

# Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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<b>Risk Code</b>	CR68	<b>Risk Title</b>	Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)
<b>Risk Owner</b>	Vaughan Watson	<b>Updated By</b>	Brian Simmonds
<b>Year Identified</b>	2020	<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Build thriving and resilient communities
<b>Risk Description</b>	<p>The outbreak of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 30 January 2020. On 11 March 2020, WHO characterised COVID-19 as a pandemic. The Council is now running on a Business Continuity footing and this needs to be recognised as not being 'business as usual'. As a result of the rapid spread of this virus, there is a risk that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NHDC (and contractor) employees and Members could become infected;</li> <li>- The virus could spread rapidly throughout the organisation;</li> <li>- On a wider scale, residents could become infected throughout the district.</li> <li>- The 'lockdown' restrictions could be protracted, with significant long-term effects on the Council.</li> </ul> <p>This could lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employees and Members being unavailable due to illness or quarantine guidelines;</li> <li>- Subsequent inability to deliver services and make decisions;</li> <li>- A change in service usage, due to fears of being in public and potential exposure to the virus;</li> <li>- The Council incurring unforeseen costs to change to manage the new environment (e.g. IT equipment/software);</li> <li>- Pressure on the Council's financial position, both in terms of income and impact upon reserves;</li> <li>- A detrimental effect on the Council's ability to deliver 'normal' services and any cost of change;</li> <li>- Contractor's inability to stay active or to continue service delivery;</li> <li>- Increasing work levels due to loss of third sector withdrawal (ASB, Domestic Violence, Homelessness etc.)</li> </ul> <p>These risks could arise during the first wave of the pandemic but could also arise in potential subsequent waves.</p>		
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and enhancement of current general resilience arrangements.</li> </ul>		
<b>Consequences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Negative impact on the general well-being of employees, Members and residents.</li> <li>- Increased pressure on employees not infected with the virus.</li> <li>- Inability to deliver statutory (and discretionary) services.</li> <li>- Decrease in service income compared with relevant budgets.</li> </ul>		
<b>Work Completed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NHDC Resilience Plan and NHDC Pandemic Guidance Resilience Response Plan in place.</li> <li>- NHDC critical functions reviewed.</li> <li>- Able to call upon the Hertfordshire NHS Pandemic Influenza Framework and the Pandemic Flu Checklist for Businesses.</li> <li>- Hertfordshire Resilience Forum Strategic Coordinating Group established with links to LAs.</li> <li>- Update included in the February/March 2020 Insight staff briefings.</li> <li>- Staff intranet page and public web page created signposting staff and the public to key guidance and information.</li> <li>- Promoting a visible change in hygiene habits at NHDC, to reinforce good hand and respiratory hygiene habits in a hot-desk environment.</li> <li>- Cleaning kits available in visible locations within the entrance of each office floor.</li> <li>- Increased number of hand gel dispensers available around the building, e.g. lift foyers and on each office floor.</li> <li>- Corporate communications increased promoting hygiene measures for infection control including new hygiene posters displayed around key sites and guidance on the intranet.</li> <li>- Government guidance and Public Health England campaigns monitored.</li> </ul>		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public Health England hygiene campaign material issued for display on staff entrance and Reception screens.</li> <li>- Detailed staff FAQs produced and published on the intranet, including guidance on home working.</li> <li>- Staff Survey carried out on home working capability and those with childcare/caring responsibilities.</li> <li>- Daily situation reports (SITREPs) introduced to monitor the number of staff self-isolating and affect on service provision.</li> <li>- Business Continuity Incident Management Team established chaired by Anthony Roche, supported by Ian Couper, Vaughan Watson and key officers.</li> <li>- Officers appointed as NHDC representatives on specific LRF cells.</li> <li>- Changes to NHDC services made in line with Government direction.</li> <li>- Alternative conference call facilities considered.</li> <li>- Increased capacity for phones for staff home working.