

Agenda Item	8
Report No	CP/05/21

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Communities and Place

Date: 24.2.21

Report Title: Ongoing Covid-19 service impacts and adjustments

Report By: ECO Communities and Place

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report describes the risks to business continuity for the Communities and Place Service arising from the prolonged Covid response and the 2nd Lockdown. Five risks are identified and over 40 mitigating actions are in place. The risks relate to service disruption from lockdown requirements and potential staff absence from Covid as well as increasing and new demands on the service, with seven new workstreams identified. Risks around staff welfare and continuing financial pressures are also assessed. Service risks and mitigating actions are attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Mitigating actions are generally operational and for Members to note; however, if any staff absence cannot be covered some temporary service re-prioritisation would be needed and Members are asked to agree this where there is a public interest. Some team functions are already adjusted to cope with additional and new demands on the workforce. Members are also asked to note and agree requests for relaxation of some timescales for statutory services and requirements.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to NOTE:
- i. the five service risks and mitigating action now in place to support business continuity and our duty of care as an employer as set out in Appendix 1;
 - ii. the service adjustments in place for the Environmental Health Team given their need to prioritise public health tasks and support for business trading with EU countries, as set out in paragraphs 6.2 and 6.3;
 - iii. the seven new workstreams affecting the Environmental Health, Policy and Ward Management and Customer Services Teams, the re-start of the amenities review and new work on play areas, the service lead role in supporting NHS Highland's

vaccination programme, contributing to a Council Visitor Management Plan and participating in the running of elections.

- iv. the adjustments required for the Policy and Ward Management Team as set out in paragraph 6.5; and
- v. that for the time being Committee business supported by the service will focus on urgent and time critical reports, supplemented by Member briefings and Ward Business Meetings.

2.2 Members are asked to AGREE:

- i. the temporary re-prioritisation of waste, public conveniences and grounds maintenance services as set out in paragraph 6.3, although these would only be required if staff absence cannot be covered; and
- ii. that a longer timescale is sought for some statutory duties and requirements as set out in paragraph 6.10.

3. Implications

3.1 Resource

This report includes mitigation around further financial risk associated with the 2nd lockdown. There will be a future report on the duty for 1% of the Council's budget to be directed by Participatory Budgeting, noting the relaxation to have this in place by May 2021. The report highlights human resource risks and mitigation. Key tasks relate to Covid compliant work practices, supporting staff wellbeing, ongoing engagement and advice from Trade Unions and the ability to deploy staff to cover Covid related absence to avoid temporary service disruption.

3.2 Legal

The report highlights the importance of compliance with the requirements of the 2nd Lockdown, including the legal requirement to work from home where possible and the need to prioritise statutory functions if any further service disruption occurs.

3.3 Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

The risk assessment aims to ensure business continuity to minimise any disruption of service for our communities. Should any temporary disruption require a re-prioritisation of services, communication with Members locally and for the public will be arranged.

3.4 Climate Change / Carbon Clever

The 2nd Lockdown and the requirement for home working means less staff business travel and commuting. There are some exceptions regarding increased use of some fleet associated with social distancing in the manual workforce.

3.5 Risk

This report describes the risks to service delivery and the mitigation in place. It is informed by the learning from the Lockdown last year. Risks and mitigating actions will be reviewed at least monthly by the Service Management Team.

3.6 Gaelic

There are no known Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4. Background

- 4.1 Significant service disruption arose from the Lockdown 1, from March to July 2020 as detailed in the [report to Committee](#) in August 2020. This disruption is summarised below.

- Only essential services and travel were permitted. National restrictions led to some services being temporarily closed or suspended. This affected play areas, recycling centres and non-statutory waste services, birth registration, civil ceremonies and citizenship ceremonies, grounds maintenance and street cleaning.
- With national direction for all vulnerable staff and those shielding to work from home, the manual workforce affected were not able to attend work (over 200 initially). This led to temporary disruption including a short term closure of public conveniences and the need to deploy other staff to support statutory waste collections.
- Other services were adjusted. This included Registrars moving to on-line methods and restricted face to face (F2F) services; Service Points moved to telephony and web services; more staff were trained in cremations and grounds maintenance teams prioritised burials.
- As seasonal recruitment was not possible, work was suspended on the amenities review, the partial ban on the use of glyphosate was adjusted to allow one application in certain locations and a reduced seasonal grounds maintenance service was provided.
- New services were set up at pace including: helplines; humanitarian assistance; coordinating support through a network of resilience groups; introducing a Covid Ward Discretionary funding regime; supporting business with covid compliance; supporting NHS with Test and Protect services; and additional deaths planning. These impacted on fleet and stores requirements, including new logistics for sourcing and distributing PPE.

