



RUSHCLIFFE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**BUSINESS CONTINUITY
STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN
2024 - 2027**

**VERSION 1
July 2024**

OFFICIAL

CONTENTS

1. Executive Summary	3
1.1. Purpose and Scope	3
1.2. Aims and Objectives	3
1.3 Alignment.....	4
1.4 Integration with Existing Continuity Plans.....	4
1.5 Risk Assessment and Business Impact Analysis.....	4
1.6 Impact Analysis and Prioritisation.....	5
1.7 Roles and responsibilities.....	6
2.0 The Business Continuity Process	8
2.1 Response and Recovery strategies.....	8
2.2 Communication and coordination.....	9
2.3 Training and Awareness.....	10
2.4 Continuous improvement.....	10
2.5 Governance and compliance.....	11
2.6 Conclusion.....	11
Appendix	
Appendix A Key Actions.....	14

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Purpose and Scope

Rushcliffe Borough Council provides a wide range of services to the local community, many of which are statutory functions. Any failure, actual or perceived, to deliver the full range of services will have a negative impact on both the community and the authority. As such, all reasonable measures should be adopted to minimise the likelihood of business or service interruption. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) places a specific duty on local authorities to ensure that they have prepared, as far as reasonably practical, to continue to provide critical functions during any disruptive incident. However, the CCA is just one of the key drivers for business continuity.

The Business Continuity Strategy provides the operational structure for responding to serious disruption and can be summarised as follows:

- To have an operational document that sets out priorities, management structures and communication mechanisms to ensure an appropriate response to any disruption.
- The plan addresses the range of the Council's service areas as well as significant contractors such as Parkwood Leisure. Where appropriate it considers the interdependencies of different organisations and partnership arrangements.
- Service areas will continue to prepare and maintain their own Business Continuity arrangements as appropriate.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of the Strategy is to anticipate risks, mitigate where possible, and to have flexible and tested plans in place to minimise disruption where unplanned events significantly disrupt normal business.

The objectives are to:

- Ensure the Council can continue to exercise its critical functions in the event of an emergency.
- Identify the potential areas of vulnerability in Council services.
- Determine overall priorities for recovery of functions if disruption takes place.
- Build on processes already in place for risk management, ensuring all existing and developing plans are integrated into the overall framework.
- Ensure all Council areas are involved in the preparation of supporting plans, so that there is an effective and consistent response to service continuity.
- Undertake training and awareness programmes for staff, councillors, and partners as appropriate and carry out regular tests of the plan to validate arrangements.

1.3 Alignment

- **Support for Core Values and Objectives:** The business continuity strategy supports Rushcliffe Borough Council's core values of service, resilience, and public safety by ensuring continuous delivery of essential services during disruptions.
- **Enhancing Public Trust and Confidence:** By implementing a robust continuity strategy, the organisation demonstrates its commitment to protecting the community, thereby enhancing public trust and confidence in its ability to handle emergencies.
- **Fulfilling Legal and Ethical Obligations:** The strategy aligns with the organisation's mission by ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and ethical obligations, safeguarding the welfare of employees and the public.

1.4 Integration with Existing Continuity Plans

- **Complementing Current Plans:** The strategy builds upon existing service business continuity plans by providing a high-level framework that enhances and supports detailed operational plans.
- **Consistency and Coherence:** Ensures that all continuity efforts are consistent and coherent across different departments and functions, preventing fragmented or conflicting actions during emergencies.
- **Strengthening Interdepartmental Coordination:** Promotes interdepartmental coordination and collaboration, ensuring that all parts of the organisation are working towards common continuity goals.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Incorporates lessons learned from previous incidents and exercises, ensuring that the strategy and plans are continuously updated and improved to reflect current best practices and emerging threats.
- **Resource Optimisation:** Aligns resource allocation and investment in continuity capabilities with the overall strategic priorities of the organisation, ensuring that resources are used effectively and efficiently.

1.5 Risk Assessment and Business Impact Analysis

The types of risk that can impact business continuity are detailed below and are considered as part of the Council's Risk Management review process.

