective of the BCM duty is to help organisations to link in with practical emergency planning arrangements put in place by Category 1 responders. Local authorities will be particularly well placed to give advice and assistance to organisations in preparing for events or situations whose scale and impact require assessments of risk to be made and emergency plans to be prepared by Category 1 responders.

8.22. However, organisations that recognise the value of BCM planning for emergencies are unlikely to confine their forward thinking to this type of risk only.

Audience

8.23. A key objective of the BCM advice and assistance duty under the Act is to minimise the economic impact of emergencies on the local community. It delivers this by requiring local authorities to encourage greater preparedness among organisations that carry out commercial activities, and providing advice and assistance in improving their resilience.

8.24. Commercial organisations are those private sector businesses operating for a profit. Charities are, by definition, voluntary organisations which carry out their activities on a 'not for profit basis'. However, some charities have separate trading arms, and companies operating under these are classified as commercial organisations, whereas a 'charity shop', operated by the charity itself, is defined as a voluntary organisation. Building societies and credit unions carry out commercial activities, and although not privately owned, operate as a business and generate financial benefits for their members.

8.25. The Regulations state that the duty to provide BCM advice and assistance only applies to businesses carrying on commercial activities in the local authority area.[8] The duty will also extend to activities that operate in the area on a non-permanent basis e.g. music festivals or major construction projects. In many cases, the local authority will be aware of the presence of such activity in its area, for example through planning consents for construction projects, or through the local authority/emergency services Safety Advisory Groups set up to give advice and guidance to event organisers.

8.26. The Act also requires local authorities to give advice and assistance to voluntary organisations in their communities, many of whom will not undertake commercial activities.[9] Voluntary organisations play a critical role in local civil protection arrangements; they also deliver a wide range of services that are crucial to the effective functioning of communities (e.g. providing advice, social care, cultural and spiritual services). Demands on their services are likely to increase in the event of an emergency, and, if they are unable to continue functioning, this could exacerbate its effects.

8.27. Providing business continuity advice to voluntary organisations will help build the resilience of the wider community, and help limit the impact of emergencies on its ability to function effectively.

8 regulation 39(2)
9 s.4

8.28. However, the voluntary sector is large and diverse, and not all voluntary organisations would want - or indeed benefit from - business continuity advice. A large number of voluntary organisations, for example, do not employ staff or maintain premises. Given the large number of voluntary bodies (c. 600,000) - and the difficulty of reaching out to some of them - it is unrealistic to expect local authorities to proactively provide (even generic) advice and assistance to them all.

8.29. The underlying principles of BCM are common to all organisations. In many instances - particularly where messages are made publicly available via websites - the costs to the local authority of extending their advice to all voluntary organisations will be minimal.

8.30. However, when deciding how to prioritise when taking forward a proactive programme of advice and assistance, local authorities may need to take decisions about which voluntary organisations to approach, and where to target resources.

8.31. The Regulations therefore permit a local authority itself to determine its target audience within the voluntary sector.[10] The Regulations provide that, in so doing, local authorities should have regard to a range of factors,[11] including:

- **Role in relation to emergencies:** A large number of voluntary organisations play a direct role in preventing or responding to emergencies. In order to help others, they will need to be able to keep themselves operating in the event of an emergency.

[10] regulation 40(2), s.4
[11] regulation 40(5)

- **Contribution to the effective functioning of the community:** In the event of an emergency, some organisations will be critical to the health and welfare of communities.
- **Economic importance:** Staff numbers and turnover will also be an important consideration in determining target audiences. These will give an indication of an organisation's importance to the local economy, and the likely value of business continuity planning adding value to an organisation.
- **Geography:** It would not generally be appropriate for a local authority to give BCM advice to a voluntary organisation which does not carry out activities in the area for which the local authority is responsible.

Charging

8.32. The Regulations permit local authorities to make a charge for business continuity advice and assistance provided on request, where this is appropriate, but do not oblige them to do so.[12]

8.33. It is unlikely that local authorities will be able to charge for promotional materials or awareness-raising materials supplied, which in many cases will not have been requested. However, local authorities may wish to make a charge for a number of activities including:

- attendance at local authority organised events;
- membership of business continuity forums;
- provision of specific information (e.g. aspects of risk assessments);
- provision of advice on an ad hoc basis (e.g. development or review of firms' own plans); and
- provision of an established BCM service.

[12] regulation 44

8.34. The Regulations also provide that local authorities may only charge for BCM advice and assistance on a cost-recovery basis.[13] Local authorities may charge for the full cost of all the resources used in carrying out activities for which a charge is to be made, and a reasonable share of any research or documentation that underpins this service. The regulations do not permit local authorities to seek to make a profit from activities in this area.

8.35. Further guidance on charging policy can be found in the HM Treasury Fees and Charges Guide (http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk); however, local authorities will also want to consider the impact of their charging policy on the take-up of their advice and assistance.

Risk assessment

8.36. The BCM programme should reflect the risk profile of the area. When developing a BCM promotion strategy and materials, the officer responsible should ask: What possible disruptions do organisations need to know about? What impacts might they have? Are there any locations or firms that are particularly vulnerable?

8.37. The Regulations require local authorities to "take into account" the Community Risk Register (CRR) agreed by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) when developing a business continuity promotion programme.[14] It may also be necessary to consider risks outside the area that could impact upon businesses in a local authority area (e.g. major chemical plant in a neighbouring area), hence the requirement to have regard to "any relevant risk register".

[13] regulation 44
[14] regulation 38

Developing collaborative arrangements

Collaboration with other local authorities

8.38. The duty to provide advice and assistance in relation to BCM falls on all local authorities. The Regulations permit local authorities to enter into collaborative arrangements with other Category 1 or 2 responders (e.g. a Fire and Rescue Authority) in delivering the duty.[15]

8.39. There are a number of options open to authorities in deciding how best to discharge their responsibility. This permissive approach gives local authorities the flexibility to decide how to make the best use of the skills, expertise, networks and resources available in an area. Working collaboratively could help ensure that efforts are co-ordinated and that economies of scale are achieved. There are a number of case studies with contacts contained in this guidance, at Box 8.3, which detail some of the ways that local authorities have discharged this duty in a cost effective and beneficial way to local businesses. This has been demonstrated by a measurable increase in website activity and engagement.

