Dinnington St John's Town Council

BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

September 2026

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Introduction

The council has a duty under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to respond to civil emergencies and to have in place a Continuity Plan to ensure it can keep delivering its services to the community. Civil emergencies are covered under the council's Emergency Plan, therefore the purpose of this policy is to keep the council functioning in the event that full services cannot be provided for whatever reason. Such reasons could include (but are not limited to):

- A national or local emergency (e.g. war, disease/infection pandemic, wide-spread public unrest/disorder)
- The sudden loss of a key employee (e.g. Clerk/RFO)
- The sudden loss of a key building (e.g. office and/or The Lyric due to fire, flood etc.)

In the case of a national emergency, the Council's measures should reflect the Government strategy (where appropriate) and prioritise the shielding of all at risk groups, and protect members and staff.

The potential impact on council staff, Members, contractors and suppliers means effective business continuity planning will therefore be key to maintaining council services and corporate decision-making capabilities in order for the council to continue to assist/lead the community as part of any resilience response.

The operational period of the plan is the date from which the plan was invoked by the council until the date at which the plan is revoked by the council.

The three main priorities for the Council are:

a) Ensuring the health and safety of staff, councillors and members of the public participating in Council activities.
b) Maintaining effective and lawful decision-making processes.
c) The continuing operation of essential services and contractual obligations. For example:

    i. Payment of staff and contractors
    ii. Cemetery services
    iii. Operation of the Lyric
    iv. Maintenance of council parks and property
    v. Council meetings

1. STAFF

    Normal working patterns for all staff should be reviewed immediately. Essential services are to be prioritised and, if necessary and appropriate, working from home arrangements are to be implemented. The Clerk is to maintain regular communication with staff with regards to the situation. In circumstances when the council invokes this policy, the Clerk is delegated authority to run the operations of the business based on the staffing resources available in consultation with the Emergency Response Committee.

In most circumstances, changes to staff working patterns will be beyond their individual control and therefore should be paid their basic salary as normal. The Clerk must ensure payroll systems are sufficiently robust to make certain staff continue to be paid at all times.

In the event of the sudden loss of the Clerk/RFO the Assistant Clerk is to assume responsibilities for staff salaries. The council should give immediate consideration to the employment of a locum clerk through the Yorkshire Local Council Association (YLCA). The Assistant Clerk should, in conjunction with the Chair, seek the assistance of a local clerk familiar with the council's finance system should he/she require assistance to maintain the council's finances in the short term (currently the council uses the Scribe system, one that is also used by Anston PC at the time of writing).

2. COUNCILLORS

Councillors should make themselves available, if qualified, to assist staff wherever possible if the situation demands. Government advice takes primacy and should be followed at all times when considering when/how to support the council.

3 COUNCIL/COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All meetings shall remain open to the public and the press unless their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons (e.g. Government advice dictates otherwise (Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings Act (1960).

Furthermore, current legislation means that any decisions must be made by a quorate meeting of Councillors present (5 for Council) and voting in the room by show of hands (i.e. not by video link or email unless otherwise permitted under special circumstances).

Depending on the situation, consideration should be given to suspending meetings until such time as it is safe to reconvene face-to-face meetings. In circumstances where a situation occurs that necessitates the implementation of this plan, an emergency meeting should be convened as quickly as possible under current legislation and guidelines, with the only item of business being to authorise the implementation of this plan.

4. PUBLIC EVENTS

Planned events, either public events organised by the council or any event scheduled to be held in The Lyric, should be immediately reviewed to assess whether they are safe to go ahead. Liaison with staff (Lyric Theatre & Events Manager, Bar Manager etc.) and the public are key to ensure understanding in the event of cancellation or postponement.

5 STATUTORY DEADLINES/REQUIREMENTS

There are a number of statutory meetings, requirements and deadlines that apply to

local Councils, for example the Annual Parish meeting[1], Annual Council meeting[2] and submission of annual accounts for audit[3]. All statutory deadlines and requirements must be adhered to unless specific guidance is received from either the government, National Association of Local Councils, YLCA or the external auditor.

6 SERVICES

The decision on whether to continue to keep any of the council's services (as listed in the introduction) operational is entirely the decision of the Council. In an event that necessitates the operation of this plan, this decision is delegated to the Emergency Response Committee.

7. COMMUNICATION

It is vitally important that effective lines of communication are available between staff, Councillors and members of the public.

- Staff will be configured to work from home, where appropriate, using their own equipment or Town Council equipment linked to the Town Council computers (this can be suspended by the Clerk or Chair at any time).
- All staff will utilise mobiles to talk to each other (SIM cards/numbers pending).
- All members should check their council emails daily during periods of isolation to keep up to date with council matters.
- Video conferencing software (preferably free of charge) that could be suitable to substitute for council meetings may be sourced by the Clerk if the situation demands.

