

Strategic Risk Register – Q3 2020/21

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
16	<p>COVID-19 Adverse impact of COVID-19 sickness and restrictions on Council finances and services. Reduced ability to deliver services, priorities and long-term planning, impacting on e.g. protecting and supporting vulnerable adults and children, education and schools, roads and infrastructure, local economic growth, and the Council's workforce. Capacity to manage a response to a significant sustained increase in COVID-19 cases alongside other winter pressures. Adverse impact of COVID-19 on local health, wellbeing, and economy, creating new long-term need for Council services.</p>	<p>Services have changed and adapted to the changing situation and Government guidance. We are endeavouring to keep services going as far as possible and to offer other options, when it isn't possible. Members of staff who can work remotely are doing so and risk assessments have been undertaken for all staff working in buildings or with service users, with appropriate protective measures in place.</p> <p>Looking after the most vulnerable people in our community is our absolute priority and community hubs have been established with Borough and District partners to support those who need additional help. We have received additional funding from the Government to undertake a range of new activities and support and are closely monitoring our COVID-19 spend. We are also monitoring impacts on the economy and wider community and developing recovery plans with our partners. The medium and long-term impact of COVID-19 is being factored into our Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resource (RPPR) finance and business planning.</p> <p>We have a Local Outbreak Plan to prevent, where possible, and respond to and contain local outbreaks, with specific measures for high risk areas. We are supporting NHS partners with delivery of the local vaccination programme.</p> <p>The Corporate Management Team meets regularly to ensure our response and recovery is effectively co-ordinated and working well through our established partnerships and the new partnerships, which come into operation when we are operating under the Civil Contingencies Act, including the Sussex Resilience Forum and the Local Health Resilience Forum. The Sussex Resilience Forum declared a major incident on 6 January 2021 in response to the unprecedented pressures of the second wave of infections, to put all agencies in Sussex in the best possible position to respond while managing other winter pressures (including from adverse weather, the end of the Brexit transition period and in health and social care).</p> <p>Extensive co-ordination and lobbying are taking place at Member and officer level through SE7, CCN and other arrangements.</p>	Red
12	<p>CYBER ATTACK The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has highlighted the substantial risk to British web infrastructure, with elevated levels of Cyber Crime being reported against all areas of government. Cyber attacks are growing more frequent, sophisticated, and damaging when they succeed. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need to carry out many additional functions virtually and remotely. Changes in working practice give rise to more requests to relax security controls, with services more likely to take risks on the technology they procure and how they use it.</p>	<p>Most attacks leverage software flaws and gaps in boundary defences. IT&D use modern security tools to assure our security posture: Monitoring network activity and identifying security threats; Keeping software up to date with regular patching regimes; Continually monitoring evolving threats and re-evaluating the ability of our toolset to provide adequate defence against them; Ongoing communication with the Security industry to find the most suitable tools and systems to secure our infrastructure. IT&D continues to invest in new tools, which use pre-emptive technology to identify threats and patterns of abnormal behaviour.</p> <p>Enhancing user awareness: Expanding E-Learning and policy delivery mechanisms to cover Cyber threat; educating staff around the techniques and methods used by active threats; and providing General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training and workshops to cascade vital skills and increase awareness of responsibilities under GDPR legislation.</p> <p>Services hosted in ISO 27001 accredited Orbis Data Centres.</p>	Red

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4	<p>HEALTH</p> <p>Failure to secure maximum value from partnership working with the National Health Service (NHS). If not achieved, there will be impact on social care, public health and health outcomes and increased social care cost pressures. This would add pressures on the Council's budget and/or risks to other Council objectives.</p>	<p>During Quarter 3, our system working has continued to focus on the way we can further integrate our services to support people during the COVID-19 pandemic, including out of hospital support and acute discharge hubs to ensure timely discharge from hospital and appropriate ongoing care. Our established integrated management arrangements and community services Target Operating Model have been critical enablers of our pandemic response. Key to this has been setting up a specific project to coordinate work to improve Medically Ready for Discharge pathways, including Home First/ Discharge to Assess, as well as amending the service model at Milton Grange and Bexhill Irvine Unit to accept patients, who are COVID positive, and procuring 32 additional independent sector nursing home beds to enable patient flow.