8.40. However, it remains the responsibility of each authority to ensure that the programme is delivered effectively, and its statutory duties are fulfilled. Whichever option - or mixture of options - is chosen, each authority should ensure that:

- roles and responsibilities are clear;
- clear review and evaluation mechanisms are in place;
- the programme adequately reflects the diverse business needs and risk profile within an LRF area; and
- elected members and senior officers are brought into the process where necessary.

[15] regulations 41(3) and 41(4)

Box 8.2: Delivering BCM in partnership

Business continuity management and promotion has become an integral part of the Local Resilience Forum structure within the Northumbria area. Responsibility for promotion lies with the five councils of Tyne and Wear and Northumberland Emergency Planning Department and is discharged by the Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit who coordinates activity on behalf of the Tyne and Wear Councils. The Business Continuity Management Promotion Strategy is focused on maximising business resilience within the Northumbria LRF by facilitating the coordination of promotional materials and events.

On a day to day basis, responsibility includes the Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit providing a comprehensive resilience planning service to all five councils in the Tyne and Wear area as well as work on specific business continuity initiatives. This includes:

- Provision of advice and guidance.
- Training of staff earmarked with business continuity roles within procurement.
- Speaking at seminars.
- Facilitating workshops.
- Supporting internal business promotion days.

Promotional aspects have included the recent Business Continuity Conference (March 2010) and current involvement includes the organising and management of business continuity Information events which will be taking place during Business Continuity Awareness week in March 2011.

The provision of support to address business continuity collaboratively within the Northumbria LRF area has enabled good practice and lessons learned to be shared between the five councils and other key stakeholders.

However, please be aware that these arrangements are currently subject to review.

8.41. Delegation, or the appointment of a lead authority, does not absolve the local authority of the duty, but merely transforms the mode of delivery. The local authority remains under a legal duty to ensure the programme is delivered, even when a third party is contracted to complete the work.

Partnership working in BCM promotion

- **Separate programmes:** Local authorities deliver BCM programmes separately, while ensuring the coherence of the message and means of delivery.
- **Delegation:** All or some local authorities in an LRF area delegate the duty to a single authority, which then delivers the duty on their behalf. Delegation can be to any Category 1 or 2 responder not just to a local authority.
- **Joint working:** This would involve a single programme being delivered jointly by a number of local authorities.
- **Appointing a "lead authority":** This involves giving one or more partner authorities a leading role within the delivery of the programme, with other authorities fulfilling a lesser, supporting role. The lead authority could, for example, co-ordinate the content and production of promotional material for others to deliver.

- **Outsourcing:** As in other areas of local authority business, the duty could be contracted to a third party on a commercial basis, either by an individual authority or collectively.

Co-ordination of BCM promotion programmes

8.42. The Regulations require local authorities within an LRF area to co-operate with each other when performing their duties under section 4 of the Act.[16] The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that local authorities within an LRF area deliver a coherent programme of advice and assistance to organisations undertaking commercial activities in their communities.

8.43. This co-operation may take place bilaterally or within a single forum. Whatever form this co-operation takes, authorities will need to take steps to ensure that:

- the message they are giving out is consistent;
- the means of delivery are co-ordinated where appropriate;
- external partners are not unduly burdened; and
- lessons are identified and learned and best practice is shared.

8.44. The BCM promotion programme in an LRF area should be driven by the needs of local organisations, not local authorities' administrative boundaries. Organisations in an LRF area will often operate across local authority boundaries, hence the importance of delivering a co-ordinated message with promotional or awareness-raising work.

8.45. Local authorities will also want to consider the need to adopt a coherent approach to the provision of specific advice and assistance where this is requested.

[16] regulation 41(1)

Co-ordination with other Category 1 responders' work

8.46. The duty to provide advice and assistance in relation to BCM falls on local authorities, but this does not mean that other Category 1 responders should not support these programmes.

8.47. A number of other Category 1 responders are already engaged in providing BCM advice. This work should be supported and encouraged by local authorities as part of the wider promotion programme under the Act.

8.48. The Regulations require local authorities to have regard to the business continuity assistance work other Category 1 responders are doing in the community.[17] In practice, this means that local authorities are required to develop an awareness of the business continuity work other Category 1 responders undertake with organisations, and consider the implications of this work for their own business continuity advice and assistance programmes.

8.49. This will help local authorities to ensure that programmes complement other work. Local authorities should take steps to ensure that their BCM advice and assistance programmes dovetail with work undertaken by other Category 1 responders, that synergies are exploited, and that they work collaboratively where possible. The Regulations additionally provide that local authorities need not unnecessarily duplicate the work done by other responders with local organisations.[18]

[17] regulation 43(1)
[18] regulation 43(1)(b)

8.50. Furthermore, BCM awareness material will address public sector response arrangements and risk profiles, which will require the collaboration of other Category 1 responders. It is, therefore, important that local authorities have access to the right information and advice to inform their promotion strategies, and that the assumptions they make about other Category 1 responders' response arrangements are accurate. The Regulations impose a duty on all Category 1 and 2 responders to co-operate and share information on request pursuant to local authorities' duties under section 4 of the Act.[19]

8.51. This co-operation may take place bilaterally, as required, or via a subgroup of the LRF.

Other Category 1 Responders' work with commercial organisations

The Police

The police work with the business community on continuity-related issues in a number of ways:

- **Crime prevention advice:** Most large police stations have dedicated officers proactively providing crime prevention advice to local businesses on crime prevention and security issues (e.g. CCTV). Contact your local police service for further information about the work done in your area.
- **Counter-terrorism advice:** Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSAs) provide advice on demand to the business community on preventing and mitigating the effects of acts of terrorism.
  They are not resourced to give advice to individual businesses, but may be willing to give advice to groups of businesses, such as a business continuity forum.

[19] regulations 41(2) and 45 to 53

Crime Their work is co-ordinated by the National Counter Terrorism and Security Office (NACTSO), which published the *Expecting the Unexpected* document (https://vsat.nactso.gov.uk/SiteCollection Documents/OurServices/expecting-the-unexpected.pdf) in conjunction with London First and the Business Continuity Institute. CTSAs can be contacted via local police headquarters.

