

SUBJECT:	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response – Risk Management
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	6 May 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the arrangements the Council has in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks in response to the Coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic.
- 1.2 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current high and medium level risks the Council is managing related to the Coronavirus response.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorse the arrangements the Council has in place and risks that are being managed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to how the Council continues to provide a range of vital services. The need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus, while continuing to support communities, has meant that a lot of our usual work has been re-purposed or paused. The Council has continued to rise to the challenge by adapting, innovating and establishing service delivery that supports residents and business, assists community activity and supports council staff well-being.
- 3.2 The Council has enacted its Emergency Management Plan and business continuity arrangements to deliver and coordinate the response, working across Council services along with our external partners such as the emergency services, neighbouring local authorities and Welsh Government. These continue to operate in a dynamic and challenging environment, evolving and adapting to manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks to Council service delivery and the well-being of our staff and residents.
- 3.3 The Council has established internal response structures that link into wider formal Gwent structures and directly into regional, Welsh and Central Government. A diagram of the structure and arrangements in place can be seen in Annex 1 of the report.

- 3.4 To help guide the Council's continuing response a revised purpose and set of strategic aims have been established that will be in place for the duration of the Council's emergency response to the Coronavirus pandemic, as set out in the separate report on the Cabinet agenda. Our focus on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan has been lessened to re-direct capacity towards the emergency response effort.

Internal Arrangements

- 3.5 The main element of the council's response is via the Emergency Response Team (ERT). The ERT chair is rotated between Strategic Leadership Team members. All directorates and COVID-19 specific sub groups established to support the response are represented on the group.
- 3.6 The ERT continue to monitor progress on agreed actions, identified risks and co-ordinate the Council's overall response to the emergency. The group can quickly be convened if situation arises, that needs to be urgently addressed and continues to meet regularly.
- 3.7 The Council's Emergency Response Team (ERT) is guided by an established risk register, which identifies specific risks related to the COVID-19 response. This identifies a range of risks that are owned across a variety of council's services and directorates that are regularly reviewed a part of the ERT's operations and updated accordingly. The risks currently assessed as High and Medium level post mitigation are provided in annex 2. The risk assessment is continually being reviewed and updated. Therefore, this overview provides the latest position at the point the Cabinet agenda was circulated. The potential High and Medium level risks are:
- Due to staff absence and reduced numbers the Council's capabilities and capacity to deliver service will be reduced and restricted in the following priority areas: i. Emergency response ii. Social care, particularly in adult services and iii. Operational capacity to maintain essential services
 - Limited supplies of PPE will impact on the ability of staff to safely deliver services, particularly in Social Care roles
 - That the Council becomes financially unsustainable, in whole or in part, due to increasing financial demands resulting from increased spending and decreased income generation as a result of the Covid-19 emergency response
 - A prolonged period of social distancing restrictions could cause unrest and the potential for some members of the public to ignore the rules and engage in non-compliant activities
 - An increase in the need for funeral and burial services will affect capacity and lead to a delay in delivery of services
- 3.8 In support of the ERT, specific COVID-19 groups have been established to deliver on various processes and specific outputs as directed by the ERT. These groups and their remit are:

Business Resilience (Chair: Head of Enterprise and Community Animation)

- Develop and deliver a grant mechanism to expedite payments to businesses, coordinate and respond to business enquiries and update MCC business advice pages with all the latest information and self-help advice.

Community Action (Chair: Head of Enterprise and Community Animation)

- Support community led response groups, scale up the Volunteering for Wellbeing programme and implementation of the 'Our Monmouthshire' digital platform

Communications (Chair: Communication, Marketing and Engagement Manager)

- Deliver on-going MCC COVID19 communications via our various channels.

Logistics (Chair: Head of Commercial, Property, Fleet and Facilities)

- Ensure that staff and resources are allocated to priority services and that staff being re-deployed have the necessary training, equipment and guidance for them to undertake their new roles in a safe manner.

Digital (Chair: Head of Digital)

- Responsible for aiding business continuity through the use of digital tools and remote working facilities for both schools and the corporate core.

Health, Welfare & Information (Chair: HR Manager)

- Support the ongoing wellbeing of all colleagues during the global Pandemic. The main aim is to publicise relevant and factual material on the Coronavirus Communications Hub which will inform, educate and link to practical support for colleagues throughout the organisation.

- 3.9 The ERT also directs issues to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) who make strategic decisions on behalf of the authority. SLT keep Elected Members informed through individual and specific briefings and via the daily updates from the Chief Executive that are sent via email and can also be found on the Council's internal Coronavirus communications hub.

