

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 27 OCTOBER 2020****REPORT OF: MS DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES****LEAD OFFICER: KATIE STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL RESILIENCE PLANNING FOR WINTER 2020/21**

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SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

This report updates Cabinet on the ongoing work that Surrey County Council (SCC) and its services are doing to support the organisation in planning the resilience of its services for what is likely to be a challenging period with the resurgence of the threat from the COVID pandemic, the imminent end of the EU exit transition period, and the normal seasonal health and non-health related pressures. There is the potential that there may be two or more of these risks being realised concurrently, and hence the report provides an insight as to the Council's approach to planning for these risks in an integrated way.

The report provides an overview of the current risks and threats to the Council's business continuity, as well as an overview of the work that is being undertaken to test that business continuity and the model that will be used for the Council to respond to incidents arising.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Notes the work being undertaken by services across the Council and with partners to ensure the business continuity of the services provided to residents and communities across the county.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Council and partners across Surrey face a challenging period over the Autumn and Winter period 2020/21, and the risks and threats facing the authority require services to ensure that they have planned for potential disruption. This kind of organisational resilience requires a robust understanding of the likely threats and risks, but also effective and tested business continuity plans that aim to minimise the negative impacts of such disruption to services on residents and customers served. In addition, it is vital that the Council has effective cross-Council arrangements in place to support an effective response when an incident arises.

As a local authority providing critical services to communities, Surrey County Council has a responsibility to prepare for such threats to business continuity, as well as in its capacity as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to contribute to multi-agency planning and response.

DETAILS:

Background

1. As a Category 1 responder, SCC is responsible for ensuring that it mitigates the impact of any such disruption to its services on residents and the communities it serves. Under the Act, the authority is also responsible for working in multi-agency partnership with other Category 1 and Category 2 responders to provide a county-wide response. This multi-agency working is delivered through the Surrey Local Resilience Forum (LRF).
2. Over coming months, the country and county face a number of potential risks and threats that if realised, could disrupt the provision of services to communities, as well as pose risks to the community. Whilst the Council and partners have tested their business continuity in the first phase of the response to the COVID 19 pandemic earlier this year, it is important to note that the risks set out below create a more complex and potentially more challenging set of conditions – particularly arising from the interrelationship between the various risks and the potential for concurrent incidents and impacts.

Current risk picture for Surrey

3. The current risk picture facing the county is set out below, and aligns to the [Community Risk Register](#) which is produced by the Surrey LRF.

Continued COVID 19 pandemic

4. The Government has shared a reasonable worst-case scenario which sets the planning assumptions for preparing to respond to the increase in cases of COVID.
5. The reasonable worst-case scenario includes:
 - an increase in cases in the autumn peaking early in the new year
 - NHS disruption to non Covid patients
 - a backlog of routine care
 - impacts from seasonal flu increased pressure on the health services

Seasonal winter pressures

6. In addition to the continued pressures arising from the COVID pandemic, there are the normal seasonal winter pressures for which LRF responders normally prepare every year. These pressures see residents' needs for health and social care support peak in the winter. The winter burden on the healthcare system is not only affected by increased incidence of infectious diseases, but also non-infectious conditions that increase in prevalence or are made worse by the winter weather, such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease, myocardial infarction and stroke.
7. In addition, across the UK, winter results in increased deaths and burden on NHS resources. As recently as in 2017/18, England and Wales experienced approximately 50,000 excess winter deaths placing increased pressure on the existing services.
8. Along with the above referenced risk of the resurgence of COVID 19 cases, the Academy of Medical Sciences has identified three further reasonable worst-case

scenarios that could exacerbate pressures on the health and social care system in winter 2020/21, by increasing demand on usual care as well as limiting surge capacity. Two of these arise as a direct result of the COVID 19 pandemic:

- Disruption of the health and social care system due to reconfigurations to respond and reduce transmission of COVID-19. This has had knock-on effects on the ability of the NHS to deal with non-COVID-19 work.
 - A backlog of non-COVID-19 care that has accumulated as routine clinical care has been suspended during the first outbreak.
 - A possible influenza epidemic that will be additive to the challenges above.
9. As a result of these potential impacts, the mass reorganisation of staff, beds and hospital services that took place during the first wave of COVID-19 in spring 2020 is unlikely to be possible at the same scale this winter due to other pressures. This will be particularly relevant if national priorities shift to focus on the protection of businesses and the economy.