</li> <li>- Home working capability increased for staff.</li> <li>- Full Council meeting took place remotely.</li> <li>- The Council graded itself with an overall Amber traffic light status rating, which was required by the Herts Strategic Coordinating Group to enable a countywide/multi-agency perspective of how responders are coping with the crisis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ongoing Work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working with partners in the Hertfordshire Local Resilience Forum through the Strategic Coordinating Group and specific cells, to monitor and share information and coordinate response.</li> <li>- Business Continuity Incident Management Team reviewing the Council's preparedness, actions required and the impacts of the current situation on services.</li> <li>- Emergency Planning officers keeping a watching brief.</li> <li>- Client officers working closely with our main contractors (Urbaser, SLL and JOC) to effectively manage the implementation of their BCPs in ensuring services can be provided, wherever possible, whilst protecting the essential services specified in the Council's BCP.</li> <li>- Site identified and NHDC volunteers available to assist with response to support vulnerable people, if required.</li> <li>- Service SITREPS ongoing.</li> <li>- Communications messages, as required.</li> <li>- Coronavirus intranet pages updated with FAQs and guidance, as appropriate.</li> <li>- Web pages updated with guidance and information on changes to Council services.</li> <li>- Only a handful of employees are now working in the DCO, reducing the risk of infection.</li> <li>- The majority of staff (an average of 270 per day) are working from home, which is supporting the Business Continuity plan. This has been possible because of the significant input by IT staff, and delivery and configuration of hundreds of computers, laptops and phones. Anecdotally, NHDC is in a good position compared to its peers, although nationally, the demands upon the broadband network means that at times, many broadband service speeds slow.</li> <li>- Working through challenges associated with telephony and video conferencing (Microsoft Teams, MiCollab and Highfive software now being used).</li> <li>- Environmental Health Officers are awaiting the correct facemasks (lower specification masks have been delivered) relating to a duty to escort infected persons under certain circumstances.</li> <li>- Whilst HCC lead regular deliveries to self-isolating persons, NHDC distributes 100 food parcels weekly to Letchworth Heritage Foundation, Salvation Army, The Need Project and Feed Up, Warm Up.</li> <li>- NHDC assisting the NHS by redirecting staff to telephone self-isolating persons who received the Government shielding letter but have not yet responded, in order to minimise those who might 'fall between the cracks'. These volunteer staff have made welfare calls to all 661 recipients of letters.</li> <li>- Waste Services have suspended bulky, food and garden waste at present with a view to early restoration.</li> <li>- Social distancing with bin crews is currently working within Government guidelines, although if instructed to have a driver only, this would have a significant impact on the waste services we could deliver to residents.</li> <li>- Development of a lockdown toolkit supporting staff mental health and wellbeing and Welfare calls being made by the HR Team.</li> <li>- Working on a recovery plan that allows moving back towards normal, whilst managing risk, monitoring impacts and being ready to scale back again if there was a second wave.</li> </ul>

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	- Monitoring the financial impact, determining impact on the Council's overall position and supporting the lobbying for funding from Government.		
<b>Current Impact Score</b>	3	<b>Current Likelihood Score</b>	3
<b>Overall Risk Score</b>	9	<b>Current Risk Matrix</b>	
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	27-Apr-2020	<b>Next Review Date</b>	27-May-2020
<b>Latest Note</b>	<p>29-Apr-2020 Risk reviewed and an activity update provided by Brian Simmonds on 27 April 2020. The Risk Description was updated, including the removal of the following, which were considered to be no longer valid as risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Central government guidance could impose self-isolation and restricted movement;</li> <li>- Resilience/emergency plans being invoked to deal with wide scale issues throughout North Hertfordshire/Hertfordshire.</li> </ul> <p>Work Completed and Ongoing Work fields updated to reflect Brian's activity update.</p> <p><b>The risk will continue to be monitored and updated to strip out risks which have already materialised and replace with detail of the current risks and arrangements relating to the recovery phase.</b></p>		