![Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council]

# Emergency Committee
# Agenda

**Friday 31 July 2020 at 11.00am**
**The meeting will be conducted virtually via Microsoft Teams**

**Please click on the link below to view the meeting live:**
[Emergency Committee - 31 July 2020](#)

**This agenda gives notice of items to be considered in private as required by Regulations 5 (4) and (5) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.**

1. **Apologies**
   To receive any apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest**
   To receive any declarations of interest from members relating to any item on the agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Code of Conduct and/or S106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

3. **Additional Items of Business**
   To determine whether there are any additional items of business arising which should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

[IL0: UNCLASSIFIED]

**Public Item**

4. **Emergency Plan**
   To approve the Council's Emergency Plan.

**David Stevens**
**Chief Executive**
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

**Distribution:**
Councillor Crompton (Chair);
Councillor Ali (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Hadley, Millard, Moore and Shaeen.
.
Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

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# REPORT TO EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

## 31 July 2020

| | |
|---|---|
| **Subject:** | **Emergency Plan**<br>**Sandwell COVID-19 Stay Safe In Sandwell Document** |
| **Director:** | **Chief Executive**<br>**David Stevens** |
| **Contribution towards Vision 2030:** |  |
| **Contact Officer(s):** | Neil Cox<br>Director of Prevention & Protection<br>Nicola Plant<br>Service Manager: Regulatory Services & Transformation |

| DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS |
|---|
| **That Emergency Committee:**<br><br>1. Endorse the framework set out in the Sandwell COVID-19 Stay Safe In Sandwell document.<br><br>2. Endorse the start a media campaign designed to take measures to avoid government instructing us to undertake a local lock down of Sandwell appealing to our local residents to do three things<br>    • If you are shielding, continue to do so.<br>    • Don't have non-essential visitors in your home.<br>    • If you have symptoms, self-isolate at home and book a test. |

**David Stevens**
**Chief Executive**

# Sandwell Covid-19 Stay Safe in Sandwell

# Item Record Table

| | |
|---|---|
| **Title** | Sandwell MBC COVID19 Emergency Plan |
| **Freedom of Information and Data Protection** | FOI Lead Agency-Sandwell Council |
| **Author** | Xris Middleton, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. |
| **Document Owner** | Senior Leadership Team |
| **Document Maintenance** | This document will be reviewed on an annual basis or following learning from a major outbreak. |
| **Consulted** | |
| **Approved by** | **Date:**   …./…../…… |
| **Validation Date** | Live Incident ☐   TT Exercise ☐   Live Exercise ☐   Other ☐<br><br>Validated by ………………. on ……………….. |
| **Publication Date** | …../…./….   **Review Date**:        …./…../…… |
| **Superseded Documents** | Not Applicable |

## Authorisation

The Resilience Team (RT) is responsible for publishing plans within a hierarchy of similar publications. Readers wishing to quote these plans as reference material in other work should confirm with the RT whether the individual publication and amendment state remains authoritative.

## Distribution

Distribution of plans is managed by the RT. Requests for issue of this publication, or amendments to its distribution should be referred to the RT. All other Sandwell Council emergency plans can also be obtained from the RT.

| Distribution Method (inc. URL) | Date Uploaded |
|---|---|
| *Resilience Direct / Council Website etc.* | |
| | |

## Amendments

| Date of Change | Description of Change | Version |
|---|---|---|
| *27/07/2020* | *Initial Draft* | *0.1-0.5* |
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Comments on factual accuracy or proposals for amendment are welcomed by the RT at emergency_planning@sandwell.gov.uk.

To ensure the integrity of this document, holders are requested to inform the Resilience Team, in writing, of any amendments to the information relating to their organisation or authority. All amendments should be addressed to the Resilience Team at the above address.

## Table of Contents

# Section 1    Background

In response to the continuing community transmission of covid-19 both local and central government are able to enforce local restrictions on an area in the country if it considers that the number of daily new cases, or local outbreaks, is too high.

This plan provides an outline of how the implementation of local restrictions will be managed and co-ordinated at both a local and national level.

## 1.1    COVID-19 Contain Framework

The declaration of any local restrictions will be made by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) based on guidance from Public Health England (PHE) and the Joint Biosecurity Centre.