End of the EU Transition Period

10. The end of the EU transition period presents an array of potential possibilities, implications and uncertainties.
11. Recognising the impact of coronavirus on businesses' ability to prepare and following the announcement in February that the UK would implement full border controls on imports coming into GB from the EU, the UK has taken the decision to introduce the new border controls in three stages up until 1 July 2021. This is a UK proposal that may or may not be supported by the EU.
12. The reasonable worst-case scenario planning assumptions include:
- delays on EU bound trucks of a maximum of two days that could affect traffic in the east of the county
 - impacts on the supply of medicines and medical supplies
 - increases in food and energy prices could affect the financially vulnerable
 - potential Adult Social Care provider failure due to increased costs for small providers
 - risk of protest and counter protests draining police resources

Seasonal severe weather

13. Every year the Council Highways service produces a cold weather plan to deal with and snow impacts of snow. The Surrey LRF has arrangements in place with 4x4 groups to assist health and social care staff get around the county in bad weather. Surrey LRF partners reviews its adverse weather and vulnerable people plans to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Other risks

14. In addition to the above risks, the Council and LRF partners continue to review and keep up to date plans to respond to other risks proportionate to their likelihood and impact.

Planning for and responding to current threats and risks

15. The Council is working both across the organisation and with partners through the Surrey LRF to prepare to respond to the above risks.

16. Within the Council, a Corporate Resilience Group (CRG) provides strategic oversight to and planning for the kind of business continuity that is required for services to be able to mitigate the negative impact to communities arising from an incident or otherwise disruption to these services. The Group brings together senior representatives for all services and has developed and will keep under review an assessment of current risks and threats.
17. This Group is in the process of reviewing the business continuity plans of services across the Council, identifying where services may need to put in place additional contingency measures to ensure that the most critical services can continue to deliver in the event of an incident.
18. A sub group of the CRG has been set up to specifically look at the interdependencies of services on ICT, property and other core capabilities. As part of this work IT&D are reviewing the organisations critical IT requirements to ensure they can continue meet the needs of the critical services or where additional contingencies need to be put in place. Property are also reviewing the work area requirements of services so that this can be provided in the event that one of the key buildings can't be accessed.
19. In addition, an Operations Group is in place to provide a tactical level response when the risks for which the CRG and services have planned actually materialise. This group operated in the first phase of the Council's response to COVID, and has been reviewed, ready to stand up in the event of an incident or otherwise risk to business continuity.
20. Having reviewed the current threats and risks, the CRG is preparing services to be able to respond in an integrated way to the potential risks outlined in the above paras, given the potential for concurrent impacts from more than one risk being realised at any one time.
21. The planning undertaken so far has highlighted several areas for further work which are being prioritised and already underway, set out in the below sections. These specifically relate to mitigation of the following implications:
 - **Increased demands on services:** Whether a resurgence in COVID, a severe weather event or managing the impacts of the potential disruption arising from the end of the EU exit transition period, services across the Council are likely to experience an increase in demand to support communities impacted by these incidents. This increased demand will be on top of what is a core of statutory responsibilities that services are already delivering to communities, and hence a balance will have to be struck with business as usual, transformational activity and delivering services to support the response with affected communities.
 - **Potential shortages of staff:** Both in respect of the potential for staff to be unavailable to work either from health-related reasons or the impact of the end of the EU exit transition period on non-UK EU staff choosing to relocate, it is likely that staffing levels in services over coming months will come under pressure. Similar pressures will be faced by suppliers, including the many small suppliers that SCC relies on to delivery adult social care and other critical services to communities.
 - **Potential disruptions to supply chains:** Along with potential for staffing shortages with suppliers, there is the risk both in the increased demand for

certain supply of materials such as PPE, but also risks that some supplies may be disrupted at the end of the EU exit transition period – particularly medical supplies and medicines.

