



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Cabinet

16 June 2020

Report of: Councillor Kelham Cooke
The Leader of the Council



COVID-19 SKDC Response - Position Statement

The report sets out a position statement for South Kesteven District Council on its response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the period March to May 2020. The report details the key priorities for the Council, activities, challenges and lessons learnt.

Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
Administrative	Non-Key	All Wards

Reviewed by:	Lee Sirdifield, Strategic Director – Transformation and Change	5 June 2020
Approved by:	Karen Bradford, Chief Executive	5 June 2020
Signed off by:	Councillor Kelham Cooke, The Leader of the Council	8 June 2020

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

1. Notes the response of South Kesteven District Council and partners to the COVID-19 crisis and the current position of the Council with regards to the response, recovery and delivery of its priorities
2. Notes the exceptional role of the voluntary and community sector and residents' groups in achieving the delivery of the priorities during this period
3. Notes the initial lessons learnt from this report and the intention to carry out a full review of the response as part of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan

1 The Background to the Report

- 1.1 Following an outbreak in early 2020 the World Health Organisation declared that COVID-19 was a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. The ongoing spread of the disease across Europe initiated a response from Government and authorities across the United Kingdom.

2 Initial Response and Setting Priorities

- 2.1 On 2 March Karen Bradford began her role as Chief Executive at SKDC and set out alongside the Leader of the Council that an immediate priority was to ensure that SKDC was equipped to support the District through the crisis and that the Council's operations were organised and prioritised appropriately to enable this. Therefore, a series of preparatory actions and plans were commissioned to ensure SKDC had a clear leadership role.
- 2.2 At the Cabinet meeting on 17 March the Leader of the Council set out that South Kesteven District Council's three priorities, in responding to the pandemic, were:
1. To protect the health of our staff, Members and residents
 2. To maintain our critical services; and
 3. To support our local businesses.
- 2.3 SKDC has structured its response to the crisis on achieving these three priorities and ensured that resources are re-directed towards activities that ensure they are achieved. This report will set out the actions and activities that SKDC has undertaken and the impact it has had against these priorities.
- 2.4 As part of SKDC's initial response an 'incident room' was established with two multi-disciplinary project teams being formed to co-ordinate SKDC's response to the crisis. The two teams were scheduled to lead the operations alternately to:
- Ensure robustness and resilience should there be an outbreak amongst one project team
 - Enable the core SKDC operations to have flexibility to extend to 7 days a week, if required
 - Minimise the physical risk of transmission of the disease between the teams
 - Reduce the risk of single points of failure impacting on the response

The teams, led by members of the Corporate Management Team, have full handover procedures in place to ensure information and activity is consistent.

- 2.5 At the outset the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, established that consistent and effective internal communication is a key success factor, therefore the following approaches were embedded:
- Weekly informal Cabinet meetings, chaired by the Leader of the Council, but with portfolio updates from all Cabinet Members (not limited to the COVID-19 crisis). This approach ensured effective and consistent political leadership and accountability was maintained.
 - Daily Corporate Management Team meetings (reduced to three times weekly in May) to support the effective co-ordination of response actions and ensured swift resolution of key issues.

- Daily incident room project team ‘stand up’ meetings (chaired by the Corporate Director lead for the respective project team), short meetings to brief project leads on the key themes for the day, communication messages and raise any new major risks or threats, changes in circumstances and Government guidance.

Working Remotely – Key Enablers

2.6 The nature of the COVID-19 crisis and the implementation of lockdown meant that the Council had to move very quickly to enable the staff to work in a remote environment. There were five key enablers that were fundamental to making this happen:

- Information Technology (IT)
- Communications
- Human Resources (HR) and Wellbeing
- Decision Making and Governance
- Risk assessments

These enablers underpinned SKDC’s ability to move to new working arrangements and therefore minimise the number of staff on site.

2.7 Moving to a remote environment meant that SKDC had to adopt a wholesale utilisation of technology at a scale and pace that it had not done before. Within 5 days, 350 staff had been enabled to work remotely and SKDC adopted Microsoft Teams and Skype meetings as Business as Usual. The IT team stress tested the systems, which enabled over 400 members of staff and all Members to work from home.