4.2 Some of the new services and team priorities made during this time have continued since July 2020 and new tasks have emerged for the Service. With the second lockdown period starting in January 2021 the Service Management Team has considered the risks to business continuity. This has drawn on the learning from our experience during 2020. This report describes those risks and the mitigating action now in place to support business continuity and our duty of care as an employer.

4.3 Most mitigation is operational and for Members to note, but aspects of service re-prioritisation, along with seeking relaxation of some statutory duties are highlighted for Member approval.

5. Risks to business continuity

5.1 Five risks are identified to business continuity. They are described in Appendix 1 and are listed below.

1. **Service delivery disruption arising from Lockdown 2 requirements.** This is regarded as a significant and critical risk and has 11 mitigating actions with a view to reducing the risk to being low and marginal.
2. **Service disruption arising from staff absence due to Covid.** This is regarded as highly likely and critical with 8 mitigating actions and 7 service areas with re-prioritisation to reduce the risk to being low and marginal.
3. **Service disruption because of increasing and new demands on the service in addition to Covid and Lockdown impacts, with seven new significant**

workstreams identified. This is regarded as significant and critical with 13 mitigating actions to reduce the risk to low and marginal.

4. **Staff welfare deteriorates, and productivity is affected.** This is regarded as highly likely and critical, with 10 mitigating actions to reduce the risk to very low and marginal; and
5. **Financial pressures increase as a result of Lockdown 2 and the service budget gap grows.** As reported separately to this Committee the service budget gap has reduced but is still significant and forecast to be over £1m by the end of March 2021. This risk is therefore regarded as significant and critical with 4 mitigating actions. Realistically this risk will remain significant, but the actions aim to reduce the impact to being negligible; in other words, to avoid any further growth in the forecast budget gap.

5.2 The service risks emerging from the second lockdown differ from those in the first lockdown in that:

- there is less national direction on service suspension, but local suspension of service may be needed if we experience staff absence from Covid that cannot be covered by deploying other staff. Staff absence may be more likely this time because of the more contagious variant of Covid and until staff are vaccinated;
- there is now a legal requirement for staff to work from home (WFH) where possible so we must ensure compliance and this time only a small number of manual staff on the shielding list are prevented from working, compared to a larger number being absent previously;
- responding to Covid needs and Lockdown 2 is happening alongside many continued Covid services from last year and other business as usual (BAU) functions. This along with a significant number of new workstreams emerging is placing further pressure on the workforce and services. This requires some re-prioritisation of services to avoid service failure and unreasonable service expectations and pressure of work for staff;
- budget impacts are better known as we enter Quarter 4, and further income disruption is expected; and
- we continue to work in uncertainty and with changes required at short notice. While we have become more resilient to this working environment and more agile and adept at responding, we need to be aware of staff fatigue from our prolonged response and be mindful of how to counter that and fulfil our duty of care.

6. Service adjustments required

6.1 The range of operational adjustments underway or planned if needed are detailed in the mitigating actions set out in Appendix 1 for noting.

6.2 Members are asked to note the ongoing adjustments to the priorities for the Environmental Health (EH) Team as described in risk 1, actions 8 and 9. This means:

- continuing the current operational focus on supporting public health with Test and Protect and business Covid compliance and supporting exporting business with Brexit requirements;
- all proactive EH work is suspended unless significant public health risks are identified (food safety inspections, animal health and welfare, Health and Safety at work and monitoring private water supplies); and
- ensuring compliance with the legal duty to WFH, so the team is continuing to suspend all on-site reactive environmental health work including responding to

complaints, enquiries and pest control unless significant public health risks are identified.

6.3 Mitigating actions to keep staff safe and well at work outlined in the risk assessment should reduce the need for us to make further temporary service adjustments. However, in risk 2, relating to staff absence, if we are ever unable to deploy other staff to cover absence, operationally we will need to prioritise some services over others temporarily, paying attention to statutory services. These are described under action 8 in risk 2 in the Appendix. Those recommended for Member approval, given the public interest in them, and if they are ever required are:

1. Waste services - we would prioritise resource for the following services in rank order: 1. general household waste and recycling bin collections; 2. commercial waste collections; 3. food Waste collections (affecting Inverness only); 4. recycling centres; 5. limited street cleansing; 6. garden waste collections (beginning 1.3.21); 7. bulky uplifts; and 8. bin deliveries.
2. Public conveniences – if we are unable to sustain them being open, we would adjust resource to prioritise those on food supply routes initially and review this for the tourist season;
3. Grounds maintenance – we would prioritise burials (although depending on the level of absence recruitment of seasonal staff should help mitigate a service continuity risk);

Should the need arise to put any of these in place in any location, local Members would be informed.

