

Impact of Covid 19 on existing Strategic Risks @ August 2020

Appendix B



Ambition 1
High aspirations



Ambition 2
Healthy lives



Ambition 3
Skills



Ambition 4
High quality education



Ambition 5
Safe communities



Ambition 6
Excellent and affordable public transport



Ambition 7
Housing to meet needs



Ambition 8
Community life, leisure centres & entertainment



Ambition 9
Location of choice for business and growth





Ambition 10
Reputation for getting things done


Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Pre Covid 19 risk score (Apr 2020)	Movement in risk score	Current risk score (Aug 2020)	Target risk score and date	Covid 19 Impact on Risk Comments
4 07/12	<p>Children's Social Care</p> <p>If the council does not put in place robust arrangements and receive appropriate assurances to ensure that the Sandwell Children's Trust addresses the areas of poor or inconsistent performance, as outlined by Ofsted, with rigour and pace, then the council will fail in its responsibilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguard vulnerable children Promote and improve the outcomes of children in its care Manage any adverse financial consequences arising from the failure to create favourable outcomes for children within the resources available to it Improve the continued adverse affect on the council's reputation. <p>Risk Area – Children's Services</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5</p>	12 (red)		12 (red)	8 (amber) Requires Improvement From 2020 to 2021	<p>This risk has been impacted by covid 19 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance indicators agreed as part of the Service Delivery Contract (SDC) may not be met during the emergency response and recovery phases. The Operational Partnership Board has been notified of 3 performance indicators which have not been met since the pandemic, due to a reduction in physical visits taking place. Under normal circumstances a rectification plan would be drawn up and agreed. However, as a result of the pandemic, the Director of Children's Services has enacted the 'relief clause' in the SDC and a variation agreement is being drawn up in this respect. The contractual obligation of the Trust to deliver services assessed by Ofsted as Requires Improvement by 2020, will not be met because Ofsted has confirmed that regulatory inspections will not begin again until 2021, and the target risk date has been amended to reflect this. Despite this however, Ofsted has confirmed that the next Monitoring Visit will be a 'focussed visit' looking at what the council and Trust has done to ensure vulnerable children receive help, care and protection during lockdown. The visit is expected


Likelihood	4	Green	Yellow	Red	Red
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						<p>in the coming weeks and the findings will be published by Ofsted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an expectation that once schools fully open in September, there will be a surge in safeguarding and exploitation referrals with a strain on resources and capacity to deal with the surge. Planning to mitigate this has already commenced with lists of vulnerable children being regularly updated and daily safe and well checks being carried out now. A 'Surge Plan' has been created via the Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership. • The strain is unlikely to be limited to just the Trust but will also impact other stakeholders including council Legal services, the courts and health partners too. As such, the ability to successfully mitigate this risk, the council will be reliant on the capacity of the Trust and other partners to deal with this whilst also still being in the recovery phase of the emergency. Whilst there is no change in the current risk score, this will continue to be reviewed over the coming weeks and months to ensure it remains appropriate. <p>Despite the above, the Trust has continued to carry out activity to discharge the statutory duties in relation to safeguarding throughout the emergency response and recovery periods. Supervision and audits have been carried out virtually alongside normal visits also taking place. The recovery activity is increasing the physical visits now taking place with appropriate social distancing measures also in place.</p> <p>The Trust has also filled all of its management tier positions with permanent appointments.</p>


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4c 02/18	<p>Demand for Children's Social Care</p> <p>If the rate of demand and pressures on children's social care (experienced nationally and locally) continue to increase at the same or at a higher rate than that experienced during 2017/18, then without a national funding solution and improved children's social care services, this will have a detrimental impact on the financial resilience of Sandwell Children's Trust</p> <p>Risk Area – Children's Services</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: All Ambitions 1-10</p>	16 (red)		16 (red)	12 (red) From April 2020 To March 2021	<p>The Trust is currently on track to deliver the 20/21 savings of £2.6m with £1.4m identified at the end of quarter 1. Work on the Trust's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTPF) is ongoing and will be dependant upon the emergency funding allocated to the Trust, as a result of increased costs of working from Covid 19 in areas such as higher placement costs; costs of PPE; IT costs and increased costs of child protection plans. As noted above, as a result of the Covid 19 and the economic downturn (which is likely to give rise to increased unemployment, deprivation, domestic violence and child poverty), it is expected that the number of children known to children's social care will increase over the coming weeks and months. The impact of this will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased costs for children known to children's social care (particularly child protection) Increased cost of social workers due to capacity issues resulting from increased volumes of referrals The Trust having to review and update its Medium Term Financial Strategy in light of new ways of working and delivering services, including increased costs by care providers Increased costs of support services for children e.g. mental health support <p>As a result of the above, the risk assessment remains very high.</p>																																
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6a 10/07	<p>Emergency Planning</p> <p>If the council does not put in place effective arrangements to plan and mitigate against national, regional or local emergencies as defined by Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA) then this will result in:</p>	8 (amber)		8 (amber)	4 (green) March 2021	<p>The current unplanned emergency has significantly tested the robustness and effectiveness of the council's emergency preparedness and planning arrangements for a pandemic as well as the effectiveness of the council's response and recovery arrangements. As a category 1 responder the local authority is required to:</p>																																