</p> <p>We have also been working with NHS partners on supporting the wider response to the pandemic including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care market resilience; • Shielding and support to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) people; • Testing, outbreak control and mass vaccinations programme; • East Sussex and Sussex-wide health and social care winter planning including the restoration and recovery of healthcare services for our local population. <p>Close system working between Adult Social Care and the Clinical Commissioning Group Continuing Healthcare Team has also been taking place. This enabled approximately 1000 patients, discharged under the original COVID-19 Hospital Discharge Scheme, to be appropriately assessed and reviewed and onto their long term pathways and funding streams by our target completion date of 31st December; and helped to ensure resilience around the financial risks involved.</p> <p>At the same time work has continued on the in-year transformation programme for the remainder of 2020/21, which has been revised in light of the learning and new models and ways of working brought on by delivering Phase 1 of the pandemic emergency response. Programme monitoring was restarted from October, and a next step will be to update the original priority objectives for 2021/22.</p> <p>Initial conversations have commenced to refresh our plans for 2021/22 to further develop our Integrated Care Provision (ICP) and integrated commissioning and delivery of services in East Sussex, in the context of the NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSEI) proposed 'Next Steps for Integrated Care Systems in England', ensuring that we make best use of our collective resources and improve our population's health and outcomes. This will include work to agree, where our integrated working can have the most significant impacts for our population over the next twelve months, and what we will need to deliver to strengthen our ICP by April 2022.</p>	Red
5	<p>RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE & RESOURCE</p> <p>Ongoing uncertainty in relation to future funding levels and the longer-term local government funding regime creates a risk of insufficient resources being available to sustain service delivery at the agreed</p>	<p>We employ a robust Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process for business planning, which ensures a strategic corporate response to resource reductions, demographic change and regional economic challenges; and directs resources to priority areas. We take a commissioning approach to evaluating need and we consider all methods of service delivery. We work with partner organisations to deliver services and manage demand, making best use of our collective resources.</p>	Red

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	<p>Core Offer level to meet the changing needs of the local community.</p>	<p>We take a 'One Council' approach to delivering our priorities and set out our targets and objectives in the Council Plan. We monitor our progress and report it quarterly. Our plans take account of known risks and pressures, including social, economic and demographic changes and financial risks.</p> <p>The Coronavirus pandemic has had, and will continue to have for a long time, profound impacts on our communities and services. We are operating in new, changing and uncertain contexts. We will review and undertake research to track and understand the impacts. We will update and reset our performance targets, priorities, service offers and financial plans, as required, to reflect them.</p> <p>We lobby, individually and in conjunction with our networks and partners, for a sustainable funding regime for local government in general and adult social care specifically to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex, and which recognises the significant impact of COVID-19 on the Council's expenditure and income.</p>	
<p>15</p>	<p>CLIMATE Failure to limit global warming to below 1.5°C above pre-industrialisation levels, which requires global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) to be reduced by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' by 2050 at the latest. The predicted impacts of climate change in East Sussex include more frequent and intense flooding, drought and episodes of extreme heat, as well as impacts from the effects of climate change overseas, such as on food supply. This will lead to an increase in heat-related deaths, particularly amongst the elderly, damage to essential infrastructure, increased cost of food, disruption to supply chains and service provision, and greater coastal erosion.</p>	<p>Climate change adaptation: we are following national adaptation advice, including working with partners on flood risk management plans, a heatwave plan and drought plans.</p> <p>Climate change mitigation: we are continuing to reduce the County Council's own carbon footprint, which was cut by 60% between 2008-9 and 2019-20.</p> <p>In response to our climate emergency declaration, our annual emissions target has been increased from 3% to 13% per year and a 5-year carbon budget has been set. This is in line with our commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions from the County Council's own activities as soon as possible, and by 2050 at the latest. The senior officer Climate Emergency Board held its first meetings on the 3rd July and the 5th October.