6.4 In risk 3 relating to increasing and new demands on the service, seven significant new work streams are described, namely:

1. new workstreams for the Environmental Health Team with public health referrals linked to Test and Protect in business, supporting business with new Brexit export and import requirements and designing two new licensing regimes;
2. new workstreams for the policy and ward management team in addition to ongoing humanitarian and other resilience support. This includes: new engagement and local resilience planning as part of the Recovery Programme; supporting Members on play areas choices and Covid Ward funds; management and co-ordination of additional Area Committees to enable agreement of Town Centre Funding and Coastal Communities funding; complying with statutory reporting on equalities duties and participatory budgeting and a service re-procurement;
3. changeable new workstreams for Customer Services on Test and Protect outbound calls and ongoing adjustments for Registrars to deliver birth, marriage and death registrations and adapting to changing guidance on marriage and other ceremonies;
4. re-starting the amenities review – which was paused during Lockdown 1 and reporting to the Redesign Board and the new work to be taken forward locally with Members on play areas as agreed at Council on 7.1.21;
5. leading and coordinating the Council's support for NHS Highland's Vaccination programme;
6. contributing to a Visitor Management Plan overseen by the Tourism Committee; and

7. participating in the running of elections.

6.5 Ways to alleviate pressures and prioritise tasks for the Policy and Ward Management team are described in risk 3 actions 6 and 7. This means:

- community partnerships and CPP Board focuses on resilience partnership work;
- no new work for the Ward Management and Policy team on economic recovery (other teams are involved in this workstream);
- email communication to all Community Councils to indicate resilience work is the priority and wider support will be delayed and not prioritised for the time being;
- reprioritising Community Asset Transfer assessment and consideration to focus only on those with external funding dependencies (and with a relaxation sought as described below if statutory timescales will be affected);
- renegotiated timescales for participation request work; and
- for Common Good Work, to complete ongoing consultations but manage expectations on response times and reduce meeting time.

Also, proposed adjustment to the phasing of work in the engagement framework is reported separately to this meeting of the Committee.

6.6 A future report will be provided on the new duty for 1% of the Council's budget to be directed by Participatory Budgeting. This was initially required by May 2021 and in association with Cosla, for those authorities not ready to implement this by this date there is a temporary relaxation.

6.7 Managerial support for the Customer Services Team and Registrars will continue to enable quick adjustments to team priorities and to seek any additional staff deployment for support.

6.8 Members are asked to note that the agendas for this Committee and Area Committees need to reflect staff capacity given the range of pressures and potential staff absence that need to be managed. This would mean agendas focus on urgent and time critical items for the time being. This approach is supplemented with the fortnightly briefing for all Members, providing written briefings when required and the ability to retain the workshop time in advance of the Committee. Also Ward Business Meetings are continuing. This enables more up to date information to be shared with Members which is helpful when issues relating to service delivery change quickly and by national direction or through partnership working.

6.9 The Council's partial ban on the use of glyphosate for weedkilling remains in use and it is not applied in sports recreation facilities, playgrounds and schools. Where possible trials and costing of alternative products and weed control methods will take place if appropriate this year and feed into the amenities review overseen by the Redesign Board. It is worth noting that further national guidance is expected on herbicide use in that:

- there appears to be an emerging preference to encourage the adoption of integrated approaches to reduce the use of pesticides and herbicides. For amenity spaces, an integrated approach means a reduced herbicide application combined with mechanical and thermal treatment;
- in December 2020 the Scottish Government undertook a Local Authority Weed Control Survey to gather data to understand the importance of herbicides in amenity settings and to what extent local authorities are adopting integrated weed control approaches. The results of the survey will help develop an evidence-based approach to national policy and regulatory decision making in this area; and

- currently DEFRA is consulting on a [UK National Action Plan for the Sustainable Use of Pesticides](#). This extends beyond herbicides and is focused on agricultural settings, crop protection and food supply.

