



Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

Report to: Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board
Meeting on: 19 August 2016
Subject: Business Continuity Plan
Author: Depute Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

1.0 Introduction

As part of the ongoing review of all the Board's policies and procedures the Business Continuity plan has been updated.

This plan forms part of the Corporate Risk Register and is prepared and updated regularly to ensure it reflects the most recent changes in circumstances facing the Board.

2.0 Recommendation

The Board approves this report.

Note Attachment: Business Continuity Plan

Kate Crawford
Depute Assessor & ERO
12.08.2016

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RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



Business Continuity Plan

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|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Title | Business Continuity Plan |
| Author | Kate Crawford Depute Assessor & ERO |
| Approved By | Management Team |
| Date of Approval | August 2016 |
| Reviewer | Shona Carlton PAO |
| Review Date | |

Review History

| Review No. | Details | Release Date |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------|
| | | |

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN
RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD

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|---|--|-------------|
| Head of Department | Alasdair MacTaggart RD, BSc, FRICS, IRRV | (Signature) |
| BCP Author | Kate Crawford | (Signature) |
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Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Title | Business Continuity Plan – VERSION 3 |
| Who should use this | All Staff |
| Author | Kate Crawford, Depute Assessor & ERO |
| Approved by Management Team | July 2015 |
| Reviewer | K Crawford |
| Review Date | August 2016 |

Review History

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YOU MUST BE FULLY CONVERSANT WITH THE CONTENT OF THIS PLAN

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Record of Amendments

The following changes have been made to this document.

| Version No | Date | Details and reasons for amendment | Record completed by |
|------------|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 3 | August 2016 | Updated to reflect staffing change | KC |
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Recipients

This document is critical to the effective recovery of the Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board’s business operations. A copy of the plan should be held offsite and readily accessible at all times. A copy should be held by the incident Management Team Leader, alternate and/other Team Members as appropriate.

The document should be regarded as **CONFIDENTIAL**.

Please ensure you are fully conversant with the content of the plan.

DISTRIBUTION LIST

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer | Robertson Centre |
| Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer | Home |
| Depute Assessor | Home |
| Divisional Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer | Home |
| Divisional Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer | Home |
| Principal Admin Officer | Home |
| Service Co-ordinator | Home |
| IT Support Manager | Home |
| IT Support Manager | Home |
| RVJB Intranet | |

| | |
|--|--|
| Clerk to Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board | |
| Chief Executive, Renfrewshire Council | |
| Chief Executive, East Renfrewshire Council | |
| Chief Executive, Inverclyde Council | |
| Civil Contingencies Officer, Renfrewshire Civil Contingencies Unit | |

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Plan is to document Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board's Business Continuity Procedures to ensure that business operations may be restored as quickly as possible following a major disruption to normal day to day service. It is imperative that all members of staff are familiar with the contents of the plan and understand their individual responsibilities in the event of a major disruption to service.

The main services provided by Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board are detailed in the 2003-2016 Service Plan. It is essential that the most critical services provided by the department are reinstated as quickly as possible.

The statutory duties allotted to the Assessor for Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board are the maintenance of the Non-Domestic Valuation Roll, the maintenance of the Council Tax Valuation List and the assessor has been appointed the Electoral Registration Officer for for Renfrewshire, East renfrewshire & Inverclyde Councils.

These services are also provided directly to the public and it is vital that these be maintained during any disruption to business operations

The plan considers restoration of services following the partial or total loss of critical services, concentrating on:

- premises
- services (electricity, water, heating)
- personnel
- computer systems

This plan has been prepared in consultation with Renfrewshire Civil Contingencies Unit and complies with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

While the procedures set out arrangements for the restoration of essential information and communications systems within the shortest time period, a degree of uncertainty will always prevail.

Any proposed amendment to the Business Continuity Plan should be notified to the Chair of the Governance Working Group. Any changes made to the Plan will be documented (on the Record of Amendments sheet).

Copies of the Business Continuity Plan are held in the Board's offices. It is also held off-site by the Assessor, the Depute Assessor, Divisional Assessors, Principal Administration Officer, Service Co-ordinator and IT Managers.

