

CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT – COVID19 USING HARLOW CIVIC CENTRE FOR STAFF AND THE PUBLIC

Authority/Employee Name :	HARLOW DISTRICT COUNCIL
Service:	ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING
Assessing Manager's Name:	MICHAEL PITT / GRAHAM JARVIS
Assessing Manager's Job Title:	ENVIRONMENT & LICENSING MANAGER / SENIOR EHO
Date Assessment Completed:	15TH OCTOBER 2020 (V1), REVISED 22ND JULY 2021 (V2) & 4TH NOVEMBER 2021
Date for Revision:	WHEN ANY SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TO KNOWN RISKS OR GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE OCCUR

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Foreword

Our overriding principles are to try to keep our activities going, but in a managed safe way.

Evolving guidance and growing knowledge about the virus means we acknowledge that our plans, set out in this risk assessment, are dynamic: they are to be kept under review and change as data/guidance occurs. In accordance with guidance from the Association of Directors of Public Health, we acknowledge that there is not just one control that will reduce risks; we must use a combination strategy of many controls to have an impact.

A working group of senior staff, now known as the Recovery Group, meets on a regular basis to make policy decisions about COVID19 security issues and review new risk assessments from council departments and teams. The Union are included in this process. The Safety Team provide specialist advice to this process as requested by the Recovery Group. Plans for new or significantly changed activities will need to go to the Recovery Group for approval.

Plans to control all other risks from council activities are still relevant in the pandemic and are documented in existing RA's. They should be kept up to date as normal.

The use of PPE, — who should use it, what specification should be used, etc. — is not resolved within this template. Specific teams and individuals will have their own needs according to the different work activities they carry out.

Notes About Risk Controls For Autumn 2021 & Winter 2022

The proposed controls in this plan will still be relevant to us after many of the national legal restrictions end on 19th July 2021. Reasons why include:

1. Many people will catch the virus as prevalence remains high. Peaks in England have been around 50K cases per day. (For comparison, the winter 2021 lockdown peak was around 61K.)
 - 1.1. Unvaccinated, partly-vaccinated and those vaccinated people who are not protected by the vaccine, may get very ill.
 - 1.2. Vaccinated people may be mildly ill and unable to work for a few weeks.
 - 1.3. Some people may get long-COVID symptoms and be off work for much longer.
2. The controls we put in place work for other respiratory pathogens such as influenza and colds. Our immunity to these pathogens has been lowered by lack of exposure last year, resulting in more severe outcomes for some people who catch them.

Activity	Person at risk	Significant Hazards	Risk Control Measures
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Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	Employees Councillors Members of the public	Being together: Social contact with people outside of one's own household, increasing the potential for spread of SARS-CoV-2 between people.	<p>Public access to the building has been limited to use of essential services in Contact Harlow on the ground floor of the building, and for specific events, each of which has its own risk assessment.</p> <p>The default position for staff who would normally be based in Civic Centre is to work from home, where their situation and their role allows. This has resulted in a significant reduction in the occupancy of the building. From November 2021 staff are being encouraged to work from their office or attend staff meetings face to face so that they are present in the Civic twice a month. This is likely to create an occupancy of around 170 staff in the building at any time; way below the pre-pandemic level.</p> <p>Those staff who do come into the Civic to work are being encouraged to spend as little time there as is necessary to do those tasks that can only be carried out in the building.</p> <p>Where tasks allow, staff should stay in their work areas and limit how far they range around the building.</p>

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Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	<p>Employees</p> <p>Councillors</p> <p>Members of the public</p>	Being ill at work: Members of staff who are carrying the virus coming into the Civic Centre and passing it on to other people.	<p>Staff will be encouraged to take a lateral flow test at home before coming to work and meeting the public and/or colleagues. If a member of staff has contact every day of the week then they should do two lateral flow tests a week (e.g. on Monday & Thursday).</p> <p>Staff who have a positive lateral flow test should arrange for a PCR test before coming in to work.</p> <p>Staff who become symptomatic, or who test positive on a PCR test, should quarantine at home in accordance with government advice, until they have a negative test result or are symptom free after the quarantine period (currently 10 days).</p> <p>Staff who's close contacts at home display symptoms will self-isolate in accordance with the government's policy.</p> <p>Staff should ensure they touch in with their security pass at the entrance — rather than tailgate in behind a colleague — as this generates a list of people who have been in the building that day, which will may be useful for any contact with Test & Trace.</p> <p>Staff will follow the direction of the government's Test & Trace service. If they are contacted and told to isolate because of a known contact with an infected person, they will do so and inform their line manager.</p>

