

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Cabinet
Date:	29 September 2020
Title:	A Progress Report of The County Council's Response to the COVID-19 Crisis
Report From:	Chief Executive

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Purpose of this Report

1. This is the third in what is now a series of regular reports to Cabinet, summarising the County Council's continuing responses to and the process (and leadership) of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet should:

2. Note the contents of this report as a further summary of the exceptional events and responses by the County Council to the COVID-19 crisis, bearing in mind that this can only be a top-level assessment of what remains such a substantial and fast changing situation;
3. Note in particular the additional developing initiatives that have been introduced since the most recent report including the further support to the wider care home sector, the preparations for the extended re-opening of schools in September, and the bedding in of the County Council's new responsibilities to the oversight of outbreak control through the Health Protection Board and the Leader led Local Outbreak Engagement Board as a sub-committee of the Cabinet.
4. Continue to recognise the on-going exceptional efforts of the staff of the County Council as the crisis has progressed.

Executive Summary

5. This report, as before, summarises the range of exceptional steps that have been taken corporately and departmentally by the County Council to respond to the current national emergency stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. This largely covers the period, from early July 2020. The report summarises progress

so far particularly with regard to the local authority's crucial public health and social care duties. The report focusses on the core responsibilities of Hampshire County Council itself, through continuing departmental updates, but heavily reflects our formal partnership with the sub-regional and interagency arrangements under the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The report also summarises the local authority's developing recovery processes.

6. An unprecedented national crisis has demanded an unprecedented set of responses from across the public sector, most notably the NHS, but also local government. The County Council's response has particularly included:

- a rapid but managed re-designation, and reprioritisation of services;
- close work with the schools' community in its general (partial) closure, with targeted retention of services for vulnerable and key workers' children, and more latterly the complex implementation of plans to gradually return schools to a wider re-opening;
- a mass movement to remote working by council staff (enabled by what has proven to be a visionary approach to IT improvements in the past year);
- an extraordinary mobilisation of staff and services in Adults' Health and Care that enabled the HIOW NHS acute sector to create significant new capacity to cope with victims of the disease while at the same time changing the operating model for care homes to manage their and their residents' vulnerability to the disease;
- leadership of the new duties for support to the "shielded" individuals identified as vulnerable and in need of social isolation by the NHS, and the subsequent phased withdrawal of those support systems;
- the continued phased reintroduction of a range of "place" services from construction projects and waste disposal services, through to the managed re-opening of country parks and open spaces facilities in the light of the changes in lockdown measures nationally;
- very rapid and effective work between HCC and the private, voluntary and independent sector to mobilise direct financial support to external care providers of some £16million of the Government's infection control grant.
- the introduction of the County Council's new leadership role with regard to the development and implementation of Outbreak Management Plans as the key methodology for safely managing potential further reductions in general lockdown (which is also a subject of a separate report to this Cabinet);
- An update the County Council's leadership, on behalf of the LRF and through our oversight of the Coroner Service, of the "excess deaths" strategy including the progress of emergency provision of additional mortuary capacity.

7. As a statutory body and democratic institution, a core principle of the County Council's approach to the crisis has been to adhere closely to Government guidance and medical advice. That was summarised initially by the maxim that we should all: stay safe; protect the NHS; and save lives. Later, as lockdown measure nationally began to ease, that summary advice shifted to and remains: stay alert; control the virus; save lives. In this context it has proved invaluable that the County Council is the public health authority for the county and the leadership and performance of local public health services remains exceptional throughout. Alongside these critical public health and safety duties, the County Council is also mindful of its responsibilities with regard to the profound economic implications of the crisis, on behalf of HCC the institution and especially upon the wider economy of the county as the country has slipped into recession.
8. One of the distinguishing features of this crisis is its length in time. As previously reported therefore, a key challenge has been the maintenance of a crisis response approach, through the established Gold, Silver and Bronze Command systems, into developing recovery. In view of the scale and timeline of the crisis, it is seen to be more helpful to consider the arrangements to be in a "stabilisation" phase that bridges continued crisis management and gradual forms of recovery. This approach remains linked strongly to the formal and statutory Hampshire and Isle of Wight (HIOW) Local Resilience Forum (LRF) arrangements. One dimension of those is that the County Council is increasingly mindful that as well as working within this HIOW geographical construct, the County Council also directly borders with a further eight upper tier authorities other than the other three that constitute HIOW. Particularly as the approach to outbreak control evolves, it will be important to manage relations in all strategic directions.
9. Finally, by way of summary, the financial implications of the crisis on the County Council's own budgets and financial planning remain profound. Separate summary financial papers will continue to map those increasingly challenging issues.