1.1 Aims & Objectives

The aim of this plan is to provide a framework of coordinated measures to ensure that critical services are maintained and systems restored within an acceptable timescale.

To meet this aim, the objectives are:-

- ◆ To develop internal arrangements and contingency measures for dealing with the loss of critical functions/assets.
- ◆ To provide procedures for obtaining assistance from other agencies as and when considered necessary.
- ◆ To deliver essential services to our stakeholders.

In addressing the requirement for a Business Continuity Plan, the following procedures have been adopted as a working model for dealing with disaster or other significant incident affecting the delivery of service.

- (a) Assess – potential threats have been identified.
- (b) Evaluate – the likelihood and impact of each threat has been assessed, and a risk rating allocated.
- (c) Prepare – a plan has been put in place for contingent operations, including an estimate of the maximum tolerable downtime for each business process.
- (d) Mitigate – actions that may eliminate risks in advance have been identified.
- (e) Respond – be prepared to take action necessary to minimise the impact of risks that materialise.
- (f) Recover – the objective of the Plan is to return to normal as soon as possible.

Risk appetite is defined as the amount of risk the Board is willing to accept, tolerate or be exposed to at any one time. Risk appetite is normally assessed on a scale ranging from high to zero. The Board's risk appetite has been assessed as moderate in most cases. This means that the Board is willing to accept risks that may affect delivery of core services in the short term which is defined for the purposes of this plan as a period of up to fourteen days.

In certain cases, such as time critical periods associated with electoral registration, the risk appetite has been assessed as zero. This means that the Board is not willing to accept risks that may affect the delivery of a time critical ER service.

The Risk Register contains a comprehensive list of the risks which might affect the organisation, along with the required assessments and responses which have been identified as appropriate in the circumstances.

Each risk has been assessed according to:

- the probability of the risk event occurring (likelihood), and
- the potential severity of the consequences should such an event occur (impact).

Both the likelihood and the impact have been assessed on a scale of 1(low) to 3 (high). The risk score is then shown as the product of likelihood x impact.

The residual risk is an assessment of the level of risk that remains after consideration of existing control measures.

The remainder of this document deals with the management process of the Business Continuity Plan which will be invoked to cope with incidents.

1.2 Types of Incident

This Plan will be invoked either in its entirety or in part, dependent upon the circumstances of the incident.

The various types of incident for which provision is made include the following (but see the Risk Register for full details):

Premises – related

Loss of part of or an entire building (temporary, long term or permanent) due to fire (accidental or arson), contamination, explosion, bomb scare, flooding, storm damage, vandalism, etc.

Services – related

Loss of Utilities

- Loss of heating, due to:
breakdown of system
unavailability of heating (electricity/gas supply)
- Loss of electrical power affecting the use of:
the fire alarm systems, ITC systems, lighting, staff welfare facilities
- Loss of water supply

Loss of data

Failure of Critical Suppliers – eg printing services, mail delivery services, IT services

Personnel – related

Loss of personnel due to:

- Illness affecting significant numbers over a prolonged period
- Accident involving significant numbers, affecting their availability for work, eg car accident involving the Management Team
- Prolonged industrial action
- A lottery syndicate winning a significant amount, and failing to report for work or resigning en bloc
- Potential disaster affecting the residents of a particular area in which a significant number of staff reside
- Significant fraudulent activity

1.3 Scope of the Plan

The plan covers the Boards activities at the Robertson Center , 16 Glasgow Road, Paisley.

1.4 Activating the Plan

Recognised procedures for activating the plan are a key element of the Plan itself, since one of the deputising problems with contingency response is the practical motivation of those responsible to put it into practice.

The purpose of having such a plan in place is to eliminate uncertainty and/or an ad hoc approach to handling an incident. Dependent upon the nature of the reason for the plan's activation, prompt and effective action can reduce or eliminate the impact of an incident on service delivery.