6.10 Other mitigation in the risk assessment involves seeking a relaxation or more time to implement new statutory services or particular duties. This has already been agreed for participatory budgeting as described above. A delay is already sought for implementing the licensing of short term lets through the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee, as detailed in a separate report to this meeting. Members are asked to agree that we also seek a longer timescale for:

- reporting on the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, due for April 2021;
- timescales for assessment and consideration of community asset transfers (with those with external funding dependencies prioritised); and
- implementing the Statutory Food Safety Intervention Programme, originally relaxed by the Scottish Government until 28th Feb 2021 along with associated recovery work required by Food Standards Scotland.

Designation: Carron McDiarmid, ECO Communities and Place

Date: 4.2.21

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C&P Service Operational Risks arising from Covid and Lockdown 2, January 2021
Appendix 1

Risk No.1	Risk Name: Service disruption arising from Lockdown 2 requirements		Risk Rating		
			Current	Target	
Risk Owner: ECO Communities and Place		Risk Type: Service continuity and agility		C2	D3
<p><u>Risk Definition</u></p> <p>Significant service disruption arose from the Lockdown 1, from March to July 2020 as detailed in the report to Committee in August 2020. Only essential services and travel were permitted, and national restrictions led to some services being temporarily closed or suspended. With national direction for all vulnerable staff and those on the shielding list to work from home, the manual workforce affected were not able to attend work (over 200 initially) and led to other temporary service disruption and the need to deploy staff to sustain essential service delivery. Other services were shifted to telephony and on-line (Registrars and Service Points). With seasonal recruitment not possible, work was suspended on the amenities review, the partial ban on the use of glyphosate was adjusted to allow one application in certain locations and a reduced seasonal grounds maintenance service was provided. Several new services were set up at pace for humanitarian assistance, additional deaths planning and supporting covid compliance in business and the Test and Protect service. There were new requirements for fleet and stores requirements, including sourcing and distributing PPE.</p> <p>Since the end of Lockdown 1 a new service to support the Test and Protect Programme has been required to make outbound calls (x3) to all those required to self-isolate to offer support. New work to communicate with community bodies and to support local community resilience partnerships is underway and informed by considerable engagement with groups (communities of place and communities of interest) and as part of the Council's Recovery Programme. This is reported separately to the Committee in February 2021.</p> <p>Lockdown 2 was announced on 3.1.21 with the end period to be reviewed. This time national restrictions do not currently require services to be temporarily closed or suspended but only essential work is to be undertaken. Also, only those staff on the shielding list are to work from home (estimated to be less than 30 across the Service in total and of those less than 15 are manual workers). Working from home (WFH) is required by law, where this is possible, so non face to face (F2F) methods can continue to operate but new measures to ensure WFH compliance are required and are being devised corporately.</p> <p>Covid deaths registered in Highland have started to occur again with registrations from 11.1.21. These are being monitored to ensure bereavements services can support the families affected. Requests for humanitarian assistance, including from those self-isolating through Test and Protect, have increased since pre-Christmas levels; .</p>					
Mitigating Actions:			Responsible Officer	Target Date	RAG
No.	Risk Action name: Details				

1.	Learning from Lockdown 1 used to inform Lockdown 2 service response and adjustments.	Service Management Team	14.1.21	C
2.	Continue to operate helplines, provide humanitarian assistance directly and via local groups and support local resilience partnerships. Seek a change in statutory timescales: for reporting on the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 for April 2021; and in timescales for assessment and consideration of community asset transfers (those with external funding dependencies prioritised). A temporary relaxation on the duty for 1% of the Council's budget to be directed by Participatory Budgeting by May 2021 is confirmed.	Head of Policy	Ongoing	G
3.	Continue to run all waste operations (statutory and non-statutory). Consider mitigation and prioritisation of services if staff absence increases (see risk 2 below).	Senior Waste Manager	Ongoing	G
4.	Continue to deliver customer services remotely. Work with services, including sharing risk assessments, if they require on an exceptional basis to provide any face to face contact.	Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G
5.	In keeping with national requirements, continue to deliver the Registrar function remotely and confine F2F services only for marriage and civil partnership ceremonies (with restricted numbers) and birth certificate signing. F2F citizenship ceremonies to be provided only where there are urgent needs. Adjust priorities as outlined in risk 3.	Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G
6.	Continue to operate public conveniences and fleet and logistics services. Proceed with seasonal recruitment of grounds maintenance staff as budgeted. Consider mitigation and prioritisation of services if staff absence increases (see risk 2 below). The Amenities Review has re-started and has project management resource from the Transformation Team.	Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G
7.	In keeping with the Council's decision, the partial ban on the use of glyphosate remains in place and where possible trials and costing of alternative products and weed control methods will take place if appropriate this year and feed into the amenities review overseen by the Redesign Board. New national guidance on herbicide use is expected.	Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G