Contextual Information

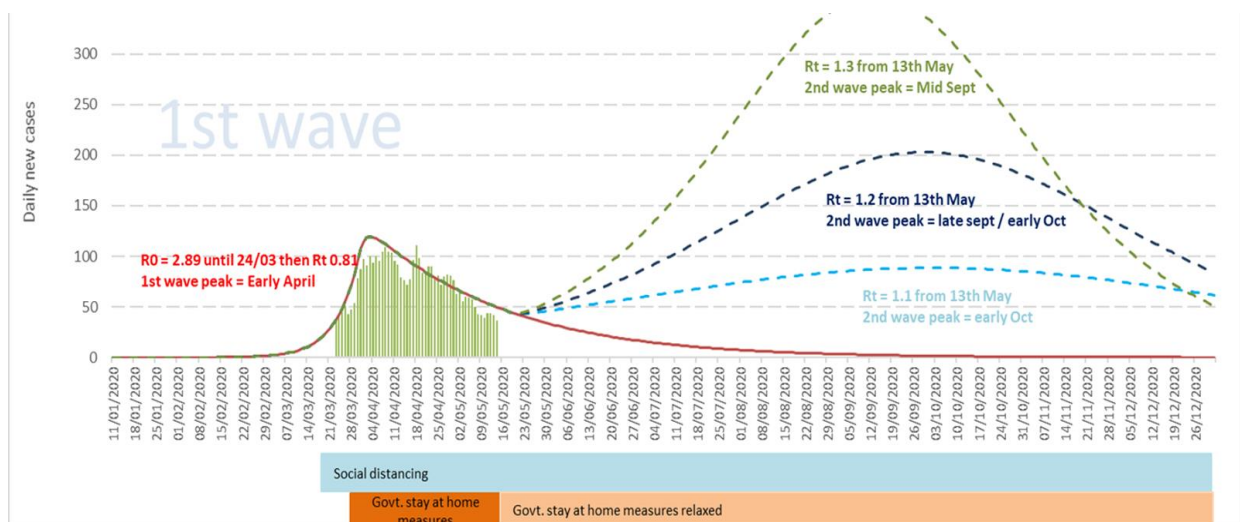
10. The following sections of this report will offer a summary of the responses so far by department and where necessary by service. Corporately, and in line with the activities of the inter-agency, pan-Hampshire Local Resilience Forum, the County Council introduced its emergency planning structure on 18 March 2020. This includes a strategic Gold Command, chaired by the Chief Executive and made up of the Corporate Management Team and relevant key officers, an operational corporate Silver Command and departmental Bronze Commands offering tactical service leadership. That structure is now supplemented by two key additional groups, one for recovery and one for the outbreak management planning.

Public Health – Context

11. The current COVID-19 outbreak is due to a new coronavirus from animals, which first came to light in China in late 2019. The first cases in the UK were identified in January 2020. With more and more countries around the world experiencing outbreaks, the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic in March 2020.
12. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which, in humans usually cause mild illness, including common colds. The COVID-19 disease is spread through cough droplets either directly from an infected person or from touching surfaces contaminated with the virus through someone coughing onto them. The virus is estimated to last for up to 72 hours on hard surfaces.
13. The symptoms of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) are typically (but not exclusively) a cough, a high temperature and shortness of breath. It is now additionally advised that a loss of sense of smell may also be a key symptom. The virus can affect anyone and for most people the symptoms will be mild, and people will recover in around two weeks. However, the individuals at highest risk for severe disease are those over 70 years and those with underlying health conditions where symptoms could require hospitalisation. There is further developing evidence about possible increased risks to BAME communities and those individuals with obesity. It remains difficult to accurately estimate the mortality rate because not all cases were identified. However, data from around the world suggests it is likely to be around less than 1% of those infected. The disease in children appears to be mild in most cases, though there have been some isolated instances of deaths.
14. Within Hampshire the number of cases and deaths rose to a peak in April, in line with the national spread of the epidemic. With lockdown measures in place we have seen a decline in the number of cases which are now increasing slightly. As of 3 August 2020, there are 5,123 diagnosed cases in Hampshire. The first peak was well managed through social distancing and effective planning. The modelling of the virus suggests further waves of disease will probably develop during the Autumn. The critical issue is the scale, extent and duration of any additional waves and it is now more clearly the responsibility of upper tier local authorities to monitor and manage local outbreaks which may contribute to such waves of spread of the disease.
15. Due to the lack of immunity in the population the disease spreads easily between people causing the potential for a large outbreak and 'peak' in cases. If allowed to spread without intervention the resulting level of disease would overwhelm our health and social care services due to the extreme volume of those requiring specialist care and support. Therefore, a number of measures, many of which were based on existing national plans to respond to influenza pandemics, were put in place by the government to manage the outbreak. The first phase was to **CONTAIN** the disease, tracking those who had the disease and contact tracing those they had been in close contact with. Working with

Public Health England, the County Council's public health team supported this through connecting with and supported key settings affected.

16. Following this phase and once the disease was understood to be spreading in the community, the country as a whole moved to the **DELAY** phase. This phase has increasingly involved measures to slow the spread through social distancing for the whole population and shielding for the most vulnerable. These measures have been largely successful, and we therefore saw a predicted peak in April much reduced and delayed, albeit with many people experienced severe disease and significant numbers of COVID-19 related deaths. As referenced above, while recognising the success of these significant measures in terms of lives protected and saved, the County Council has also to be concerned about the economic impact of this crisis upon the welfare of the Hampshire population.
17. The following graph depicts a predictive assessment of the potential severity and timing of a second peak or wave of the outbreak, relative to the first in April 2020. This is based on three scenarios linked to the future "R number" (the analysis of the reproductive pace and spread of the virus) and the prevalence of infection. Firstly, it should be stressed that it will not be feasible to construct an R value for localities or even the county of Hampshire. It is a broad statistical analysis over time and a wide population – it is likely we may see regional R values in time. We know that the first peak was based on a very high R number but from what was a low base of prevalence at that time. Crucially, that first peak, for all of the challenges and tragedies it brought, was contained within the capacity of the NHS so the worst national calamity was avoided. We also know, as we have come gradually down from the first peak through near total lockdown, that to avoid any second wave (as per the lower red line in this graph) would depend on continued high levels of lockdown that keep R well below the value of 1. But the closer the R number gets consistently towards or beyond a rate of 1.2, the more severe would be the second peak and the more intense would be the pressures upon the NHS and wider services. That is why the new local authority public health duties of outbreak control planning, discussed further in this report and separately to this Cabinet, will be so critical to the management of and recovery from the crisis.



