**Caerphilly Town Council**

**Business Continuity Plan**

The Town Council does not deliver any direct services and therefore any disruption by whatever cause will have minimal impact on the public. The biggest risk to business continuity is the non availability of the Town Clerk due to an unplanned extended period of absence. The Town Council is unable to legally fulfil its responsibilities as a public body without a Proper Officer and S151 Responsible Financial Officer, both statutory functions performed by the Town Clerk. There are other disruptions that may affect business. The most recent was the Covid 19 pandemic which led to the introduction of remote access to meetings, home working of employees, and advanced the migration of day to day business online.

**Response to Disruption Events**

1 Loss of Town Clerk due to illness, incapacity, resignation or dismissal

Town Mayor to call extraordinary meeting of Town Council to agree appropriate actions.

Temporary replacement recruited via SLCC locum service. Recruitment of permanent replacement initiated as appropriate.

Key documents collected from Town Clerk’ s home:

* Income and expenditure ledger
* Cheque book
* Paying in book
* Debit card
* Internet banking access
* Bank mandate
* Payroll records / access to payroll software / HMRC PAYE
* Bank statements / reconciliations
* Invoices
* Mobile phone (EE)
* Broadband information (BT)
* Office keys
* Laptop
* Personnel records
* Member allowances
* VAT records
* CIL records
* Insurance cover
* Budget and budget monitoring reports
* Audit files
* Event files
* Website administration access

2 Loss of Town Councillors due to multiple resignations

If the number of councillors falls to less than a third of the total membership the Town Council will not be able to make decisions (inquorate). The Town Clerk will discuss with CCBC by elections to fill vacancies and / or co option. The Town Clerk will make any urgent decisions in consultation with the remaining members.

3 Unavailability of office due to fire, theft etc

This will have limited impact as employees are primarily home based. There may be some loss of files or office equipment. Business broadband may be affected with loss of internet connection to office. Make insurance claim if appropriate.

4 Unavailability of meeting room for Town Council meetings due to damage to building

This will have limited impact as remote access meetings are a legal requirement and Town Council meetings can be held online until such time as the meeting room is available, or alternative identified.

5 Loss of Council documents due to fire, flood, theft or other causes

Business critical documents are held by the Town Clerk at home. Agendas and minutes are posted to the website. The electronic archive goes back to 2013. The hard copy archive of agendas and minutes back to when the Town Council was established in 1985 is held in the locked office store. While the risk to the historical archive is low consideration could be given to a fireproof storage system. Copies of approved policy documents are also held on the website.

6 Loss of Council electronic data due to corruption, fault or breakdown of hardware

The majority of business is undertaken on council owned laptops issued to the Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant. Agendas and minutes are passed between the two machines and when finalised posted to the website. The email account can be accessed from any device. Therefore if one machine goes down it should be possible to access all important information from the other. Cyber attacks are a daily occurrence and there is a need for constant vigilance to avoid the corruption or loss of data as the result of an attack. Security updates are regularly checked. Where a machine becomes corrupted as result of a virus it may need to be written off and replaced rather than repaired especially if it is several years old.

7 Loss of equipment due to theft, damage, fault or breakdown

In addition to the two laptops there is a desktop pc in the office. Any theft would be subject to an insurance claim. The desktop pc is password protected and any business critical information should be stored on the Cloud. Note the desktop equipment is not business critical due to the migration to laptops as consequence of home working.

There is sundry other equipment, including the MFP, held in the office and store which could be destroyed in a fire or stolen. All the main items are listed on the Asset Register and covered by the insurance. The Town Council is now solely responsible for IT solutions, maintenance, updating and security having severed links with CCBC IT.

8 Event Cancellation due to unforeseen issues

The Town Council directly organises and manages two significant events, the Christmas Lights switch on, and the annual fireworks display at Caerphilly Castle. Normally as part of the planning process it will be determined whether the events will be happening in a particular year. As a result of the pandemic events were cancelled 2020 and 2021. Building works at the Castle have also led to the fireworks not going ahead in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Circumstances can arise when a late decision is required as to whether a planned event should go ahead, most notably if there is adverse weather conditions, or other incidents that could give rise to risks to the general public. It will be for the Chief Steward (nominated Town Councillor) to make the call, as appropriate in consultation with the emergency services. As the events are free the question of refunds of entry fees does not arise.

Adopted September 2023

Amended July 2024 to reflect IT changes