8.	Stand up Covid deaths monitoring and additional deaths planning coordination group to ensure bereaved families do not suffer delays in the burials and cremations process.	Environmental Health Manager	From 12.1.21 onwards	G
9.	Continue prioritisation of Environmental Health (EH) tasks to focus on supporting public health with Test and Protect and business Covid compliance and supporting exporting business with Brexit requirements. This means all proactive EH work is suspended unless significant public health risks are identified (food safety inspections, animal health and welfare, Health and Safety at work and monitoring private water supplies). Seek relaxation for relevant statutory functions. (See note below).	Environmental Health Manager	Ongoing	G
10.	As well as prioritising Environmental Health tasks above, to ensure compliance with the legal duty to WFH, continue to suspend all on-site reactive environmental health work including responding to complaints, enquiries and pest control unless significant public health risks are identified.	Environmental Health Manager	Ongoing	G
11.	With our HR business partner and Trade Union engagement continually monitor any updates or changes to the definition of, and requirement to undertake, essential services to ensure compliance.	ECO C&P	Ongoing	

Notes:

Action 9: The Statutory Food Safety Intervention Programme was relaxed by the Scottish Government until 28th Feb 2021. Approach to be made to extend this further given Lockdown 2 and competing priorities along with associated recovery work required by Food Standards Scotland.

Actions 2, 5 and 9: There is scope to work with Colsa, Government and Government Agencies for all relaxations or changes in timescales proposed.

Risk No.2	Risk Name: Service disruption arising from staff absence due to Covid		Risk Rating		
			Current	Target	
Risk Owner: ECO Communities and Place		Risk Type: Service continuity and workforce		B2	D3
<p>Risk Definition</p> <p>Staff absence is not showing any notable increase to the end of January 2021. Compared to Lockdown 1, fewer manual staff are absent from work because national direction affects only those on the shielding list and not all staff self-identifying as vulnerable. Office-based staff who are shielding are enabled to work from home. However, the new Covid variant is more contagious and until staff are vaccinated, the service may experience local outbreaks among our:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manual workforce and their on-site managers (affecting waste, fleet, amenities and burials teams); • office and other front-facing staff e.g. Registrar services, Customer Services staff accessing manual records and staff at the Crematorium; and • Environmental Health staff undertaking visits to business or issuing export health licenses and providing other F2F advice. <p>Additionally, any member of staff may be absent from work because they have tested positive or have been in contact with, or live with, someone else who has tested positive. Self-isolation is required for 10 days, although we can expect staff to be absent for longer if they test positive and are unwell.</p>					
Mitigating Actions:			Responsible Officer	Target Date	RAG
No.	Risk Action name: Details				
1.	Reinforce Covid work compliance for waste teams, ensure risk assessment actions are implemented and refreshed when needed and continue to engage with Trade Unions and H&S representatives on risk assessments and compliance.		Senior Waste Manager	Ongoing	G
2.	Regularly review Covid work compliance for amenities, burials, fleet, stores, Registrar and Customer Services teams, ensure risk assessments actions are implemented and refreshed when needed and continue to engage with Trade Unions and H&S representatives on risk assessments and compliance.		Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G
3.	Regularly review Covid work compliance for Environmental Health and the Bereavement Services Team at Kilvean and the crematorium. Ensure risk assessments actions are implemented and refreshed when needed and continue		Environmental Health Manager	Ongoing	G