2.8 Following the adoption of remote working, the focus moved on to enabling remote committee meetings, which culminated in the first Alcohol, Entertainment and Late Night Refreshment Sub Committee on 3 April, followed by Planning Committee on 12 May, Full Council on 14 May and Licensing Committee on 22 May and the first Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 May. These meetings were largely successful, although lessons have been learnt and will be applied for future meetings.

2.9 An emergency communications plan was established, which involved:

- Regular communication with Members (via twice weekly “All Member updates” from the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive)
- Regular communication with Staff (via “All Staff Updates” 5 times per week from the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council)
- Weekly update sent to each M.P. from the Leader of the Council.
- Ongoing communication with different resident and stakeholder groups, which included:
 - o Release of a dedicated COVID-19 webpage www.southkesteven.gov.uk/coronavirus from 20 March with key service information and the latest Government advice and guidance
 - o Targeted use of social media to promote key information ranging from Government messaging, information on SKDC services and routes to access support and advice – seeing a reach on Facebook of over 145,000, with over 70,000 engagements, and our Twitter account seeing 726,000 impressions.

- A number of newspaper columns and reports highlighting key messages and support and features on East Midlands Today, Radio Lincolnshire and Lincs FM.
- Letters to those living in our 6,000 Council owned homes on 20 March advising of service changes and providing contact details if they were in need of help or support, followed by a COVID-19 special 'Skyline' magazine dispatched on 8 June
- Contacting over 18,000 residents identified as being potentially vulnerable to inform them of the support available to them which could be accessed by contacting the SK Community Hub
- Distributing a 'COVID-19 special' SKToday to all 64,000 households within the District in May.

2.10 Moving to staff and Councillors working remotely also created a number of Human Resources and Wellbeing risks, which SKDC has sought to address using a 'prevention is better than cure' approach. These have included:

- Immediately undertaking a survey of 667 employees to understand their health, caring and childcare responsibilities to ensure that we offered appropriate levels of flexibility and protected those at greatest risk. This also enabled us to identify skills that would support the redeployment of staff, including those with HGV licences that could support our street care team if needed.
- Ensuring that managers hold frequent team meetings to build a sense of team and provide staff with ongoing engagement.
- The creation of 'Wellbeing Wednesday' and 'Fun Friday' emails that seek to encourage people to adopt good working practices and undertake other 'non work activities'.
- Extending the Employee Assistance Programme to include all Councillors.
- Clear messaging encouraging people to continue to take leave and spend time engaging in non-work activities maintaining a work life balance as much as possible.
- Support to our managers to help them to work through any new challenges that they and their team face around areas such as childcare, caring responsibilities or the stresses and strains of living and working during a pandemic.

2.11 In addition there were significant changes to the delivery of services, with some services being withdrawn completely (e.g. Arts Centres), others significantly reduced (e.g. East Midlands Building Control, Housing Repairs) and other new ones introduced (e.g. SK Community Hub, Befriending Service). This situation required a number of key HR tasks to be completed to ensure that resource was focused appropriately, which resulted in:

- Redeployment of 90 staff from non-essential services to support essential activity and the COVID-19 response project team
- Furloughing of a total of 70 staff from East Midlands Building Control and the Arts Centres.

- Reprioritisation of other workloads to focus on the most essential activity within an area (e.g. returning void properties to create further accommodation for the homeless)

2.12 A further key enabler was putting in place the governance structures to allow the Council to continue to make decisions in a timely manner, especially given the fast paced environment of an emergency response. Cabinet on 17 March gave the Leader full increased delegated powers to make decisions (in consultation with others) – 14 decisions were made by this route. A full calendar of meetings has now been put in place to be held virtually and enable ‘normal’ decision making processes to be reconvened.

2.13 Fundamental to enable the Council to operate during the COVID-19 response has been the role of health and safety risks assessments in service delivery. At each stage and for all relevant services, risk assessments have been carried out to identify risks and ensure appropriate controls and mitigations are put in place (e.g. closing services, introducing remote working, providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment). As government guidance has changed and more information has become available the Council has used risk assessments to inform and adopt its processes and practices.

