

# Report to Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

**20 January 2020**

<b>Subject:</b>	House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning – Call for Evidence
<b>Director:</b>	Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer Surjit Tour
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Democratic Services Officer Alex Goddard <a href="mailto:alexander_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk">alexander_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

## 1 Recommendations


- 1.1 That the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board consider the information presented by officers at the meeting;
- 1.2 That the Director – Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to submit a response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning’s Call for Evidence.



## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning has issued a Call for Evidence on “risk assessment and risk planning in the context of disruptive national hazards”. Further information and initial thoughts will be presented to the meeting to allow the Scrutiny Management Board to discuss and formulate any response it may wish to make.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Strong resilient communities – risk assessment, risk planning and associated activities can help Sandwell’s communities through challenging events and can contribute to building resilience.
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## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning was appointed on 15 October 2020 to: “consider risk assessment and risk planning in the context of disruptive national hazards”. It has to report by the end of November 2021.
- 4.2 As part of its evidence gathering for the inquiry, the Select Committee has issued a Call for Evidence from all interested parties. Local authorities are one of the categories of interested parties identified by the Select Committee.
- 4.3 The inquiry sets out 12 questions and respondents are invited to submit answers to some, or all, of them by 28 January 2021. The questions are:-
- 1 What are the most significant extreme risks that the UK faces? Are these kinds of risks discrete, linked or systemic? What do you understand the term ‘extreme risk’ to mean?
  - 2 Are there types of risks to which the UK is particularly vulnerable or for which it is poorly prepared? What are the reasons for this?



- 3 How could the Government's approach to risk assessment be strengthened to ensure that it is rigorous, wide-ranging and consistent? Your answer could refer to any aspect of the risk assessment process including, for example, its governance, the evidence base, or the degree to which it is open to scrutiny and the input of experts.
- 4 Given the range of possible national risks, and the need to achieve a balance between efficiency and resilience, what level of assurance should the Government be seeking on the UK's resilience to hazards? What would effective national risk management achieve, and how could its success be measured?
- 5 How can the Government ensure that it identifies and considers as wide a range of risks as possible? What risks does the inclusion criteria for the National Security Risk Assessment exclude and what effect does this have on long-term resilience?
- 6 How effectively do current ways of characterising risks (for example, the use of a five-point scoring system of a 'reasonable worst case scenario') support evidence-based policy decisions? What other information would be useful?
- 7 How effectively do Departments mitigate risks? Does the Risk Assessment process and the Civil Contingencies Secretariat adequately support Government departments to address risks within their remits? Is further oversight or accountability required, and if so, what form should that take?
- 8 How well are national contingency plans communicated to and understood by those at a local level, including emergency responders? What could be changed to increase the capability of local responders to effectively plan for and respond to emergencies?
- 9 What is the role of the individual in relation to national crises? Are there potential benefits in increasing public involvement and transparency in emergency planning? What limitations are there to this? What lessons have been learnt or should have been learnt about the approach taken to risk assessment and risk planning in this country from the COVID-19 pandemic?



- 10 What challenges are there in developing resilience capability? Your answer could refer to critical infrastructure, but also to systems and networks beyond those elements. What is the role of exercising to test risk preparedness, and are these methods utilised effectively in risk assessment and risk planning in this country?
- 11 What can be learnt from local or corporate risk management processes, or those of other countries? Are there any specific examples of practices, processes or considerations which could improve the UK's national risk resilience? How could businesses and civil society more effectively support national resilience preparation?
- 12 What individual or economic behaviours would strengthen national resilience against hazards, and what mechanisms are open to the Government or society to incentivise these behaviours? How should we prioritise any changes required in approach, process or policy needed to improve risk mitigation and strengthen the UK's resilience to extreme risks and emergencies?

4.4 Officers will present initial thoughts on the inquiry's questions to the meeting.

## 5 Alternative Options

5.1 The Scrutiny Management Board could choose to not consider the information and submit a response to the Call for Evidence, however this would result in the opportunity to share the experiences and views of Sandwell being missed.



## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	There are no direct implications relating to finances, staffing or the Council’s land/building portfolio arising from the recommendations of this report. Any risks identified in terms of national hazards however and the associated risk mitigation strategies are considered through the Council’s risk assessment process and budget planning process and incorporates the financial and other resources required to manage any national and local risks.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The purpose of risk management is to assist in the achievement of the Sandwell vision and Corporate Plan and the authority’s statutory responsibilities. There are numerous standards applicable to the management of risks within the local authority sector. Included amongst these is guidance from CIPFA/Solace, the British Standards Institute (BSI) and a set of joint standards published by the Institute of Risk Management (IRM), Alarm (The public sector risk management association) and AIRMIC (Association of Risk Managers in Industry and Commerce). Evidence that robust management of the authority’s strategic risks is being undertaken demonstrates compliance with these standards.
<b>Risk:</b>	Whilst there are no specific risks associated with this report, the Council’s strategic risk register does include risks associated with national and local hazards and emergency planning.
<b>Equality:</b>	There are no equality implications of this report.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	There are no specific health or wellbeing implications associated with the recommendations being sought within this report.
<b>Social Value</b>	This report does not have any social value implications.

## 7. Appendices

None

## 8. Background Papers

[Call for Evidence webpage](#)