- a) **Natural Disasters**
 - **Flooding:** Rushcliffe is prone to flooding, particularly in areas near the River Trent and other waterways. This can lead to property damage, road closures, and disruption of services.
 - **Severe Weather:** Heavy snowfall, storms, and high winds can cause infrastructure damage, power outages, and impede transport networks.
- b) **Technological Risks**
 - **Cybersecurity Threats:** Increasing risks of cyber-attacks, such as data breaches, ransomware, and phishing attacks, which can compromise sensitive council data and disrupt IT systems.
 - **IT System Failures:** Outages or malfunctions in the council's IT infrastructure, affecting online services, communications, and internal operations.
- c) **Human-Induced Events**
 - **Industrial Accidents:** Potential for accidents in local industrial areas or during transportation of hazardous materials, leading to chemical spills or fires.
 - **Terrorist Threats:** Although less likely, the possibility of terrorist activities cannot be entirely ruled out, potentially targeting public spaces or Council facilities.
- d) **Public Health Emergencies**
 - **Pandemics:** Outbreaks of diseases like COVID-19 can lead to widespread illness, overwhelming healthcare services, and causing significant disruption to Council operations and public services.

- **Localised Disease Outbreaks:** Issues such as contaminated water supplies or foodborne illnesses affecting local populations.
- e) **Operational Risks**
 - **Supply Chain Disruptions:** Delays in procurement of essential supplies and services, impacting Council projects and service delivery.
 - **Labor Strikes:** Industrial action by Council employees or key service providers, leading to interruptions in service delivery.
 - **Key Personnel Loss:** Loss of critical staff due to illness, retirement, or other factors, impacting the continuity of operations.
- f) **Environmental Risks**
 - **Climate Change:** Longer-term changes in weather patterns, increased frequency of extreme weather events, and impacts on local ecosystems and infrastructure.
 - **Pollution Incidents:** Accidental releases of pollutants into the environment, affecting public health and local wildlife.
- g) **Economic Risks**
 - **Financial Constraints:** Budget cuts, reductions in government funding, and economic downturns affecting the Council's ability to deliver services and maintain infrastructure.
 - **Economic Volatility:** Fluctuations in the local economy impacting business rates and Council revenues.
- h) **Legal and Regulatory Risks**
 - **Compliance Failures:** Risk of failing to meet legal, regulatory, or statutory obligations, leading to penalties, legal action, or loss of public trust.
 - **Litigation Risks:** Potential legal disputes involving the Council, resulting in financial liabilities and reputational damage.
- i) **Infrastructure Risks**
 - **Aging Infrastructure:** Increased risk of failure in aging Council-owned buildings, roads, and facilities, necessitating significant maintenance or replacement.
 - **Construction Accidents:** Risks associated with ongoing construction and development projects, including worker safety and project delays.
- j) **Social Risks**
 - **Civil Unrest:** Protests or social movements affecting public order and safety, requiring Council response and potentially disrupting normal operations.
 - **Community Relations:** Issues with local communities, including opposition to Council initiatives or developments, impacting project timelines and public cooperation.

1.6 Impact Analysis and Prioritisation

The identified critical functions appendix, in the Rushcliffe Borough Council Business Continuity Plan 2022, outlines which services and functions are critical and will need to conduct a Business Impact Assessment feeding into the Business Continuity Plan.

Each identified critical function is responsible for undertaking a three-yearly review.

Business Impact Assessment Co-ordination

To ensure our Business Continuity Planning (BCP) remains up-to-date and aligned with the latest organizational priorities, each department will be required to meet with the Emergency Planning Officer to conduct a comprehensive review and update of their Business Impact Analysis (BIA). The BIA is then used by each service to put a Service Business Continuity Plan in place. The Business Impact assessments and Business Continuity Plans are reviewed by the Emergency Planning Officer to ensure all possibly interruptions have been considered and the plans are in place to mitigate them.