3 Working in Partnership

Local Resilience Forum

- 3.1 Across the UK there is a network of Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) that co-ordinate a local multi-agency response to the crises (including senior representation from Councils, Police, Health and Fire). South Kesteven District Council (SKDC) is an active member of the Lincolnshire LRF and is frequently part of a co-ordinated response to events (e.g. flooding). On the 12 February the Lincolnshire LRF began to schedule a series of meetings to discuss Lincolnshire’s response to the emerging crisis. SKDC has been a full part of this forum throughout the development of the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- 3.2 The structure of the LRF involved daily meetings (7 days a week) between 19 March and 15 May (when it was decided to reduce the meetings to twice weekly) of two key groups:
- Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) - to enable decisions to be made swiftly (e.g. providing resources for additional mortuary space or emergency food parcels) and keep a strategic overview of threats and risks. These are attended by the Chief Executive or a member of the Corporate Management Team
 - Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) – to inform decision and recommendations to SCG and keep an operational overview of threats and risks. These are attended by a member of the Corporate Management Team or another senior officer
- 3.3 The SCG and TCG oversee a network of operational Cells, which has evolved as different challenges have emerged during the crisis and SKDC has had representation on or provided resource to as appropriate. The cells include (but are not limited to) Health, Community and Volunteering, Personal Protective Equipment, Warn and Inform (communications), Mortality Planning and Business Recovery. The LRF command and control structure from April 2020 is attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 SKDC has also provided direct ‘mutual aid’ resource to support activity within the LRF, which has included communications specialists, data analysts and emergency planning expertise. In addition, SKDC has supported operational activities such as the roll out, by the British Army, of a mobile testing centre at Grantham Meres Leisure Centre, which has

to date conducted 1,667 tests and provided a crucial facility in the south west of Lincolnshire.

- 3.5 Throughout the crisis the work and structure of the LRF has evolved and improved, which has been informed by regular formal and informal feedback mechanisms, which SKDC has been a key part of influencing.

Other Partnership Forums

- 3.6 Alongside the LRF, SKDC has played an active role in a number of other groups to shape and support the response. Early in the crisis it was recognised that as a District Council we could work most effectively to highlight the support we require from Government by partnering with others – therefore SKDC has been part of the following:

Forum	Objectives	SKDC attendance
Lincolnshire LAs Leaders Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set strategic direction to LA response in Lincolnshire - Identify key messages to feedback internally and externally 	Leader of the Council
Lincolnshire LAs Chief Executive Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic overview of LA response in Lincolnshire - Adopt consistency and learn form best practice in the County - Influence strategic direction of regional and national response 	Chief Executive
Lincolnshire LAs S.151 Officers Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on financial issues/challenges in Lincolnshire - Adopt consistency in financial modelling and a best practice approach - Coordinated lobbying of regional and national platforms with regard to local authority financial impact 	Director of Finance
Lincolnshire LAs Chief Monitoring Officers Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Early identification and response to emerging issues (e.g. GDPR/safeguarding challenges) - Robust and consistent response to key and emerging issues - Understand issues around democratic processes and virtual meetings 	Director of Law and Governance
Lincolnshire LAs Community Response Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopt agreed approach to identifying and communicating with vulnerable residents - Develop flexible and streamlined approach to utilising volunteering groups - Learning from best practice and influencing LRF response 	Assistant Chief Executive
East Midlands Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing challenges and solutions 	Chief Executive
Local Government Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communicate as a single voice for the LA sector around challenges and support requirements - Guidance around key issues (e.g. furloughing) 	Chief Executive and Leader of Council
District Councils Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing challenges and solutions from a District Council perspective - Communicate as a single voice to Government of financial challenges of District Councils (resulting in 	Chief Executive and Leader of Council

