

Emergency Plan Priorities

Priority Area 1	Priority Area 2	Priority Area 3	Priority Area 4	Priority Area 5
Health and Social Care	Citizen and Communities	Infrastructure and Supplies	Business and Economic Impact	Organisational Impact

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Current risk score (Apr 2020)	Target risk score and date	Commentary
C19 01 04/20	<p>Recovery Plan for Covid 19</p> <p>If the council does not put in place a robust plan, including reviewing its corporate and business plan priorities and financial planning in response to Covid 19, then the borough will be unable to swiftly recover from the pandemic which may result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inability to support and protect its businesses, residents and workforce Inappropriate service budgets resulting in the inefficient allocation of limited resources An adverse impact on the council's reputation. <p>Risk Area – Corporate</p>	8 (amber)	4 (green) June 2020	<p>Planning for the recovery phase of the emergency has commenced and includes the following measures being taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is working through the Local Resilience Forum with key partners to understand what recovery should look like and how partners will need to coordinate activity as the recovery will require a collective and joint approach across all partner organisations to mitigate this risk. To inform the recovery plan information is being collated and analysed from regional forums and via the WMCA (to stimulate economic reset and recovery) as well as impact assessments carried out by council services. The Plan will also be informed by stress indicators that have been identified and are being monitored and reported on by service areas. A review of the corporate plan, directorate and service business plans is commencing to ensure that the priorities have been reviewed in light of the intelligence available and in light of the potential easing of government restrictions, new directions and guidance, to ensure that recovery is carried out in a phased and collective manner, so as to avoid an increase in the risk of infection. Alongside the business plans review, the reallocation of limited resources will also need to be considered to ensure these are reallocated on a risk based approach to where the risk to delivery of any 'updated' priorities is the greatest, and therefore decisions made on an informed basis. An update on the work being done is being provided to this Committee meeting, with further detailed updates on the reset and recovery plans being presented at future meetings of the Committee.

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Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Current risk score (Apr 2020)	Target risk score and date	Commentary
C19 02 04/20	<p>Covid 19 Budgetary Implications</p> <p>Covid 19 has had a significant impact on the council's expenditure and income generation activity, with resources being spent on the emergency response. If the council does not have robust arrangements in place to record, monitor and report on Covid 19 financial pressures and ensure this is funded by central government then it will be unable to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess and report on the adequacy of central government's emergency funding provided to deal with the pandemicConsider the implications it has for the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the immediate implications for the 2020/21 budgetUnderstand the sustainability of the provision of council services. <p>Risk Area – Finance & Resources</p>	16 (red)	8 (amber) Dependent upon future government funding allocations	<p>Whilst the emergency response to the pandemic commenced in early March 2020, the financial impact resulting from the crisis is largely affecting the budgets for 2020/21.</p> <p>In order to mitigate against the unplanned increased expenditure, the following mitigations have been put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The government has provided the council with an allocation of emergency funding of approximately £12.5m to respond to pressures including increasing spend in the adult social care service, and support for vulnerable residents.The Finance team is working closely with all budget holders to identify and record financial pressures associated with Covid 19 (including additional costs of external service providers) in order to assess and report to senior management, members, the WMCA and government on the inadequacy of the emergency allocation. Whilst there are no strict rules on how the funding is to be used, it became clear early on that the initial funding will be insufficient to meet the additional pressures being faced by councils. A further allocation has recently been announced by government, but the value and basis of this allocation is still unknown. However, it is likely that this additional funding will still be insufficient to meet all additional pressures, including the losses from income generating activity, reductions in council tax collection, the cost of the council tax reduction scheme and the costs arising from the inability to deliver planned savings, that were all factored into the 2020/21 financial budgets. As a result the Council will need to review which services it continues to deliver with the reduced financial resources available.The Finance team has compiled some principles which set out the circumstances in which the emergency funding can be used to fund expenditure or loss of income. These principles will require agreement by the Chief Executive. Areas where funding is likely to be allocated include the additional spend on PPE; the significant mortuary provision; food supplies; the Food Hub; communications; additional social workers; loss of external income; etc.It is highly likely that the impacts of Covid 19 will cross over into future years too and therefore the risk will need to be factored into the medium term financial strategy as part of the recovery and resilience planning.