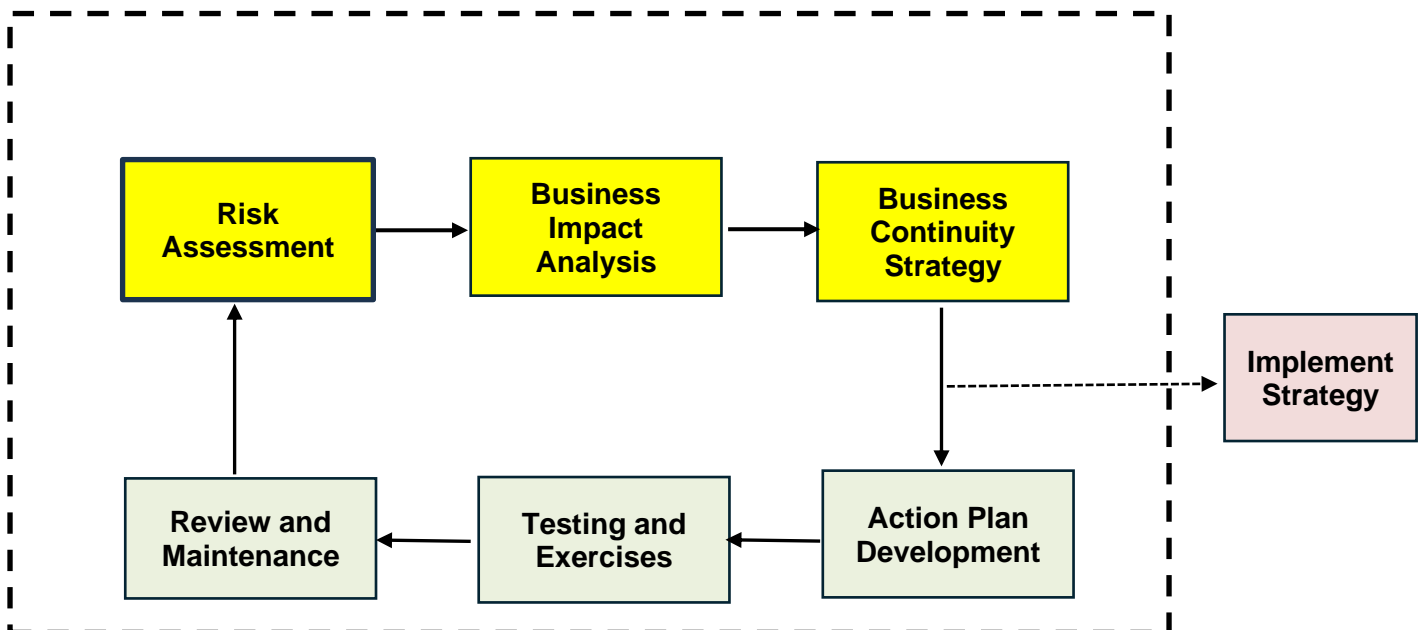
This process will involve:

- **Assessment of Critical Functions:** Evaluating and identifying critical functions, resources, and dependencies within each department.

- **Risk and Impact Evaluation:** Analysing potential risks and the impact of disruptions on departmental operations.
- **Continuity Planning Integration:** Incorporating the findings from the updated BIAs into each department's Business Continuity Plan (BCP).
- **Strategic Action Plan Alignment:** Ensuring that the updated departmental BCPs feed directly into the overarching Business Continuity Strategic Action Plan.

By systematically updating the BIAs and integrating them into the BCP and Strategic Action Plan, we strengthen our organizational resilience and ensure that our continuity strategies are reflective of current risks and operational realities. The Business Continuity Management Lifecycle is depicted in the diagram below, summarising the process to effectively manage business continuity.

Exhibit 1: Business Continuity Management Lifecycle



1.7 Roles and Responsibilities

Emergency Executive Team (EET)

The role of the EET is to:

- Work with the Local Resilience Forum when the Emergency Plan is active
- Ensure the safety of all employees, councillors and visitors to RBC premises
- Ensure that arrangements are put in place to enable the authority to continue delivering essential services
- Ensure that arrangements are put in place to enable the authority to re-establish normal working in the shortest possible time
- Direct the service area business continuity teams
- Direct staff established to assist in the recovery from a business continuity incident
- Suspend standing orders (if required)
- Identify new priorities
- Advise the media through the Communication and Customer services team
- Liaise with councillors

The core membership of the EET will include:

- Chief Executive
- Director (Neighbourhoods)
- Director (Finance and Corporate services)
- Director (Development and Economic Growth)
- Strategic ICT Manager
- Emergency Planning Officer (when required)
- Lead specialist Communications and Customer Services

Other personnel (e.g. Services Managers, Lead Specialists) may be needed depending on the nature of the incident.

If specific staff are unavailable, or the incident is prolonged enough to require a staff rota, the EET will determine suitable officers to deputise during any absence.

2.0 The Business Continuity Process

Irrespective of an unusual or disruptive event, occurring internally or externally, the capabilities of the Council to provide its statutory and legal duties, services to the community and income generation must be maintained. This process aims to address the issues likely to arise, and to identify measures to mitigate them.

