POLICY

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

What is in the Policy?	The purpose of this policy is to set out the standards and working practices to be employed by members and officers in the event of an incident which threatens personnel, building or the operational procedures of the organisation and requires special measures to be taken to restore daily activities.
Date Adopted	Jan 2024
Review Date	Jan 2026

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BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Plan details the procedures that will be followed in the event of significant interruption to the business of the Council. The plan covers all sites at which Ware Town Council provide services to the public. This is an operational document which will be monitored and updated.

2. AIM OF THE PLAN

2.1 The aim of this Business Continuity Plan (BCP) is to ensure that the Town Council is able to continue business with as little disruption as possible, no matter what the location, and to ensure that any critical business functions are re-established as soon as possible.

3. PLAN ACTIVATION SEQUENCE

3.1 For larger councils such as Districts, Counties, Unitary Councils, the Fire Service and Police the following activation sequence is used. In the event of any major disaster or terrorist act the Town Council would follow the instructions of Hertfordshire County Council's 'Hertfordshire Resilience' team who have statutory responsibility for implementation of emergency procedures under the Civil Contingencies Act. It is therefore important that all staff understand the activation sequence.

- "Standby" phase – Standby will be used as an early warning of a situation which might at some later stage escalate and thus require implementation of this plan. A standby phase allows key officers time to think, brief staff, start a business interruption log and prepare for the deployment of resources should an implementation message be received. Resources are not normally deployed at this stage. It is possible that 'Stand Down' may follow this type of alert.

- "Implementation" phase – Implementation will be used to request the immediate utilisation of the Council's officers and resources in the activation of the plan.

- "Stand Down" phase - Stand Down will be used to signify the phased withdrawal of any services provided due to the activation of the plan.

Ware Town Council's only critical business function is the cemetery service.

3.2 The Town Council will endeavour to support and provide assistance to other organisations in the event of a major disaster in accordance with the Major Incident Plan.

4. WARE TOWN COUNCIL PLAN ACTIVATION

4.1 The Town Council does not require such a detailed activation sequence. In the event of a business interruption, an immediate notification will be given to the most appropriate manager who will then inform the Town Clerk. If there is an interruption to the IT system the Finance Manager should be notified to contact the IT support service.

4.2 In response to any major interruption to business the Town Clerk will notify the all staff, the Mayor, the Leader of the Council and any emergency services.

4.3 It is generally accepted that most business interruptions will be able to be dealt with in a relatively short space of time without the need to contact any other organisation or persons.

4.4	The Town Clerk and senior managers will be provided with feedback regarding any significant business interruption, which will allow an assessment of the effectiveness of this plan and inform any future planning.

5.	**NOTIFICATION OF BUSINESS INTERRUPTION**

5.1	Notification of a business interruption will be most likely to come from Town Council personnel who occupy the sites identified within the plan or East Hertfordshire District Council in the case of a major emergency. In any situation it is essential that the Town Clerk is contacted as soon as possible.

5.2	The Town Clerk, Grounds Maintenance Manager, Operations Manager, Finance Manager, Communications Manager and Marketing and Events Manager have the authority to activate the plan and will act as the co-ordinators to assist the quickest return to normal business.

5.3	The Town Clerk will assume the role of the Business Continuity Manager. The primary role of the Business Continuity Manager is to formulate the Town Council's overall strategic response to the business interruption. The Town Clerk will inform any other relevant bodies such as the Emergency Services, the Mayor and the Leader of the Council.

5.4	In the absence of the Town Clerk, the Finance Manager will assume responsibility and act on behalf of the Town Clerk.

5.5.	 Where an incident involves the disruption of IT services the Finance Manager must be informed immediately.

6.	**BUSINESS FUNCTION IMPORTANCE**

6.1	Business Critical Functions are defined as follows:

- Class One Function - an essential function needing to be restored within 0-24 hours.

- Class Two Function - is an important function needing to be restored within 3 days.

- Class Three Function - is a function which can be restored progressively after 14 days.

- Time Sensitive Functions - are identified as being functions which become more important to re-instate depending upon the time of the week, month or year etc.

7.	**DEFINITIONS**

7.1	A 'Business Interruption' is any unwanted incident which threatens personnel, building or the operational procedures of the organisation and requires special measures to be taken in order to restore daily activities. For the purpose of the plan the following scales of business interruption have been determined:

- Minor Business Interruption - is defined as a business interruption which affects part of a service area.

- Significant Business Interruption - is defined as a business interruption which affects a number of service areas but not in their entirety which may be located over a number of sites, or one specific site.

- Major Business Interruption - is defined as a business interruption which affects a number of service areas in their entirety or more than one specific site.

8. <u>BUSINESS SUMMARY</u>

8.1 Ware Town Council has one 'class one function' (burials) and 'time sensitive functions' such as the payment of wages and accounts. All other services are likely to be 'class three functions'.

8.2 Generally speaking any business interruptions are likely to be minor. In the event of a major business interruption the Town Council would follow the instructions of East Hertfordshire District Council.

8.3 <u>Council Offices</u>

8.3.1 Ware Town Council offices (The Priory) are the central point for the service provision of IT, financial, administrative support and the main meeting facilities.