Where circumstances permit, the Assessor, the Depute Assessor, the two Divisional Assessors and the Principal Administration Officer, as appropriate, will consider the nature of the problem, and if it is required, will invoke the plan. The decision to invoke the plan will always be taken by at least two of the postholders, one of whom will be the Assessor, or the postholder deputising for the Assessor. Where it is not possible for two of those identified to participate in the decision-making process, one of the Divisional Assessor's will be brought into the process, and deemed to have the necessary authority to activate the plan.

When any one or a combination of the circumstances contained in the Risk Register occurs, those personnel identified in the previous paragraph with the appropriate responsibility should:

- (a) Meet to deliberate the circumstances, and
- (b) Determine if the Plan should be invoked.

It is possible that a situation described in the Risk Register above may occur, but due to its lack of severity, or anticipated effect on provision of the Board's services, those responsible decide that it is not necessary to activate the plan.

Where an incident is recognised as sufficiently severe to invoke the plan then those responsible should inform every member of staff and other officials in accordance with the responsibilities set out in 2 below.

1.5 Assumptions

For the purposes of this plan, it is assumed that replacement resources, buildings, and infrastructure are available within a foreseeable timescale and that the incident does not affect the whole Renfrewshire area, but is essentially confined to the Board's service provision.

The Headquarter's Offices of Renfrewshire Council are relatively close to the Board's premises and it is agreed that should it be necessary space will be made available to accommodate key personnel if required. To be confirmed by Renfrewshire Council once final agreement on Disaster Recovery plan has been reached.

2. AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITIES

As detailed at 1.4 above, the Assessor, the Depute Assessor, the two Divisional Assessors and Principal Administration Officer, or Managers as appropriate, are responsible for the activation of the plan. They should therefore be in possession of the best background knowledge surrounding the situation and most effective to oversee the process involved.

Accordingly, individual responsibilities will be as follows:

2.1 Assessor & Electoral Registration Officer

Postholder (or substitute if appropriate – see 1.4), will be responsible for: Informing the Convener, the Clerk to the Board, the members of the Management Team, Administration Officers and IT Support officers, the Chief Executives and Heads of Finance/Returning Officers of the 3 constituent councils and Renfrewshire Civil Contingencies Officer of the occurrence and of any contingency arrangements put in place and keeping them informed of progress as the situation develops.

2.2 Clerk to Board

Upon being informed by the Assessor that the Board's Business Continuity Plan has been invoked, the Clerk should inform the Depute Convener and other members of the Board.

2.3 Depute Assessor

Postholder will liaise with the Assessor, the other members of the Management Team and the IT Support officers, and contact any emergency services required in connection with the situation/incident as it relates to the office and related staff.

2.4 Divisional Assessors & Assistant Electoral Registration Officers

Postholders will be responsible for liaising directly with the Depute Assessor in respect of their sections, and establishing arrangements for the continued provision/recommencement of the service.

2.5 Principal Administration Officer/ Service Co-ordinator

Postholder, or postholders, will liaise with the Assessor and the other members of the Management Team and oversee the arrangements for continued provision/ recommencement of the clerical service.

2.6 IT Development Managers

Postholders will liaise with the management team and ensure IT systems remain operable and any data recovery requirements are met. This role may require close liaison with external IT suppliers and arrangements may include allocating specific tasks to the IT staff and ensuring that they are informed of any changes in working arrangements. In order to facilitate any recovery action server back up procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. Inventories of software and hardware are attached to this document (See Appendix 2)

2.7 IT Disaster Recovery Plan

A dedicated IT Disaster Recovery Plan is being worked on presently.(see 1.5 above)

2.8 All Other Staff

All staff not already listed above should remain on standby in the event of a situation or incident which affects their ability to report for work in the normal way. A line manager will make contact as soon as practicably possible.

2.9 Substitution of Personnel

Where necessary, any of the personnel listed above may be substituted by another member of staff on the authority of the Incident Management Team. Consideration should be given to the nature of the crisis and the work required as a result in order to decide on the appropriate substitute.

3. INCIDENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Due to the compact nature of the Valuation Joint Board, the required structure can be compressed, with the same group fulfilling various roles. If the incident dictates that the the Board's offices are not operational the expected base of operations will be be Renfrewshire Council HQ or any other suitable venue offered by Renfrewshire Council should the HQ not be available.

