HALIFAX

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Item No. Info Item 2
Audit & Finance Standing Committee
December 11, 2024
Executive Standing Committee
December 16, 2024

TO:	Chair and Members of Audit & Finance Standing Committee
	Chair and Members of Executive Standing Committee
FROM:	Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer
DATE:	November 1, 2024
SUBJECT:	**Action Plan from the Management of Business Continuity Audit**

INFORMATION REPORT

ORIGIN

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Deagle Gammon, seconded by Mayor Savage

THAT the Audit and Finance Standing Committee request the Chief Administrative Officer develop an action plan to address the recommendations from the Management of Business Continuity Audit and Enterprise Risk Management Audit and report back to the Audit and Finance Standing Committee in three months.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

AND

Staff Initiated:

Under the By-Law E-100, the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee shall advise the Executive Standing Committee on the development of municipal emergency management plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Community Safety has developed a plan to address recommendations from the Business Continuity Planning audit (see Attachment A)

BACKGROUND

[The Halifax Regional Municipality Auditor General Management of Business Continuity Audit, presented in July 2024](#) outlined a series of ten (10) recommendations which were all accepted by Management. The attachment A in this information report is in response to recommendation 3 and outlines the detail noted in the Management Response:

Action Plan Recommendations from
the Management of BCP Audit

Audit & Finance Standing Committee
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Community Safety management should develop and implement detailed plans and timelines to establish a business continuity management program.

Management Response:

HRM accepts this recommendation. Community Safety Business Unit, Emergency Management Division will develop and implement detailed plans and timelines to establish a business continuity management program. Initial planning is underway with a planned completion date of Q4 2024-2025 for Business Unit plans to be created for each Business Unit and an additional deliverable for Community Safety to bring together those plans into a corporate plan. Additional planning documentation related to review, training, testing, and exercise including timelines are needed. A plan will be documented by Community Safety within 3 months of this report.

DISCUSSION

On October 29, 2024, the Emergency Management Planning Committee reviewed and approved the creation of a plan that Community Safety has undertaken to address Business Continuity.

On October 29, 2024, the response to Recommendation 3 of the Auditor General Management of Business Continuity Audit, was sent to the office of the Auditor General.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The business continuity plans for both IT and Public Works, which are ongoing currently with consultants, are expected to cost approximately $58K in total. The approximate pro-rated current year costs for hiring a Business Continuity Specialist within Community Safety are approximately $50K, with the remaining costs will be brought forward as part of the proposed 2025/26 operating budget. All current fiscal year costs can be accommodated in the approved 2024/25 operating budget for Community Safety.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

N/A

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

By-law E-100 Respecting of a Prompt and Coordinated Response to an Emergency

Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
        (4) The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee shall:
                (b)   advise the Executive Standing Committee on the development of municipal
                            emergency management plans;

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Memo Business Continuity Planning Process for HRM

**Action Plan Recommendations from
the Management of BCP Audit**

**Audit & Finance Standing Committee
December 11, 2024
Executive Standing Committee
December 16, 2024**

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Report Prepared by: William (Bill) Moore, Executive Director Community Safety 902.490.8456

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M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Cathie O'Toole, Chief Administrative Officer
CC: David Thorpe, Chief Information Officer
FROM: Bill Moore, Executive Director Community Safety
DATE: October 15, 2024
SUBJECT: Business Continuity Planning Process for HRM

