

Committee: Operational Resilience Task and Finish Group

Date: Monday 18th
March 2024

Title: Broader Operational Resilience

Report Author Peter Holt, Chief Executive

Summary

1. This report describes work being undertaken to identify any system weakness across the council.

Recommendations

2. None

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	Management colleagues are being consulted as per paragraph 10
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	The resilience review summarised in this report has implications across the workforce.

Situation

6. Beyond the issues specifically around the waste service disruption, this experience has flagged up the risk of 'single points of failure' elsewhere in the organisation. Although the Council is one of the larger local employers, with some 330 staff, these staff are spread over a vast number of different specialist services. There is a rich and proud tradition of Council staff stepping sideways to help fill gaps in other services under pressure, caused for whatever reason, and this was proved most visibly during the pandemic. The fact remains however that there are so many various specialist, complex or statutory requirements which cannot instantly or smoothly be filled by such best endeavours.
7. The chief executive has therefore initiated a process to consider the whole organisation's business functions to spot for system weaknesses in terms of resilience and business continuity to see how well they are already mapped and covered, proportionate to their risk.
8. For example, there is a requirement that at the end of every working day, every Council banks with the Government any funds over a certain agreed limit, rather than leaving them in banks overnight. As a district council, UDC often holds sizeable sums not only of its own money, but of Council Tax receipts collected on behalf of other preceptor authorities (with 92% of such tax collected paid over periodically to Essex County Council, the Police, the Fire and Rescue Service, and all of our Parish and Town Councils who raise their own precept), so these can be very sizeable sums. The physical process for transferring this money to Government coffers late in the afternoon requires specialist knowledge, security equipment and log-ons, and so there is in place an identified local resilience system within our finance team to carry this out.
9. This council-wide resilience check exercise will both test the appropriateness of that system, as well as capture and record it centrally in the Council in a way that is not currently done, so that any vacancies or absences in those specific posts that carry out this work can be flagged up through an HR system, with step-in arrangements put in place as appropriate.
10. This action includes an immediate addition of a risk to the Corporate Risk Register (as below), and an initial trawl of the organisation by the Director of Business Change and People to identify such issues (see template as below). The chief executive has also secured the agreement of an experienced director of a neighbouring local authority to join in this exercise as a 'critical friend', providing insight and independent, constructive challenge and advice.
11. A report back on this resilience review will be provided in due course, though by the nature of the risks and issues involved, various specific details will not be published for security reasons.

New strategic risk:

NEW RISK

- *Impact of regulatory/enforcement/intervention action by various Government departments/regulators on UDC – both their individual risks and impacts, and also cumulative impacts on both operations, reputation, ability to recruit and retain etc.*

23-CR-21 BUSINESS RESILIENCE			Responsible Cabinet Member: Cllr Lees	
Risk Owner: Peter Holt				
<p>If the council does not have officers in post with the correct statutory or regulatory qualifications to carry out the key functions/activities of the council or ensure adequate back up is in place to avoid single points of failure this could lead to adverse impacts on service provision and reputational damage.</p>	Original Likelihood	Original Impact	Original Score	Current Controls
	2	4	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and proactive management of regulatory requirements both at a corporate and operational level • Succession planning/deputisation of key roles within the authority to mitigate operational/service failure • Support professional qualification or specialised training programmes throughout the organisation to mitigate single points of failure
	Current Likelihood	Current Impact	Current Score	Further Action
	4	4	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To update Business Continuity plans for each service area to include where specific qualifications and/or licences are required and ensure back up options are specified to avoid single points of failure and ensure continuity of service delivery
	Target Likelihood	Target Impact	Target Score	Planned Completion date
	1	4	4	31.03.2024

Template for organisational trawl (edited to remove specifics):

Operational Resilience



Service Area	Activity/Function	Responsible Officer/s	Back up/Deputy	Service Impact	Other information
Environmental Services	Operator's Licence				
Finance	Statutory Officer - Section 151 Officer				
Finance	Treasury Management				
Legal	Statutory Officer – Monitoring Officer				
Car Parks					
Economic Development	Not applicable				
Private Finance Initiative					
Homelessness					
Housing Strategy					
Building Control	Building Inspections				
Development Management					
Highways Infrastructure Planning					
Planning Management					
Planning Policy					
Planning Specialists					
Contract, Performance and Risk Management					
Committee Administration					