In any incident, the Assessor, Depute, one or both of the Administration Officers as appropriate, IT Support Officer and either of the Divisional Assessors as required will make up the Incident Management Team and will be responsible for emergency, business continuity and disaster recovery management, once the need has been identified as described in 1.4 above.

The main focus of each of these 3 elements will be as follows:-

3.1 Emergency Management

Involves determination of priorities in allocating resources, the planning and co-ordination of when a task will be undertaken, and the means of obtaining required resources. The response to an emergency should concentrate on the effects rather than the cause and accordingly, arrangements should be flexible enough to be adapted to a range of incidents.

3.2 Business Continuity Management

This involves ensuring that the functions of the Board continue to operate in the event of an emergency. This may require contact with external providers .

In assessing Business Continuity, the Incident Management Team will be required to oversee a “scaling up” of some critical functions, alongside a “scaling down” or suspension of other non-critical functions.

3.3 Recovery Management

The main objective of Recovery Management is to control and co-ordinate recovery action.

The Incident Management Team will draft in, as required, other members of staff who are recognised as potential contributors to the recovery process. See Appendix 1 for contact details.

It will be the responsibility of the Incident Management Team to decide on the importance and level of involvement to be attached to each of these elements, having taken account of the nature and scale of the incident eg one business activity disrupted, several business activities disrupted or loss of all business activities.

In the event of a minor disruption to normal business activities, services may be recovered in a few hours using the resources within the department and by a small number of key personnel.

A major disruption to services such as a fire may cause a lengthy delay before normal business activities can be recovered and may involve key other departments and outside suppliers. In the event of a major disruption an operational base would be established where the Incident Management Team would coordinate the recovery of all services affected by the disruption.

Those services which are considered essential will be established as a matter of urgency, with priority being given to those services within the department who are directly involved in providing a service to members of the public eg the electoral registration service. Non-essential services may be suspended until such time as temporary accommodation is secured or vital records are recovered.

Vital Records are defined as “records essential to the continued functioning or reconstitution of an organisation during or after an emergency”.

The Incident Management Team Leader would liaise directly with the Public Relations Unit of the three Councils to ensure that members of the public are kept informed of temporary service arrangements. A customer help line would be established.

It is acknowledged that the loss of premises would cause major problems and temporary accommodation may need to be found as quickly as possible.

Where necessary manual procedures will be implemented until such time as IT equipment and records are restored.

4. EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

4.1 Emergency Services

It should be clear to the Incident Management Team which services are required. Contact details are listed in Appendix 1.

4.2 Utilities

Contact details are listed in Appendix 1.

4.3 Contractors

Any contractors whose services might be required in the event of an incident should normally be contacted through the usual channels. See Appendix 1.

5. MITIGATION

5.1 Risk Assessments

Risk assessments for a number of identified scenarios are provided in the CorporateRiskRegister and will be subject to regular review, along with the Board's Risk Register, by the Management Team.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

Details of mitigation measures are provided in the Corporate Risk Register.

6. COORDINATION AND CONTROL

Immediate responsibility for dealing with all emergency situations in the general community lies with Police Scotland, and where an incident affects the area in general and not only Board premises/personnel, the Police will assume overall control and have jurisdiction over the operations of the Incident Management Team.

If the incident is confined to Board premises/personnel, the person who will determine whether the plan should be activated will be the Assessor (or substitute) in accordance with the procedure set out in 1.4 above.

Section 2 of the plan sets out the responsibilities for contacting staff and other agencies/bodies in order that a coordinated and controlled response is achieved.

7. INCIDENT RESPONSE

7.1 Operational Base

Where possible, the Operational Base will be Assessor's main office at Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board, The Robertson Centre, 16 Glasgow Road, Paisley PA1 3QF.

If it is not possible to make use of Renfrewshire Councils HQ, Cotton St, Paisley PA1 1UJ.

7.2 Management & Operations

The Assessor (or his substitute) will be responsible for selecting the appropriate offices for the Operational Base and inform the Incident Management Team and other appropriate personnel when they should attend.