18. As the pandemic has developed and the impact of the interventions is becoming better understood we have seen an easing of some of the lockdown measures but importantly the two-metre social distancing rule has remained in place to date (although it was moderated by Government slightly to suggest “one meter plus” in certain circumstances). In the absence of an effective vaccine, as long as there are cases of infection in the community, the likelihood of a resurgence of spread remains. As restrictions are eased, the UK may then see a rise in the disease again leading to a second wave. This will need to be managed in a similar way to the current measures, with increased local leadership through the Outbreak Control plan. At the time of writing, the rate of infection in Hampshire was below 4 per 100,000, which is well below England averages and substantially below any of the local rates that have caused local lockdowns in some communities during the summer (e.g., Greater Manchester and Leicester City). That must not be construed as a message of complacency. It is essential that the hard and skilled work which has contributed to this low rate is sustained with the cooperation of the residents of the county.
19. The programme of testing for COVID-19 is key for understanding the spread of disease and prevent further cases. The testing programme has been developed over the life of the epidemic. In the ‘contain’ phase testing was for people who had travelled to affected areas or those in contact with cases who were symptomatic. The next phase testing was for those admitted to hospital who were symptomatic and for potential outbreaks in care homes. A programme of testing for key workers has commenced in Hampshire recently to support business continuity. Finally, testing was made available for everyone symptomatic. Testing programmes have developed through a variety of delivery models. The transfer of leadership to the Director of Public Health will aid our local management of the disease. The delivery models are being reviewed to ensure they meet local needs. The progress and coordination of testing, and a stronger local authority role in that coordination is key to the effective management of outbreak control plans.
20. We have now moved to a phase, as the start of outbreak management, of testing and tracing community cases. This involves increased testing in the community, tracing those who have been in contact with a case and supporting people to self-isolate with symptoms and NHS care where needed. It is intended to be a more targeted and “surgical” approach to management of the spread of the disease which can apply controls which do not have such widespread and economically as well as socially disruptive effects. The contact tracing will be the NHS Test and Trace programme overseen by Public Health England and Local Directors of Public Health. The Director of Public Health was helping to lead the early implementation of the Test and Trace and Mobile phone app pilot through his leadership role on the Isle of Wight. At the time of writing the pilot app used on the Isle of Wight is now being rejected in favour of a different model which will take further time to develop and implement.
21. In line with Government guidelines an Outbreak Control Plan for Hampshire has been developed. The leadership of this approach has been devolved to the upper tier (public health) authority. The Government has allocated £300 million

nationally to support implementation. An officer led Health Protection Board has been established as has a parallel political and leader-led board, the Local Outbreak Engagement Board. The Plan is centred around 7 themes:

- a. Planning for local outbreaks in care homes and schools
- b. Identifying and planning how to manage other high-risk places, locations and communities of interest
- c. Identifying methods for local testing to ensure a swift response that is accessible to the entire population.
- d. Assessing local and regional contact tracing and infection control capability in complex settings
- e. Integrating national and local data and scenario planning through the Joint Biosecurity Centre Playbook
- f. Supporting vulnerable local people to get help to self-isolate
- g. Establishing governance structures.

22. A vaccine is still being researched which would enable society to gain population immunity, preventing the spread of disease and protecting the vulnerable from illness. This is most likely to be available during 2021, if a vaccine can be developed.

Public Health – Leadership

23. Through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF), Hampshire County Council has provided public health leadership to the multiagency response to ensure that the emergency is managed in a way that is proportionate and ensures that the local system, especially in health and care, is able to cope with the pandemic. The Director of Public Health (DPH) is the Deputy Chair of the Strategic Command Group of the LRF, working to the Chief Fire Officer. (The LRF is the umbrella term for the formal legal partnership of key statutory agencies in a given area, in our case that is Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, including the two cities and the island. The LRF is not a legal entity in itself and holds no direct budgets or accountabilities but is the sum of its constituent statutory partners in the area who must work together during a time of crisis).
24. The public health team, which also covers the Isle of Wight by agreement with Isle of Wight Council, working with Southampton and Portsmouth Directors of Public Health, has ensured that the data on the disease is understood by the partners for effective response. Key workstreams led directly by the County Council's DPH include: preventing the spread of infection through effective social distancing; setting up testing with national government; and ensuring national guidance on PPE is communicated and interpreted for effective use by local agencies. Members of the public health team have also supported the workstream to protect the most vulnerable led by the HCC's Director of Adult Social Care on behalf of the LRF. Throughout all stages of the pandemic, support and advice has been given to all parts of the council dealing with different aspects of the public health emergency.

25. The Director of Public Health is providing the leadership at a regional level and Pan Hampshire level as the Director of Public Health regional lead.