	to engage with Trade Unions and H&S representatives on risk assessments and compliance.			
4.	Work with Head of Health and NHSH to ensure any staff eligible for priority vaccinations are enabled to make appointments	ECO C&P	Ongoing	G
5.	Implement new corporate guidance on compliance with working from home for office-based staff and continue Trade Union engagement.	Senior Management Team	Ongoing	
6.	Comply with Health and Safety requirements and HR policy for reporting Covid absence and reporting any infections arising in the workplace.	Senior Management Team	Ongoing	G
7.	Where absence occurs and service will be disrupted but must continue, we will in the first instance seek reinforcements. These may come from: within the same functional teams; from other teams in the service; or from outwith the service and if required with support from the deployment team. Agency staff can be considered if staff cannot be borrowed internally. The approach to training staff brought in will be based on experience in Lockdown 1.	Senior Management Team	If and when required	
8.	If staff cannot be identified and service must continue, a re-prioritisation of service will be required and this should prioritise statutory functions. This may mean other services are reduced, delayed or suspended as detailed below .	Senior Management Team	If and when required	
8a	For waste this means prioritising resource for the following services, in rank order: 1. general household waste and recycling bin collections; 2. commercial waste collections; 3. food Waste collections (Inverness only); 4. recycling centres; 5. limited street cleansing; 6. garden waste collections (beginning 1.3.21); 7. bulky uplifts; and 8. bin deliveries.	Senior Waste Manager	If and when required	
8b	For amenities, public conveniences on food supply routes would be prioritised initially and reviewed during the tourist season (see risk below); for grounds maintenance burials would be prioritised (although recruitment of seasonal staff should mitigate service continuity risk).	Head of Performance and Resources	If and when required	
8c	For Customer Services and Registrars, customer requests would be fielded to available staff based throughout the region. Business Support staff have already been trained in Lockdown 1 and identified for redeployment again for call	Head of Performance and Resources	If and when required	

	handling support. Wedding and civil partnership bookings would be scheduled based on workforce capacity.		If and when required	
8d	For fleet services, vehicles would be maintained by other Council workshops or external contractors.	Head of Performance and Resources	If and when required	
8e	For Environmental health, in addition to the reprioritisation of work as outlined in risk 1, actions 8, 9, and 10 above, a request for reciprocal support from another Authority will be made (our EH team has supported another Council in 2020) and all Government Covid funding and any new ring fenced funding for EH will be used to recruit staff temporarily or through agency.	Environmental Health Manager	If and when required	
8f	For bereavement services, staff trained in Crematorium operations will be brought in.	Environmental Health Manager	If and when required	
8g	For humanitarian assistance and community support, staff supporting the Ward Management Team from Lockdown 1 would be approached again, including from HLH and if not available and other Council staff cannot be deployed, agency staff would be recruited.	Head of Policy	If and when required	
Notes:				

Risk No.3	Risk Name: Service disruption because of increasing and new demands on the service in addition to Covid and Lockdown impacts	Risk Rating	
		Current	Target
Risk Owner: ECO Communities and Place		C2	D3
<p>Risk Definition</p> <p>In addition to Lockdown 1 and 2, six significant new workstreams have emerged since 2020 for the Service. They are listed below.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant new workstreams for the Environmental Health team: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. responding to referrals from the Public Health Team on positive covid cases linked to business premises (from 18th to 31st January there were 38 referrals). To manage demand, including out with working hours and at weekends an EH standby rota has been put in place. b. support to exporting business in Highland to enable them to comply with Brexit requirements. This was reported to the C&P Committee in November 2020. Since then over 300 fishing vessels have been inspected and export health certificates have been provided. They are issued from all EH offices and in a new roadside location in Inverness outwith office hours and at weekend for vehicles travelling south on the A9. It is still too early to predict the volume of service requests, but an update is provided to the Committee in February 2021. In addition, foreign vessels landing their catch in Highland require new certification. Pressure exists particularly in Lochinver. c. Designing two new licensing regimes including short term lets (reported to Council in September 2020 and considered as a separate item at C&P Committee in February 2021) and licensing of residential mobile home sites reported to Committee in November 2020. Both require new licensing systems to be designed including advice, income collection, documentation, and the tasking of staff for on-site and administrative work. 2. Significant new work for the Policy and Ward Management teams. In addition to sustaining humanitarian assistance, this includes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. a significant workstream in the Recovery Programme on participation and engagement with local community bodies (x339 resilience groups and over 150 Community Councils) and communities of interest; b. supporting the amenities team in facilitating local discussions with Members on play areas as agreed at Council on 7.1.21; c. management and co-ordination of additional area committees to enable agreement of Town Centre Funding and Coastal Communities funding; d. equalising up Covid Ward funds and adapting the process for grant awards including introducing an appeals process; e. taking forward the motion agreed at Council in January 2021 on local resilience plans and further local engagement; f. a new direction on using participatory budgeting for 1% of Council expenditure; g. statutory reporting on our Equalities duties; and 			

h. re-procuring interpretation contracts.