The duration of the Operational Base will depend upon the nature of the incident.

It is judged that normally there will be no immediate requirement to be fully operational in relation to the Board's functions in respect of non-domestic rating and council tax. A target of 14 days to arrange temporary reinstatement of service delivery has been set.

The situation with regard to electoral registration is potentially more time sensitive, since a by election or "snap" general election could be called at any time.

If an incident occurs at a time-sensitive period in the year, such as during an election, or coinciding with a statutory deadline such as the citation or settlement of non-domestic valuation appeals, then the Incident Management Team will determine at the outset the number of affected staff who are required to be active in providing the necessary manpower, and arrange for the workload to be coordinated from the Operational Base.

7.3 Communications

Telephones and local area networked workstations should be available in the Operational Base.

Where an immediate work requirement has been identified by the Incident Management Team, and it is necessary to pass instructions/directions to other members of staff, this should be achieved in accordance with the responsibilities set out under 2 above.

7.4 Logging & Documentation

The discussions, deliberations and decisions of the Incident Management Team will be minuted in accordance with the procedures for normal Management Team meetings.

7.5 Reporting Procedures

In addition to alerting the Renfrewshire Emergency Planning Officer, the Board's stakeholder departments should be informed of the incident by the Assessor in accordance with section 2.1 above within 24 hours of the incident.

The Board's staff will be kept informed of developments by their line managers.

Where it is possible for a notice to be displayed on the affected building for the attention of the public, it should be displayed at the front entrance giving a brief explanation of the problem, an indication of how to make contact with important/urgent queries or requests, and notification if possible of the projected date for resumption of normal service. Also, if possible, information should be placed on the Board's website.

Where considered appropriate, an advert should be lodged in the local newspaper(s) providing an explanation of the situation, and the Incident Management Team may also consider it appropriate to contact local radio stations with information for broadcasting. See Appendix 2 for contact details.

7.6 Closing Arrangements

Once the requirement to operate from the Operational Base has passed and all staff and other bodies that were advised of the incident in accordance with section 2 have been advised of the return to normal operational conditions, the Assessor (or his substitute) will chair a de-briefing meeting and close the Operational Base.

8. RECOVERY ACTIONS

8.1 Incidents relating to Premises

Where an incident occurs out of hours and emergency access is required to premises, a list of keyholders who may be contacted in such an occurrence is set out in Appendix 1 .

Otherwise emergency actions are detailed below.

EMERGENCY ACTIONS

The following actions should be undertaken in the event of disaster or other incident which results in the loss of access to premises:-

| | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | If necessary initiate the evacuation of the building using the appropriate evacuation procedures. | |
| 2. | Contact the Emergency Services if appropriate | |
| 3. | Ensure all staff under your control are accounted for (evacuated or not to a place of safety). | |
| 4. | Respond to any staff injuries/fatalities | |
| 5. | Ascertain the immediate nature of the incident and the current status; fire, explosion, water damage, power failure, computer outage | |
| 6. | Immediately contact a member of the Incident Management Team for further guidance and assistance (see Section 3.0) | |
| 7. | Secure buildings once the initial phase of the emergency has passed to avoid the possible threat of theft or vandalism. Take steps to avoid further damage or deterioration of the building. | |

The severity of the incident will determine the likely downtime of the services and whether or not alternative accommodation is to be sought. If the incident occurs at a time sensitive period for one of the three main functions or if the loss of access to the premises is judged to be long term or permanent then suitable premises within the vicinity of the affected building should be sought. As a first step the Property Services Department of the local Council should be contacted regarding the availability of suitable office space.

Depending on the severity of the incident the building may still be accessible even if not capable of being used. In such circumstances the Incident Management Team should give consideration to the salvaging of vital records and equipment. The appropriate emergency services, utility companies and structural engineers should be consulted regarding access to the building. Salvaged records and equipment should be recorded and transported to alternative accommodation. Staff may be asked to use their own vehicles alternatively, vehicles or a contractor may be hired.

If appropriate the Board's insurers and the landlord of the building should be notified as soon as possible.