Adults' Health and Care

26. The department has moved positively to maintain its critical functions throughout the on-set of the COVID-19 crisis. Staff have resolutely and positively moved to the new working from home and social distancing arrangements; providers are making support in the community available through our Brokerage services and all providers are being supported and paid in advance to maintain their cash-flow and resilience. We are regularly liaising with the whole sector to ensure that direct care is continuing to be provided in line with the published guidance.
27. On 14 May the Minister for Care, Helen Whately MP, published a letter identifying the support required to the care sector, with particular emphasis on support to the care home sector. Alongside a range of support offers ranging from clinical support, through to infection prevention and control training and access to other support through social care and health partners a national fund of £600m was announced. The first and second tranches of money have been distributed across the sector in Hampshire. Some £15m has been distributed to care homes (largely on a per capita basis of care home beds), inclusive of the County Council's own provision. A further £2m has been distributed to the domiciliary care sector, £920k assigned to emergency PPE supplies and approximately £250k available to pay opportunity providers to support restoration of services. These monies have been distributed in recognition of the pressures on the sector, including through short term use of County Council reserves ahead of receiving payment from Government. Hampshire County Council has received positive endorsement of the approach and detailed plan in support of the care home sector, both from local providers and also through recognition by the national Better Care Support Team and Department of Health and Social Care of best practice examples of support detailed in our submission and action plan, developed with CCG partners, Hampshire Care Association and supported by HealthWatch Hampshire and the Care Quality Commission. Additionally, following approvals from Cabinet, an estimated further £16m, through increased commissioned care support, will have been received by the care sector by the end of September 2020.
28. Our direct care provision, alongside NHS partners, saw a significant amount of acute hospital provision freed-up in anticipation of a surge in COVID-19 cases. Initially, some 40–50% of the available acute hospital beds were made available. The restoration of many elements of NHS service delivery commenced in early July and bed occupancy has increased as the incidence of COVID-19 care in hospitals has decreased. Currently hospital bed-based provision is restoring to near normal levels. Within each acute hospital system planning is currently taking place for winter, alongside usual winter pressures contingency arrangements relating to Covid-19 are also being undertaken. In order to maintain capacity and maintain system flow we have established a discharge to assess facility, Woodcot Lodge, an up to 80 bedded facility in Gosport to support people leaving Portsmouth University Hospital. This unit is being NHS funded, but run wholly by Hampshire County Council Care.

Development of similar models of discharge care are being explored to support hospital discharge from University Hospital Southampton and Hampshire Hospitals in Basingstoke and Winchester.

29. Our in-house care homes have maintained good levels of care for residents. Staffing levels have continued to recover since the height of the first wave of the pandemic through the Spring and early Summer. These achievements in themselves cannot be underestimated and the ongoing consequences and impacts upon care homes, residents, families and staff will continue to be significant in the coming months. Restoration of visiting has commenced, cautiously and carefully, where care homes have been Covid-19 free for at least two weeks, outside and with social distancing being maintained. We continue to find weekly staff testing and monthly resident testing frustrated by limited access to test kits. However, measures are underway to ensure full coverage and access to weekly/monthly testing to the care home sector across England through September.
30. Impacts upon the wider social care sector continue to be felt and pressures have increased over the duration of the lockdown. There has been growing evidence of family distress – particularly for younger adults supported by family carers. Staff and provider partners continue to offer regular contact to individuals and their families, this especially offers vital safeguarding support and critically we are now in the position of seeing the restoration of usual services and support.
31. As referenced above, the leadership of HIOW's "Shielding" arrangements has been taken on by HCC's Director of Adults' Health and Care and the Departmental Management Team. Shielding is the term used to support those members of the community who are identified by the NHS as in need of social isolation by virtue of their underlying health conditions. The process involves GPs and hospital Consultants notifying NHS England about individual patients and then the NHS contacting those individuals and asking them to register for support if needed. Following arrangements put in place by Hampshire County Council, working with district / borough councils, NHS and the voluntary community sector with incredible rapidity support has now been scaled back and stood down with the ending of the national shielding programme on 31st July. We continue to work diligently with all partners and will maintain the ability to stand-up support in the coming months, should it be required.
32. Overall information relating to the support provided across Hampshire can be found via the following link;
<https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/AHC/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fsites%2FAHC%2FShared%20Documents%2FCOVID-19%2D19%2DHantshelp4vulnerable%20Helpline%2FWelfare%20Support%20Team%20External%20Scorecard%2Epdf&parent=%2Fsites%2FAHC%2FShared%20Documents%2FCOVID-19%2D19%2DHantshelp4vulnerable%20Helpline>

Children's Services

33. With regards to the County Council's critical children's social care services, a three-phased approach has been developed, with each phase based on prioritising key areas (e.g. residential care) in the event of having fewer staff available to work should the situation worsen.
34. The services are continuing to operate in phase one, meaning essentially doing 'business as usual but doing it differently'. All statutory timescales for safeguarding visits and meetings remain the same (and are being met) but with enhanced use of technology to ensure officers see children and families through digital means if necessary. The service is fully operational and continues to operate as near to normal as possible. An increasing number of face-to-face home visits are now being undertaken. Guidance has been issued for staff in the use of PPE when it is necessary to use it. Plans have been drawn up to facilitate a phased return to office bases as they re-open.
35. At this stage, the numbers of staff ill or self-isolating for various reasons has remained stable at less than 10% and there is confidence that safeguarding services will remain as reported above. The approach is being closely communicated with partners, including through the MASH so they are aware of this business as usual approach in the interests of protecting vulnerable children during the crisis. The Hampshire MASH continues to function to high standards which is essential to the safe running of children's services generally. Children's vulnerability has not diminished and requires the local authority's constant vigilance and intervention. Furthermore, there is a legitimate concern that the true impact of the crisis on children's social care services is yet to come. We are now experiencing the expected "bow wave" of referrals of vulnerable children brought about by the combined effects of the lockdown and the reduction of routine universal service accessibility or attention. During July and August referrals into the MASH were approximately 10-15% above the average for the time of year and this has increased further in early September. Additional resources are being redeployed within the service to address this increased demand. There can be a long 'tail' with regards to the length of time intervention is required to support children and families and there is a medium to long term impact on the council's finances.
36. Since the formal closure of schools was announced on the 20 March 2020, the response across the education sector has been strong. Provision was put in place across the county during Easter, half-term and Bank Holidays so that the children of critical workers could be cared for whilst their parents attended work. Schools also remained open for children living in circumstances of vulnerability. For those children unable to attend schools due to the Covid-19 restrictions, schools put in place a variety of remote learning activities. Throughout the period leading up to the end of the summer term, schools in Hampshire consistently had much higher proportions of children and young people attending than seen nationally. In the latter weeks of the summer term, overall attendance peaked at just over 40,000 students.