The Covid-19 Framework, from the Department of Health & Social Care, sets out how national and local partners will work with the public at a local level to prevent, contain and manage outbreaks. Successful management of local outbreaks is key to breaking the chains of COVID-19 transmission to enable people to return to and maintain a more normal way of life.

Sandwell Council has published its COVID-19 Local Outbreak Plan in line with this framework.

Depending on the prevalence and progression of the virus local authorities will be designated into three 'escalation' categories which would enable specialist expertise and resource to be drawn down from regional and national levels to augment the local systems.

**Areas of concern** - Additional actions required including; target testing; enhanced communications and detailed epidemiological work.

**Areas of enhanced support** - Actions may include significant additional widespread testing, local restrictions put in place to manage outbreaks and engagement with high risk groups and sectors to help increase the effectiveness of testing and tracing in these areas.

**Areas of intervention** - Actions will be determined by analysis of outbreak but may include; extensive communications, expanded testing, business closures; school closures; travel or movement restrictions; bespoke measures for shielders.

The weekly PHE surveillance report includes an overview of upper tier local authorities (UTLA) with the highest incidence rates and the Contain Framework Local Authority Watchlist as determined by the Local Action Committee and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

## 1.2     Sandwell COVID-19 Local Outbreak Plan

The Sandwell COVID19 Local Outbreak Plan outlines a locally-led system for Sandwell that seeks to protect and promote health and wellbeing in the face of the pandemic.

Its key goals are to; (1) reduce the number of new community cases of COVID-19; (2) minimise outbreaks and manage them effectively when they occur and (3) reduce the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable groups in our community.

The Local Outbreak Plan is centred on 7 themes:

- Theme 1: Local Outbreaks (care homes, schools and workplaces)
- Theme 2: Managing High Risk Places
- Theme 3: Local Testing Capacity
- Theme 4: Contact Tracing in Complex Settings
- Theme 5: Data Integration
- Theme 6: Vulnerable People
- Theme 7: Local Board

The measures outlined in this plan are designed to sit alongside those set out in the Local Outbreak Plan.

# Section 2   Introduction

### 2.1      Aims

The aim of this document is to outline Sandwell Council's response to managing and preventing widespread community transmission of COVID19, the impacts to council services, and how we will engage with key partners and the public.

### 2.2      Objectives

The objectives of this plan are:

- Detail the national and local powers and policies in respect to a major outbreak
- Set out the triggers and escalation process to avoid a major outbreak
- Detail the approach to managing the council's response
- Outline the potential impacts on council services should a major outbreak be experienced

### 2.3      Planning assumptions

The plan has been written with the following planning assumptions:

- Part, or all, of the borough maybe required to implement restrictions
- Additional restrictions may be implemented by central government
- Notification of any restrictions may be at short notice
- Restrictions may include; closure of all non-essential businesses; closure of schools and early years settings; restrictions on travel; bespoke measures for shielders.
- Restrictions may persist for a minimum of 14-days and could continue indefinitely until infection rates drop.

### 2.4      Strategic Priorities

In the event of a major outbreak the council's strategic priorities are to:

- Warn and inform interested parties and the public of any restrictions
- Support vulnerable persons in the community
- Enforce restrictions where legislated to do so
- Maintain essential council services in an affected area

### 2.5      Associated Documents

- COVID-19 contain framework: a guide for local decision-makers
- Sandwell COVID-19 Local Outbreak Plan
- Sandwell COVID-19 Response Plan

# Section 3   Powers and Policies

### 3.1      National Legislation and Powers

The government guidance on outbreaks states that the majority of COVID-19 outbreaks should be dealt with at a local level, and local leaders have a range of powers at their disposal to enforce decision-making.

The legal context for managing outbreaks of communicable disease which present a risk to the health of the public requiring urgent investigation and management is provided through the following legislation:-

- With Public Health England under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Directors of Public Health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With Chief Environmental Health Officers under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
- With NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups1 to collaborate with Directors of Public Health and Public Health England to take local action (e.g. testing and treating) to assist the management of outbreaks under the Health and Social Care Act 2012
- With other responders specific responsibilities to respond to major incidents as part of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004

In the context of COVID-19 there is also:

- The Coronavirus Act 2020.
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No 2)(England) Regulations 2020
- Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (No 2) (England) Regulations 2020

This underpinning context gives Local Authorities (Public Health and Environmental Health) and Public Health England the primary responsibility for the delivery and management of public health actions to be taken in relation to outbreaks of communicable disease through the local Health Protection Partnerships.