External Arrangements

- 3.10 Monmouthshire links with external responding organisations via the Gwent Strategic Co-ordinating group (SCG). The SCG is chaired by Gwent Police and covers their geographic footprint. Representatives from the Emergency Services, local authorities, health organisations, military, Natural Resources Wales, utilities and Welsh Government sit on this group. Monmouthshire's representative is the Head of People Services. The SCG are responsible for setting the strategic objectives and coordination of the partner agency response to COVID-19.
- 3.11 There are specific sub groups that sit beneath the SCG that support this strategic group. Monmouthshire CC are represented on these groups as necessary. Monmouthshire CC provides a daily situation report to the SCG and these are collated and sent daily to the Emergency Coordination Centre Wales (ECCW). The ECCW reports to Welsh Government (WG) who then report to COBR – the Cabinet Office Briefing Room. The

SCG can also escalate concerns directly to WG through the formal meetings in addition to the daily situation reporting mechanism.

- 3.12 In addition to the above, the Leader of the Council also meets with other council leaders and Welsh Government ministers to discuss the response three times a week.

Activity so far

- 3.13 There has been an incredible amount of urgent output from both SCG and ERT in response to COVID-19. In addition to the establishment and agreement of strategic intentions, identification and mitigation of risks and the over-arching response structures put in place, a phenomenal amount of work has been and continues to be achieved.

Next steps include

- 3.14 The Council continues to operate in a dynamic environment. Response arrangements are continually under review to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances, the latest evidence, learning gathered and changes to legislation and guidance. The risks identified are regularly reviewed as part of these arrangements and updated based on the latest evidence available.
- 3.15 To help guide the Council's continuing response a revised purpose and set of strategic aims have been established that will be in place for the duration of the Council's emergency response to Coronavirus pandemic, as set out in the separate report of the Cabinet agenda. Delivery will continue to be monitored and will need to be flexible in timescale and content as circumstances and guidance changes. The plans being undertaken to deliver the strategic aims will further identify activity that is being undertaken to manage and mitigate identified risks.
- 3.16 The Council also has an established risk management policy that sets out the Council's policy and approach to strategic risk management across all service areas. The Council's strategic risk assessment will continue to be updated based on the latest evidence.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 The risk management arrangements aim to identify and assess risks robustly, drawing on a range of evidence across all service areas. These arrangements form part of the emergency response and the aim is to put in place risk controls that are appropriate and proportionate to the issues they are mitigating. The legislation and the council's responsibilities in all these areas will remain an important part in our response now and as it continues to develop.
- 4.2 The Council's other established risk management arrangements continue to manage a range of strategic risks across service areas.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 This is not seeking a Cabinet decision and no detailed option appraisal is necessary.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Actions in the risk register set timescales and responsibility holders for delivery. The risk environment and risk assessment is subject to continuous review, as part of the ERT arrangements.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure delivery of the Council's strategic purpose to protect life and support sustainable resilient communities and strategic aims.
- 7.2 There are significant challenges that must be responded to. The arrangements ensure that risks are identified and assessed robustly by the authority and that risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate, and supported by effective operational activity to ensure, as far as possible, risk reduction/risk management.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Specific activity to mitigate/manage risks has resource implications that includes:
- Increased costs to maintain current service delivery and demands in setting up new or amended services.
 - Significant reduction in income generation as a result of the Covid-19 emergency response and where services have been reduced or closed entirely.
 - An inevitable delay in budget savings plans in some areas and that adds to the financial challenges that were already being faced by the Council before the COVID-19 pandemic impacted.
- 8.2 A specific risk on the financial impacts to the Council has been identified and continues to be managed. A specific strategic aim has been identified to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable as an organisation

9. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

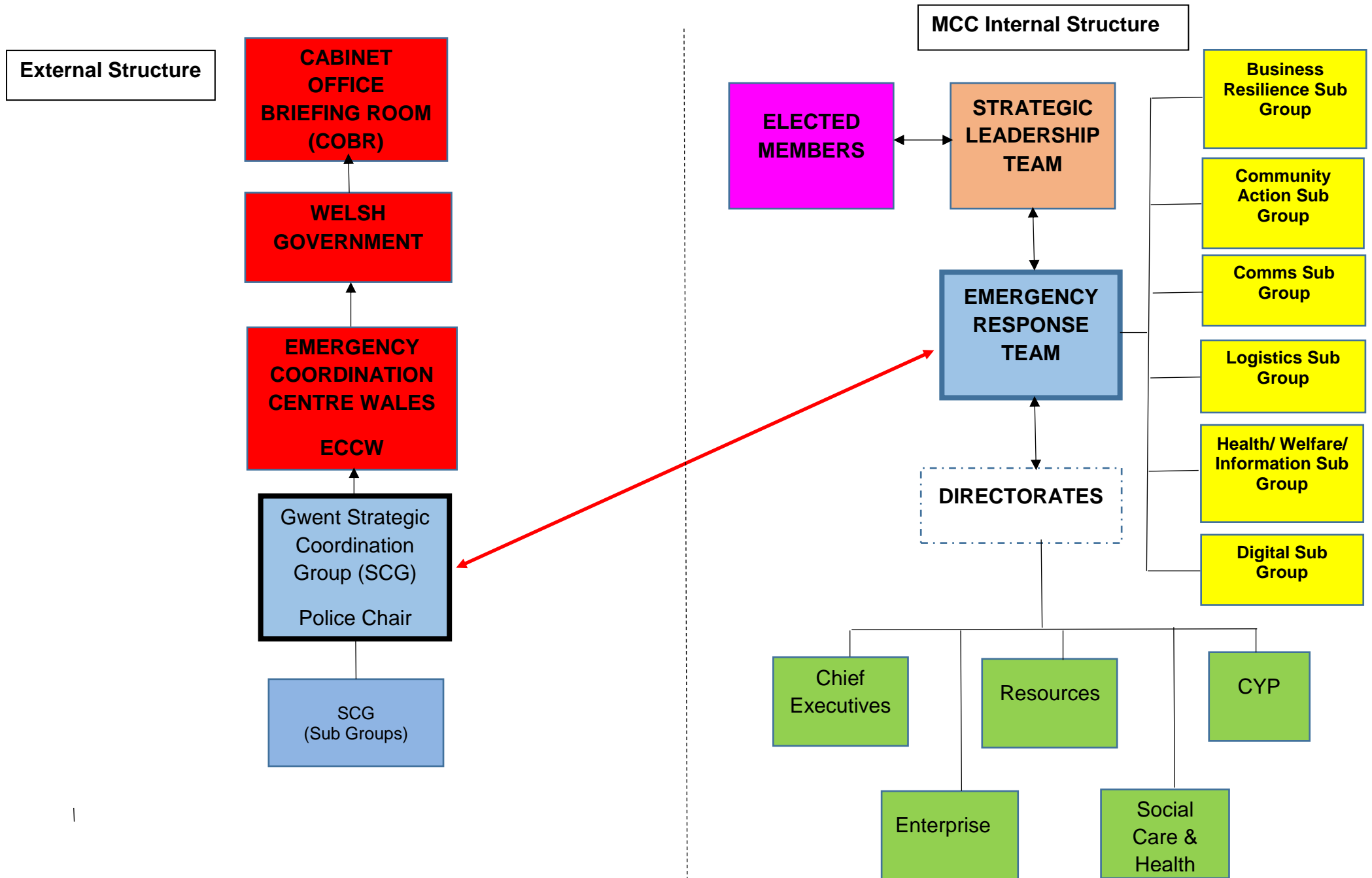
11. AUTHOR:

Frances O'Brien, Chief Officer for Enterprise

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail: francesobrien@monmouthshire.gov.uk