37. Children's Services put in place a system to secure the high attendance of vulnerable children open to our social care services. All schools reported weekly on the support they gave for every individual child open to a social worker, such as those on a child protection plan or those in care. Over 2,400 children open to children's social care attended schools which is around 54% of the school age cohort. For vulnerable children not attending, schools kept in regular contact to ensure their pastoral needs were being met. Attendance was monitored through weekly conversations between each headteacher and a member of the School Improvement Team. Colleagues from across Children's Services worked collaboratively to undertake risk assessments and increase the numbers of children attending school from this specific cohort. Again, Hampshire enjoyed high attendance of this cohort of children compared to that seen nationally.
38. Over the summer, the Government changed its proposals around the awarding of GCSEs, A Levels and other qualifications such as BTECs. The School Improvement Team worked extensively with Heads of Departments in secondary schools, advising on the process for awarding centre assessed grades and the forms of moderation that should be in place to ensure consistency and fairness. Post 16 colleges and sixth form providers have demonstrated great flexibility to accommodate students onto courses. In addition, Post 16 colleges are reporting that practically all students that wished to progress to a preferred university have been able to do so. The Careers Service offered support to students and parents who wanted to explore options available to them.
39. The Government set an ambition for all schools to be open for all children and young people from the start of the autumn term. Extensive guidance was issued by the DfE to school leaders and Local Authorities setting out how this should be achieved. Over the last few weeks of term and throughout the summer period, the School Improvement Team has worked with school leaders to ensure the Government's ambition was realised and that the guidance was interpreted appropriately, to ensure all schools opened whilst reducing the risks of COVID-19 transmission.
40. There were a number of logistical issues that have been successfully resolved through this dialogue. The size of bubbles in secondary schools has been an area of focus. Bubbles have to be sufficiently large enough to enable successful deployment of specialist teachers, whilst recognising that large bubbles will potentially affect more children if a bubble has to be locked down and students sent home to isolate. Some schools considered zoning their school site, with specific areas being allocated to particular year groups. However, strict zoning can mean that some students cannot access specialist facilities.
41. As a consequence of this intensive preparation, schools across Hampshire were in a good place to open for all children from the start of term. During the initial few days attendance has been comparatively high. The DfE has initiated a daily attendance return that all schools have been asked to complete.

Nationally, from the schools that submitted the daily attendance return on the 14 September 2020, around 86% of pupils attended primary schools and 88% attended secondary schools. In Hampshire, 91% of primary aged pupils and 92% of secondary aged pupils were attending. The proportions of primary aged pupils are ordinarily slightly reduced during the initial two weeks of the autumn term because schools, both locally and nationally, put in place carefully constructed inductions for reception aged pupils involving home visits, stay and play sessions, smaller group sessions before the young children attend full time.

42. The School Improvement Team has put in place professional development opportunities and resources for primary school leaders to inform their robust plans for a recovery curriculum, bridging from areas missed in the last academic year to this year. These resources have been well-received.
43. At the end of last term, webinars were rolled out to schools and colleges on the correct procedures to follow in the light of a suspected or confirmed case of Covid-19 within the school. A second series of these webinars has just commenced to update schools again to ensure they are clear on the current processes. These webinars will include the independent sector as well as state funded schools.
44. One of the areas we are continuing to focus on is access to remote education. Schools have to be ready to move swiftly to a system of remote learning, in the event of a local lockdown or when children are asked to self-isolate at home for up to two weeks. We have made that clear to all school leaders and held webinar briefings, attended by 130 school leaders, to offer guidance on the preparation and management of such events. The School Improvement Team has produced curriculum packs and clear guidance for “emergency” lesson plans for each primary aged year group, based upon the national curriculum, to cover the first two days for children that have been asked to self-isolate whilst schools switch to remote learning. Guidance has been sent out to primary, secondary and special schools setting out the DfE’s expectations.
45. Since the start of term, the School Improvement Team has worked very closely with colleagues in Public Health to ensure schools have access to rapid advice and support in the event of a suspected or confirmed case. All headteachers are following the public health advice closely and, where needed, staff and children and young people are being asked to self-isolate. Support has been provided to schools with communications to parents and the media.
46. The DfE has allocated £193,000 to Hampshire to provide professional development for well-being leads in schools to ensure this area is prioritised during the return to full time schooling. Initially well-being leads will be asked to attend two virtual training events before half-term, using nationally produced materials. The training will be supported through a multi-agency partnership approach including health, CAMHS, Educational Psychology,

Primary Behaviour Support, Public Health and School Improvement. The lead trainers are themselves accessing national training before delivering in Hampshire during October. The initial training and on-going support to March 2021 will dovetail into existing provision and signpost to other services available within Hampshire and nationally.