- **Potential disruption to the ability to travel and for transport:** Whether from additional Government restrictions from further lockdowns to mitigate the spread of COVID, or from congestion arising from the disruption that is likely to follow the end of the EU exit transition period, services and communities will need to be prepared to cope with less physical mobility. Services will need to prepare for appropriate contingencies where possible, particularly where critical services need still be delivered face to face.

Mitigating the potential impacts

22. As with the county's response to the first phase of COVID, it is vital that the Council works in partnership with other Category 1 and 2 responders through the LRF. This joint working will ensure that we are able to support the most vulnerable in our communities as effectively as possible. The Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) from the first phase of COVID response is still operating, and a review of arrangements is taking place within the LRF under the banner of the new plan, Operation Tarragon, which provides a framework for partners to respond to the above risks and implications.

Service prioritisation and staffing resilience

23. In order to prepare for and mitigate the effects of such potential impacts on staff levels and resilience, services are reviewing their capability and priorities to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within services to manage both business as usual and any increase in workload arising from having to respond to new demands arising from any given incident.
24. The Council will be putting in place measures that allow for redeployment of staff across the council to support critical services as and when pressures arise. This approach worked well in the response to the first phase of COVID, and therefore a model is in place on which the Council will build for responding to pressures over the short term.
25. Staff are being encouraged to get flu vaccinations if eligible, and the wellbeing of staff is being monitored proactively by managers. Measures such as social distancing and ensuring safe practices for all staff that are engaging with face to face contact, either with their teams or with customers and clients are being employed to ensure that the risk to employees' health whilst at work is minimised as much as possible. New measures across all Council buildings and workspaces are in place to ensure that staff are able to socially distance and keep as safe as possible whilst at work.
26. Further, the Council has been working with services and suppliers to ensure that there is the right support in place for any staff affected by the EU exit. Services across Adult Social Care (ASC) have worked closely with the Council's Emergency Management and Resilience Team to ensure that all providers have access to the information they need to understand the impact of the EU exit on their business continuity and also to offer them appropriate support to ensure they have arrangements in place so that they can continue to provide services to our vulnerable residents. Previously, the Council has held EU Exit and business continuity

workshops specifically for providers and information is cascaded to them via the Surrey Care Association.

27. Finally, it is worth also noting that the EU exit is also likely to create new responsibilities for the Council's Trading Standards team. Trading Standards is delivered for Surrey County Council through a team that is jointly resourced and managed with Buckinghamshire County Council. The joint team is a market surveillance body responsible for inspecting goods that cross the national border. In both a 'deal' and 'no deal' scenario the UK will adopt new trading standard responsibilities which will have an impact on the service, including a potential increase in demand as traders prepare for any changes.
28. In addition, there are likely to be increased demands arising from the risks of an increased flow of unsafe, illegal, and illicit products as legislation and regulation changes and border controls focus more on speed and avoiding disruption rather than checks for safety and compliance. Associated economic pressures also create market conditions for rogue traders trading malpractices to grow. Residents will face increased risks which will lead to increased need and demand for interventions from Trading Standards to protect people from harm. These pressures are being assessed and will be addressed in line with the emerging national picture in respect of the Government's negotiations with the EU, and the implications for what will be required of local resources.