</p> <p>Our new Climate Emergency Officer started on the 1st July and is working with teams across East Sussex to deliver the corporate emergency plan covering 2020-22, with an initial focus on building and travel related emissions.</p> <p>In quarter 3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The climate emergency plan has undergone Scrutiny Review. The response to Scrutiny's recommendations will go to CMT, Cabinet and full Council by the end of February 2021. 2) Bids have been submitted to the £1bn national public sector decarbonisation fund to support delivery of the climate emergency plan. 3) A communications plan to engage Members and staff will be developed during quarter 4. 	<p>Red</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>POST EUROPEAN UNION (EU) TRANSITION The United Kingdom has left the EU with a negotiated outcome. However, there are likely to be areas of disruption over the coming months. Key areas at risk of disruption are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •At Newhaven Port and on the surrounding road network due to new port checks. •In business and economic activity, due to 	<p>Many of the key areas at risk of disruption are already on the Strategic risk register (COVID-19 response, Local Economic Growth) or departmental risk registers and are subject to business as usual risk and business continuity management.</p> <p>The Trading Standards team are working with Environmental Health colleagues to smooth the impact of Government border policy on the capacity required to support new border enforcement arrangements at Newhaven Port. Planning will also be informed by the Government Protocol and Border Group, of which the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport is a member.</p>	<p>Red</p>

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	<p>import/export administrative complexities for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, supply chain disruption, impact of trade tariffs on consumer purchasing power, and workforce supply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The COVID-19 pandemic response and local outbreak management. E.G. through disrupting international supply chains for Personal Protective Equipment, and •delivery of Council Services. <p>The impact of this risk is heightened with the current requirement for hauliers to produce a negative COVID test for entry to France.</p>	<p>The Sussex Resilience Forum has run exercises to support multi-agency emergency planning for the implications of additional border controls.</p> <p>The Chief Executive is a representative for the South East on the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government group of nine regional chief executives, which provides a direct channel of communication into the Ministry, on local and regional issues emerging from the end of the transition period.</p>	
1	<p>ROADS</p> <p>Wet winter weather, over recent years has caused significant damage to many of the county's roads, adding to the backlog of maintenance in the County Council's Asset Plan, and increasing the risk to the Council's ability to stem the rate of deterioration and maintain road condition.</p> <p>COVID-19 could lead to an increase in the level of staff sickness, as well as the need for staff to self-isolate/distance. It will lead to a change in our working approach and arrangements, even beyond the length of any Government imposed lockdown.</p>	<p>The additional capital maintenance funding approved by Cabinet in recent years has enabled us to stabilise the rate of deterioration in the carriageway network and improve the condition of our principle road network. However, a large backlog of maintenance still exists and is addressed on a priority basis.</p> <p>The County Council's asset management approach to highway maintenance is maintaining the overall condition of roads, despite recent years' winter weather. However, severe winter weather continues to be a significant risk with the potential to have significant impact on the highway network. The winter of 2019/20 was one of the wettest on record and generated 4 times more potholes for example. The recently approved five-year capital programme for carriageways 2018/19 to 2022/23, and the six-year additional capital programme for drainage and footways 2017/18 to 2022/23 provide the ability to continue to manage condition and build resilience into the network for future winter events.</p> <p>Additional DfT money from 2018/2019 has supported this approach.</p> <p>Remote working has been adopted where possible in response to COVID-19. We are still able to deliver works on the ground adhering to current working restrictions and the carriageway programme is continuing as normal. If working restrictions change, this might impact our ability to deliver. If staff illness increases for either our contractor, sub-contractors or suppliers, this might impact our ability to deliver.</p> <p>Our contractor has adopted the service to ensure the workforce can work in a safe environment and has continued to successfully deliver the service on the ground or from home, with a full reactive service and capital programme delivered this year. Staff absence due to COVID related illness or self-isolation has remained very low and has had no significant impact on the service but clearly, in an ever-changing situation, the risk remains.</p>	Amber