- **Advice on emergency response procedures:** Police services seek to raise awareness among local businesses about emergency response procedures (e.g. evacuation procedures, cordoning in the event of an incident). Project ARGUS (http://www.nactso.gov.uk/OurServices/Argus.aspx) is a NACTSO initiative, which takes businesses through a simulated terrorist attack and identifies prevention, handling and recovery measures. Project Griffin (http://www.projectgriffin.org.uk/) was developed by the City of London Police as a joint venture between the City and Metropolitan police forces. Its remit was to advise large public and private sector organisations on security, counter-terrorism and crime prevention issues. It is increasingly being adopted by other police forces.

Fire Authorities

Since 1947, fire authorities have been under a duty to provide, on request, information about fire prevention and mitigation. The Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 conferred a new duty on fire authorities to make provision for actively promoting fire safety within their area. This involves the provision of advice and assistance to local businesses. They work with occupiers/owners in the business community to offer advice over a broad range of topics - proactively and on request.

This work will be undertaken in different ways according to the priorities in the area.

In Hereford and Worcester, specialist Fire Safety Inspecting Officers receive technical training so that they can offer advice and assistance to commercial organisations on issues such as:

- arson reduction;
- business continuity; and
- community fire safety.

Fire-fighters reinforce this proactive approach to fire prevention by taking forward aspects of this approach in their day-to-day work. They may work closely with other enforcement agencies and bodies providing business continuity advice to explore opportunities for partnership working.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency is committed to preventing loss of life, continuously improving maritime safety, and protecting the marine environment. Various aspects of this work involve BCM promotion.

In addition to enforcing contingency planning requirements, the Agency undertakes a range of educational initiatives with the shipping, fishing, and offshore oil and gas industries, as well as with those who visit the sea or coast for leisure. Further information can be found at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/mca/.

8.52. Local authorities must observe the limits on sharing sensitive information set out in the Regulations when taking forward their programme of advice and assistance. Local authorities may have access to - or be asked for - personal data or information that relates to national security or public safety. Even where this would assist the local authority in its BCM advice and assistance work, this information should not be disclosed, unless appropriate consent has been obtained or the public interest in disclosure outweighs the interests of the organisation or individual concerned. The same applies to commercially sensitive information, which must also be treated appropriately. Chapter 3 sets out in more detail the limits on dealing with sensitive information. [See also case studies 3 and 5 in Box 8.3]

How the Act and the regulations apply in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Scotland

8.53. The Regulations made by the Minister which relate to the promotion of business continuity do not apply to local authorities in Scotland. The Regulations made by the Scottish Ministers make provision as to how local authorities in Scotland should exercise their duty to provide advice and assistance in relation to business continuity.

Wales

8.54. The Act and the Regulations apply in Wales in the same way as they apply in England.

Northern Ireland

8.55. The duty to provide advice and assistance to business and voluntary organisations in relation to business continuity does not apply to local authorities in Northern Ireland.

HOW THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE ACT AND THE REGULATIONS MAY BE CARRIED OUT

8.56. This section outlines how the Government believes the duties described may best be carried out. It describes good practice. Category 1 responders must have regard to this guidance.[20]

Why should organisations put BC plans in place?

8.57. Whilst the duty to promote BC is founded on the wider contribution to national resilience, to use this reason as a way to encourage businesses to take up business continuity may not encourage businesses to take that step and make that investment.

8.58. For the majority of commercial businesses, any decision to adopt a system or activity will focus on 'business benefits'. It is therefore imperative that when promoting business continuity, the arguments used resonate with those responsible for making these decisions. These should promote the financial benefits that can be accrued by:

- conducting a business impact analysis to evaluate the critical activities to a business (e.g. the processes for producing and selling those products that have the highest profit margin);
- demonstrating processes in place to deal with disruption to existing and potential new customers;

[20] s.4(8)(b)

- reduction of costly downtime, through alternative arrangements such as dual-sourcing and contingency measures;
- reduction in insurance premiums for policies such as 'business disruption' when demonstrating resilience measures;
- the ability to retain, and possibly gain new contracts and customers through being able to deliver when others can't.

8.59. The following information will be useful to local businesses in assessing the need to develop business continuity plans:

- the **kinds of disruption** which could occur, and
- the **impacts** they may have (e.g. loss of utilities or access to premises);
- the arrangements that Category 1 responders have in place to assess the risk of, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies, and their implications for the business community (e.g. evacuation or recovery plans);
- **the steps individual organisations can take** to prepare for, or mitigate the effects of, an emergency (e.g. implement BCM); and
- sources of **warnings, information and advice** in the event of an emergency.

8.60. Levels of BCM awareness and activity will vary considerably between organisations. In some cases the challenge will be to get BCM on the agenda, and in others the challenge will be to sell the concept or help organisations already doing BCM to refine their plans.

Delivering a programme of advice and assistance / discharging the duty

8.61. Since 2005, local authorities have developed various means of discharging the duty: providing a service to the communities and contributing to national resilience. Some believe they have achieved real value in this area. Some of these are included as case studies at Box 8.3. They have been generously provided by local authorities, whose contact details can be found at the foot of each case study.

8.62. Practical advice in delivering the duty to provide business continuity advice and assistance is set out below.

Ways to give generic advice and assistance

The web

Local authorities could use their own websites as a reference tool for the promotion of business continuity in their area, or set up a dedicated website with local partners.

Surrey County Council produced a website www.surreycontinuity.org that is simple to use, easy to follow but contains all the relevant information that a local business needs to adopt a business continuity programme. With the site as the nucleus of business continuity promotion in Surrey, it is kept up-to-date and actively promoted within the local authority area. [See case study 1 in Box 8.3.]

In addition to specific advice on business continuity, a website can be used to direct businesses to other sources of information about civil protection issues, including the CRR and other Category 1 and 2 responders' sites and to reference other sites offering guidance on the development of business continuity arrangements.