	improved provision in second round of Government funding)	
Lincolnshire Leisure Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop a consistent and informed approach regarding current and likely future leisure issues in the light of current restrictions - Provide advice to Chief Executives on co-ordinated approach to the leisure sector 	Head of Leisure
Lincolnshire Planning Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work collaboratively to embed new planning processes, governance and delegations - Response collectively to new planning guidance/approach developed by Government 	Strategic Director of Growth
GL Housing Delivery Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work collaboratively to stimulate housing growth, explore opportunities to attract funding into the housing market. - Coordinate housing growth potential in the sub-region and share best practice. 	Assistant Director-Housing
Lincolnshire Environmental Health Managers Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure a consistent countywide approach to the enforcement of the new Health Protection Coronavirus Restrictions Regulations - Share intelligence and information with other agencies e.g. Police and Trading Standards 	Head of Environmental
LRF Test and Trace sub-cell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To work collaboratively in order to ensure that, in Lincolnshire, the national Test and Trace programme meets the need of the local population 	Head of Environmental

Lockdown

3.7 On 23 March the Government announced that the UK had entered into 'lockdown' and put in place significant measures that impact on every aspect of life, including travel, business, leisure and socialisation.

4 Delivering against the Priorities

4.1 This report sets out an overview of SKDC's response against its priorities, with actions and outputs set out in Appendix 2.

Priority 1: To protect the health of our staff, members and residents

4.2 Key elements of achieving this priority are:

- Reducing physical contact to essential activity only and thus minimising the risk of transmission
- Identifying the most vulnerable people and ensuring there is appropriate support for them
- Mobilising and enabling community and voluntary sector support across the district via formal and informal networks
- Communicating effectively the support available and routes to accessing it
- Maintaining essential services which protect public health such as Environmental Health, licencing (eg taxi licences) and refuse collection

4.3 Five key activities that SKDC undertook to achieve this priority were:

1. Conduct the staff survey to 667 employees identifying those who either have health conditions that made them vulnerable or live with someone who does. The survey informed the deployment of home working solutions to ensure that those who were higher risk were prioritised in the ICT roll out.
2. Postpone all face to face Council, Committee and Cabinet meetings for Councillors from 17 March, but enabling critical decisions still to be made by delegating additional decision-making authority to the Leader of the Council. SKDC then began a gradual reintroduction of the democratic process beginning with Planning Committee on 12 May.
3. The temporary closure of face to face services (e.g. Customer Service Centres, Arts Centres) or facilities that promote physical contact or an environment where the virus is likely to be transmitted (e.g. play parks, non-essential housing repairs), while maintaining access to open spaces
4. Creation of the SK Community Hub from 20 March, open seven days a week 8am-7pm, as a 'first point of call' for SK residents with COVID-19 queries, receiving over 1,799 contacts as of 31 May with access to over 1,500 volunteers through a variety of community groups to ensure those isolating were able to access essential supplies and also socialisation support
5. Work in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and others to offer support to contact over 7,000 residents identified by the NHS (or self-referred via GPs) as shielded in South Kesteven. Contact via LCC dovetailed with SKDC contacting nearly 18,000 people across the District, who were identified via a range of data sets as potentially vulnerable and offer practical or social support (accessed via the SK Community Hub)

Priority 2: To maintain our critical services

4.4 Key elements of achieving this priority are:

- The enactment of established business continuity plans for services, meaning that no frontline service has been reduced due to lack of capacity during the crisis
- Ensuring that additional resilience is built into the most critical services to enable them to operate whatever and developing a daily tracker sheet, which identified any areas of risk to delivery of the most critical services to enable redeployment of other staff to support them
- Established remote working across services, enabling functions to be carried out without face to face contact
- Communicating the status of services and any changes to operating practices

4.5 Six key activities that SKDC undertook to achieve this priority were:

1. Established new working practices to ensure critical refuse collection services continued. This included new morning procedures to enable social distancing and seeking to treat refuse crews as 'family units'. So far, there has been no disruption to any of the refuse, recycling, food, bulky or garden waste collections. This was achieved through thorough risk assessments and close collaboration with Lincolnshire Waste Partnership colleagues to develop innovative ways to maintain essential services whilst complying with government and industry guidance.