3. Changeable new workstreams for our Customer Services Team, currently including Test and Protect outbound calls to support people self-isolating and support shielding people to access vaccination appointments and ongoing adjustments for Registrars catching up on birth registrations and adapting to changing guidance on marriage ceremonies;
4. Re-starting the amenities review – which was paused during Lockdown 1 and reporting to the Redesign Board and the new work to be taken forward locally with Members on play areas as agreed at Council on 7.1.21
5. Leading the Council’s support of NHH in their vaccination programme – this involves coordinating activity across a range of Council services to identify premises for vaccination centres, facilities support, creating a mobile vaccination centre, providing support vehicles and drivers, responding to any transport requests for people shielding, identifying volunteers to assist with managing the flow of people and in arranging Council communications to community bodies and Members. Other tasks may arise at short notice.
6. Contributing to the Visitor Management Plan to identify service enhancements for waste and litter services and public conveniences following the difficulties presented by uncontrolled camping and high numbers of people ‘staycationing’ in Highland in 2020.
7. Participation in the running of elections (By-election in Ward 12 in March 2021 and Scottish Parliamentary Election in May 2021). Four Depute Returning Officers are sourced from within C&P Service management, the Ward Management Team are fully deployed as Polling Station Inspectors, fleet is provided for the transportation of ballot boxes and many staff volunteer in the Count. Additional count training time is required for the electronic count.

Mitigating Actions:		Responsible Officer	Target Date	RAG
No.	Risk Action name: Details			
1.	Relaxation on national requirements pursued as detailed at Risk 1, actions 2, 5 and 8.	See above	Ongoing	G
2.	Delay sought for implementing the licensing of short term lets as detailed in a separate report to the C&P Committee in February 2021 (submission sent 27.1.21 following Member consultation).	Environmental Health Manager	27.1.21	G

3.	Work re-prioritised and services reduced, delayed or suspended if staff cannot be borrowed from other services as detailed in Risk 2 actions 6 a-g.	Service Management Team	Ongoing	G
4.	All Government Covid and any Brexit resource to support Environmental Health Teams with public health and exporting businesses deployed to increase capacity in the team.	Environmental Health Manager & ECO C&P	From Dec. 2020	G
5.	Deploy all any change/transformation resource (e.g. for amenities review), identify any new need for other standby rotas and work to fill vacant essential posts in the Service to alleviate pressure and take forward new work streams.	ECO C&P	Ongoing	G
6.	Refocus the Recovery Programme workstream on participation on resilience plans and either defer some engagement with communities of interest or commission others to undertake that work (e.g. with people experiencing homelessness, gypsy travellers and refugees). The adjusted recovery workstream on engagement is reported to the C&P Committee in February 2021.	Head of Policy	Ongoing 24.2.21	G
7.	Adjust Ward Management and Policy Team tasks as follows: Committee business focuses on urgent and time critical business; community partnerships and CPP Board focuses on resilience partnership work; no new work for the team on economic recovery; email communication to all Community Councils to indicate resilience work is the priority and wider support will be delayed and not prioritised; reprioritise Community Asset Transfer assessment and consideration to focus only on those with external funding dependencies; renegotiated timescales for participation request work; and for Common Good Work, to complete ongoing consultations but manage expectations on response times and reduce meeting time.	Head of Policy	Ongoing	A
8.	Developing new workstreams and team priorities with the Customer Services Manager based on Government and other requests e.g. check in calls for shielding people, Test and Protect Outbound calls, transport support for people shielding to access vaccination appointments. Seek deployment of reinforcements where needed.	Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G
9.	Supporting the Chief Registrar with adjustments to team priorities for the delivery of birth, marriages and death registration and appropriate scheduling for undertaking marriages, civil partnership and civic ceremonies, and within changing Government guidance.	Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G

10.	Participate in all partnership and national meetings to support the roll out of the vaccination programme. Work with service leads to support different workstreams for roll out including venues, mobile provision, identifying marshalling support, transport and communications. Claim Government grant where costs involved. Communications for Members and community bodies.	ECO C&P	From 5.1.21	G
11.	Re-set the amenities review with PM support. Support local discussions with Members on play areas following the Council decision on 7.1.21. Postpone work planned on collaborating with partners on an integrated or shared service opportunity for grounds maintenance in Fort William, until team capacity is available.	Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G
12.	Service enhancements identified for tourism period (Easter to October 2021) for waste, litter and public conveniences in producing the draft Visitor Management Plan being overseen by the Tourism Committee and with costs quantified.	Senior Waste Manager, Head of Performance and Resources, ECO C&P.	End March 2021	G
13.	C&P Committee and Area Committee agendas focus on urgent and critical items for the time being and supplemented with virtual and written briefings for Members.	ECO C&P	Ongoing	G
14.	Review priorities and service adjustments in April to enable capacity for Elections work in May 2021	Service Management Team	By end April 2021	
Notes:				