Press releases

Articles in appropriate publications can raise awareness of business continuity issues, or to direct readers to relevant materials. Local authorities publishing an annual business or voluntary sector directory can use them to publicise the message. References in publications issued by partner organisations (e.g. business or social action representative groups) can also be useful.

Mailings

Local authorities have various means, e.g. business rate letters, of disseminating guidance to the business and voluntary sector, this might include existing reference materials on BCM, available from a wide range of sources, including the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Business Continuity Institute.

Participation in seminars/events

Existing events/seminars targeted at businesses or the voluntary sector, whether organised by the Local Authority Economic Development Department or other local partners, can be used to communicate the

message on BCM promotion and to publicise sources of information on BCM, either provided by the local authority or by a third party.

Facilitating or hosting events

Local authorities may choose, individually or in collaboration with others, to organise their own BCM events, e.g. regional or local business continuity fairs or seminars. A seminar or fair could be used to launch a new BCM forum. The costs incurred by local authorities might be met by charging a small attendance fee, inviting firms to sponsor such events, or by seeking collaboration from business or voluntary sector representative bodies. (See Box 8.2 for a short case study of similar activity undertaken by Tyne and Wear Emergency Planning Unit.)

Establishing a business continuity forum

The formation of business continuity forums, facilitated by local authorities, can encourage members of the business community to participate. These forums can promote business continuity management, and help to consolidate a local network, within which businesses can learn from each other and liaise with Category 1 and 2 responders.

Local authorities and the emergency services are often already engaged with the business and voluntary sector communities, for example, in planning for evacuation in the face of a threat of flooding or terrorism or the fire prevention work undertaken by the Fire and Rescue Service. These links provide a strong basis for developing a business forum looking at BCM or emergency planning issues in the round. Forums can be used to strengthen the links between businesses and LRFs. (See also the case studies 2 and 5 in Box 8.3.)

Specific advice

8.63. Whilst local authorities are more likely to achieve value for money through events and promotion activities that reach out to a wide audience, there is nothing to prevent the provision of specific advice as part of the method of discharging the duty. However, this is likely to be more time consuming and the following paragraphs should be noted.

8.64. Whichever approach local authorities take to the provision of specific information and advice to businesses or voluntary organisations requesting further support, they should consider developing a documented policy statement, in order to manage the expectations of local organisations and ensure consistency and fairness.

8.65. Local authorities should also be aware of professional liability issues when giving specific advice and assistance. In order to reduce the risk of claims of negligence or breach of contract, local authorities should:

- only become involved in areas where they are competent and experienced enough to give advice and assistance;
- be clear about the status and limits of advice;
- clearly flag up areas of uncertainty or assumptions that have been made; and
- consider the use of disclaimers where appropriate.

8.66. However, liability issues should not deter local authorities from giving detailed advice and assistance. If managed correctly, the risk of legal challenge is limited, and far outweighed by the demand from organisations for support, and the possible benefits in terms of community resilience.

Referring organisations to a third party

8.67. The local authority should avoid giving definitive recommendations, or endorsing individual consultants. Its role is to direct firms to organisations that could assist them, and suggest the criteria for selecting a service provider. These could include:

- professional qualifications/certification;
- membership of a professional organisation;
- experience in relevant aspects of BCM;
- track record of completing similar tasks; and
- adequate professional indemnity insurance.

8.68. The Business Continuity Institute (BCI) (http://www.thebci.org) provides a certification scheme for business continuity professionals. It publishes a list of consultants it deems to be experienced, qualified and competent in particular areas, and operates a code of practice for members. The Continuity Forum also provides a service designed to help connect consultants with clients: Consultancy Signpost lists individuals and organisations who provide consultancy services covering business continuity and its related disciplines. It is publicly available via the front page of the Continuity Forum's website http://www.continuityforum.org. The BCI and the Chartered Management Institute are useful sources of advice on commissioning consultants. The local authority can also facilitate the sharing of feedback on consultants by maintaining records of the organisations who have sought its advice about the engagement of a third party.

8.69. Nonetheless, the local authority will need to make it clear to firms that the choice of consultant is their sole responsibility, and that the local authority shall not be liable for any damage or loss suffered as a result.

BCM advice to the community and the LRF process

8.70. The arrangements for multi-agency co-operation established by the Act will establish a framework for delivering joined-up and effective civil protection. BCM promotion is an integral part of the wider package of civil protection activity, and requires multi-agency co-operation and information-sharing to be effective.

8.71. Local authorities will want to consider how they use this wider framework to deliver the co-ordination and buy-in required for effective BCM advice and assistance activity. Much can be achieved through informal working-level contact, but there may be some merit in formalising this co-operation. This could take the form of:

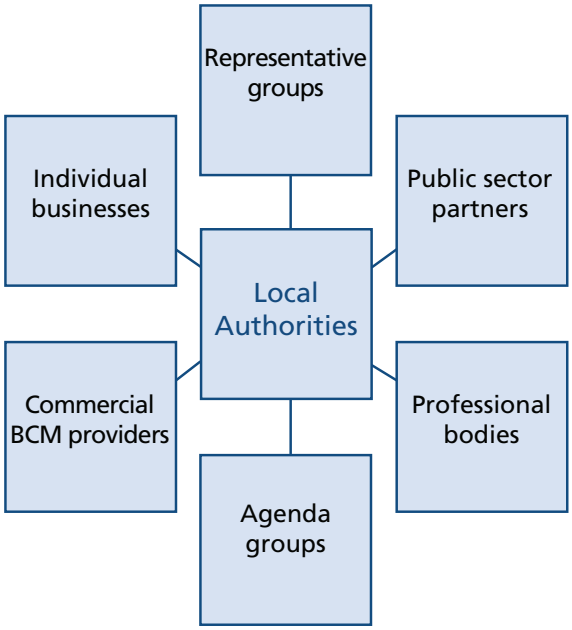
- regular discussions at working-level liaison groups;
- establishing a community resilience subgroup of the LRF; or
- discussion at LRF meetings.

8.72. The approach taken will depend, in large part, on the nature of the local authorities' programmes, the means used to deliver the message, and the extent of the involvement of other agencies in the process. It is good practice for the full LRF to be given a chance to discuss BCM promotion work once each year.

