Report to Risk Management Steering Group
meeting on 20th April 2009

Since the Steering Group last met I am sorry to have to report that progress has been slower than I would have wished, however, this is not totally unexpected as talking to colleagues dealing with business continuity in similar organisations elsewhere they have experienced a similar situation with some taking several years before the organisation has a robust plan in place. In some respects we are fortunate that we are starting with a blank sheet and not having to rewrite previous plans or policy.

While progress is slow I urge the Steering Group not to lose heart on this matter. I am as determined as ever that this authority will have a robust Business Continuity Plan at departmental, directorate and corporate level, but it will not be achieved overnight or even next week. I am wary of introducing unrealistic targets as this would only be setting up the individuals undertaking this task to fail and that is not, in my opinion, a recipe for success.

One of the fundamental problems is that introducing a formalised process of business continuity into an organisation like Uttlesford District Council is that we are in effect introducing a huge cultural change. A not uncommon initial reaction from staff involved in the process is the belief that business continuity is nothing to do with them, but of course it is everything to do with them, and every other member of staff in this authority.

From talking to several of the officers around the authority who have been given responsibility for this task, it is apparent that the process they are being asked to complete is causing them to totally rethink some of the ways things are done, or could be done in the event of a crisis.

I have a minor concern over the information flow between those who have been charged with responsibility for writing the plans and I but these will hopefully have been addressed by the date of this meeting when I speak to the SMB/HODs meeting the week before.

Of more concern is the I.T. problem on Monday 30th March 2009 that left most staff without any I.T. for most of the morning. Lisa and I have shared our concerns from a business continuity point of view, with John Mitchell, and we await with interest the report into the incident that he has now called for.

To summarise, Business Continuity is still "work in progress" and will continue to be so for some time to come, however I hope to be able to report more positively at our next meeting.

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