The Business Continuity process aims to address the issues likely to arise, and potential solutions, grouped in the following three areas:

- **MITIGATION** - Identify and select proactive measures to reduce likelihood of disruption
- **CONTINUITY AND RECOVERY** - Maintenance of essential services and set timescales for recovery, returning to normality
- **INCIDENT RESPONSE STRUCTURE** - Provide a mechanism for responding to an incident.

Business Continuity is an on-going cyclical process of risk assessment, management and review with the purpose of ensuring that the business can continue if risks materialise.

2.1 Response and Recovery strategies

Strategies for immediate response to disruptions.

- **Classification:** A system to classify incidents by severity and impact.
- **Rapid Response Team:** Establish designated teams with clear roles.
- **Communication:** Robust communication protocols for timely updates.
- **Assessment:** Rapid initial assessments to determine the scope of incidents.
- **Command System:** Use of an Incident Command System for coordinated response.
- **Documentation:** Keep detailed records for post-incident analysis.

Short-term and long-term recovery strategies.

- **Critical Functions:** Prioritise restoring critical services.
- **Temporary Solutions:** Implement interim measures to maintain operations.
- **Staff Support:** Provide resources and support for affected staff.

Long-term Recovery:

- **Assessment:** Conduct a comprehensive impact assessment.
- **Planning:** Develop detailed long-term recovery plans.
- **Improvement:** Integrate lessons learned into future planning.

- **Community Engagement:** Rebuild trust and address community needs.

Resource Allocation

Necessary resources for effective recovery.

- **Personnel:**
 - **Roles:** Identify and train key personnel.
 - **Surge Capacity:** Plan for additional staffing needs.
 - **Safety:** Ensure health and safety of response teams.
- **Technology:**
 - **IT Infrastructure:** Maintain robust IT systems.
 - **Data Recovery:** Implement data backup and recovery solutions.
 - **Communication Tools:** Provide reliable tools for coordination.
- **Equipment:**
 - **Supplies:** Stockpile essential supplies and equipment.
 - **Inventory:** Maintain a resource inventory.
 - **Logistics:** Establish logistics systems for resource management.

These will prepare the Council to handle disruptions effectively, ensuring the continuity of essential services and community well-being.

2.2 Communication and coordination

Protocols for internal communication during a disruption.

Communication with Staff

- **Emergency Call-Out:** The Executive Management Team (EMT) authorises initial emergency call-out and staff mobilisation.
- **Team Communication:** Service managers are responsible for team communication using home and mobile numbers. A council-wide text service is available for corporate messages.
- **Updates:** The Communication and Customer Services team ensures employees are updated via email, intranet, and in-person as appropriate.

Communication with the Public

- **Public Information:** The EMT assesses and approves information for public release. The Communication and Customer Services team prepares and distributes this information and advises the media.
- **Press Releases:** Regular press releases and media arrangements are managed by the Communication and Customer Services team.

Communication with Councillors

- **Information Flow:** The Communication and Customer Services team keeps councillors informed. Councillors may assist in public communication and reassurance. An information document on emergency planning is available for all councillors.

Communication with the Media

- **Media Liaison:** The Communication and Customer Services team liaises with the media to ensure timely and accurate information is provided, regardless of the incident's scale.

This strategy ensures coordinated, accurate, and timely communication with all stakeholders during a business continuity event.

2.3 Training and awareness

All members of the Executive Emergency Team and the Service Teams need to be trained, and exercised, on an annual basis to ensure that they are fully aware of how to implement the plan. All

staff should be informed of the process and further training should be available if required. Councillors should be trained to ensure that they know of the existence of the plan and how they can assist, politically, in the continuity and recovery process.

Conducting awareness campaigns is essential to fostering a culture of preparedness within the Council and the wider community. These campaigns will include regular training sessions, workshops, and informational materials aimed at educating staff, elected members, and residents about potential risks and the importance of readiness. By promoting awareness and providing practical guidance on emergency procedures, we aim to ensure that everyone is equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to respond effectively during a disruption. Engaging the community through various communication channels will reinforce the message that preparedness is a shared responsibility, enhancing overall resilience.