Identifying and engaging other external partners

8.73. Local authorities should consider engaging partner organisations in the process of providing information, advice and assistance to organisations that carry on commercial activities and to voluntary organisations. This should prove useful in communicating with firms and gaining their buy-in, providing support in organising events or forums, and as a source of BCM expertise.

Figure 8.1: Network of BCM promotion partners



8.74. Figure 8.1 shows a range of organisations in both the public and private sectors that may be willing to collaborate with local authorities in this work. These are:

- **Within local authorities:** Local authorities themselves have established links with the business community, which can be utilised when promoting BCM (e.g. Economic Development Units, City Centre Management Units and Community Safety Teams). Local authorities also have close links with voluntary organisations, which are often engaged as partners in service delivery.
- **Representative groups:** There are a number of groups that represent the business community or sections of it (e.g. Confederation of British Industry, British Chambers of Commerce, and Federation of Small Businesses). Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) are voluntary organisations which are set up, owned and run by local groups to support, promote and develop local voluntary and community action. CVS support their members by providing them with a range of services

and by acting as a voice for the local voluntary and community sector. They provide a useful way to identify the local voluntary sector community. There is a CVS working in almost every district and city in England, and they usually work within the same geographical boundaries as the local authority. To find your local CVS visit http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/

- **Education bodies:** Higher education institutions and colleges of further education may be effective partners in the promotion of BCM through their business courses. A number of higher education institutions also offer BCM qualification courses which may be useful to local authorities seeking to develop their competence in this area.
- **Professional bodies:** There are a number of organisations that exist to promote the take-up and standards of business continuity in the business community, including the Business Continuity Institute and Continuity Forum. There are also professional bodies or institutes with a wider remit - including the Chartered Institute of Management and British Institute of Facilities Management - which can provide a way into the business community in an area.
- **Agenda groups:** There are a range of bodies that can act as a conduit for BCM promotion work (e.g. Local Strategic Partnerships, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships).
- **Commercial BCM providers:** Commercial organisations providing a range of BCM services may be willing to sponsor business continuity initiatives or events.
- **Individual businesses:** Experience has shown that gaining the support of larger firms is important in taking forward a BCM promotion programme. Larger firms are more likely to be familiar with the discipline of BCM, and may already have established relationships with Category 1 and 2 responders. They may provide useful support in establishing business continuity seminars and companies - or large

well-established voluntary bodies - in their area. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are also crucial to the UK forums, and give assistance in raising the profile of BCM within the business community (e.g. through supply-chain leadership, membership of associations). Professional services firms (e.g. banks, accountants) may be willing to distribute information through their websites.
(See case studies 3 and 5 in Box 8.3.)

Targeting advice

Size of organisations

8.75. BCM arrangements are crucial to the sustainability of all organisations. Local authorities should not assume that business continuity is well established in the large national or multi-national companies - or large well-established voluntary bodies - in their area. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are also crucial to the UK economy, accounting for some 99.9% of the UK's 4.8 million businesses. They account for 59.8% of the number in employment in the private sector and generate 49 per cent of private sector turnover. In total, turnover in SMEs is estimated to be £1.589 billion (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, October 2010 http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/statistics/docs/b/bpe_2010_stats_release.pdf).

8.76. Local authorities should ensure that materials used are appropriate to the needs of businesses, which may vary considerably. While the underpinning principles remain the same, the approach taken when approaching a small owner-managed firm will be different to that taken with a large, well-established firm. Local authorities will need to be proactive in engaging the SME community, and ensure that materials are pitched at the right level.

8.77. It may be helpful to think of the business community in terms of the following definitions used by the Department for Business Industry and Skills:

- Micro firm: 0-9 employees
- Small firm: 10-49 employees
- Medium firm: 50-249 employees
- Large firm: Over 250 employees

8.78. Where it is not possible to engage smaller businesses directly in a community resilience initiative, it may be possible to include them through a variety of umbrella groups that can disseminate information and advice. This can be achieved through groups such as the Chamber of Commerce, Business Link, The Federation of Small Businesses and Local Retail Initiatives. Voluntary organisations can be reached through local Voluntary Service Councils, Social Councils, Volunteer Bureaux and other local umbrella bodies. (See case studies 4, 5 and 6 in Box 8.3.)

Added value

8.79. Local authorities may wish to focus on organisations that are well placed to give support to the programme by helping to raise awareness or by offering practical support (e.g. venues). Local authorities may also wish to target organisations that are able to provide help or resources to other organisations or Category 1 responders in the event of an emergency, or organisations whose activities are crucial to the effective functioning of the wider community (e.g. food suppliers).

Maintaining a BCM advice and assistance programme

8.80. In order to ensure that they continue to fulfil the requirements of the business continuity advice and assistance duty, local authorities will wish to undertake a continuous cycle of assessing the content and delivery of the promotion programme against the requirements of the legislation, assessments of risk, needs of the audience, and resources and support mechanisms available. This is likely to involve:

- **Developing objectives and message:**
  - Clear objectives should be established in consultation with partners in the LRF, and the message and target audience should be defined with reference to the CRR. Are proposed approaches coherent and will they be effective?
- **Reviewing promotion materials:**
  - There is a wide range of existing materials illustrating the importance of BCM and how to develop business continuity arrangements. Is there a need to develop further materials tailored to local circumstances? And what form might these take (e.g. printed, web-based, etc)
- **Reviewing the means of delivery:**
  - Choose means of delivery in the light of available resources and support from partners. Publicise events and services offered, and publicise any charging policy.

- **Delivery:**
  - The case studies contained in this chapter will give authorities guidance on ways in which the duty is delivered in other areas. The details of those responsible can be found at the end of the individual case studies and should be contacted with any questions?
- **Evaluate and review programme:**
  - Gathering feedback along the way is a useful way to judge if the programme met its stated objectives? Has feedback been positive? How could it be improved or extended? What lessons can be learned from experience elsewhere in the country?