47. The School Improvement Team is continuing to liaise with school leaders to work through any emerging issues and is remaining alert to any changes in guidance being issued.
48. With regards to home to school transport, the Children's Services Department communicated the complexity of the home to school transport challenges and the need for timely guidance to be issued to support a full return to school in May 2020. Throughout June, July and August, these requests were repeated but unfortunately guidance was not issued until late in the day on 11 August.
49. Organising home to school transport (HtST) for 13,000 pupils across 1,300 routes for the September school return has been particularly challenging given the late guidance, and a number of families received late notification of transport arrangements as a result which is regrettable but was unavoidable.
50. In parallel with the issuing of the guidance, the Government made £1.1M additional funding available to the County Council to support additional transport costs incurred, but widened the scope of the transport planning task to include management of the impact of school return on the wider public transport system. This brought approximately 4,000 additional young people into scope of the planning and organising of transport.
51. There has been strong and effective cross departmental working to deliver the transport in accordance with the Government guidance, involving HTST, School Improvement and Local Bus and Public Transport colleagues from ETE.
52. As is the case every year, settling down of arrangements occurs in first few days of term and is improving, aided by a rapid, response and flexible approach to resolving issues commissioning additional transport where necessary.
53. Government guidance changed on 1 June to allow all early years and childcare services to reopen to "all children". By the end of the summer term 91% of Early Years childcare providers were open. The start of the new academic year has seen this rise to 99% of group settings open and confirming children are attending. There are a small number of providers who continue to operate reduced capacity, but such capacity is meeting demand.
54. There is anecdotal feedback from some providers advising that attendance and take up for the autumn term is positive. Eight early years settings have closed over the summer but no significant sufficiency issues arise from these closures, and the position continues to be closely monitored. Out of school

childcare (eg after school clubs) remains an area of some concern with a few closing or not able to operate. Some schools have set up to deliver provision themselves or make temporary offers to third party providers.

55. Early years providers have been offered the option of advanced payment of some of their autumn early years entitlement funding to support cashflow and a longer term sustainability fund has been established to support provider in financial difficulty where there is sufficiency need. The support offer to early years settings is being further enhanced through online training and resources together with seminars and surgery options to the sector.

Economy Transport and Environment (ETE)

56. Most staff in ETE remain able to work remotely, with many utilising the County Council's new technology platform to work from home. However much direct service delivery work is carried out through service contracts such as those with Skanska for Highways maintenance and Veolia for waste management, including Household Waste and recycling Centre (HWRC) operations.
57. The County Council, HWRC sites re-opened with provisions to ensure safe working and to enable social distancing requirements to be maintained on the sites, which means in effect significantly reduced site capacity, with limited numbers of vehicles and people allowed on site at the same time. In order to manage the traffic issues and local disruption caused by the build-up of long queues at HWRCs, a pre booking system was put in place on 15th June. An established third party system was utilised to minimise delay in implementing and operating an effective booking system, and the system parameters have subsequently been adjusted wherever possible to accommodate as many slots as possible at each site, whilst maintaining social distancing and safe working. Initially the service offered 30,000 slots per week, and this was increased to 35,000 by early July. However, demand for slots, particularly at some of the key urban sites remains very high, with 100% booking of slots consistently making it challenging to obtain access to a slot. Now that the operation of the sites has settled down, it is intended that further increases in throughput will be made during August, to ensure that more slots are available, particularly at the larger sites, where there is potential to increase the number of vehicles safely allowed on site. It is also intended to carefully manage 'no shows' which whilst only a small proportion of visits, is still a frustration in taking up slots which could otherwise be available for those who wish to visit sites.
58. Highways Maintenance work, including planned and reactive maintenance work was re-started in May, and particularly sought to take advantage of reduced traffic volumes in May and June, to progress certain schemes and programmes. Traffic volumes started to rise with the easing of lockdown restrictions at the beginning of June, and they have risen significantly as more restrictions have been eased in Town Centres and tourism and hospitality businesses for example. Whilst traffic levels are still below pre-COVID-19 volumes for the most part, with reduced public transport patronage, traffic continues to increase, and

the return of schools in September is expected to push traffic volumes back close to pre-Covid levels in the mornings.

59. Work has fully restarted across the County on Transport Capital Programme projects, and the private sector construction industry is operating at greater levels of activity, albeit with restrictions to support safe working and social distancing. It is still too early at this stage to establish the full impacts of social distancing and 'COVID-19 safe' working practices on construction activity, but productivity is reduced and it is likely that this will lead to lengthening construction times and additional costs on many schemes, which will potentially be a pressure on the capital programme.
60. Public transport services have seen huge falls in passenger numbers, but more services are now running to provide access for essential journeys. The County Council has maintained support for subsidised bus services, the Gosport Ferry and also for community transport, as that gets back to more normal operating patterns. A support package has also been agreed in principle for the Hythe Ferry, but at the time of drafting this report, funding confirmation from Government and partners for the rescue package has not been received.
61. The County Council continues to actively develop and implement proposals for temporary measures to support social distancing and facilitate walking and cycling around towns and employment areas, (e.g. increasing footway/cycleway capacity). The first tranche of Government funding from the Department of Transport has been received and an ambitious programme, averaging around 12 schemes per week were delivered in the initial period. This programme supports the Town Centre recovery work being promoted by the Government and locally through the LEPs.
62. Planning applications are still being registered and processed. In environmental services, work continues, including site survey activities, where they can be carried out in full accordance with social distancing and safe working practices. Finally, the Economic Development service continues to play a critical role in preparations for recovery and supporting local businesses, in consultation with district council partners and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (see below). As the economic impact of the pandemic on Hampshire becomes clearer, the direction of economic support and interventions will need to become more focussed and evidence led. Unemployment will rise sharply nationally, and the south east will be more affected than in the last recession. The local economy was hit harder than the national average at the outset of the crisis in March and has some hard-hit sectors such as aerospace/aviation and the visitor economy. Retaining assets such as Southampton Airport and securing big planned infrastructure improvements such as M3 Junction 9, will also need to be at the forefront of our longer term thinking in the economic recovery response. There are some encouraging signs of the start of economic recovery, including interest in investment in Hampshire, but it is still early days in the recovery process, and the depth of lost economic activity and outputs is unprecedented in modern times. Latest indications are that the UK will enter a recession and see further

significant job losses during the autumn, and this will clearly have an impact locally.