PHE is mandated to fulfil the Secretary of State's duty to protect the public's health from infectious diseases, working with the NHS, local government and other partners. This includes providing surveillance; specialist services, such as diagnostic and reference microbiology; investigation and management of outbreaks of infectious diseases; ensuring effective emergency preparedness, resilience and response for health emergencies.

At a local level PHE's health protection teams and field services work in partnership with Local Authorities and health partners playing strategic and operational leadership roles both in the development and implementation of outbreak control plans and in the identification and management of outbreaks.

The Director of Public Health has and retains primary responsibility for the health of their communities. This includes being assured that the arrangements to protect the health of the communities that they serve are robust and are implemented.

In addition to the above powers, local authorities may also seek support from central government to use powers under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to close schools or limit schools to set year groups attendance, to cancel or place restrictions on organised events or gatherings, or to close premises.

To address more serious and wider-spread cases, central government will be able to use their existing powers (under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984) to implement more substantial restrictions (regulations would be produced – and approved by Parliament – on a case-by-case basis) which could include:

- closing businesses and venues in whole sectors (such as food production or non-essential retail), or within defined geographical areas (such as towns or counties)
- imposing general restrictions on movement of people (including requirements to 'stay at home', or to prevent people staying away from home overnight stays, or restrictions on entering or leaving a defined area)
- imposing restrictions on gatherings – limiting how many people can meet and whether they can travel in and out of an area to do so
- restricting local or national transport systems – closing them entirely, or introducing capacity limits or geographical restrictions
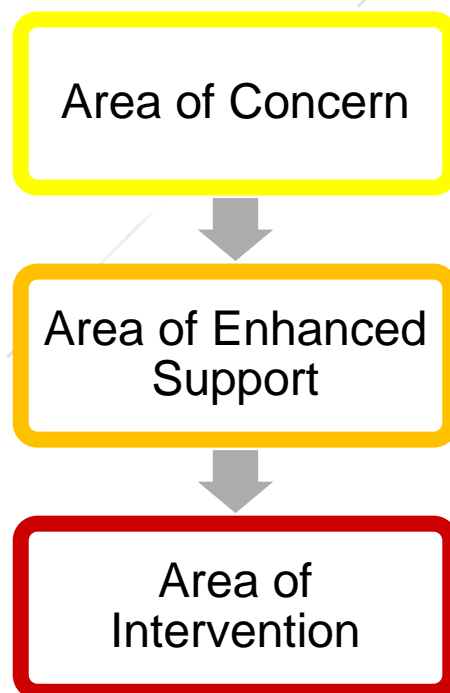- mandating use of face coverings in a wider range of public places

## Section 4   Escalation / Triggers

At local level our Public Health Research and Intelligence Team routinely monitors local data to inform our ongoing management of covid-19 within the borough. They are able to identify if there are any developing areas of concern.

There is currently no set number of new infections in an area that will trigger additional restrictions by Central Government. Any decision to implement additional outbreak controls beyond the national restrictions will be made by central government following scientific advice.

In the event of significant rises of community transmission the council will work with the Department for Health & Social Care to address these issues through the deployment of both this plan and the Sandwell COVID19 Local Outbreak Plan. If these efforts are ineffective, or local capacity and controls are exceeded, central government may then choose to impose additional restrictions.

Based on the government designation of escalation categories this plan will be activated by the Chief Executive (or nominated deputy) following the notification that Sandwell has become an 'Area of Concern'.

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└─────────────────────┘
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│     Area of         │
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# Section 5   Governance

Interim governance arrangements have been stood up to support the council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and managed local outbreaks.

## 5.1    Sandwell COVID-19 Emergency Response Structure

The chart below provides an overview of the interim governance structure within which the following groups operate

- **Strategic Co-ordination Group**

This is a regional group chaired by the Police, which interfaces with central government, maintaining oversight of the regional position with the ability to deploy resources where required to tackle local concerns.

- **Emergency Committee**

Emergency Committee stands in place of full council during an emergency situation and has been standing since March 2020 following the onset of the pandemic.

- **Incident Management Team**

Following the activation of this plan an incident management team will be convened with the responsibility to provide tactical co-ordination of the council's response to the outbreak. An appropriate director will be appointed as the IMT chair, dependent on the nature of the outbreak and any restrictions, who will report into the Senior Leadership Team.