Box 8.3: Business continuity advice and assistance to business and the voluntary sector: Case studies

(Additional examples of case studies are available in the 'best practice' folder on the NRE at https://www.resilience-extranet.gse.gov.uk/AtlasApps/Pages/Collaborate/DocumentStore/DocumentStore.aspx?folderid=113699 or https//www.resilience-extranet.gov.uk/AtlasApps/Pages/Collaborate/DocumentStore/DocumentStore.aspx?folderid=113699)

Case Study 1 – Surrey County Council

The 'surreycontinuity' website was launched in September 2009 with the support of the Surrey Local Resilience Forum, local authorities and Surrey and Woking Chambers of Commerce. This case study outlines the strategy that was adopted from the initial concept, to the development stages and through to delivery

Background

In May 2008, a decision was taken by the Planning and Environment Committee to focus on business continuity; in particular, how small to medium size enterprises and charities could best cope with emergency situations both within their own company and on a wider scale.

A business continuity sub-committee was formed involving representatives from Woking and Surrey Chambers of Commerce, local businesses, Woking Borough Council, and Surrey County Council. The sub-committee provided a steer on developing a strategy and this led to a series of meetings, discussions and presentations on how this could best be delivered to local business.

By early 2009, a draft proposal was in place to develop a website to act as a business continuity hub in order to help local businesses understand the basic principles of BCM together with signposting them to find additional information if required. Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council agreed to part fund this, with the Surrey Local Resilience Forum agreeing to co-sponsor the initiative and provide additional funding to develop the project.

The sub-committee put out to tender and a company was short-listed and commissioned to deliver the website. The company has an innovative way of delivering the website using panoramic views summarising phases of the business continuity process, case studies featuring local business incidents and an interactive quiz.

Conclusion

Although Surrey delivers business continuity advice through traditional methods such as leaflets, conferences and local forums, surreycontinuity helps promote other local initiatives such as Project ARGUS and GRIFFIN.

Surreycontinuity has been kept simple and is able to be used by those with no previous experience of business continuity. This gives it the flexibility to target a generic audience within the community such as small to medium enterprises, independent care providers and schools, also reaching a global audience.

Detailed weekly and monthly web traffic reports are providing useful in validating the success of the website. Although limited in determining the type and exact location of the organisation accessing the website, they do provide detail of number of hits, method of access and global location. The most popular part of the site is the case studies.

The results have certainly raised the profile of the county; and the work of the Surrey Local Resilience Forum; and proved that engaging and working in partnership can deliver benefits to the local community.

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Case Study 2 – Milton Keynes Council

Milton Keynes Council is a unitary Council with approx 220,000 citizens. The concept of a Milton Keynes Business Resilience Forum (MKBRF) was initially proposed by Milton Keynes Council at the local BCI Forum in June 2006. It was seen to be the best way to promote BC to local businesses and encourage the involvement of local businesses. Following the first MKBRF event, an independent lead team was established consisting of, and chaired by, voluntary representatives from local businesses. The MKBRF was established to promote the benefits of effective business continuity by:

- providing information and advice;
- sharing experiences between members;
- holding business continuity and incident management exercises;
- sharing threat and opportunity data (horizon scanning);
- provide informal mentoring;
- create a networking opportunity for local organisations and BC practitioners; and,
- providing mutual help and support.

Currently the membership of the MKBRF stands at over 300 local organisations, predominantly from the Milton Keynes area, but several from further afield. There is also an active LinkedIn forum which does not require MKBRF registration.

In addition to developing and facilitating events, Milton Keynes Council, in conjunction with the MKBRF, provides a website BC toolkit and an informal mentoring scheme. The website receives on average 1500 hits per month.

Analysis of feedback received following exercises and events, as well as key topics of the moment and market research carried out by the MKBRF lead team during 2010, drive the requirement for the next event. Attendees are also asked to suggest topics for future activities which ensures that the needs of the audience are consistently met.

All events have been free of charge. Milton Keynes Council has been supportive of all events and gained sponsorship from businesses based in Milton Keynes to assist with the costs.

Timeline of events

1st February 2007 – MKBRF launched – Conference – "**Secure in the Knowledge**" and formal launch of the Milton Keynes Business Resilience Forum. Contributors included Health Protection Agency, NaCTSO, IBM Business Continuity and Resilience Services

15th May 2007 – **Project Argus** – Milton Keynes Council were an integral member of the planning team supporting the National Counter Terrorism Security Office – focussing on the retail sector

17th October 2007 – **"Keeping your business going through an emergency"** conference and business continuity development day. Contributors included Thames Valley Police, Abbey (now Santander), PCT and the Fire Service

14th May 2008 – **Exercise Phoenix** – an interactive workshop focussing on the emergency response and incident management phases of an major incident. Representation and support from BSI, ambulance, fire and police services.

23rd March 2009 – **Radio broadcast** – first in the series of daily radio broadcasts on BBC Three Counties to coincide with Business Continuity Awareness Week – totalling 50 minutes air time – promoting various aspects of business continuity

17th September 2009 – **Business2Business Exhibition** – presentation and discussions with exhibitors to promote the MKBRF and it's forthcoming events. Distribution of MKBRF registration forms to local businesses in attendance.

21st October 2009 – **"Pandemic Flu Game"** – closed invitation to existing MKBRF members to an adaptation of the NHS business continuity flu game – focussing on the potential impacts on local businesses. Representation from MK Hospital and NHS to respond to direct concerns.

25th January 2010 – **"Exercise Midwinter"** - an interactive workshop focussing on resilience in the supply chain. Key speaker Dr Helen Peck, Cranfield University. Involvement of MK College students as part of their media course to have input to the technology for the event.

3rd March 2011 – **"Business Continuity and the Threat Environment"** – a breakfast briefing held at Bletchley Park, the home of the computer, focussing on Cyber Threats, exploring what business aspects are vulnerable in terms of both technology and people.

7th April 2011 – **"Crisis Communications: Business Continuity and the Media"** a highly interactive workshop to look at business continuity from the perspective of media strategies, featuring speakers from former BBC, ITN and Daily Mirror correspondents.

Contact:

The Risk and Business Continuity Team

Milton Keynes Council

Department of Audit and Risk

Civic Offices

Saxon Gate East

Milton Keynes

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Study 3 – Leicestershire County Council

Promoting business continuity in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) accepts that, for many businesses, the issue of developing a good business continuity management (BCM) framework is not seen as a high priority. Managers within these organisations are often very busy with other demands. However, some organisations have made a start on BCM, sometimes triggered by external factors, such as:

- they have suffered a disruption or;
- they have been requested to provide evidence of Business Continuity for a tender application, bank or insurance purposes or;
- they have been asked to provide Business Continuity assurance in terms of their contract with the County Council.