Culture Community and Business-Related Services (CCBS)

63. From mid-May the focus within CCBS moved to recovery of the many services that either had to shut completely or significantly changed their delivery processes as lockdown occurred. All recovery is taking place in line with the government's timeline and announcements. However, it is important to emphasise that many services have continued to operate throughout the lockdown period and have provided invaluable support to the COVID-19 response across the County Council.
64. The planning for the recovery of services has involved extensive work on site-specific risk assessments within the overarching County Council approach to COVID-19 and other risk more generally. The emphasis is on staff and customer safety. This activity, led for the County Council across all sites by Facilities Management, is critical to the local authority's phased return to increased physical occupation of its buildings. For those services who depend almost entirely, or entirely, on income generation, this is a vital period and everything possible is being done to ensure that services can become fully operational again as quickly as possible while maintaining a safe environment for staff and users. In many cases this is involving changes to the service offer and a diversification of activities.
65. The Country Parks opened their car parks and toilets on Wednesday 13 May, in line with the government announcement that people could travel further to exercise. The food outlets are also now open, following government guidelines. Car parking was initially limited to 60% capacity which then was raised to 85% capacity once all systems and processes had been tested. The bank holiday weekend brought challenges at Lepe which was full by 9:30am with parking on double yellow lines. Further planning was undertaken with Highways to assure road safety in the area. Both the farm attractions and Titchfield Haven will open on 6 July in line with government guidance on ticketed visitor attractions. Countryside teams are very busy undertaking seasonal vegetation clearance and rights of way maintenance.
66. Hampshire Records Office remains closed to the public but is making preparations and finalising risk assessments prior to re-opening. The records management staff have been continuing the service of urgent file retrievals for legal and social care and have given considerable support to the Registration service in certificate management and issue.
67. Calshot car park and slip ways are now fully open as are the toilets. Camping is re-opening imminently at Calshot, Tile Barn and Runways End. Indoor 'sports' facilities at the Centres remain closed but are prepared to re-open as soon as government guidance allows. All residential courses at the Outdoor Centres remain closed and postponements or full refunds have been offered to all school bookings through to the end of July and will continue on a rolling basis until re-

opening can be achieved. This has been very well received by schools. Plans are well developed to make alternative 'COVID-19-proof' activity offers to the public over the summer. The café at Calshot has now re-opened. The Hampshire Mountain Centre in Wales remains completely closed in line with Welsh policy at this time.

68. Hamble Harbour is now fully open and operating normally. Activity from boat owners and other small craft is predictably high and is leading to good slipway launch revenues which will help to offset other COVID-19 losses if the activity continues at a high level.
69. The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens opened to visitors on 8 June. Initially numbers of visitors are being managed through an online booking system with time slots. The restaurants and shop remain closed for the time being, but plans are in hand for re-opening as soon as practicable.
70. Libraries will be re-opening on 6 July for short visits and with reduced opening hours. However, the Library Service has had its digital services open throughout the Covid lockdowns and has been developing further offers throughout the period. These are proving highly successful and are attracting national attention. Demand for on-line services has increased dramatically, currently averaging 12,000 customers actively using Borrowbox to read eBooks each day, an increase of over 58% since the beginning of March. This equates to an 84% increase in daily loans, averaging more than 3,000 a day. The total number of registered Borrowbox users now equates to a quarter of the customers who borrowed a physical book in the year 2019 to 2020.
71. The new Ready Reads' service – where library staff select books according to a reader's preferences which customers can then collect from their local branch – has been used by over 3,000 people since it started in mid-June.
72. Many of the services that were previously enjoyed in libraries are now being delivered using social media. The reach of Facebook posts has increased over 4800% since the beginning of March with 18,000 people a day seeing a post from Hampshire Libraries. Videos containing interactive story times and other activities are being watched 1,700 times a day on average.
73. The home library service re-started deliveries in the week of 18 May and these have been extremely well received. All these new and enhanced schemes offer new opportunities for people to access a wide range of library services.
74. The Registration service has now firmly established its Death Registration service as a phone-only process, and this is working well. The service re-started marriage ceremonies and birth registrations on 6 July.

75. Trading standards have developed new processes around market surveillance of PPE equipment and trading during lockdown. Weights and measures inspections continue and Buy with Confidence audits are being carried out.
76. Hampshire Scientific and Asbestos services are all open and functioning effectively. Hampshire Scientific staff have been working flexibly over a seven-day week to keep all services running and remain Covid19 compliant within their office and laboratory space. Asbestos are undertaking site visits in line with construction industry needs.
77. All Hampshire Transport Management activities continue to run with appropriate measures in place. This includes essential vehicle maintenance for the highways fleet and Skanska and the courier service which has diversified its activities to accommodate the County Council's COVID-19 response needs. The public MOT service is now fully operational again.
78. HC3S, the County Council's catering operation, has continued to supply all its school customers during the lockdown period, catering for those pupils and teachers who have been in school throughout the lockdown period. The service has continued to support schools through close liaison to provide meals for the additional children who returned to school from 1 June.
79. County Supplies are continuing to support the warehouse operation at Segensworth. They are now also proving invaluable in managing the procurement, in volume, of the materials needed to ensure that service and offices across the County Council, including schools, can provide a safe working environment.
80. Construction and maintenance activity within Property Services has now broadly returned to a business as usual position. The Property Services compliance team are supporting across the HCC and Partner Estates to re-energise building systems in buildings 'hibernated' during lockdown. The Category Management Team are supporting HCC and Partner estates to ensure that service arrangements such as cleaning, waste collection and grounds maintenance keep pace with service recovery and address additional requirements. The Estates Management team is continuing to support discussions and decisions on rent relief and will support planning for recovery of any deferred rent that accrues during the lockdown period. Hampshire Print and Document service is operating as normal.
81. The department is also leading on the work to establish a safe and effective office environment and the procedures governing staff who are currently working at home returning to office-based workplaces. This is a far from complete picture and the initial emphasis has been placed on those who operationally need to be in the workplace and then on those who, for various reasons, find working at home particularly difficult. Under the COVID-19 guidance on the management of office accommodation it is estimated that a utilisation level of around 25% is around the maximum to provide a safe working

environment. That clearly has many implications for a wider return to the workplace for office-based staff and will be considered within a wider review of working patterns and practice in the 'new' paradigm post-COVID-19.