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C19 03 04/20	<p>Economic Impact</p> <p>The economic impact on the global, national, regional and local economy from Covid 19 is already known to be significant. If intelligent data is not readily available or gathered, shared and analysed then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on the regional and local economy will not be clearly understood The economic measures put in place to manage the risk may not be appropriate <p>And result in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local businesses unable to survive and collapsing Grant conditions on funding received not being met and clawed back, and inhibiting regeneration Increase levels of unemployment and deprivation across the borough leading to homelessness, debt, arrears and poor health Increased demand on council services <p>Risk Area – Regeneration & Growth</p>	12 (red)	8 (amber) 2021	<p>The measures in place to manage this risk include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of support and advice to businesses. The processing and payment of the business support grants announced by government and the reporting back to government via the WMCA on the significant impact this is having on businesses that are not eligible. The support made available to key council suppliers in line with government guidance PPN 02/20 Sector reviews and analysis being undertaken at a regional level via the WMCA Resilience and recovery action plans being prepared by the WMCA <p>The difficulty in managing this risk has been that the data is not yet available to understand the full scale of the impact.</p> <p>The national picture has already shown the impact Covid 19 has had on larger (and usually more resilient) businesses collapsing in recent weeks. With the timescales for Brexit also fast approaching and the uncertainties this brings, the scale of the economic impact on the regional and local economy could be profound and take some time to fully understand.</p> <p>The collapse of businesses will automatically bring about increased levels of unemployment and result in households getting into debt difficulties alongside rent arrears, homelessness, adding to the financial implications for the council alongside increased demand for council services (see risk below too).</p> <p>The procurement actions required for the acceleration of the Community Wealth and Inclusive Economy Deal may be an option to assist in the mitigation of this risk.</p> <p>There are uncertainties around the impact of Covid19 on Government funding for capital programmes including regeneration, transportation, and housing programmes. This could impact on the future attractiveness of Sandwell to businesses.</p> <p>The Towns Fund Programme has retained its Government funding but what the future town centre environment now needs to look like is unknown and Sandwell is still required to successfully bid for the funding.</p>

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C19 04 04/20	<p>Risk to Health, Wellbeing and Life</p> <p>If the council does not allocate resources and put effective arrangements in place to support, protect and safeguard vulnerable people, its workforce (including commissioned care providers) and the people they come into contact with then there is a potential risk to health, wellbeing and life, resulting in excess deaths, negative reputational impact and also potential for future litigation claims against the council.</p> <p>Risk Area - Corporate</p>	8 (amber)	4 (green) June 2020	<p>The measures in place to manage this risk include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The establishment of the Food Hub in Tipton (with over 3,000 parcels delivered at the time of preparing this report) The corporate sourcing and provision of PPE to staff including care workers, in line with prevailing Public Health England guidance Redeployment and training of staff to priority areas and services and the review and updating of risk assessments by all affected services Social distancing measures in line with guidance and smart working Regular communications to staff on health and safety and wellbeing and the access to counselling services. Updating risk assessments taking into account additional risks that could materialise from the new ways of working (on the front line and also in smart working environments) RIDDOR reporting to the HSE (3 cases to date where staff from the STAR service in adult social care have reported that they have contracted Covid 19 as a result of their work) <p>Despite the above, further consideration will need to be given to the following matters to ensure that additional mitigations are implemented to ensure the risk continues to be managed once lockdown is eased:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continual review, update and documenting of risk assessments and risk mitigations as circumstances change. Being able to demonstrate that the council has considered the risks carefully and taken reasonable steps to mitigate these risks will be critical. In the absence of evidence of these risk assessments and mitigations, the council would be in breach of its duty as an employer and could be exposed to claims being made against it. The continued provision of suitable PPE in all services where it is deemed necessary (based on government advice) The hygiene and additional facilities management measures that will be required in council's operational buildings to ensure they remain safe places to work. In addition, to this are environmental health inspections in line with the Food Standards Agency requirements. How schools, leisure centres, and care homes in particular will need to operate to safeguard all users and reduce sickness and deaths. In care homes there may be a need to consider intermediate care for those testing positive, which will result in associated financial and provider capacity risks.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and support to deal with integrating children back into school or transitioning between schools Resources to support the emotional and physical impact on the workforce and carers How the council works with partners to communicate and enforce social distancing measures so that there is clarity and avoid a second wave of pandemic The anticipated increased demand on council services and resources to deal with increased safeguarding referrals, backlogs of DOLs assessments, domestic violence, child poverty, exploitation and isolation. This would be against a backdrop of potentially reduced capacity in some services (eg housing, social care) where there is an ageing workforce or higher staff absence rates due to self isolation.