The most difficult hurdle to overcome is getting organisations to consider business continuity. Part of the County Council's strategy is not to promote business continuity using 'scare tactics' but rather promote the benefits of practical and effective contingency planning. The County Council believes that good business continuity is good business.

Furthermore, the County Council accepts that not everyone would be interested in, or understand, the relevance of BS25999 to their organisation, so decided against promoting the standard in its entirety. We do, however, actively promote its methodology and the benefits of adopting the Standard as good practice. As an organisation's business continuity programme matures, with minimal effort it will become more aligned with the standard.

The Council's initial approach to promoting business continuity was linked into the embedded procurement and supply-chain processes. This enabled us to prioritise and assess the levels of resilience in place for key suppliers/providers and, if necessary, provide them with guidance, support and assistance so that they were able to meet the Council's supplier requirements in terms of business continuity practice.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) have an active, Local Resilience Forum (LRF). In early 2010, the LRF established a business continuity subgroup – called the Business Continuity Practitioners Forum (BCF). This group, as part of its remit, aims to promote business continuity good practice across all business sectors in the LLR region.

During Business Continuity Awareness week 2010, the BCF published a one-page supplement in some of the regions newspapers and their related websites which generated a substantial interest and response from the business community.

The BCF and County Council have combined their business continuity planning and exercise workshops and these have now been rolled out as a LRF initiative across the region. Separate planning and exercise workshops are run on a monthly basis. The BCF has –

- strong links into all the regions Trading Standards teams as well as other business networks e.g. Federation of Small Businesses and Chamber of Commerce;
- started to develop initiatives with its partners (police and fire) to further promote business continuity (e.g. Emergency Response Planning for Schools and Residential Care Providers); and
- launched the LLR Business Continuity Working Group for businesses, regardless of sector and size, in the region. This free, one day workshop, introduced the business community to the LRF business continuity advisors who are available to assist organisations in developing their own practical resilience programmes. The working group will meet on a regular basis (every 8 weeks) to share and develop good practice amongst businesses across the region. The service is provided free of charge to all business sectors.

The County Council and the LRF accept that the aims may not be achieved overnight, but remain optimistic that, over time, their approach will become embedded as one of the key support services offered in the LLR region.

Officer to Contact:
Mondy Holliday, Business Continuity Manager,
Leicestershire County Council 0116 305 5400; businesscontinuity@leics.gov.uk

Case Study 4 – Cardiff Council

Cardiff Council has adopted a unique approach by attempting to embed business continuity promotion as a key strand of its EVAC Cardiff initiative. EVAC Cardiff is a multi-agency service which combines a number of statutory duties and national policing initiatives under one brand. The initiative was a finalist in the 2008 Wales Innovation Awards where it was commended for combining different strands of Cardiff's resilience programme delivered by using clever technology and strong easily distinguishable branding.

The business continuity element of EVAC Cardiff has been delivered in three specific ways, these are –

- electronically via a BCM promotion website – The website has been developed to be eye catching and easy to navigate. The site delivers key messages using simple language with an emphasis on selling the positives rather than focusing on the negative reasons for undertaking this work. It uses different technologies such as video/flash and many downloadable templates and tools. It also links to other sites and a feedback questionnaire which also gathers important statistical data on which sectors and size of business are using the website: http://www.nonverba.com/admin/cardiff/welcome.htm

EVAC Warden training – The training is aimed at any business irrespective of their size or sector. It covers risks specific to Cardiff, how the scheme works and the importance of business continuity, signposting businesses to the promotion website for advice and guidance. Businesses also have the ability

of booking their staff on to EVAC warden training via the promotion website.

Cardiff has developed its own Area Risk Register which is published on the website. The register has been developed by a multi-agency group and also co-opting specific sector specialists to ensure that the register reflects Cardiff's issues and also to cross reference current plans are adequate enough.

The Council managed to negotiate the site development as part of a deal it brokered for internal business continuity software. The only small costs incurred are when updates are required but these very small. Using technology also reduces the amount of officer time as businesses can `help themselves` to whatever resources they choose to use from the website. E-mail has been used to send promotional information to businesses in Cardiff by tapping in to distribution lists from the Council's economic development department which has proven to be an effective and free way of raising awareness of the website.

The strength of the brand locally has made it easier for Cardiff to get buy in from local businesses. The initiative is supported by all the emergency services and this has enhanced the Council's relationship with partners and in particular the business community.

Reaching every business in Cardiff is a challenge and indeed not all businesses have access to the internet in order to benefit from the resources on the website. SMEs are more difficult to engage for a variety of reasons but the Council is always looking to `piggy back` onto other local initiatives as an opportunity to promote the key messages.

Contact:

Cardiff Emergency Management Unit

Tel: 02920 871838 email: emergencymanagement@cardiff.gov.uk

Case Study 5 – Manchester City Council

Manchester's partnership approach to delivering Business Continuity Advice and Assistance

Manchester City Council delivers its business continuity advice and assistance programme via the Manchester Business Continuity Forum (MBCF), which has a membership or nearly 400 organisations. The Council has provided resources (staffing and financial) to support the MBCF's work programme. It remains an equal partner with the other MBCF member organisations. The MBCF is increasing the resilience of Manchester based organisations, through cross-sector collaboration and partnership working. It aims to:

- improve the resilience of Manchester's communities, businesses and voluntary organisations; encouraging them to respond effectively to internal or external threats of disruption, thereby lessening the economic and social impact of emergencies and speeding up the subsequent recovery; and
- contribute to Manchester's prominence as a leading economic hub by showcasing its ongoing commitment to building safe, sustainable and resilient communities by continually increasing the resilience of the city.