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actual or anticipated failure to adequately protect vulnerable persons Failure to support the emergency services Loss of public confidence in the council Failure to fulfil Civil Contingencies Act responsibilities <p>Risk Area – Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: 2, 5, 10</p>			<table border="1" data-bbox="875 279 1294 475"> <tr> <td rowspan="4" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Likelihood</td> <td>4</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #FFD700;"></td> <td style="background-color: #FF0000;"></td> <td style="background-color: #FF0000;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #FFD700;"></td> <td style="background-color: #FF0000;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #FFD700; text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td>2</td> <td>3</td> <td>4</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">Impact</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Likelihood	4					3					2				8	1						1	2	3	4			Impact						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put in place emergency plans and business continuity management arrangements. Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public. Share information and cooperate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination. <p>The mitigations implemented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance arrangements being stood up to oversee and support the council's response to managing and preventing widespread community transmission of COVID19, the impacts to council services, and how the council will engage with key partners and the public. These arrangements include the Strategic Incident Management Team (Strategic IMT) which is represented by officers from Health, Police, council and the voluntary sector. The IMT is focussed on seven themes which are each the responsibility of a cell that reports to the IMT. The IMT reports into the Emergency Committee for any decisions as appropriate Emergency response for the provision of food and medicines to the vulnerable by redeploying staff, volunteers, partners (including the voluntary community sector and the Albion Foundation) and contractors in critical areas. Regular communications to residents and businesses through various forms of media and letters to all residents, as well as via the Sandwell Herald. Recently this has included the volunteering of Asian speaking employees to assist with communication and engagement with BAME communities across the borough to ensure they understand the steps that need to be taken to control the spread of infection.
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						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leading on increasing mortuary provision across the region by working with Police, Health partners and other councils. Monitor and enforce government directives on homelessness, social distancing, lockdown and business support across the borough. <p>Whilst the council response has been extensive and effective to date, the risk continues to exist with the emergence of a second local spike and the threat of a local lockdown.</p> <p>The recovery plan is being implemented and a lessons learned exercise will also be conducted to see where improvements can be made.</p>																																
6b 04/18	Business Continuity Management (BCM) If the council does not develop, review, monitor and test plans and capabilities (including the resilience of its supply chains and the power supply arrangements for the data centre at the council house) that seek to maintain the continuity of key functions in the event of an unplanned disruptive incident, then it will be unable to perform critical business functions which will impact the provision of council services and result in potential financial loss and loss of public confidence in the council. Risk Area – Neighbourhoods Ambitions impacted: All Ambitions 1-10	9 (Amber)		9 (Amber)	6 (green) March 2021	<p>Council wide business continuity plans were exercised in March with a big shift to working remotely and the closure of a number of key operational council buildings.</p> <p>Exercise of the plans allowed the adequacy of the council's ICT infrastructure, smart working and redeployment arrangements to be successfully tested and implemented.</p> <p>Whilst the council has continued to deliver critical services throughout the emergency response phase as noted above, the risk assessment is also informed by the adequacy of the council's recovery plans too. The effectiveness of the recovery Plans to restore council wide service provision as restrictions are eased and services being restored or upscaled, are currently being tested. The Reset and Recovery Board (R&RB) is overseeing this process with all service requests going through a rigorous health and safety process as well as input from Public Health team and the Work Place Vision Board. The R&RB is also tasked with reviewing restored services on a regular basis to ensure that the measures put in place continue to be adequate and effective.</p>																																
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						As noted above, a lessons learned exercise is taking place and is being addressed through the reset and recovery programme. This is looking at the impact on services, customers and ongoing projects (for example Transforming Local Services) during the emergency response and exploring new ways of working as well as channel shift to encourage customers to interact and access council services in different ways.																															