8.1.1 Electoral Registration function

An incident affecting the office premises at the Robertson Centre, Paisley may affect the delivery of the Electoral Registration Service. If the Incident happens at a time critical period such as an election then the Incident Management Team may decide that the service must be restored as quickly as possible even if the anticipated loss of access to the building is only a few days or less.

At present Renfrewshire Council are moving to a Cloud Base Disaster recovery system. When this has been completed in the latter part of 2016, arrangements will be made for the Board to secure space on this system alongside Renfrewshire Council. This IT Disaster Recovery Site will also be able to be tested on a regular basis once fully established, probably by Summer 2017. This system will enable any of the Board's 3 core functions to be brought on line with minimum disruption.

The Returning Officers for the three Council areas will be contacted in order to establish the required computer links.

Advertisements in the local press and radio stations should be taken out to publicise alternative telephone and fax numbers and email addresses for public contact. If possible the information will be placed on the Board's website.

As stated at 7.2 above the target time for reinstatement of the service under normal working conditions is 14 days.

8.1.2 Non-Domestic Rating function

This function may be affected by an incident in the Robertson Center offices.

Service delivery is not regarded as time critical. As stated at 7.2 above the target time for reinstatement of the service under normal working conditions is 14 days.

See 8.1.1 above

The Director of Finance in the three Council areas will be contacted and advised of the expected service downtime.

Advertisements in the local press and radio stations should be taken out to publicise alternative telephone and fax numbers and email addresses for public contact. If possible the information will be placed on the Board's website.

8.1.3 Council Tax function

As for non-domestic rating function above.

8.1.4 Administration function

This function may be affected by an incident affecting the Robertson Center office.

Service delivery may be time critical if related to the payment of invoices or to the administration of the payroll.

As Renfrewshire Council through an SLA deliver Payroll and Accounting services to the Board these services will be unaffected should the Robertson Center Office be out of commission.

8.1.5 Personnel

An incident in the Robertson Center offices may affect the ability of staff to work in their normal location.

The Incident Management Team will decide which staff members will be asked to work in an alternative location. This may be in temporary accommodation. It may be appropriate to allow some staff to work from home. The Incident Management Team may also decide to allow staff temporary leave of absence until their normal workplace or other suitable accommodation is available.

8.2 Incidents relating to Personnel

The loss of key members or large numbers of staff may affect service delivery in any of the three divisional offices.

If the situation is judged to be short term then the Incident Management Team may address the situation by authorizing overtime for remaining staff .

If it is envisaged that serious staff shortages will continue in the longer term or permanently then, in addition to the above measures, the Incident Management Team will advertise for temporary or permanent staff to fill the vacant posts.

8.3 Incidents relating to External Suppliers and Stakeholders

The failure of third party service providers could affect service delivery. In particular disruption of the Electoral Registration service could be time critical if incident occurred at the time of the annual canvass or during an election.

A list of external providers is contained in Appendix 1.

Should any of the service providers fail at a time critical period the company concerned will be contacted in order to determine the severity of the incident and the likely downtime. If the service cannot be restored within an acceptable time then consideration will be given to finding an internal solution or arranging an alternative provider.

An incident may affect the ability of one of the Board's constituent Councils to provide planning and building control information. This situation is unlikely to be time critical.

Close liaison with the affected Council will determine the need for specific actions.

9. TRAINING & AWARENESS

9.1 Training

In order to have an effective Business Continuity Plan which can be implemented smoothly when the need arises, training of the participants is required, along with exercises being held on a regular basis.

9.2 Awareness

Staff awareness of the Business Continuity Plan will be promoted by:

- Ensuring that emergency planning arrangements are part of induction training for all relevant staff.
- Publishing the Business Continuity Plan on the RVJB Intranet.
- Informing staff by team briefings and e-mail that the Plan is in place and available on the intranet.
- Convening regular training sessions.

10. IT DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

10.1 Disaster Recovery Plan

See 8.1.1 re development of IT Disaster Recovery plan

10.2 Testing the Plan

Consideration will be given to testing the plan annually and an actual test carried out at least every 3 years.