The Halifax Regional Municipality Auditor General Management of Business Continuity Audit, presented in July 2024 outlined a series of ten (10) recommendations which were all accepted by Management. This memo is responding to Recommendation 3 and outlines the detail noted in the Management Response:
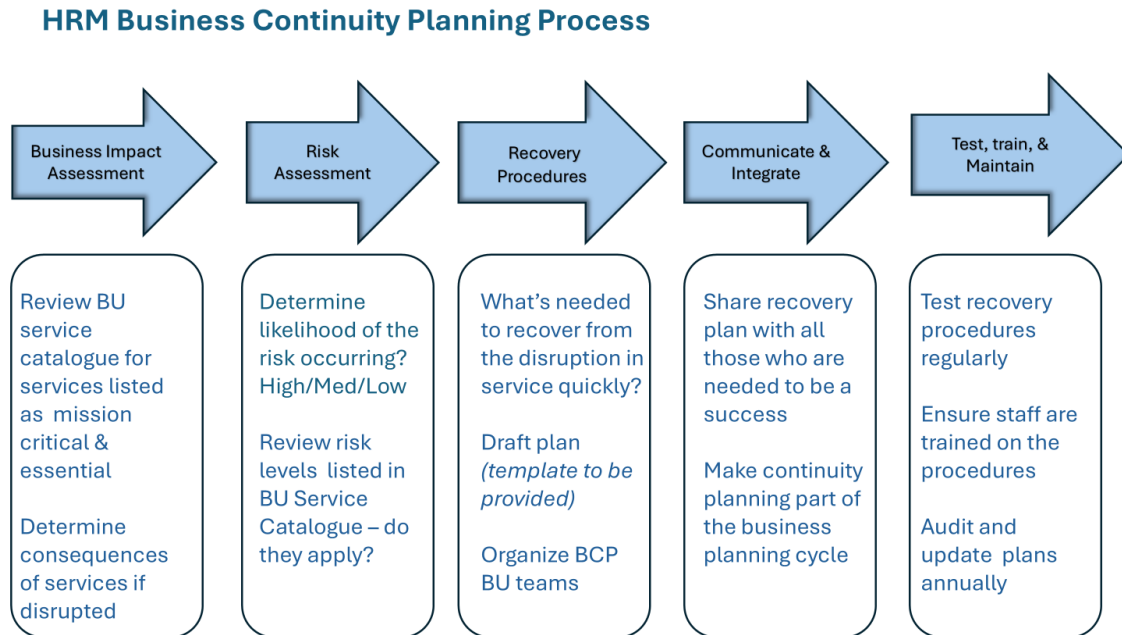
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HRM accepts this recommendation. Community Safety Business Unit, Emergency Management Division will develop and implement detailed plans and timelines to establish a business continuity management program. Initial planning is underway with a planned completion date of Q4 2024-2025 for Business Unit plans to be created for each Business Unit and an additional deliverable for Community Safety to bring together those plans into a corporate plan. Additional planning documentation related to review, training, testing, and exercise including timelines are needed. A plan will be documented by Community Safety within 3 months of this report.

Community Safety has undertaken the creation of a plan to address Business Continuity Planning. The plan will follow the five steps as outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

HRM Business Continuity Planning Process

Business Impact Assessment	Risk Assessment	Recovery Procedures	Communicate & Integrate	Test, train, & Maintain
Review BU service catalogue for services listed as mission critical & essential Determine consequences of services if disrupted	Determine likelihood of the risk occurring? High/Med/Low Review risk levels listed in BU Service Catalogue – do they apply?	What's needed to recover from the disruption in service quickly? Draft plan *(template to be provided)* Organize BCP BU teams	Share recovery plan with all those who are needed to be a success Make continuity planning part of the business planning cycle	Test recovery procedures regularly Ensure staff are trained on the procedures Audit and update plans annually

HRM has recently completed a refresh of the Service Catalogue, which outlined the services provided by each HRM Business Unit. In that process, the criticality of the service was determined and whether that service should be reflected in the Business Continuity Plan (BCP).

The BCP Initiative will use the services identified as requiring to be in the BCP as inputs into the Business Impact Analysis (BIA). The BIA will explore the potential likelihood, impact to the business, and initiate the planning process to determine the process to recover or continue operations in an alternative manner.

The BCP will be created using a standardized template. Once completed by each Business Unit, the plans will be looked at collectively to ensure there is alignment across services.

The plans will then be exercised and tested as part of the Emergency Management Exercise calendar with ongoing training provided to staff and inclusion in an annual review process.

As noted in the Audit, there is a lack of templates, policy, procedure, and expertise in the creation of BCP within HRM. To assist in the process, HRM is pursuing the addition of outside expertise to accelerate the process and provide much needed guidance and resources in two ways:

- **Engage an external emergency management team to deliver on two deliverables:**

- Produce a user-friendly *(BCP) Development Tool* to be used by all HRM Business Units, and facilitate the production of the Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) business unit's BCP using that tool; and

- Develop a draft *BCP Template* and facilitate the production of *ICT's draft BCP* with that template using *the BCP Development Tool* as a proof of concept for the tool. The template will be consistent with Canadian Standards Association's standards and Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards.