21a 06/15	<p>Compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)</p> <p>If the council does not ensure it has a robust framework in place to comply with the DPA 2018 (which includes GDPR) or FOIA then it faces significant external action from the Information Commissioner's Office for failing to undertake its statutory duty. Further, failing to comply will result in negative public reaction and reputational damage, significant monetary penalties, loss of confidential data and potentially legal action.</p> <p>Risk Area – Legal & Governance</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: 5 and 10</p>	12 (red)		12 (red)	8 (amber) From March 2020 to June 2021	<p>This risk has been impacted by Covid 19 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New ways of working and increased data sharing with other public authorities, partners, volunteers and redeployed staff have increased the risk of data loss and breach incidents. Access to the Governance team was expanded to cover the hours up to 8:00pm on weekdays during the emergency period. This has now been restated to pre Covid19 levels. The Council is providing minimum Information Governance compliance support to some organisations in the borough, whose operations and employees have been significantly impacted by Covid19 infections. Significant delays beyond the one calendar month statutory timeframe for processing Subject Access Requests will continue until the first quarter 2021. The ICO has acknowledged that there has been, and will continue to be, intense public interest in understanding how and why decisions were taken and how information was used and as such there is a potential for increased volume of FOIs to be made in the future and challenges to decisions made during the emergency period. Reprioritisation of workloads has meant that activity to ensure compliance with the council's retention policies has been delayed and as such the target risk date has been extended to reflect 																															
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						<p>this. Delays in the Transformation Modernisation Programme Plan which was being adopted to enable data migration is also being revisited.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHS toolkit -NHS Digital has extended the deadline for submission of the self-assessment from 31 March to 30 September 2020. Likewise, the completion of mandatory training has also been extended to 30 September. The ICO has relaxed enforcement for statutory processing time during the emergency response . The council is experiencing delays for response to its PSN application and certification (see risk 42a). Information Governance Change Activities such as specialist training, necessary to embed the change from the Information Governance Framework will now take longer 																																					
<p>The 22a 01/16</p>	<p>CONTEST The national threat level was lowered to 'substantial' on 4th November 2019. Whilst the national threat level remains 'severe' there is no known significant specific or particular threat for Sandwell. If the council does not work with partners to put in place suitable arrangements with the aim of preventing terrorism and radicalisation in Sandwell then it will be unable to effectively discharge its statutory duties.</p> <p>Risk Area – Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: 5</p>	<p>8 (amber)</p>		<p>8 (amber)</p>	<p>8* (amber)</p>	<p>The main impact that Covid 19 has had on this risk is a potential safeguarding issue, due to children and adults being online more. Whilst there is no evidence showing increases in risk of radicalisation, online harms and crimes, the risk nevertheless still exists. As schools and other partners have less contact with vulnerable persons, there is potentially an increased risk that cases go undetected and there is a reduction in referrals. Referrals have decreased significantly across the country as well as in Sandwell. Extensive communications to raise awareness and resources have been made available and shared with partners, Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools and on social media by the council's Prevent Team. The Prevent team is keeping in regular contact with Partners and Community partners by sending out relevant information and awareness raising messages through email and now also on Instagram and Twitter, to reach out to general public and partners. In addition, Prevent training during Covid 19 has also been delivered to council employees and partners.</p>																																					
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27 06/09	<p>Funding and Resource Allocation</p> <p>Local Government continues to operate in an uncertain financial environment arising from reducing central government funding, increasing demand for services and planned changes to the local government funding formula. Failure to put in place the necessary processes and actions to manage these uncertainties may impact on our ability to deliver services to the people of Sandwell and our statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget.</p> <p>Risk Area – Finance & Resources</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: All Ambitions 1-10</p>	16 (red)		16 (red)	8 (amber) Dependent upon announcements of Comprehensive Spending Review	<p>Appendix A of this report sets out the impact Covid 19 is having on the council's spend and budgetary position. As well as the unprecedented additional spend being incurred in response to the emergency, the council's budget has been significantly impacted by the lockdown, through the loss of income and the inability to make planned savings upon which the current 2020/21 budget was predicated.</p> <p>The loss of income is likely to affect future years due to the economic downturn and potentially reduced income from council tax collections, increased costs of the council tax reduction scheme, business rate arrears, commercial rents, housing rent arrears, increased demand for services, etc.