Risk No.4	Risk Name: Staff welfare deteriorates, and productivity is affected.		Risk Rating		
			Current	Target	
Risk Owner: Eco Communities and Place		Risk Type: Workforce wellbeing		B2	E3
<p>Risk Definition</p> <p>The service workforce has dealt with considerable disruption as well as new and adjusted tasks since March 2020. Staff have also demonstrated a huge amount of good will, for example manual workers ensuring business continuity and office-based staff turning their homes into office spaces. This prolonged period of resilience response along with adapting to new work streams and demands has created staff fatigue. Prolonged working from home does not suit all staff, either physically (equipment, furniture, comfort, affordability) or mentally, with wellbeing adversely affected by social isolation and only virtual contact with colleagues, customers/clients/service users and Members. Staff also home schooling may find it more difficult and stressful to be productive. More formal arrangements may be needed if Government restrictions continue longer or if some staff move from working from home to home working on a more formal or routine basis. A corporate project is underway to consider new working arrangements and opportunities arising from Covid. Staff based in depots and some staff required to attend the workplace may be more anxious about their exposure to the virus. Working during winter months is harder for manual workers in any year and on top of a very busy and disrupted year manual workers may experience higher levels of fatigue. The longer disruption to service continues and more service requests that are made, the more fatigued staff are likely to feel, affected their physical and mental wellbeing.</p>					
Mitigating Actions:			Responsible Officer	Target Date	RAG
No.	Risk Action name: Details				
1.	Team leaders and managers in bases for our manual workforce, including depots have a visible presence to check on staff wellbeing. Congregating at the start and end of the day is discouraged by flexible start and finish times and flexible break times. Bubbles are formed for certain tasks and fleet use.		Senior Waste Manager, Head of Performance and Resources	Ongoing	G
2.	Line managers have routine formal and informal check in arrangements with staff working from home.		Heads of Service/Lead Officers	Ongoing	G
3.	Greater flexibility in the time of hours worked enabled for homeworking staff with caring responsibilities including home schooling.		Line Managers	Ongoing	G
4.	Managers respond to home working staff requests to take equipment and furniture home.		Heads of Service/Lead Officers	Ongoing	G

5.	Staff communications on employee assistance programme and on-line H&S assessments are promoted.	Service management Team	Ongoing	G
6.	Ensure staff are aware they have time off for vaccination akin to absence permitted to attend hospital appointments and encourage vaccine take-up.	Service management Team	Ongoing	G
7.	All staff with leave to carry forward will have unused leave recorded (a maximum of 20 days can be carried forward over 2 years).	Service management Team	Ongoing	G
8.	HR support drawn on for tailored facilitated team talks where required (for example to cope with bereavement).	HR Business Partner and Service Management Team	Ongoing	G
9.	Continue to fill essential vacant posts and reduce prolonged agency use in the waste team by recruiting permanent staff.	ECO Communities and Place	Ongoing	G
10.	Recruit any temporary staff enabled by Government grant including Covid grant funding.	ECO Communities and Place	Ongoing	G
Notes: Active use of risk assessments will help ensure Covid compliance in the workplace, as detailed in Risk 2 above Service disruption arising from staff absence due to Covid.				

Risk No.5	Risk Name: Financial pressures increase as a result of Lockdown 2 and the service budget gap grows		Risk Rating		
			Current	Target	
Risk Owner: ECO Communities and Place		Risk Type: Financial		C2	C3
Risk Definition Further income disruption occurs from Lockdown 2 and increases the Service budget gap. New costs arise from any new agency staff recruitment arising from staff absence due to Covid.					
Mitigating Actions:			Responsible Officer	Target Date	RAG
No.	Risk Action name: Details				
1.	Continue to control expenditure, including through staffing controls by identifying only essential posts to fill.		Service management team	Ongoing	G
2.	Claim all Government Covid grant funding available with support from Finance Business Partners.		Service management team	Ongoing	G
3.	Monitor external income achievement and describe in budget reports.		ECO Communities and Place	Ongoing	G
4.	Capture Covid budget pressures arising in 2020/21 to inform the budget setting process for 2021/22.		ECO Communities and Place	4.3.21	G
Notes:					

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