8.3.2 In the event of the loss of the building the services would be transferred to the Lido and officers would be able to access files and emails from home if necessary in the short term and demountable building would be hired if necessary. The IT equipment is backed up off site and the Chess system has cloud based phone lines and is able to sustain basic Town Council office functions for a short period, while additional equipment is installed as required. The main business re-instatement, as a time sensitive business requirement, would be the financial systems and IT, followed by office and meeting accommodations. The Lido is available for meeting accommodation.

8.4 Cemetery

The cemetery facilities are key to the provision of cemetery services for the residents of Ware. In the event of short term loss, the administrative and operational functions would be returned to the Priory. The main area and class one function would be to ensure the continuation of burials. All other services could be resumed as and when ready.

8.5 Lido & Maintenance Storage Area

The Lido is a key but not critical service provided by the Town Council during April till September annually. In the event of the closure of the Lido & Maintenance Storage Area, the Maintenance Team would temporarily relocate to the Cemetery Mess Room.

9. <u>INSURANCE</u>

9.1 As soon as practical the Finance Manager will be appraised of the circumstances and all losses and contact the Council's insurers, Zurich Municipal (tel. 0800 0280336). Where possible, loss mitigation and salvage should be identified and reported accordingly.

10. <u>RISK AND ACTION PLAN</u>

10.1   The following is a risk based action plan of potential business disruption causes.

Incident	Who is affected	Recovery Actions (lead officers in brackets)
Significant damage to/loss of Council Offices at the Priory Inc - fire, theft, malicious damage or incident at any nearby large industrial facility	Staff, users of services/facilities, public	Salvage as much IT and office equipment as possible and set up alternative base in Fletcher's Lea recover computer data back-up tapes from off site facility (RFO) Notify staff (TC) Contact Alphafirst IT to arrange emergency IT support (RFO) Source replacement IT and office equipment (RFO/TC) Contact Chess to install additional telephones if required (RFO) Notify local media of re-location and display appropriate signage (CM) Notify Customers that events cannot take place (MEM) Place information on website (CM) Pursue insurance claim/repair (RFO) If required, source demountable/temporary office accommodation (TC)
Significant damage to/loss of Cemetery Storage Area Inc - fire, theft, malicious damage or incident at any nearby large industrial facility	Staff,	Salvage as much equipment as possible and transfer to other Council-owned locations (GM) Notify staff (GM) Transfer operations to the Priory (GM) Source replacement or hire of new equipment – prioritised by need. (GM/RFO/TC) Pursue insurance claim/repair (RFO) Contact EHDC regarding any emergency outstanding work (GM) Place information on website and in local press if needed (CM)

Significant damage to/loss of TC office	Staff, users of services/facilities, public	Salvage as much equipment as possible and transfer to The Priory (GM)
Inc - fire, theft, malicious damage or incident at any nearby large industrial facility		Pursue insurance claim/repair (RFO)
		Reinstate IT equipment and networks as soon as possible, or source replacement IT and office equipment (RFO)
		Notify staff (TC)
		Notify local media (CM)
		Place information on website (CM)
Significant damage to/loss of the Lido	Staff, users of services/facilities, public	Salvage as much equipment as possible and transfer to other Council-owned locations (GM)
Inc - fire, theft, malicious damage or incident at any nearby large industrial facility		Notify staff (GM/OM)
		Transfer operations to the Priory (GM)
		Source replacement or hire of new equipment – prioritised by need. (GM/RFO/TC)
		Pursue insurance claim/repair (RFO)
		Contact Cemetery contractor regarding any emergency outstanding work (GM)
		Place information on website and in local press if needed (CM)
Significant damage to/loss of Fletcher's lea	Staff, users of services/facilities, public	Salvage as much equipment as possible and transfer to other Council-owned locations (GM)
Inc - fire, theft, malicious damage or incident at any nearby large industrial facility		Notify staff (TC/GM)
		Source replacement or hire of new equipment – prioritised by need. (GM/RFO/TC)
		Pursue insurance claim/repair (RFO)
		Place information on website and in local press if needed (CM)
		Notify Customers that events cannot take place (MEM)

Loss of gas/electric supply	Staff, customers	Council Offices/Lido/Cemetery Storage Area – hire temporary heaters (GM)
Loss of water supply	Staff, customers	Depending on severity:- Council Offices/Cemetery Storage Area/Lido - Purchase bottled water for drinks and washing; hire temporary toilets (RFO)
Pandemic/epidemic affecting service delivery	Staff, Members, customers	Follow instructions from East Hertfordshire District Council (TC)
Industrial action affecting service delivery	Staff, customers	Inform staff (TC) If required use outside contractors (TC) Inform the media and place information on the website (CM)

Loss of IT services	Staff, customers	Council Offices; Contact Manager who will contact Alphafirst IT (RFO) If infrastructure is damaged ie fibre optic cut though - implement paper systems where necessary (TC)
Loss of Town Clerk	Staff	Investigate interim cover to assume duties (RFO/Leader of Council/Chairman FPA) Leader and Mayor to be informed and an action plan drawn up
Loss of RFO	Staff	Investigate interim cover to assume duties (TC/Leader of Council/Chairman FPA)
Significant loss of staff due to sickness	Staff, customers	Investigate interim cover to assume duties (TC)

TC = Town Clerk
RFO = Responsible Financial Officer
MEM = Marketing and Events Manager
GM = Grounds Manager
OM = Operations Manager
OM = Communications Manager

Review Summary

Date	Update
February 2024	New Policy Adopted
January 2022	Updated Policy Adopted
January 2020	New Version Adopted