Maintaining supply chain resilience

29. Services are reviewing their supply chains in line with the risks set out at paragraph 20 to determine where pressures are most likely and/or will have the greatest impact on service delivery in the event of disruption.
30. With regard to the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff delivering services to vulnerable residents in care and other customer facing settings, the supply of such equipment is being monitored closely through SCC procurement and the LRF's PPE cell. There is an expectation there will be an extension of the Government Clipper line to extend provision to more clinical settings, but there remains a need to maintain a local solution to protect the supply to the care providers.
31. Critically, the LRF have procured a six-week buffer supply of PPE that will support services in the event of a disruption to supply chains. Further measures will be put in place should the need for further such resilience become necessary.

Traffic management planning

32. In addition to the above, officers are working closely with national Government leads and neighbouring highway authorities and LRFs to ensure that Surrey is engaged in the traffic management planning to accommodate any disruption that may occur particularly at ports across the Southeast. Specific engagement is taking place with Kent County Council and Essex County Council, in particular, to input to their traffic management plans relating to relevant ports, and to reflect those plans in SCC's own contingency planning.

Supporting our most vulnerable communities and businesses

33. Surrey LRF partners have been working throughout this year to provide additional support to our most vulnerable residents. There are plans in place to increase this

support in the event of an increase in cases of Covid-19 or any local or national lockdown.

34. Surrey LRF have several existing plans for identifying and supporting vulnerable residents during any severe weather events.
35. In addition, the Council will continue to provide the most up to date information available on countywide impacts of the any disruption experienced as a result of any of the business continuity events identified in this report. The Council is supporting and will continue to support residents, businesses and its workforce through digital platforms, namely a web page on the Surrey County Council website and the council's Jive (intranet) pages.
36. These communications include the critical provision of information relating to Brexit and how the county is responding to any potential disruption arising in borders in surrounding counties that may have a corresponding impact on both transport networks and supply chains into Surrey. These communications will build on the new public information campaign that the Government has launched, 'the UK's new start: let's get going'.
37. In addition, the Council has continued to engage directly with businesses through virtual meetings and working with the Local Enterprise Partnerships and the Surrey Chamber of Commerce to both understand the concerns of businesses in Surrey and provide advice and support in respect of the end of the EU exit transition period.

CONSULTATION:

38. Engagement with stakeholders has continued to be a key part of the Council's planning process for the likely and possible impact during the winter of 2020/21. Through the LRF the council have been liaising with a range public bodies such as emergency services, health bodies, government agencies and, other local authorities.
39. As part of wider planning, the council has been engaging with external stakeholders such as boroughs and districts, businesses, local enterprise partnerships, organisations from the voluntary, community and faith sector to understand implications within the respective sectors and in communities.
40. Internally, the council has been engaging with officers from numerous services and the relevant Cabinet Members regarding the SCC organisation Resilience.

FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

41. At the moment, no specific financial implications have been identified with the above activity. However, it should be noted that (a) there are ongoing pressures arising from the Council's response to the first phase of COVID, and (b) there may be pressures arising from the Council's response to further business continuity events and incidents as set out in this report. Services will be keeping resources under review and will highlight any financial impacts from the Council's response as and when it is deployed.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY

42. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook is uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which are not fully funded in the current year. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected from next year onward, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
43. Cabinet will continue to receive regular reports setting out the financial implications of Covid-19 and of other risks and threats, and further action will be considered as appropriate.
44. The Council has received £53.4m Covid-19 grant funding from government towards the costs resulting from the Covid-19 crisis (£0.9m was used in 19/20), with £1.9m available. Risks identified in this report will be mitigated and any additional costs resulting from this will need to be captured and funding sources established.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER

45. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 ("the Act") and accompanying Regulations and Guidance deliver a framework for civil protection in the UK. Part 1 of the Act establishes a set of rules and responsibilities for those involved in emergency preparation and response at a local level.

Surrey County Council ("SCC") as a Category 1 responder is required to;

- i) assess the risk of an emergency occurring and use this to inform contingency planning;
- ii) put in place emergency plans;
- iii) put in place business continuity management arrangements;
- iv) 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 in the event of an emergency;
- v) share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- vi) co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- vii) provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

Plans should also give due consideration to the welfare of responder personnel.