- **Sandwell Health Protection Board**

The Sandwell Health Protection Board is responsible for the day to day COVID-19 response. It is chaired by the Director of Public Health (DPH). Its membership includes local Public Health Consultants as well as representatives from Adult Social Care, Public Health England and local NHS Partners.
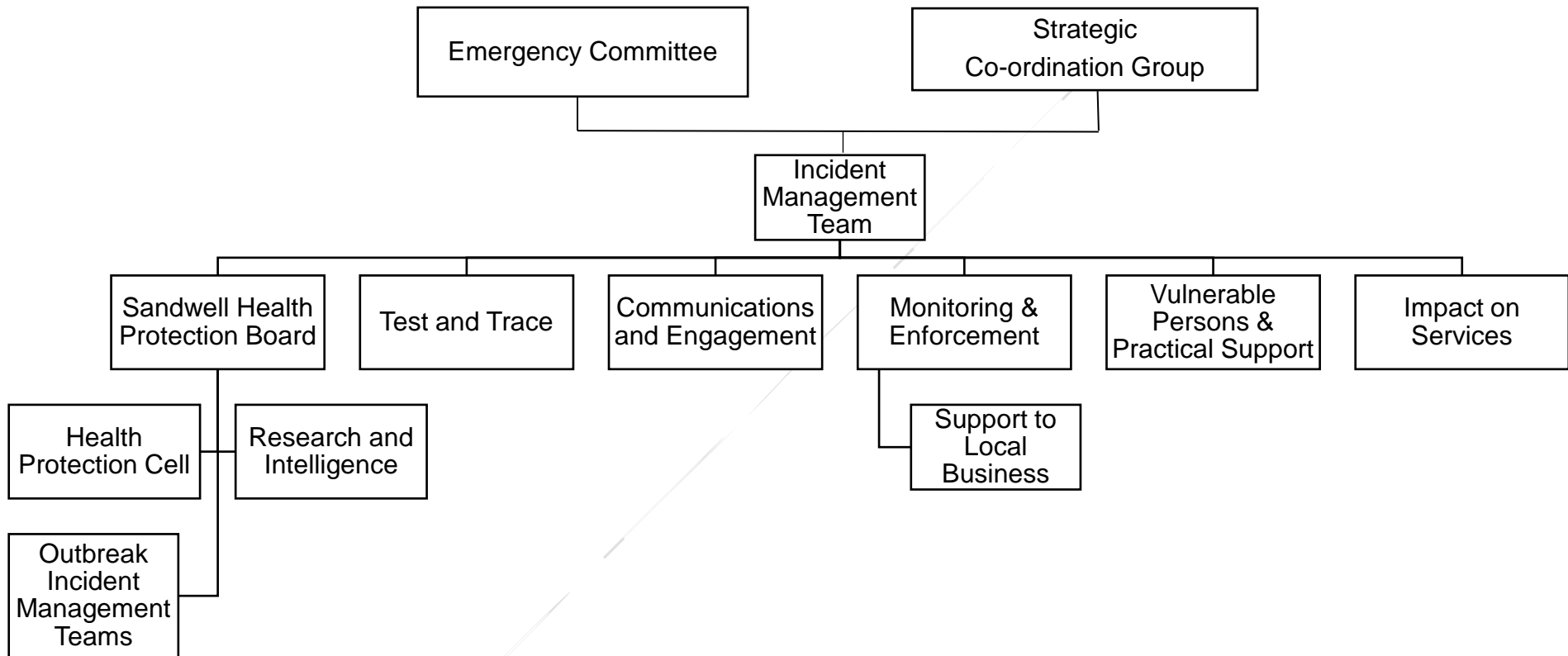
- **Operational Groups**

Operational working groups (cells) will be setup to enable an effective response in the affected area. These cells will be formed based on the type of restrictions and demand on officers as the response escalates.