</p> <p>Whilst the government has provided emergency grant funding to the council (since April 2020 when the risk was assessed at its highest level), and has also recently announced some funding relief (of 75p in the pound) for some aspects of loss of income, full details of which are still awaited, the extent to which it impacts the council's finances is being continually worked on with regular update reports provided to the Emergency Committee and now Cabinet too.</p> <p>Work with budget holders and within Finance teams has commenced to understand the potential impact and whether the council can continue to deliver a balanced budget for 2020/21 and beyond.</p> <p>With the government's focus on the pandemic and avoiding a second lockdown nationally, together with uncertainties of how well and how quickly the global, national and local economy will be able to recover, as well as the uncertainties of what post Brexit Britain will look like, it is unlikely that government will be able to provide the necessary clarity that councils require over future funding/ medium term settlements. As a result, the ability to plan effectively and manage the risk down continues to be reduced.</p>																															
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38a 03/18	Health and Social Care Reforms If appropriate arrangements are not made to effectively manage the implications and the impact of the health and social care reforms including the Social Care Green Paper and the change in delivery from acute / primary care to social care led intervention, then the outcomes for adult social care users will be adversely affected. Risk Area – Adult Social Care Ambitions impacted: 2, 5, 7	8 (amber)		8 (amber)	4 (green) When further clarity is provided by government	The main impact that Covid 19 has on this strategic risk is whether there will be further delays in the government setting out its plans to address the social care crisis as a result of the pandemic, or whether the pandemic now may focus the minds of government to address what the future health and social care system should look like and how it should be resourced to ensure funding is sustainable. This is against a backdrop of the changed public perception on residential care being considered as a safe place and the significant reduction in referrals currently being experienced across the country.																									
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40 01/15	School Place Planning If the Department for Education is unable to provide sufficient funding and if the council is unable to identify suitable solutions to schools' place planning and deliver these solutions on time and to scope then it will fail to discharge its statutory duties to provide sufficient school places. Risk Area – Education Ambitions impacted: 1, 3 and 4	12 (red)		8 (amber)	4 (green) Dependent upon Spring 2021 Basic Needs Announcement	The impact on this risk from the Covid 19 emergency is expected to be to the extent that next year's basic needs allocation by government will inevitably take into account the current government spending and the financial support being given to councils, and may therefore require the council to consider alternative mitigating strategies. As such, the timing of next year's funding announcement will be instrumental in managing this risk to ensure sufficient places are available for the additional places required. The reduction in the current risk assessment reflects the progress made on the three projects that have started and are on track for completion by September 2021, as well as the approvals that were granted by Cabinet on 22 July for financial resources for the schools capital programme. In addition, further approvals were recently given by Cabinet on 26 August to progress work with the Department for Education on creating a new CBSO school in West Bromwich for 750 pupils.																									
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42a 02/17	<p>Cyber Security</p> <p>If the council does not have a co-ordinated approach and understanding of its existing cyber security controls or those available to it, together with an analysis of identifiable gaps, then this could expose the council to cyber-attack resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The inability of the council to deliver services, particularly critical services for a significant period of time The loss of corporate and sensitive personal data (including bank details) Enforcement action Significant financial loss and Reputational loss <p>Risk Area – Finance & Resources</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: 5, 10</p>	12 (red)		12 (red)	8 (amber) Dependent upon TMP and PSN completion	<p>This risk is impacted by Covid 19 to the extent that there is a heightened risk for cyber attacks to take place during an emergency. In April, the UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) confirmed that cyber criminals are targeting individuals and organisations with a range of ransomware and malware. In addition, the NCSC detected cyber criminals scanning for vulnerabilities in software and remote working tools as more people work from home during the pandemic. It was as a result of this that the risk was increased when last reported.</p> <p>For Sandwell, whilst there has been an increase in phishing (reflecting the picture nationally) no successful attempts have been made. Regular communications have been sent to employees around the risks of remote working, password security, etc. The NCSC has also shared new information and documentation which requires additional actions to be taken which have been incorporated into the council's cyber security action plan.</p> <p>The council has ensured that all of its ICT protections and virus protection measures are up to date and are constantly blocking malware. Despite the above, the management of the risk is heavily reliant on individuals being vigilant and careful. As such, mandatory training is required from all council employees on a regular basis, and the council is procuring a new training solution part funded by NCSC to further improve the training provided.</p> <p>The council's PSN certification has expired and is in a 'deferred' status given the challenges arising from Covid 19. At present however, this is not impacting the council's operations and ability to work with other service providers and share resources.</p> <p>The Technology Modernisation Programme (TMP) which will implement new governance and revised security settings to Office 365 and Azure has also been delayed as a result of Covid 19. The</p>																															