2. Mobilisation of IT enabling over 400 staff and Members to work from home during the crisis, meaning that the St. Peters Hill Office was closed 3 days a week but services still provided, for example Customer Services have handled over 20,000 telephone calls and over 4,600 email enquires remotely and services such as Revenues and Benefits have continued to function
3. Redeployed 90 staff to support critical services, including refuse collection, the COVID-19 project team, housing repairs and the SK Community Hub supporting the collection of 80,000 bins per week and the delivery of 813 urgent housing repairs each within 24 hours
4. Recruited new staff and retrained existing ones to provide additional resource to support areas of identified vulnerability within critical services (e.g. HGV drivers)
5. Worked collaboratively with partners, Bed and Breakfast organisations, businesses and other Councils, prioritising the availability of and access to void properties to enable SKDC to respond to an increased number and type of homelessness issues enabling over 40 people to be housed
6. Created a dedicated COVID-19 Webpage with up to date information about the status of services based on robust and frequent internal communications (see Appendix 3 sample service update sheet – an internal communications document updated daily), which has had nearly 21,000 views.

Priority 3: To support our local business

4.6 Key elements of achieving this priority are:

- Effective and consistent communication with businesses about advice and support available
- Prioritising the processing of Government support packages to enable the smooth, effective and swift distribution of Government grants
- Consistent application of Government policy on business closures and safe reopening, application of social distancing
- Responsive and tailored support to businesses who have specific enquiries or issues
- Taking a flexible approach to the receipt of payments from businesses to help them manage cashflow issues

4.7 Seven key activities that SKDC undertook to achieve this priority were:

1. Provision of a dedicated webpage with up to date Government advice and signposting of how to access key support, alongside a phone line to support specific enquiries, receiving over 450 calls
2. Prioritisation of resource to support the processing of approximately 2,200 Government grants injecting over £27m into the local businesses
3. Direct communication with over 2,200 local business with information about how they could access government grant support
4. Consistent access and application of Government policy on business closures and safe re-openings, including the launch of a 'business re-start' website which includes support for food business which are planning their re-opening

5. Developed a consistent process to identify businesses that engage with SKDC, including those within our own supply chain who may be particularly vulnerable, suspended rent in Council owned premises and considering deferral of business rates and scaling back debt collection activities; all on a case-by-case basis.
 6. Liaising closely and providing support to market stallholders to enable food stalls to continue to trade throughout the peak of COVID-19.
 7. Environmental Health advice to businesses and other organisations, such as the Grantham Food Bank, to ensure that they were able to implement appropriate measures to operate safely and comply with the new regulations.
- 4.8 SKDC's COVID-19 response has had significant financial implications for SKDC, some of which have been mitigated by additional Central Government support. However, the 2020/21 budget will require amending. This Cabinet agenda includes the updated Finance report setting out the current forecasting information and Council will be presented with an amended budget in September of this year.

The Role of SKDC's wholly owned companies

- 4.9 The COVID-19 crisis has not only required SKDC to work flexibly but has also been supported by the SKDC's wholly owned companies, with the relevant approvals in place from the company directors.
- 4.10 The Council's wholly owned economic development company, InvestSK, has been further refocused to ensure it was meeting the key priorities for businesses within the District. To support this and the ongoing alignment with the emerging priorities as a result of the crisis SKDC's Strategic Director of Growth was appointed by the Board of Directors for InvestSK as the Managing Director and has been leading the company's activities. This has facilitated the Council in distributing £27m in government support grants to businesses.
- 4.11 The Board of Directors for EnvironmentSK have also fully supported the SKDC's response to the crisis by:
- Allowing the Council to contact EnvironmentSK staff and invite them to be seconded into the refuse and recycling team – resulting in up to 5 members of staff being redeployed in this way
 - Responding to the changing priorities of the Council during the crisis, including providing additional support to cemeteries and after guidance, changed working with the Council to prioritise work
 - Continuing to undertake commercial and external work to pursue the SKDC's primary objective for the company to trade effectively.

The Board of Directors for Gravitass has supported SKDC's response by offering to utilise properties within its portfolio to tackle homelessness as temporary accommodation.

