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| Report to: | Cabinet | Date of Meeting: | 7 September 2023 |
| Subject: | Business Continuity Policy | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | Yes | Included in Forward Plan: | Yes |
| Exempt Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

In the event of a major incident such as a fire resulting in the loss of access to a building, loss of ICT or pandemic flu it is good practice for organisations to have in place plans to ensure that services can continue to be provided. In the case of local authorities, the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places an additional statutory requirement for Local Authorities to put in place a Business Continuity Management Programme.

The Council has existing business continuity arrangements to ensure the continued delivery of its priority activities to protect its vulnerable residents in the event of an emergency.

This revised policy sets out the Council's continued approach to implement an effective business continuity framework across all service areas which will ensure the timely recovery of priority services in the event of an incident.

The Policy has been revised to clarify and strengthen the responsibilities for all staff members and management.

Recommendation(s):

(1) Members approve the revised Business Continuity Policy.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

Approving a revised Business Continuity Policy provides leadership, clear direction and priority for the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs. There are no additional revenue costs associated with the revised policy outside of the existing budgets.

(B) Capital Costs. There are no capital costs associated with the proposed revised policy.

Implications of the Proposals:

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| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): There are no resource implications. | |
| Legal Implications: To ensure compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications. | |
| Impact on Children and Young People: No | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
| The revised has a neutral climate emergency implication as it is proposing continuing with the same approach as the previous policy. | |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

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| Protect the most vulnerable: Ensuring that the Council can continue to provide key services to the most vulnerable is positive. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Positive. |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: Neutral. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: Positive. |
| Drivers of change and reform: Neutral. |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Neutral. |
| Greater income for social investment: Neutral. |
| Cleaner Greener: Neutral. |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7335/23.....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5535/23....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee / Council meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Business Continuity Policy

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In the event of a major incident such as a fire resulting in the loss of access to a building, loss of ICT or pandemic flu it is good practice for organisations to have in place plans to ensure that services can continue to be provided. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places an additional statutory requirement for Local Authorities to put in place a Business Continuity Management Programme to ensure the Council can deliver its priority activities in the event of an emergency.
- 1.2 The Council's constitution states that services are expected to have arrangements in place to ensure the effective identification, evaluation and management of priority activities for the Council to recover.

2. Revised Policy

- 2.1 The revised Policy (Appendix 1) sets out Sefton Council's commitment to the management of Business Continuity by ensuring we have a Corporate Business Continuity Plan supported by Strategic, Tactical and Operational Recovery plans. This will enable the Council to respond to any incident or disruption and maintain our ability to continue to deliver priority activities and meet our contractual, legislative and regulatory obligations.

- 2.2 The Policy sets out that the Strategic Leadership Board has overall accountability to ensure this policy is effectively implemented throughout the Council. To achieve this goal, we will:
- Maintain a Business Continuity Management Programme that broadly aligns to the requirements of ISO 22301 and the Business Continuity Institute Good Practice Guide 2018.
 - Establish Business Continuity objectives and targets, processes and procedures relevant to managing risk and improving organisational resilience.
 - Ensure that the Business Continuity Management Programme is subject to on-going appraisal against this policy evidenced by a structured testing regime.
 - Maintain and improve Business Continuity Management Programme arrangements through preventive and corrective actions; and ensure that the Business Continuity Management Programme and associated policy, standards, procedures and plans are embedded into the day-to-day activities and culture of the business.
- 2.3 The Policy has been revised to clarify and strengthen the responsibilities for all staff members and management.
- 2.4 As a result, the revised policy provides a strong foundation to enhance the Council's approach to business continuity across the organisation. Due to the statutory nature of business continuity, the revised Policy is presented to Cabinet for approval.

3. Current and proposed activity to embed business continuity

- 3.1 The Risk and Resilience Team are currently refreshing the Corporate Business Continuity Plan which will be shared with the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB). An externally hosted business continuity exercise in January 2023 with SLB identified a number of recommendations which the Team are currently implementing.
- 3.2 A further annual exercise for SLB is being planned for January 2024.
- 3.3 There is a continual programme of renewing the existing business continuity plans in place across the Council as well activation tests and refreshing a specific business continuity risk register.

4. Progress on business continuity activity across Council

- 4.1 Progress on embedding business continuity is provided to the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Members should approve the revised Business Continuity Policy.