8. MAINTAINING LAWFUL DECISION -MAKING PROCESSES

8.1 THE DELEGATION OF POWER

The law permits a Council to delegate decision-making and discharge of statutory powers/functions (including "power to spend") to the following in order to perform these functions on the Council's behalf:

i. A Committee, (who may further delegate to a sub-committee) but not a Working Party
ii. A Council Officer (Clerk, RFO… who may delegate to another officer) (see below)
iii. Another Local Authority

This does not prevent the council from performing the responsibilities/decision-making itself and legal responsibility always remains with the Council. Although there are certain matters that the law states cannot be delegated and must be discharged by a meeting of the Full Council, delegation can remove the requirement to convene

[1] Local Government Act 1972 s13(1) – between 1st March and 1st June annually.
[2] Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12, para 7(1) (2) – must be in May or within 14 days of an election in an election year.
[3] Local Government Act 1972 s168. Procedures detailed under the Local Audit and Accountability Act (2014), Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations and the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015). Current deadline required by external auditor PKF Littlejohn is 1st July annually.

a Full Council or Committee meeting whilst still enabling functions to be undertaken lawfully.

N.B. Authority to make decisions cannot be delegated to an individual Councillor or Councillors. However, they may be consulted by the Clerk before a decision is made/actions are taken by the Clerk.

The Clerk as Proper Officer /RFO is therefore the only individual in law who can act on behalf of the Council and lead the administration of all the Council's activities. Some obligations are statutory whilst others are determined by the Council as part of the Clerk's job description. These delegated powers therefore arise as the everyday duties of the Proper Officer and Responsible Finance Officer, including management of all staff, services and finances.

At all times the Clerk has to comply with Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These can only be amended by a decision of full Council. The Orders/|Regulations therefore address specific principles (including those laid down in statute) for governance (lawful/legal management and control by the organisation as a corporate body) of all financial operations, decision making and conduct of the Council.

With the exception of

a) matters which the law states cannot be delegated and are reserved for full Council, and

b) Employment Appeals procedures requiring the involvement of Staffing Committee.

any decision requiring Council approval where it is not possible to convene a lawful meeting is hereby delegated to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair or Vice-Chair for the Operational Period.

8.2. EMERGENCY POWERS/TEMPORARY ALTERATION TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

On activation of this policy, the Clerk is authorised to make expenditure on revenue items up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. Financial Regulations 5.15 and 5.18 are suspended during the operational period in favour of authorisation as follows:

- the Clerk for any items below £1000
- the Clerk, in conjunction with Chair of Council for any items £1001 - £4999
- the Clerk, Chair plus 3 councillors over £5000

The Clerk/RFO shall prepare the monthly schedule of invoices for payment which shall be circulated electronically to all Councillors for inspection and questions. After 3 working days, the schedule shall be approved for payment.

Financial Regulations to be suspended/amended
FR 5.15 5.15 Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by: • the Clerk, under delegated authority, for any items below £500 excluding VAT. • the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Council, for any items below £2,000 excluding VAT. • a duly delegated committee of the council – in accordance with limits determined by the terms of reference for the committee and passed by resolution of the council. • the council for all items; Such authorisation must be supported by a minute (in the case of council or committee decisions) or other auditable evidence trail.
FR 5.18 In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Clerk shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the council as soon as practicable thereafter.
FR 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.

8.3. SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS/FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

In the absence of Council or Committee meetings, certain items of business cannot be transacted unless the Council decides to suspend the particular rule that requires something to have Council approval before it is expedited. This includes for example making payments to the Council's suppliers, seeking 3 quotes/council approval for procurement over certain values. Once this plan is active, the Clerk and Chair are delegated authority to ensure the council remains functional and may only override those Standing Orders/Financial Regulations as are absolutely necessary and must never take decisions/actions that the law states can only ever be taken by full council (e.g. approval of annual accounts, application for a loan etc.).

Annex: Planning Actions, Emergency/Useful Contacts Recovery Actions

PLANNING ACTIONS

Loss or disruption to the Council:		
Loss	**Disruption**	**Action**
Staff	*Key staff are off work due to sickness* *Threat of sickness (widespread virus)* *Work Station* *Key staff resign*	*Temporary Staff are employed for periods of long term sick* *Staff are requested to work from home and given the relevant equipment to perform their tasks from home* *A work station risk assessment to be completed for home working* *YLCA to provide advice on recruitment and aim to employ a qualified clerk or someone who will work towards CiLCA qualification. Support from YLCA for local council sector advice.*
IT and Data	*IT equipment is damaged irrecoverably, and backups have not worked*	*Information is saved on Flotek/ Microshade cloud system with daily backups to 2 separate servers*
Building(s) staff work from	*Inability to access the Council office due to fire, flood or other disaster*	*Staff can work from home, with remote access to emails and shared files – password protected*
Suppliers	*Companies cease trading*	*New suppliers are found*
Customers	*Local Groups that hire the Village Hall/Community Room – loss of income*	*The hall/room is available for hire and this is advertised locally, on the website and in the local paper*
Utilities	*Gas, Electric and Water are disconnected*	*Homeworking commences. The office is closed until such time that the utilities are reconnected*
Equipment	*Photocopier ceases to work* *Fire alarm and Intruder alarm breaks down*	*Work is emailed/scanned and printed elsewhere* *The maintenance contractor is called out to repair the alarm systems immediately.*