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Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	Employees Councillors Members of the public	Risk of disease transmission from airborne liquid droplets that travel up to 2m away from an infected person when they breathe, cough and sneeze, but which then fall onto surfaces, rather than remaining in the air (known as droplet transmission).	<p>Where possible, staff and the public will stay more than 2m apart. In situations where that is not possible, other control measures can be put in place. For example, Contact Harlow are using perspex screens for contact with the public in the ground floor.</p> <p>Areas of the building that might force people into closer proximity than 2m, have restrictions on the numbers of people that can use them at one time. The lifts can only be used by one person at a time. The toilets and kitchen areas can only be used by two persons at a time.</p> <p>Where possible, managers will ensure staff who do come into the building occupy work stations and desks that are 2m apart.</p> <p>A supply of face coverings will be provided for those staff who want to wear them. Face coverings provide protection for other people close to the wearer, because they limit how far droplets can travel.</p>

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Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	<p>Employees</p> <p>Councillors</p> <p>Members of the public</p>	<p>Risk of disease transmission from airborne micro-droplets that could stay in the air for up to 3 hours after being breathed out by an infected person (known as airborne transmission).</p>	<p>Contractors, facilities management and the safety team have reviewed the design of the ventilation system and have taken action to ensure that only fresh air is being supplied and no air is being recirculated through the building.</p> <p>Mechanical ventilation now begins two hours before the building is occupied and does not stop until two hours after it closes, to increase dilution.</p> <p>Four of the seven air handling units use plate heat exchangers, which are by design not prone to mixing outgoing and incoming air supplies. The other three do not have any heat exchangers.</p> <p>Contractors have checked the AHUs for any other potential for air leakage between incoming and outgoing air streams.</p> <p>The four AHUs that would normally recirculate air when the weather gets colder have had that function overridden to prevent recirculation.</p> <p>Staff are being encouraged to wear more clothes in the office on cold days and open windows as far as is tolerable whilst at their workstations to increase fresh air supply in places where people are working.</p> <p>Monitoring of ventilation levels will be conducted in the most occupied and potentially least ventilated parts of the Civic using CO2 monitoring as a proxy measure for reassurance (where this method is suitable as a proxy, typically in rooms of floor area 50-320m²).</p>

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Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	Employees Councillors Members of the public	Risk of disease transmission from expelled droplets from an infected person containing the virus that land on surfaces, which are later touched by another person, who then touches their eyes, nose or mouth (known as the fomite transmission route).	<p>Frequently touched surfaces in common parts of the building are cleaned regularly by facilities staff.</p> <p>All staff and the public sanitise their hands on entering the building at the ground floor using designated dispensers.</p> <p>Staff are instructed to then wash their hands immediately on arriving at their normal area of work, or in the sink in the first aid room on the ground floor next to the lift lobby.</p> <p>Staff who work at a desk are required to clean the desk and other contact surfaces before occupying the workstation and once again when they leave it.</p> <p>Swing bins have been placed around the building for disposal of wipes and tissues.</p> <p>Equipment should ideally not be shared, and if it is, then a suitable sanitising procedure should be introduced.</p> <p>People are encouraged to wash their hands for more than 20 seconds after touching potentially infected surfaces or to sanitise their hands.</p>

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Activity	Person at risk	Significant Hazards	Risk Control Measures
Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	Employees	Risk of serious illness and deaths from the complications of COVID19 to those staff with existing underlying health conditions.	All staff have been assessed by occupational health professionals for their individual risks from contracting the disease. Those who were categorised as clinically vulnerable or extremely clinically vulnerable have had individual risk assessments conducted by their line manager, and where necessary, made adjustments to their role to reduce risks.
Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	Employees Councillors Members of the public	<p>Risk of an inadequate first aid response to an emergency because of fewer first aiders working in the building.</p> <p>Risk of a first aider contracting COVID19 whilst assisting in an emergency.</p>	<p>A new first aid procedure has been created and shared with staff and first aiders that accounts for fewer first aiders being in the building since March 2020. The prime response will be from first aiders in Contact Harlow in office hours and from Stewards (aided by staff at The Playhouse and Water Gardens) out of normal office hours. A separate risk assessment for this activity has been created and will be kept under review.</p> <p>Instructions from the Resuscitation Council and the HSE have been shared with all our first aiders about assisting in an emergency whilst keeping safe from transmission risks.</p> <p>New additional PPE has been obtained for first aiders to use, stored with the existing first aid materials in a number of locations around the building.</p>

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Working at or visiting the Civic Centre	Employees Councillors Members of the public	Risk of an inadequate emergency evacuation response to an alarm because of fewer fire marshals working in the building.	<p>Our old system of having dedicated fire marshals for each area of the building has been disrupted by changed working practices and lower occupation. In response, third tier managers of those teams who have a frequent presence in the building have been asked to create rotas of staff who will take on this role.</p> <p>New advice for anyone temporarily taking on the role of fire marshal will be issued in November 2021.</p>

Line Manager/Employees Signature:		Date:	
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