- **Hiring a Business Continuity Staff Position in HRM responsible for:**

- Ongoing implementation of the program once developed.

- Supporting Business Units in BCP creation

- Consolidation of the Business Unit Plans

- Training of staff and participating with the exercises

The following will provide some additional detail to each of these two initiatives.

<u>External Emergency Management Team</u>

The purpose of hiring the external team is to develop a *Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Development Tool* and *BCP Template* for Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) Business Units, and to *facilitate the ICT Business Unit's BCP* as a proof of concept. Conceptually, the Development Tool and BCP Template would then be available for all business units to develop their BCPs with little or no external assistance. The BCP template is to be developed as soon as practical given the requirement for all HRM Business Units to have a draft BCP by 31 March 2025.

Based upon HRM requirement to have a working draft template as soon as possible, the key milestones below assume HRM approves each draft deliverable within scheduled timelines. The schedule enables the completion of ICTs BCP by the end of 2024, and for other BUs to commence their work as soon as components of the tool are ready prior to the end of 2024. Once a BU commences the BCP process, they should be able to complete their BCP within two months by using the BCP Development Tool.

The proposed project schedules for the two deliverables are:

No	Date	BCP Development Tool - Key Milestone
1	07 Oct 2024	Kick-Off meeting, Teams meeting to discuss project methodology, assumptions and outcomes. (schedule dictated by this date)
2	09 Oct 2024	Submit revised Project Plan
3	10-16 Oct 2024	Identify HRM essential processes and outputs (interviews)
4	17-25 Oct 2024	Facilitate HRM essential processes and outputs workshop
5	17-22 Oct 2024	Develop initial *BCP Development Tool*
6	28-31 Oct 2024	Conduct threats/processes/BIA workshop with ICT
7	6-12 Nov 2024	Conduct risk assessment/gap analysis workshop with ICT
8	18 Nov 2024	Submit 2 BCP workshop results
9	18-22-Nov 2024	ICT Review BCP workshop results
10	25 Nov 2024	Submit draft *BCP Development Tool* to HRM
11	25 Nov – 12 Dec 2024	HRM review draft BCP *Development Tool*
12	12 Dec 2024	HRM return draft *Development Tool* with comments to consultant
13	12-19 Dec 2024	Review *Development Tool* with other business units
14	27 Dec 2024	Submit final *Development Tool*
No	Date	BCP Template - Key Milestone
1	30 Oct -05 Nov 2024	Draft BCP template
2	05 Nov 2024	Submit BCP template to HRM for approval
3	12 Nov 2024	HRM return draft BCP template with comments to consultant
4	14-21 Nov 2024	Work with ICT staff to populate BCP
5	21 Nov 2024	Submit draft ICT BCP
6	21 Nov – 05 Dec 2024	ICT/HRM review draft ICT BCP
7	05 Dec 2024	ICT return draft BCP with comments to consultant
8	18 Dec 2024	Submit final draft ICT BCP

Hiring a Business Continuity Staff Position in HRM

Community Safety has secured approval for the addition of a staff position in Emergency Management to be assigned the Business Continuity Program. The position will serve as an internal support to all Business Units in expanding the pilot program into a sustainable program with documented policies, program goals, annual reviews and training and exercise programming. The internal training portion will assist in creating a cadre of staff that are proficient in the creation and update of BCP. The job description is being finalized and it is expected to be posted for applicants before the end of October 2024. It is anticipated the position would be filled by the middle of November 2024.

Conclusion:

HRM recognizes that the BCP Program needs additional support as noted in the Auditor General Report. We believe the addition of external expertise to kick-start the process coupled with a new internal resource will enable the program to be created, implemented and supported by the whole of the organization. This memo is provided in reply to the commitment made in the management response to Recommendation 3 and will serve as the roadmap to achieving the recommendations of the entire audit.

It should be noted that this BCP Project is a component of the larger review and revitalization of the HRM Emergency Management Program and will leverage that work to integrate this into a more fulsome program.

It is suggested that this memo should be shared with the Auditor General, Audit and Finance Committee, Emergency Planning Committee and Executive Standing Committee in alignment with existing directives and processes for emergency plan review and approvals.

Community Safety
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