Information Technology: Progress Report

Report by Hillary Kelly, Head of Customer Services

1.   Purpose of Report

This report provides an update to the Audit Committee on progress with the ongoing testing of business critical IT systems as requested at the Audit Committee on 7 May 2013.

2.   Background

Grant Thornton, the Council's External Auditors, presented their interim report to the Audit Committee on 18 September 2012 and in the report were 4 recommendations relating to IT Corporate Resilience. Progress with the recommendations was reported to the Audit Committee on 11 December 2012.

At the Audit Committee on 7 May 2013, during discussion on the Internal Audit Manager's Statement of Internal Control, a request was made by Members for a further update on the recommendation detailed below relating to Corporate IT Resilience:

- IT services have produced a number of business continuity plans for their IT applications but should have a systematic testing strategy.

2.1   Progress Made

A Business Continuity Testing Strategy has been produced by IT Services and is attached in Appendix 1 of this report. This systematic testing strategy works in conjunction with an outline testing schedule and details: test objectives; test management; test structures; and how to conduct tests. The testing schedule lists business critical applications and critical infrastructure technologies and records the testing of each using different scenarios. The Testing Schedule is attached in Appendix 2 of this report.

Each system is tested as per the schedule and a report is produced after each test detailing the findings and outcome of the test. From this report, an action plan is produced and actions are allocated to relevant members of IT to progress.

The testing strategy is incremental in its complexity and it is the intention to involve users of each system at the higher levels of testing complexity. Please note that these tests are for the recovery of IT systems and do not include any response to be implemented by the department or service while the system is unavailable.

Initial testing of business critical applications and critical infrastructure technologies is underway and progress is being made. It is the intention to do a test against each system annually.

3. Report Implications

3.1 Resource

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

3.2 Risk

A lack of business continuity testing may result in an inability to rely on the accuracy and suitability of IT business continuity and disaster recovery plans.

3.3 Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation

Themes addressed in this report:

☐ Community safety
☐ Adult health, care and housing
☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child
☐ Improving opportunities in Midlothian
☐ Sustainable growth
☐ Business transformation and Best Value
☒ None of the above

3.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes

None

3.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

This report addresses the Council's policy to have a robust internal control environment, management of risk and effective governance.

3.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Consultation was undertaken with Internal Audit.

3.7 Ensuring Equalities

There are no equalities issues in this report.

3.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

There are no sustainability issues in this report.

3.9 IT Issues

This report suggests a way forward in having assurance over the accuracy and suitability of IT business continuity and disaster recovery plans.

4.   Recommendations

The Audit Committee is invited to:-

- note this report and the progress made by IT with testing the Council's IT business continuity and disaster recovery plans.

Date: 16 May 2013
Report Contact: Steve Currer, IT Infrastructure Manager
                         Tel: 0131-271-3030
E-Mail: Steve.currer@midlothian.gov.uk

I confirm that I have undertaken the following actions before submitting this report to the Council Secretariat (Check boxes to confirm):-

- ☒ *All resource implications have been addressed. Any financial and HR implications have been approved by the Head of Finance and Human Resources.*
- ☒ *All risk implications have been addressed.*
- ☒ *All other report implications have been addressed.*
- ☒ *My Director has endorsed the report for submission to the Council Secretariat.*

For <u>Cabinet</u> reports, please advise the Council Secretariat if the report has an education interest. This will allow the report to be located on the Cabinet agenda among the items in which the Religious Representatives are entitled to participate.

Likewise, please advise the Council Secretariat if any report for <u>Midlothian Council</u> has an education interest. The Religious Representatives are currently entitled to attend meetings of the Council in a non-voting observer capacity, but with the right to speak (but not vote) on any education matter under consideration, subject always to observing the authority of the Chair.