The Role of SKDC's Councillors

- 4.12 Councillors played a key role in both supporting and shaping SKDC's response to COVID-19. The Leader, Cabinet and the Chief Executive communicated regularly with all Members via a range of mechanisms at all stages of the response to enable Members to be as informed as possible and provide opportunity for feedback.
- 4.13 The response to the COVID-19 crisis demonstrated the key role of Members in supporting their local communities, including:

- Being part of the front-line response, with many volunteering via SKDC, LCC and through local community groups (formally and informally)
- Shaping the response by providing constructive challenge and input about groups or individuals that they believed may be vulnerable during the crisis and ways of supporting them
- Reinforcing and communicating key messages to residents within their community
- Signposting residents and businesses to the relevant support, either to the SK Community Hub, InvestSK or other support mechanisms
- Undertaking befriending with 21 Councillors signing up to make regular phone calls to those who were vulnerable to the impacts of social isolation

4.14 The role of Members in supporting and shaping the response has been extremely positive and one that should be maintained as SKDC develops its recovery plan.

5 Progressing ongoing Projects

5.1 During the response phase resource has been directed to achieving the delivery of the three COVID-19 related priorities set out above, however other priority projects have also been progressed, including:

- **St Martin's Park Stamford**– the development of which has continued to progress during this period including:
 - o Undertaking stakeholder consultation (utilising remote technology)
 - o Marketing of the site to residential, retirement and commercial developers
 - o Progressing the outline planning applications (expected to be submitted by September)
- **Enhancing Leisure Provision for All** – key activities including:
 - o Appointment of procurement consultants
 - o Undertaking financial modelling to assess the impact of capital investment
 - o Preparation of robust business plans
- Impact of Covid on the leisure service – key activities including:
 - o Receipt of claim for financial assistance from the Council's leisure provider
 - o Appointment of Sports and Leisure Consultancy (utilising Sport England funding). Work is being undertaken to:
 - Assess the true costs being incurred by the operator whilst the leisure centres are closed
 - Prepare a 12 month business plan to assess the level of support the Council may need to provide during the recovery period
 - Identify whether the decision to extend our current arrangement with the current contractor is still the recommended route given the impact of COVID-19,

- **Future High Street Fund:**
 - Progression of site-specific work with team of grant-funded consultants, following approval of draft submission earlier this year
 - Governance route determined for submission of final bid on 31st July, including Cabinet and Full Council in June and July, respectively
- **Heritage Action Zone:**
 - Due diligence on, and acceptance of, grant-award from Historic England
 - Initial discussions with property owners in order to ensure early start on schemes
- **Elm Street Stamford (former ambulance station)**
 - Planning approval secured in May
 - On-site commencement planned for mid-June, with a three-month completion date
- **Climate change**
 - Work to finalise the Council's carbon footprint and to establish carbon reduction opportunities has continued and is due to be presented to the Climate Change Action Task & Finish Group on the 16th June 2020.

6 Recovery Planning

- 6.1 On 10 May 2020 the Prime Minister issued a statement which set out a roadmap to recovery and operations. The statement set out:
- A change of emphasis, encouraging people to return to work where possible (if they cannot do so from home)
 - Some immediate easing of restrictions on social distancing and exercise
 - Plans to re-open schools for some year groups from 1 June (subject to various requirements being met)
 - An intention to further ease restrictions on business opening, including opening some non-essential shops, restaurants and hospitality (subject to various requirements being met)
- 6.2 The Government also issued a framework that set out how it would decide whether the country was ready to enter the next phase of easing of restrictions.
- 6.3 SKDC's approach to recovery planning is set out in the report 'COVID-19 SKDC Recovery Plan' elsewhere on this agenda, and is aimed to enable the Council to best mitigate threats and maximise opportunities associated with the transition to a 'new normal' over the next 18-24 months.

7 Lessons Learned

- 7.1 Part of the recovery planning will involve lessons learnt of the activity undertaken to date by SKDC in the immediate response to the crisis and these will be presented to Cabinet and via relevant scrutiny committees.

