



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Non-key Decision

05 August 2020

Councillor Adam Stokes

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources



Re-introduction of Recovery Activity

To review the currently suspended recovery action as part of the Covid-19 Response and Recovery Plan and consider its re-introduction.

Report Author

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Approved for
publication:

Councillor Adam Stokes, Cabinet Member for Finance
and Resources

5 August 2020

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

1. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources is asked to approve the:
 - Re-instatement of the Fair Collection and Debt Recovery Policy with effect from August 2020.

1 The Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Since the start of the financial year there has been no formal recovery in place to support specific elements of the community during the pandemic period. This temporary arrangement was put in place for a limited period to respond to the Covid-19 crisis. However it is now considered timely to remove the recovery restriction in order to re-commence with ensuring residents and businesses meet their statutory obligations for payments of Council Tax, Business Rates and rents. It is also important to ensure that customers do not incur large debts that prove difficult to repay in an affordable way. Officers of the Council will continue to work with customers to ensure that any payment plans are affordable and enable any debts to be repaid over a mutually agreeable period.
- 1.2 This recommendation has been developed alongside reviewing the evolving approaches other local authorities are undertaking so ensure consistency where possible although local factors are also taken into consideration.
- 1.3 The resumption of recovery activity will be in line with the Council's agreed Fair Collection and Debt Recovery Policy (Appendix 1).

2 Available Options Considered

- 2.1 The current suspension of recovery action could continue but it is considered that this could be detrimental to the customer as the accrued debt could prove difficult to repay if no proactive work by the Council is in place.

3 Preferred Option

- 3.1 This is set out in the report.

4 Reasons for the Recommendation (s)

- 4.1 This recommendation is required given the current economic context.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The implications of on-going suspension can be damaging to the customer if they fail to keep up to date with any amounts due. Therefore recovery plays an important role in helping customers meet their statutory responsibilities. In addition receipts from residents and businesses are a key element of the Council's cash flow management and poor collection rates has a financial detrimental impact on the Council and ultimately on the delivery of its priorities.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Director of Finance

6 Legal and Governance Implications

- 6.1 In considering whether or not to take recovery action against any customer in breach of its statutory demands, each case will need to be decided on its own merits and dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Jo Toomey, Head of Governance

7 Equality and Safeguarding implications

- 7.1 Equality and safeguarding implications are considered and embedded within the Fair Collection and Debt Recovery Policy. Therefore the recommendation contained in this report, in itself, has no specific equality and safeguarding implications.

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

8.1 This report has a carbon neutral impact because it is recommending a service that was temporarily suspended during the Covid-19 response period.

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1: Fair Collection and Debt Recovery Policy

Report Timeline:	Date decision due to be made	18 August 2020
	Call-in deadline	26 August 2020
	Date decision effective (subject to call-in)	27 August 2020