

Appendix 4: Enhanced written updates

CRR 2: Organisational capacity to deliver.

This risk remains high. The Council financial position has meant that as part of the savings strategy for 24/25 a number of vacant posts have been deleted from the organisation. Furthermore the number of Group Heads in the Senior Management Team has now reduced from 9 to 7. The latter has meant a number of services have been reallocated to other Group Heads. There remains a lack of financial resource to provide additional support in many areas which are under significant pressure.

These challenges mean that the organisation (both officers and members) will need to consider very carefully the resourcing of any new projects and how much time will be required to deliver existing and future work. The agreed financial strategy includes a commitment to review how services are delivered and it is anticipated that this work will also look at how further efficiencies can be made. This is a very significant piece of work and will involve the whole organisation. The outcomes of this work are scheduled for further consideration in late 24/25 or 25/26. Any implementation will follow afterwards.

The Financial Strategy Report was presented at the Special Meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 January 2024. This includes further information regarding the information above and can be viewed on the Council's website: Arun District Council.

Action has been taken to provide stability to the organisation including updating the Council's policy on its approach to flexible working. The use of agency staff is gradually being reduced through permanent recruitment and where that remains challenging for certain professions a range of other incentives are being used such as Market Force Supplements. However the usage of agency staff has reduced by over 50% in the last 18 months and now represents less than 10% of the workforce. Whilst the remuneration package is an important element of recruiting quality staff so are other factors such as the Council's reputation. It has been recognised that there has been a 'toxic' political environment in the past and this led to poor officer/member relationships. The last year has seen significant improvements on both fronts but efforts are required from all members and officers to build upon this good work.

In December 2022 staff and member surveys were issued. The response rate was very positive but there were some difficult messages to read, some of which related to the above. Much work has been done to improve the cohesiveness of the organisation including improving internal communications and launching both new values for the organisation but also a behaviour and competency framework. It is hoped to repeat these surveys in the summer of this year to provide an update on progress in addressing the issues identified in the original surveys but also undertake a health check of the organisation.

All of the issues identified above contribute to stress. Some stress can be a positive but excessive or prolonged periods of stress are not good and stress is a significant

contributor to the Councils current level of absence. Senior management is looking at ways to manage stress more effectively, particularly where the root causes of stress continue to be stubborn to address. As part of this the Council is engaging with the Health & Safety Executive to assist.

The appointment of the new Chief Executive provides an opportunity for a 'new set of eyes' to review the work to date, the proposed work programme and the ability of the Council to deliver not only the existing services but any transformational change. The appointment will also allow the Directors to focus on their substantive roles which will assist the Group Heads.

Finally, to confirm that as 'Business Continuity' has its own corporate risk it hasn't been specifically added to this risk as both

CRR 5: Corporate Business Continuity

In July 2023 an internal audit report was produced on Business Continuity and Emergency Planning. The audit found that there was a limited assurance opinion, and that improvement was required to effectively manage risks.

As a result, actions were agreed to address the limited assurance. These actions formed part of the audit report and have been regularly taken to CMT performance board to monitor progress and reported to the Audit & Governance Committee as part of the Internal Audit Progress Report.

The following information is taken from the Corporate Risk Register and provides a detailed overview of progress in addressing the requirements identified for Business Continuity and Emergency Planning.

Corporate Business Continuity Plan (CBCP). An updated version was produced and approved by CMT in October 2023. This addressed shortfalls identified at the outcome of the Audit in July 2023.

The plan sets out the following:

- Scope and Accountability within the organisation
- A terms of reference for the **Business Recovery Management Team (BRMT)** including roles and responsibilities.
- A checklist for activities during an incident
- Critical activities and recovery time objectives for identified priority services.
- Possible threats and suggested recovery strategies
- Draft agendas for meetings of the BRMT
- Action log template
- BRMT contact details
- RAG (Red / Amber / Green) report template
- **Business Impact Analysis (BIA)** and **Business Continuity Plan (BCP)** templates and guidance to officers for their completion.

The BRMT has been meeting on a 6 monthly basis with the aim of reviewing the BCP and implementation across the council. In addition, the training and exercising has been reviewed. Tasks include identifying possible risks and ensuring Group Heads have signed off all BIA and BCP for all services areas. Minutes of the meeting are reported to CMT.

All service areas are required to review and update their BIA and BCP annually or if there is a change in service. As part of the BCP each service is required to address how their service would continue to operate with loss of IT.

Storage of all plans is made on the separate server to enable access in case of IT failure and managers advised to retain up to date paper copies.

Procurement tender processes require all major contractors to have business continuity plans in place. These are required to be set out in all service BCP.

Working with the council's insurance firm Protector Insurance, an exercise to test the current business continuity plans is due this year, dates to be confirmed. Where improvements are identified these will be included in revised plans.

Generic training for all staff is to be rolled out to provide greater awareness of business continuity across the organisation.

Emergency Planning

CMT approved an identified role and programme of training (Feb 2024) for staff across the organisation. This training is to be implemented over the next 12 months and kept under review.

A 3 year plan for emergency plan review, training and exercising was approved by CMT (Feb 2024). This is to form a continuous 3 year cycle.