In addition to the Health Protection and Research and Intelligence cells that exist under the Health Protection Board, the following cells will be established:

| Cells | Focus |
|---|---|
| Health Protection | Epidemiology and analytics and specialist advice |
| Test & Trace | Tailored testing strategy<br><br>Working with Public Health England on Sandwell's tracing campaign.<br><br>Standing up of an 'in reach' programme of testing in the areas of highest incidence |
| Outbreak Incident Management Teams | Responding local outbreaks in accordance with the local outbreak plan |
| Communications & Engagement | Communications campaign with media delivered by the Leader, and other community leaders, multichannel, messages carried by local community influencers and leaders<br><br>Extensive reach campaign 'Staying safe in Sandwell" accompanied by a behavioural insights programme which feeds back into the messaging and tactics for community engagement |
| Monitoring & Enforcement | Co-ordinating the activity of partners to monitor the adherence to appropriate legislation and implementation of enforcement action where required |
| Vulnerable Persons & Practical Support | Development of a Council self-isolation offer (accommodation, financial and social/health care support for those who would otherwise struggle to self-isolate)<br><br>Social care cell supporting delivery of strategy to protect the most vulnerable |
| Support to Local Business | Prioritised prevention-focussed business and residential engagement visits at scale |
| Impact on Services | Co-ordinate and oversee the delivery of both essential and non-essential council services |

**5.2      Structure**



Emergency Committee

Strategic Co-ordination Group

Incident Management Team

Sandwell Health Protection Board

Test and Trace

Communications and Engagement

Monitoring & Enforcement

Vulnerable Persons & Practical Support

Impact on Services

Health Protection Cell

Research and Intelligence

Support to Local Business

Outbreak Incident Management Teams

### 5.3    Multi-Agency and Outbreak Response Levels

Multi-agency response arrangements have been stood up since the beginning of the pandemic, However, as national restrictions have been lifted, arrangements have, or are being, stood down. Partners will remain on alert and the standard notification process via West Midlands Police should be used.

If a major outbreak or additional restrictions are put in place in any local authority area within the West Midlands LRF then the following multi-agency structures have been proposed. These are based on the number of simultaneous outbreaks across the conurbation.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 x LA Outbreak | LA Area led<br><br>TCG formed around Local Authority area<br><br>SCG Notified – placed on Stand-by |
| 2 x LA Outbreaks | Each LA Area leads the respective response<br><br>TCG formed around each Local Authority Area<br><br>SCG activated to coordinate |
| 3+ LA Outbreaks | WM Level TCG Activated<br><br>SCG Activated<br><br>If applicable previous TCGs become OCG led by LAs |

### 5.3.1   Triggers and Activation

- Local Authority triggers local response and escalation
- WM Command and Control process follows
- Any partner can activate the command structure at any time
- Mutual Aid can be drawn in to support LA areas impacted

### 5.3.2   Multi-Agency Working Groups

If required to support the response the council may request the support or re-activation of multi-agency working groups, via the regional Local Resilience Forum that have been setup during the pandemic response. These include:

- Media and Communications
- Testing
- PPE
- Vulnerable persons
- Mortality

## Section 6   The Impact on Council Services

In the event of a major outbreak the ability to deliver council services will need to be delivered will need to be continually reviewed to ensure the ongoing safety of both our residents and our staff.

The table below outlines how the continued delivery of council services will be reviewed in line with the escalation levels for local outbreaks as defined by central government.

This work will be managed via the 'Impact on Services' cell Sandwell Covid-19 Emergency Response structure.

| Status | Actions |
| --- | --- |
| No concerns | The council will continue to deliver its Reset & Recovery Plans, managing isolated outbreaks in line with its Local Outbreak Plan |
| Area of Concern | The Incident Management Team will be stood up, reporting to central government, and consideration will be given to ceasing or restricting the delivery of non-essential services |
| Area of Enhanced Support | Delivery of all non-essential services will be ceased, and consideration will be given to the ceasing or restricting of essential services. |
| Area of National Intervention | Critical services only will be delivered, and the Sandwell Covid-19 response plan will be mobilised. |

# Section 7   Communications & Engagement

Good communication and engagement with communities and businesses will be key throughout the management of Covid19 in the borough; both to support prevention of outbreaks but also during any outbreak or additional measures if placed by central government.

The local authority communications team will take a key role in coordinating communications working with Public Health England and the councils Public Health team.

There are a wide range of stakeholders to reach and engage with, and this will be overseen and co-ordinated by the Communications and Engagement Cell.

Key features of the communications and engagement activity will include: -

- Ensuring elected members and staff are informed and engaged
- targeted messaging to support infection prevention and control
- engagement with communities and businesses
- working with partners across the system including in primary care networks and the voluntary sector.
- Engaging with key partners such as health, police, fire service and transport providers