7	<p>SCHOOLS</p> <p>Impact of weak leadership in schools on outcomes for children and young people</p>	<p>Continuing to secure high-quality leadership and governance across all our schools, colleges and settings is a high priority for the SLES performance improvement plan. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with partnership networks to provide support and challenge for the recruitment, development, and performance of high-quality school leaders. 	Amber

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	<p>Failure to secure adequate leadership within East Sussex Schools, leading to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced outcomes for children • poor Ofsted reports and reputational damage <p>Failure to accelerate progress and improve attainment for all key groups of pupils</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • poor Ofsted reports • reputational damage <p>Resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • negative impacts on employability • undermining capacity for economic growth • increased pressures on services provided by social care and health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the existing Academy Chains within East Sussex, to ensure appropriate solutions for schools in East Sussex. • Continue to support the East Sussex recruitment and retention strategy with a focus on leadership. • Accelerate the work to develop partnerships between schools that cannot secure adequate leadership alone and explore the options for closure of schools that are unable to deliver a high-quality education to their pupils. • Work with Teaching Schools Alliances and Education Improvement Partnerships to support the development of outstanding leaders. • Work with the primary and secondary board to implement the schools causing concern guidance. • Work with the primary board, secondary board and teaching schools to raise standards of provision, curriculum design and quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 and improve outcomes in Key Stage 4. <p>These mitigations don't take account of COVID impacts/measures.</p>	
<p>8</p>	<p>CAPITAL PROGRAMME</p> <p>As a result of current austerity, the capital programme has been produced to support basic need only and as a result of this there is no resource for other investment that may benefit the County e.g. that may generate economic growth. Additionally, there is a risk, due to the complexity of formulas and factors that impact upon them, or changes in these, that the estimated Government Grants, which fund part of the programme, are significantly reduced.</p> <p>There is also a risk that the move from S106 contributions to Community Infrastructure Levy will mean that Council has reduced funding from this source as bids have to be made to Districts and Boroughs. Slippage continues to occur within the programme, which has an impact on the effective use of limited resources.</p>	<p>The Council has a Capital Strategic Asset Board (CSAB), a cross departmental group consisting of officers from each service department, finance, property and procurement to oversee the development and delivery of the capital programme. Governance arrangements continue to be reviewed and developed in support of the robust programme delivery of the basic need programme. The Education Sub Board, which in part focuses on future need for schools' places, continues to inform the CSAB of key risks and issues within the School Basic Need Programme. Regular scrutiny by the CSAB of programme and project profiles (both in year and across the life of the programme) occurs on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>The CSAB also proactively supports the seeking and management of all sources of capital funding, including; grants, S106, CIL and, Local Growth Fund monies. A cross department sub board oversees the process for bidding for CIL and the use of S106 funds, and work continues with Districts and Boroughs to maximise the Council's receipt of these limited resources. The impact of COVID-19 provides a risk to external funding that supports the capital programme, with future years capital grants and receipts estimates, CIL and S106 targets at risk of reducing. In addition, the one-year Spending Review (SR) on 25 November set government department's revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22 only, providing no certainty over future years capital grants. Officers will proactively monitor funding announcements and seek to minimise the impact on delivery of the capital programme and ensure that there is sufficient liquidity to meet funding requirements.</p> <p>A risk factor was introduced in 2019/20 to acknowledge and address the historic level of slippage in the capital programme, its impact on the financing of the capital programme, and therefore on treasury management activity. Following the creation of the 20-year capital strategy (2020/21 to 2040/41) and the enhanced rigour in the building of a 10-year capital programme, this factor has not been extended to future years. CSAB will continue to monitor slippage and recommend any change should it become necessary.</p>	<p>Amber</p>

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		<p>COVID-19 is impacting on the delivery of projects and programmes of work. Any slippage and/or under/overspend will be reported as part of the capital monitoring process overseen by the CSAB and as part of the normal RPPR process. The pressures and issues that COVID-19 has presented are unprecedented and has thrown many of the current planning assumptions off course. There are a number of overspends relating to COVID-19 being reported; officers will seek to minimise the adverse impact of overspends through mitigations, seeking additional funding where available and closely monitoring the impact of any additional borrowing if required.</p>	