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						<p>implementation plan and timeline are currently being reviewed and amended to take account of current working arrangements and service area priorities/pressures.</p> <p>The TMP has now reached the stage where high levels of engagement with users is required. In addition, the new Windows 10 build being delivered through TMP requires all users to 'drop off' their laptop devices for the new version to be installed and then collect the updated device. Due to Covid 19, this now needs to be approached very differently to ensure the safety of all employees.</p> <p>As a result of the above, the risk assessment remains red.</p>																															
50 01/18	<p>Commonwealth Games Aquatic Centre</p> <p>If the council fails to deliver this project to scope, timescales and cost, then this will result in significant reputational damage to the council.</p> <p>Risk Area - Neighbourhoods</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: 2, 6, 8, 9, 10</p>	8 (amber)		8 (amber)	4 (green) April 2021	<p>Work on site has progressed well since main construction commenced in January 2020. All excavation and piling works have been completed, the studio pool tank is now complete, the competition pool tank will be complete by the end of August 2020, and the dive pool is 60% complete.</p> <p>While COVID-19 has had and continues to have an impact on all construction projects in the country, a proactive approach with the contractor, Wates Construction Limited, has seen the impact on the Aquatics Centre project kept to a minimum.</p> <p>During lockdown the site was only closed for 24 hours while health and safety measures were checked to make sure that they were sufficient. Social distancing is in place on site and the site is being managed in line with Government guidelines. The health and safety measures on site have been independently audited and verified.</p> <p>As the impact of COVID-19 has been minimised and an action plan to move forward has been developed, the Project Team are confident that the project will be delivered in line with the programme.</p>																															
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52 05/18	<p>Better Care Fund (BCF) and Public Health Grant</p> <p>If the government fails to confirm or extend grant funding for the Better Care Fund and for Public Health, then the council will be unable to discharge its key statutory functions in this respect.</p> <p>Risk Area – Adult Social Care, Health & Well Being and Public Health</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: 2, 5, 10</p>	12 (red)		12 (red)	4 (green) When longer term funding sources and levels confirmed	<p>The impact that Covid 19 has had on these risks is to the extent that some Better Care Funding and Public Health funding has been used to assist with the emergency response.</p> <p>In addition, the emergency may also help inform and focus government on the importance of these funding streams and the need for the continued grant funding in these areas into the future.</p>																																
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53 04/18	<p>Business Management System</p> <p>If the appropriate project governance arrangements are not put in place to ensure that the project is delivered to time, scope and budget, then this may result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council's business system being unsupported Inability to transform services that would enable processes to be more efficient Non compliance/ misalignment with other council policies and projects such as Organisational development, the digital strategy, Work Place Vision and the IT transformation programme. <p>Risk Area – Chief Executive, Finance & Resources</p> <p>Ambitions impacted: Ambition 10</p>	12 (red)		12 (red)	8 (amber) September 2020	<p>The current system used by the council becomes unsupported from 31 December 2021.</p> <p>The first phase of the project plan was to go live in September 2020 and subsequent phases / sprints were planned to carry out service improvement and system functionality improvement works thereafter.</p> <p>As a result of the emergency, the completion of the first phase has been delayed as the project plan had little slippage. However, as long as the delay of the first phase of go live does not go beyond December 21 then there is no risk of an unsupported system. At present, we are awaiting revisions to timelines (from the project contractor) in respect of the delivery of phase 1.</p> <p>The risk as currently worded however, is about having an unsupported system and ensuring service transformation to enable efficient processes and digital transformation. As there could be a delay to delivering the whole project the risk was increased in April 2020. Since then, communications with the contractor have been ongoing through weekly Project Board meetings. At present the project is undergoing a full project review which will be completed in mid September to agree a revision to the contract and the risk will be reassessed at that time.</p>																																
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