MBCF has a number of notable features:

- activities and priorities for the MBCF are always member coordinated, led and driven

- recognition of the part every organisation has to play in ensuring Manchester has 'Business Continuity Whatever the Disruption'
- firm commitment to building on and facilitating the sharing of BCM knowledge and expertise already present in Manchester
- commitment to partnership with leading professional bodies, academia and complementary networks
- real opportunities for a wide range of organisations to learn from each other, share good practice and experience and opportunities to work together to increase the resilience of Manchester
- willingness to share the learning and successes of MBCF outside of Manchester – regionally, nationally and internationally.

The MBCF's accountability to its members is demonstrated by the existence of a Steering Group, which consists of member organisations working to terms of reference and overseeing the delivery of a formal work plan for MBCF.

To help reflect the needs of the City and the ability to provide a wide range of general and specific business continuity advice and guidance, the Steering Group is made up of representatives from a variety of organisations and subject matter experts in the field of resilience. Current Steering Group representation includes senior representation from large blue chip companies, Third Sector organisations, business networks, including the Chamber of Commerce, universities, and the emergency services.

Crucially, Manchester City Council has facilitated the creation of a clear and individual identity for the MBCF to ensure that it is an independent and successful initiative, rather than being identified as a city council project. The membership reflects the diversity of the organisations within the city.

MBCF is dedicated to achieving tangible outcomes including regular educational and awareness seminars, mentorship programme, networking events, scenario based testing and exercise opportunities, publications and consultation activities some of which are described below:

Buddy Scheme

The MBCF is particularly keen to support small and medium enterprises in the city, as well as third sector organisations, by the creation of a mentorship programme. The MBCF Buddy Scheme has been designed so that representatives from organisations with well-developed business continuity arrangements can 'buddy up' with representatives from organisations that would benefit from extra support in this area.

MBCF Network group

The idea behind the MBCF Network Group is to provide an informal space for MBCF members to discuss 'BCM in action' with a very practical focus to help members help each other, by sharing good practice, experience and lessons learned from BCM incidents.

Events and seminars

The MBCF has hosted a variety of events, including a large launch event, which helped shape the direction of the Forum's activities based on direct feedback. Most of the events are aimed at any member of the Forum; however 'Keep Calm and Carry On' was aimed at people from Third Sector organisations specifically, designed to give an introduction to business continuity management. There are plans to hold the event as an annual initiative. In addition to the large scale events, there have been a number of smaller breakfast seminars, focusing on topical issues such as Pandemic Flu preparedness and Counter Terrorism issues.

MBCF publishing

The MBCF has created on-line support, which includes signposting to existing good practice for BCM as well as creating templates and other 'how-to' guides.

City wide exercise

In late summer 2010, the MBCF ran the city's first public-private collaborative exercise, which aimed to exemplify best practice in collaborative exercising. Several businesses participated with representation from emergency services, the council and Manchester University. The participants explored how their various business groups would react individually, collectively and in partnership.

This was one of the first such exercising initiatives in the UK. The objective was to see how the main parties would react to an incident. The exercise was not an emergency services exercise but rather a simultaneous exercise for a large number of major employers and significant companies within the Manchester City Centre area. It ensured that all parties' responses and plans were exercised as they would be in reality.

Further interest:

Internet: www.manchester.gov.uk/MBCF

Alternatively please contact –

Kimberley Hart

Chair of the MBCF

Corporate Business Continuity Officer, Manchester City Council

Email: businesscontinuity@manchester.gov.uk Telephone: 0161 234 3313

Case Study 6 – Shetland Islands Council

Shetland Islands businesses learn how to stay afloat if disaster strikes

When Shetland Islands Council decided to review the way it delivered business continuity (BC) advice to the community, it recognised the need to engage the widest possible audience and overcome the often low take-up of seminars, lectures and other forms of traditional BC support.

"In the past we used to run business continuity workshops and hold seminars for voluntary groups and emergency services," said Ingrid Gall, the council's emergency planning and resilience officer. "But we'd had limited success, often with quite minimal attendance."

The Council took an innovative approach to addressing these challenges. Following a tender process, it appointed a Glasgow-based firm of business continuity consultants to devise an online programme of presentations - www.shetlandcontinuity.co.uk - and an accompanying workbook, all inspired by island life.

"We needed to overcome the common attitude that insurance companies would take care of any disasters," said Ingrid. "What businesses often didn't consider was, if their business had to temporarily close due to a disaster, would they find an alternative supplier, would they lose customers, and would they lose staff? These are the themes that the new training aims to develop."

Such issues are particularly important in the Shetland Islands, which has seen more than its share of commercially damaging incidents in recent years, from storms to maritime disasters. Working closely with the consultants, the Council recognised the vulnerability of the islands to natural and man-made catastrophes, and was keen to make this factor a key component of the online campaign.

The course uses a series of tailor-made online video and audio presentations to help business owners understand the practical relevance of BC to their businesses and to their local environment. As the presentations are online, users can view them at their own pace, and then complete a workbook and a series of contingency checklists to help them develop their own BC plan.

The course begins with a 'newsreader' highlighting some of the perils of island life and of coastal climates. The checklists use specific examples of local industries. For instance, the section covering asset protection cites creel boats and lobster pots as key assets to protect. And the island's unique logistical challenges are also explored, addressing the potential absence of the ferry service in times of severe weather and rough seas.

For Ingrid, this practical, local focus, and the ability for users to dip in and out at their own pace, is key to overcoming business apathy when faced with generic BC information, or one-off seminars, "The website is very practical, easy to work through, and means people can have a full contingency plan of their own within a matter of hours. It's short, sharp and, above all, specifically relates to the businesses and challenges we have here on the islands."

After the initial start-up costs, the website has proved to be a cost-effective way for the Council to meet it business continuity responsibilities – a statutory duty of all local authorities.

"Running seminars can be quite expensive, especially if you don't get many people attending," explained Ingrid. "Now the website's active, it is pretty much self-sustaining and won't need much updating. We're going to further address business continuity at the Shetland Business Gateway for new businesses, and we're also linking it to the Shetland Emergency Planning Forum – so it all forms part of a rolling programme."

Feedback has so far been excellent for the www.shetlandcontinuity.co.uk website. Since its launch in November 2010, take-up has exceeded expectations and many users have contacted the council requesting experts to come and talk to them about other benefits of emergency planning.

For further details contact:

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