9	<p>WORKFORCE</p> <p>Stress and mental health are currently the top two reasons for sickness absence across the Council, potentially leading to reduced staff wellbeing, reduced service resilience, inability to deliver efficient service and/or reputational issues.</p> <p>An inability to attract high calibre candidates could lead to limited recruitment choices and therefore lack of the expertise, capacity, leadership and/or innovation required to deliver services and service transformation.</p>	<p>The 2020/21 Q1-3 sickness absence figure for the whole authority (excluding schools) is 5.67 days lost per FTE, a decrease of 4.8% since last year.</p> <p>Stress/mental health remains the primary reason for absence, increasing by 33.4% compared to 2019/20 Q1-3. It is worth noting that Q1 covers the key period of the immediate response to COVID-19 and the lockdown. It is likely, therefore, that the sudden increase since April 2020 is a result of COVID-19. This should become clearer in future reports.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •80 members of staff have attended 'Working Through a Pandemic' sessions hosted by our EAP with more booked •Compassionate leadership, remote teams and wellbeing workshops have taken place with more planned •Our expanding Mental Health First Aiders network have been providing support in virtual team meetings and 1-1 sessions •A Wellbeing Intranet page to support staff during COVID-19 has been developed which hosts a wealth of information and signposts to targeted resources. This is supported by a dedicated wellbeing campaign with daily webinars from our EAP provider •'Time to TALK about Stress' campaign was launched on 10 October 2020, with a focus on managing stress in a remote environment, supported by a comprehensive toolkit •A short film is underway promoting the importance of keeping in touch with colleagues to help prevent reported feelings of isolation •A review is currently taking place on our Wellbeing intranet pages to ensure the support is more visible and accessible •In response to staff feedback, a Wellbeing Newsletter was launched in November, capturing all key updates in one place <p>Whilst it is too early to assess the full impact of COVID-19, some effects are already being felt. In the context of attraction and recruitment, the move to remote working and the opportunity for this to continue as we consider future new ways of working, has resulted in a much wider geographical pool of applicants being available to the Council. Two workstreams: 'attracting and recruiting the future workforce' and 'leading the workforce' were reported to CMT on 3 February 2021 and the learning so far from COVID-19 has been incorporated into this work.</p>	Amber

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6	<p>LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> <p>Failure to deliver local economic growth, and failure to maximise opportunities afforded by Government proposal to allocate Local Growth Funding to South East Local Enterprise Partnership, creating adverse reputational and financial impacts.</p>	<p>The County Council and its partners have been successful in securing significant amounts of growth funding totalling £129m, via both the South East and Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships, to deliver a wide range of infrastructure projects in East Sussex. We have also secured outgoing European Funding (EU) funding for complementary economic development programmes supporting businesses to grow, including: South East Business Boost (SEBB); Low Carbon across the South East (LoCASE); TRANSFORM Apprenticeships; South East Creative, Cultural & Digital Support Programme (SECCADS); and inward investment services for the county. We have continued to bid for further EU funding on the above projects and have secured over £4m of investments to be delivered from April 2020 for a further 3 years.</p> <p>Government issued a funding call in mid-June through the Getting Building Fund programme for pipeline projects to create jobs and deliver over the next 18 months, with East Sussex securing £11.2m on 8 projects in late July. All 8 projects were approved by SELEP in October/November and we are now confirming their grant agreements to start delivery in December/January.</p> <p>We have been actively working with partners in developing projects and submitting proposals to a number of recent funds, including the Green Homes Fund, Future High Streets, Stronger Towns Fund, the European Social Fund and the SELEP COVID-19 Skills and Business Support Fund.</p> <p>The COVID-19 outbreak in early March 2020 is seemingly changing the funding landscape, and alongside the impacts of Brexit, is having an impact on major funding decisions from Government.</p> <p>We officially launched in September the East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan, called 'East Sussex Reset'. The plan identifies deliverable actions in the short term, alongside more aspirational asks. It will become an important bidding document and influence the emerging SELEP Recovery and Renewal Strategy, scheduled for March 2021. Both documents will look at ways to incorporate the recent Government Spending Review 2020 focus on the green revolution, the Levelling Up Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The prospectuses for both are to be launched in the new year and spring respectively, with initial pilot monies available for bids in 2021/22.</p>	Green