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Listed here are the details of Key Persons that the Council may need to contact to make it aware of an emergency or serious business disruption

Name	Contacts:			
	Work	Home	Mobile	Email
Chair – Cllr D Smith	-	01909 564749	07854 151911	cllrdsmith@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk
Clerk – Amy Wright	01909 564169		07947 880573	clerk@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk
Vice Chair – Wayne Hall	-		07931 527689	cllrwhall@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk

RFO	As Clerk			
Asst Clerk – Cheryl Radford	01909 564169		-	asstclerk@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk
Maintenance Supervisor - Ellen Pack	-	-	07790 556351	Cemetery@dinningtonstjohns-tc.gov.uk

BUSINESS CONTACTS

Listed here are the Council's key customers and suppliers; they will be contacted in the event of an emergency or serious business disruption

Contract details	Company	Contact	Telephone No.
Electricity supplier	EDF (office only) Eon (all other supplies)		0330 912 9959 0808 5015699
Gas supplier	British Gas – Lyric EDF – Office & Cemetery		03454 040506 0330 9129959
Water supply	Everflow		0330 6600137
Telephone supplier	BT		0800 800154
Alarms/CCTV	AT Alarms		0115 9792300
Solicitor	Ilett & Clark	Daniel Richardson	01909 505242

ALTERNATIVE CONTACTS / SUPPLIERS

Listed here are other businesses the Council could use in event of its normal supplier being unavailable

Company	Contact Name	Telephone No.
Property Repairs & Improvements	Kev Kavanagh	07830 291341

INSURANCE AND BANK DETAILS

Company	Contact Name	Telephone No.	Policy Ref.
Zurich Insurance	Matthew Murray	0800 028 0336 0800 917 7207	
Co-op Bank		03457 213 213	

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Organisation	Contact Name	Telephone No.
Neighbouring Council Clerks details		

Anston Parish Council Maltby Town Council Thurcroft Parish Council	Andrew Woodhead Ben Styring Sarah Wilkinson	01909 560922 01709 814060 07462671978
YLCA		01904 436622
SLCC		0845 450 6156
RMBC		01709 382121 (switchboard)

RECOVERY ACTIONS

RECOVERY OF ESSENTIAL BUSINESS RECORDS

Business Records	How will you recover the records? Identify any alternative measures in place
Computer records / data and location	Back-up records are held on the 'cloud' and can be accessed remotely
Diary	Calendar included on staff emails and can be accessed remotely
Financial Records	A copy of the backed-up finance records is saved on the Scribe Accounts 'cloud' storage system and can be accessed remotely
Critical paper records / information and location	Deeds and such are stored in a fireproof safe with the solicitors Ilett & Clark; copies are held in the office filing cabinets.
Passwords	A record of all passwords is kept in the Restricted folder in the council's online/cloud-based filing system (accessible only by the Clerk and Asst Clerk)
Keys	A fireproof key safe holds the keys to buildings, filing cabinets etc. A set of keys is held by the Clerk and Maintenance Supervisor.

A copy of essential information is held by the Chair and Clerk of the Council at their home address. No other councillor or member of staff have access to this information.

RECOVERY KEY EQUIPMENT NEEDED

Listed here are the essential equipment the council may need to replace if lost, or if the council had to move to an alternative site

Essential Equipment
Critical IT records and Data – including personnel records. Can be accessed remotely via the cloud-based Flotek/Microshade system.
Specialist equipment

Computer software – as critical records
Pension and HMRC data – pension data held remotely on Peoples Pension (pension provider) and Brearley & Co Accountants. Pension submissions also held on C:Drive.

RECOVERY ACTIONS

Recovery Actions
Advise all Councillors and call meeting of Emergency Response Committee
Activation of Business Continuity Plan
Inform and allocate actions to Staff
Inform key suppliers and customers and provide a recovery timescale
Activate alternative suppliers, premise, equipment
Review diary and customer commitments
Advise insurance provider
List of key dates; Insurance Policy renewal date; precept demand to Principal Authority by X date; budget to be approved by X; staff to be paid monthly on X date. (This can include key event dates)

RECOVERY LOG

Below is a record of all the events, actions and decisions the Clerk/Proper Officer of the Council has taken.

Date/Time	Action	Action By	Complete

Additional Notes

Adopted date: 14/09/2026

Minute reference: ER10/27

Review cycle: Annually