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

46. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not needed for this report as the recommendations do not have any direct equality implications. However, when there is clarity around the terms of Brexit, any subsequent services changes will be accompanied by an EIA.
47. Under the Equality Act 2010, race is considered a protected characteristic – this includes nationality. Brexit will have a disproportionate impact on EU nationals.

Therefore, as the terms of Brexit become clearer, the council will need to establish an understanding of the implications for affected residents and staff.

48. There are equalities impacts for Covid response as there is evidence that Covid disproportionately impacts on BAME and older residents. All service managers will undertake individual risk assessments for our most vulnerable staff including all BAME and previously shielding staff. Surrey LRF partners have undertaken a large amount of work to identify and help the most vulnerable members of our community.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

49. The CRG will continue to coordinate the Council's business continuity over the coming weeks and months and will be prepared to stand up a tactical response when required.

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Consulted:

SCC Corporate Resilience Group
Chair of the Surrey Local Resilience Forum

Sources/background papers:

The Academy of Medical Sciences - Preparing for a challenging winter 2020/21 - 14 July 2020

Health and social care

- [Actions for adult social care providers and local authorities to prepare for 1 January 2021](#)
- [How healthcare providers can prepare for 1 January 2021](#)

Access to public services

- [Access to social housing and homelessness assistance for EEA and Swiss citizens in England](#)
- [Citizens' rights - EU citizens in the UK and UK nationals in the EU](#)

The EU Settlement Scheme

- The [Local authority introduction to the EU Settlement Scheme](#) includes a number of useful resources for local councils, including:
 - [ID document scanner locations](#)
 - Information about the [Assisted Digital Service](#)
 - [Translations of communications and guidance](#)

- [A list of organisations funded to provide support to vulnerable and at-risk EU citizens applying to the EU Settlement Scheme](#)
- [A postcode checker to help identify support provided by these organisations locally](#)

Community engagement

- [Community engagement: guidance for local authorities](#)

Regulatory services

- [Import of products, animals, food and feed system \(IPAFFS\)](#)
- [UK product safety and metrology changes from 1 January 2021](#)
- [UK product safety and metrology from 1 January 2021](#)
- [Food labelling changes from 1 January 2021](#)
- [Health marks on meat, fish and dairy products](#)
- [Changes to health and identification marks from 1 January 2021](#)
- [EU trade mark protection and comparable UK trade marks from 1 January 2021](#)
- [Find a professional to certify export health certificates](#)
- [Training for environmental health staff, port health officers and trading standards officers on food sampling](#)
- [Training for environmental health staff, port health officers and trading standards officers on imported food controls](#)

Internal operations

Council employees

- [Workplace rights from 1 January 2021](#)
- [EU Settlement Scheme: employers toolkit](#)
- [Right to work checks on EU citizens](#)

Data

- [Using personal data during and after the transition period](#)

Procurement

- [Public-sector procurement under the EU Withdrawal Agreement](#)
- [Public-sector procurement from 31 January 2020](#)

Waste

- [Importing and exporting waste from 1 January 2021](#)

Contingency planning

- [Local resilience forums: contact details](#)
- [Local authorities' preparedness for civil emergencies](#)

- [Guide to local authority mutual aid](#)
- [Central government concept of operations – chapter 5](#)
- [Business continuity advice](#)

Funding

- [The Stronger Towns Fund](#)
- [EU funding](#)

Statutory instruments which have been laid and identified as having impacts on local authorities are listed on a separate page: [EU \(Withdrawal Agreement\) Act 2020 secondary legislation laid with impacts on local government](#). A full list of Brexit related secondary legislation can be found on the [government legislation site](#). Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) have produced [guidance for councils on EU exit Secondary Legislation](#)

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