Testing and exercising

Regular testing and exercising are vital to ensure the effectiveness of the Council's business continuity plans. We will conduct scheduled drills and simulations to test various aspects of the continuity plans, enabling staff to practice their roles and refine response procedures. Additionally, we will establish processes for reviewing and evaluating the outcomes of these tests and exercises. This evaluation will help identify strengths, pinpoint areas for improvement, and ensure that our plans remain robust and effective in the face of potential disruptions. Continuous improvement through testing and feedback is key to maintaining a resilient and prepared Council.

2.4 Continuous improvement

Monitoring and Review

Established mechanisms for ongoing monitoring and reviewing of the business continuity strategy. Regularly assess the strategy's effectiveness through audits and staff feedback to ensure it remains aligned with emerging risks and operational changes.

Feedback Loop

Create a feedback loop to incorporate lessons learned from incidents and exercises. By systematically capturing and analysing this information, we can make informed adjustments to our plans, enhancing our overall preparedness and response capabilities.

Update Cycle

A schedule for regular updates to the continuity strategy. This includes annual reviews and revisions, as well as updates triggered by significant organisational changes or after-action reports from real incidents and exercises, ensuring the strategy remains current and effective.

2.5 Governance and Compliance

Governance Structure

There is a clear governance structure in place for overseeing business continuity efforts. This includes defined roles and responsibilities within the Executive Management Team and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services to provide strategic direction, ensure accountability, and monitor progress. To this end, there is an Action Plan to deliver the Strategy (see Appendix A) with an overall review of the strategy by the relevant Scrutiny Group for councillor 'buy-in' and support.

Compliance Requirements

The strategy meets legal, regulatory, and industry standards. Regularly reviewing and updating the business continuity plan to comply with the CCA and regulations, incorporating best practices and guidelines to maintain the highest levels of preparedness and resilience.

2.6 Conclusion

To be an effective management tool and to truly embed the process throughout the organisation, the business continuity strategy should recognise and be influenced by the Council's operational and strategic risk registers. This will lead automatically to the strategy linking into the Internal Audit plan, the corporate plan and the budget process. The strategy should also recognise the Community Risk Register, maintained by the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum, to ensure that external impacts are recognised and allowed for.

The business continuity process must also be closely linked to the Emergency Planning process. In any major scenario it is likely that other organisations in the Borough will be affected as well, and it is essential for the Council to be able to respond to their requirements as well as its own. Due to the nature of the response required from Emergency Planning it is likely that they will be the first service to receive external information regarding potential issues and it is imperative that there is a system for incorporating these issues in the business continuity process.

Appendix A: Key Actions

Key Recommendations	Action	Date
1.Enhance Risk Assessment and Business Impact Analysis	Review and Validate Comprehensive Risk Assessments	September 2024
	Reassess Detailed Business Impact Analyses (BIA)	September 2024
	Evaluate and Enhance Mitigation and Recovery Strategies	October 2024
2.Develop and Implement a Robust Continuity Framework	Review Strategic Framework (Report to CoG)	September 2024
	Define Roles and Responsibilities (Report to COG)	September 2024 November 2024
	Implement Ongoing Training and Communication	
3.Strengthen Response and Recovery Capabilities	Confirm Incident Response Plans	October 2024
	Confirm Detailed Recovery Strategies	October 2024
	Allocate Necessary Resources	October 2024
4.Improve Communication and Coordination	Review Internal Communication Protocols	January 2025
	Develop External Communication Strategies	January 2025
	Foster Collaboration with External Agencies and Partners	January 2025
5.Promote Training and Awareness	Design and Deliver Training Programs	February 2025
	Launch Awareness Campaigns	February 2025
	Evaluate and Update Training and Awareness Initiatives	February 2025

6.Regular Testing and Exercising	Schedule Regular Drills and Simulations Establish Evaluation Processes	September 2024 September 2024
7.Commit to Continuous Improvement	Mechanisms for Ongoing Monitoring and Review (Internal Audit Report) Create a Feedback Loop. (Reporting to Director and Strategy Update to COG)	September - 2025 September 2027
8.Ensure Strong Governance and Compliance	Define a Governance Structure Ensure Compliance with Standards Maintain Documentation and Reporting	Complete – September 2024 Complete - September 2024 Complete – September 2024
9.Resource management and Financial Planning	Ensure adherence to relevant legal, regulatory, and industry standards related to business continuity. Regular audits and reviews should be conducted to verify compliance and address any budget requirements as part of the Council's MTFS review.	Complete – September 2024 Annual Budget process and Internal Audit Review every 3 years