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C19 05 04/20	<p>Decision Making and Governance</p> <p>During the emergency response, if a robust governance framework is not put in place with the provision of appropriate assurances then there is the potential for decisions being made at speed which may be challenged in the future.</p> <p>Risk Area – Legal & Governance</p>	4 (green)	4 (green)	<p>The following arrangements have been put in place to mitigate against this risk and ensure that legal requirements around decision making are being met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revival of the Emergency Committee with terms of reference which include authorising any actions that may be deemed appropriate under the prevailing circumstances which would otherwise require a decision of the Cabinet, a Cabinet Member or the full Council Agreed emergency delegated decision making powers which are reported back to Emergency Committee Development of the Resilience Plan Assurance framework which includes preparation of a resilience plan, establishment and review of service impact assessments, risk assessments, monitoring of stress indicators and ongoing lessons learned The establishment of remote council meetings in line with new government regulations which came into effect on 4 April to ensure members are engaged and involved in the decision making process. Further technological improvements are being put in place so that members feel more engaged. Daily Sitrep meetings with key partners and twice weekly meetings of the Chief Executive, Deputy s151 officer and the Monitoring Officer. Weekly Corporate Covid 19 briefings with all service managers Weekly meetings of the Governance and Risk Assurance Group where various matters of risk are discussed <p>Despite the above arrangements most of which include minutes and agreed actions, given the nature of the emergency, the new ways of working and the urgency with which some decisions need to be made (in particular at the commencement of the lockdown), there is a small risk that some 'operational' decisions may have been made based upon guidance available at the time which may have subsequently changed or in response to emerging guidance. Therefore, there is the risk that challenges may be made on our interpretation of the emergency response and unintended consequences may arise in the future that could not have been foreseen at the time resulting in the potential for litigation and negative financial and reputational impact. In addition, there is a small risk that some operational decisions may be made in such speed that evidence of how the decision was arrived at or by whom the decision was made may not be available. These matters may result also in the council being challenged and reputational impact.</p>

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				The arrangements above, however, will assist in the mitigation of this risk but as with most mitigations, they cannot guarantee that the risk is eliminated in full.
C19 06 04/20	<p>Supply Chain Resilience</p> <p>If the council does not put in place additional or alternative measures to ensure the resilience of its key supply chains during the Covid 19 crisis and beyond, this will impact on the ability to recover from the emergency and provide key services in the future. This could result in the potential for increased financial impact and/or loss of public confidence in the council.</p> <p>Risk Area – Finance & Resources</p>	12 (red)	8 (amber) Sept 20	<p>Whilst the supply chain risk has been identified in the strategic risk register as part of the business continuity risk, some aspects of the council's supply chain have become higher risk as a result of Covid 19.</p> <p>In particular, the supply chain risk around adult social care and nursing home providers has become extremely fragile as the number of cases and deaths of users and care workers continue to increase at pace. Added to the risk is also the availability of appropriate PPE (which Sandwell is currently managing well in terms of sourcing and procuring this but needs to ensure this is sustained), placing care workers at risk, and the capacity of providers to recruit additional resources to cover pressures due to the low pay scales involved and also due to the lack of financial resources available.</p> <p>Coupled with the above, due to the current crisis in care homes, there is also the risk of a social and behavioural change towards care home provision whereby residents requiring care will express a preference for care at home (which is more expensive) than going into a care home setting, resulting in spare capacity in care homes, thereby adding further financial pressures on care providers.</p> <p>The council is prioritising this and looking at the options available with partners to assess the most effective way of supporting care workers and how patients discharged from hospital who are Covid 19 positive are cared for using step up/step down facilities. This includes the expansion of the testing programme in care homes and finding the best ways of supporting the providers across the independent sectors.</p> <p>Other areas where the council will also need to prepare option plans for mitigation, is in respect of the provision of leisure activity across the borough if Sandwell Leisure Trust are unable to be financially viable.</p> <p>There is a risk that Early learning and childcare providers are also unable to operate in the future and become financially unviable. This would result in the council being unable to discharge its sufficiency duty. The reason for the providers becoming financially unviable is due to them not meeting the criteria to access the various support schemes offered by the government such as furloughing and the business support grants.</p>

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