ANNEX 1: CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRUCTURE



Annex 2: Emergency Response Team (ERT) COVID-19 risk register

Risk	Reason why identified	Risk Level (Pre-Mitigation)			Mitigating actions	Timescale & responsibility holder	Mitigation action progress	Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			Risk owner
		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level				Likelihood	Impact	Risk level	
<p>1. Potential risk that: Due to staff absence and reduced numbers the Council's capabilities and capacity to deliver service will be reduced and restricted in the following priority areas:</p> <p>i. Emergency response ii. Social care particularly in adult services and iii. Operational capacity to maintain essential services</p>	<p>The impact of the coronavirus pandemic could lead to an increase in staff absence due to illness or self-isolation.</p> <p>This could result in a lack of capacity to respond to other major incidents, should they occur.</p> <p>The delivery of social care services is essential and achieved through a dedicated service model, which could be impacted by the reduction in staff numbers. The impact would be most significant in Adult services</p> <p>This could result in a lack of capacity to respond in agreed priority services.</p>	Likely	Major	HIGH	<p>Monitor Staff absence rates</p> <p>Maintaining 'Service status' positions on Priority services</p> <p>Redeploying staff, where possible, to ensure service delivery is at acceptable levels.</p> <p>Continue to implement the robust protocol for testing to facilitate staff to return to work.</p>	Daily Emergency Response Team (ERT)	<p>Service status is being monitored by each directorate and reporting any issues, risks or escalations to the ERT. Emergency Response Team meetings are identifying and monitoring pinch points.</p> <p>Testing is now available for all priority service staff and their family members who are symptomatic.</p>	Possible	Major	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service
<p>2. Potential risk that: Limited supplies of PPE will impact on the ability of staff to safely deliver services, particularly in Social Care roles</p>	<p>Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, access to PPE has been challenging and if supplies should decrease, this will impact on our ability to deliver services, particularly in Social Care. National guidance has been issued regarding the use of PPE, which further increases the demand for supplies. Concerns remain over national availability, national procurement and regional supply chain.</p>	Likely	Major	HIGH	<p>Develop MCC guidance on the correct usage of available PPE</p> <p>Stock availability is limited nationally so utilise all existing stocks as best as possible.</p> <p>Work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and ABUHB to share resources, and ensure WG are aware of our position to escalate concerns regarding PPE as they arise.</p>	Daily ERT	<p>Guidance has been developed and is now available for each department to utilise.</p> <p>Continue to monitor the supply chain and use current resources as efficiently as possible.</p> <p>Collaboration is now underway amongst neighbouring authorities and ABUHB to share resources where available.</p>	Possible	Major	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service
<p>3. Potential risk that: That the Council becomes financially unsustainable, in whole or in part, due to increasing financial demands resulting from increased spending and decreased income generation as a result of the Covid-19 emergency response</p>	<p>The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in an increase in costs in maintaining services, in addition to the increasing demands from Central and Welsh Government to deliver new services and provide additional grants. This has resulted in a steep increase in our financial expenditure. In addition to this, some services have been reduced or closed entirely, resulting in a reduction of income.</p> <p>Budget savings plans will also inevitably be delayed in their</p>	Almost certain	Major	HIGH	<p>Implement the process for reclaiming costs via agreed avenues, and identify alternative grant funding offers available via Welsh Government.</p> <p>Complete a financial impact survey.</p> <p>Following the completion of an initial high level assessment to undertake a comprehensive financial sustainability assessment and draft recovery plan for consideration.</p>	Daily ERT	<p>It is a complex and evolving situation that is ongoing and is currently being considered at a regional and national level.</p> <p>A process has been established to identify Covid-19 costs in order to make a claim from Welsh Government.</p> <p>Ongoing discussion and dialogue is taking place with Welsh Government directly and through WLGA and with Welsh Treasurers to ensure that the financial</p>	Likely	Major	HIGH	Chief Officer – Resources

Risk	Reason why identified	Risk Level (Pre-Mitigation)			Mitigating actions	Timescale & responsibility holder	Mitigation action progress	Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			Risk owner
		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level				Likelihood	Impact	Risk level	
	delivery in some areas. This adds to the challenges that were already being faced by the Council before the COVID-19 pandemic impacted.				To review the MTFP and budget assumptions with a view to assessing medium term implications.		challenges are understood and responded to.				
4. Potential risk that: A prolonged period of social distancing restrictions could cause unrest and the potential for some members of the public to ignore the rules and engage in non-compliant activities	As lock-down and social distancing continues, there is a risk that a small minority of people will start to defy the restrictions. This could impose a risk to community safety, and could also negatively impact on social cohesion should frustration occur amongst those adhering to the restrictions.	Possible	Substantial	MEDIUM	Provide accurate and frequent updates to the public, both national and local, utilising all communications mechanisms available. Continue to liaise with Gwent Police and Community Cohesion officers to pick up on early indications, and continue to monitor and escalate situations, as necessary, to address them.	Ongoing ERT	The situation will continue to be dynamic and is being monitored. Mitigation measures will depend on impacts and any developing situations within individual communities.	Possible	Substantial	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service
5. Potential risk that: An increase in the need for funeral and burial services will affect capacity and lead to a delay in delivery of services	The current pandemic could cause capacity constraints on the Registrar and Burial services, resulting in disruption to the funeral process chain and causing additional undue distress to members of the public	Almost certain	Major	HIGH	Continue to monitor the capacity of the Registrars and Burial services and implement the Emergency Response Team action plan, and continue to liaise with the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG). Consider alternative ways of working for the Registrar service, such as during weekends. Relaxation of some registration legislation, where appropriate, such as utilising telephone contact to register deaths. Increase the availability of resources for Registrars, where necessary.	Ongoing ERT	Registrars have now implemented new processes, for example, proactive contact is now being made with bereaved families to offer assistance. The situation is being monitored for demand levels and responded to accordingly. ABUHB have also implemented new process to help alleviate the funeral and burial process. We are working closely with funeral directors to help mitigate the risk.	Possible	Substantial	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service