- 7.2 However, as part of the initial COVID-19 position statement five key lessons learnt from the initial phase are highlighted here:
1. Systems and processes across partners – partners across Lincolnshire have played a proactive role in supporting the Local Resilience Forum. However, there is a need for more consistency around systems and processes across partners as this can be a barrier to effective working.
 2. Utilisation of community support and voluntary sector – the COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the strength of community and the voluntary sector within the District, with over 1,500 formal and many more informal volunteers providing support to others. There are activities during the crisis (such as befriending support) where the Council has been the provider of activities where it would be more effective to be an enabler and facilitator of voluntary and community support. Working closely with the voluntary and community sector will be a key part of SKDC's Recovery Plan.
 3. Supporting staff working in a new environment – due to the nature of the crisis the Council made a very quick transition to home working as the norm for most staff during week commencing 16 March 2020. This was received extremely positively by our employees. However, more needs to be done to ensure that those working from home are productive and all of the equipment is available to carry out their duties effectively.
 4. Engagement with and support to Councillors – during April 2020 feedback was received from a number of Councillors that although there was regular communication to them, more support could be provided to local Members to enable them to support their communities. From the end of April all District Councillors were contacted, frequently asked questions provided and all Members were invited to support residents via the befriending service (of which 21 responded). However, some elements of the support to Members could have been done earlier.
 5. Improved communications with organisations carrying out services on SKDC's behalf – the phase when Government guidance was changing on a daily (or sometimes even more frequent) basis demonstrated the need for a clear communication framework between the SKDC and those carrying out services on SKDC's behalf (e.g. leisure provision, crematorium and cemeteries).

8 Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview and Scrutiny

- 8.1 As this report is for noting it has not been considered by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, however Members have been regularly briefed as the COVID-19 response developed.

9 Available Options Considered

- 9.1 As the report is not asking Cabinet for any specific decisions there are no other alternative options considered.

10 Preferred Option

- 10.1 The preferred option is to note the report and recommend that Cabinet formally thanks Councillors, Colleagues, Volunteers and Partners for their outstanding efforts to date in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

11 Reasons for the Recommendation (s)

- 11.1 Cabinet is recommended to note sections 1-3 as they are a statement of the activities of SKDC in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

12 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision

- 12.1 The next steps are set out in the paper “COVID-19 – SKDC Recovery Plan” appearing separately on this agenda.

13 Financial Implications

- 13.1 A report providing updated financial information and the forecasted financial impact is contained elsewhere on this agenda. An amended budget taking into consideration the in-year financial impact is scheduled to be presented to Council on 17 September 2020.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Interim Director of Finance

14 Legal and Governance Implications

- 14.1 As this report is for noting there are no legal implications associated with this report

Legal Implications reviewed by: Shahin Ismail, Director of Law and Governance

15 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 15.1 As this report is for noting there are no equality and safeguarding implications associated with this report.

16 Risk and Mitigation

- 16.1 On a service by service basis, there have been service level risk assessment and building use assessments for any services operating.

17 Community Safety Implications

- 17.1 There are no specific Community Safety implications of this report, which is a review of activity to date. However, all the actions contained within have been carried out specifically with Community Safety at the forefront of those decisions.

18 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council’s declaration of a climate emergency?

- 18.1 There are no direct climate change or carbon impacts as a result of this report and the recommendations. That said, the recovery phase provides an opportunity to incorporate climate change considerations and carbon reduction measures as part of a ‘reshaping’ of the new normal for SKDC, its services and the wider district.

19 Other Implications (where significant)

- 19.1 None

20 Background Papers

- 20.1 Decisions taken during COVID-19 response period including decisions made under General Exception and Special Urgency arrangements – Full Council 14th May 2020
<http://moderngov.southkesteven.gov.uk/documents/s25571/Decisions%20taken%20during%20the%20COVID-19%20response%20period.pdf>
COVID-19 SKDC Next Steps – Cabinet 16th June 2020
Financial Impact Report – Cabinet 16th June 2020

21 Appendices

21.1 Appendix 1 – LRF Command and Control Structure (April 2020)

21.2 Appendix 2 – Key Priorities, Actions and Metrics

21.3 Appendix 3 – Service Operation Status Regular Report

Report Timeline:	Date of Publication on Forward Plan (if required)	18 May 2020
	Final Decision date	16 June 2020