Corporate Resources

82. Corporate Resources' key focus is enabling colleagues in front line services to provide vital services to the public. This includes Hampshire County Council, Oxfordshire County Council, including schools across both Counties, Hampshire Constabulary, Hampshire Fire & Rescue, the three partnered London Boroughs and a variety of other public sector organisations reliant on HCC corporate support. The substantial majority of staff have been successfully working from home, albeit this does in some areas affect the quality of service and productivity. All services are holding up strongly but that could decline if significant staff numbers are affected by the virus or if the situation continues for a significantly lengthy period. Following the Prime Minister's Announcement on 10 May and fully reviewing the guidance, there is only one change to current work arrangements for staff, which is the un-pausing of HR casework face-to-face meetings otherwise all remains unchanged and this will be kept under review in line with any changes in Government requirements and/or Public Health advice.
83. In the Integrated Business Centre (IBC) the focus is on ensuring staff and suppliers continue to be paid and income collected. A small group of staff rotate coming into the office to deal with "hard" mail but predominantly the service is operating on-line, including having had to switch off the telephony. Payment performance to suppliers remains at normal levels (99% of invoices were paid within 30 days from the receipt of a valid invoice) and payroll accuracy continues to be in excess of 99%. Customer Satisfaction continues at c85% demonstrating the on-going success of the contact model and customers engaging effectively in the significantly expanded digital channels such as webchat. The new contact centre telephony will be operational in September allowing calls to be taken by staff working from home and a review is underway to determine the services which will benefit from reinstating telephone contact
84. In Finance the focus is on properly recording and projecting additional expenditure and loss of income, plus the impact of non-delivery of savings with departments, ensuring sufficient cashflow on a daily basis as well as continuing with the year-end closure of the accounts which have just been submitted within days of the early closure period, we did not need to make use of the extended timescale which is a significant achievement. The Pension Team are ensuring that Local Government pensioners are paid across over 300 employers with some staff still having to be office based. The introduction of Teams external calling has allowed an improved approach to the contact centre. In HR, the focus is on supporting managers and staff to operate using adapted HR policies to meet the current challenging operating model whilst also focussing on the health & wellbeing of employees now and into the recovery period and beyond. HR Casework was paused for 'face to face' aspects during lockdown and this sensitive work was re-instated in June utilising meeting rooms in line with

normal practice although also offering the staff members the opportunity to meet 'virtually' as an alternative. There is also a focus on creating additional digital learning materials to support the swift rollout of new Digital Technology to support new ways of working.

85. At this time, IT and connectivity have never been more critical. Credit is due to IT colleagues who have been focussed on significantly speeding up the roll out of new technologies which are now supporting our new ways of working, particularly Teams and external calling. Without this move the organisation would not be in such a strong position, particularly regarding working from home. Many County Council staff were working on home devices due to the swift move to home working and initial anticipation that this would be short lived, as it is now clear that for a significant number of staff home working will continue for a lengthy time period, IT have procured and in the process of deploying appropriate IT kit to make this new operating model sustainable, ensuring staff wellbeing and maximising performance. Most IT staff are providing support through home working. The support desk is keeping on top of requests, a rota of 6 specialist roles are still office based in case a critical IT incident occurs. Internal Audit have worked with all partners to reprioritise current plans and also amend them to take account of the significant new risks COVID-19 has introduced to each organisation's operating model.
86. HantsDirect is now offering a 100% on-line service to enable non-essential customer contact activity to be delivered remotely. This includes the County Council's "front door" customer enquiries for General Enquiries, School.
87. Admissions, Blue Badge, Concessionary Travel, Libraries, Countryside, Highways and Waste Services. The telephone lines for Children's Services and Registrations remain open and operating effectively (and safely) by an on-site team based at Fareham Parkway. The agreed restructure and geographical relocation of the HantsDirect Service has been postponed from May 2020 until September 2020, with the exception of the Children's Services teams which moved in May for service reasons. The new contact centre telephony is due to be operational in September and this will allow all of Hantsdirect telephony contact to be switched on with operators able to work from home.

Human Resources – Our People

88. Whilst our people are now getting used to 'new ways of working' and the broader situation in which we all find ourselves there continues to be a wider range of 'people' issues surfacing and requiring attention. Clearly 'COVID related' work remains a priority for our HR and WFD team, but attention has also been maintained on more routine activities to ensure a full and effective service continues to be delivered for our people. Despite the ongoing impact for our staff it remains true that our staff are demonstrating the best of themselves in these difficult times.
89. As part of our Recovery work we have established a 'People and Organisational Health and Effectiveness' workstream which is led by our AD HR+OD. This

workstream is focussed on the range of People (staff) and Organisational issues that have surfaced because of COVID-19. The range of issues is broad; from matters of organisational strategy and design through to more practical issues such as process improvement and health and well-being.

90. The overall aim of the workstream is to both understand the issues being faced by our Departments, in order to ensure HR+WFD support is available as necessary and appropriate and to identify common issues across the organisation to support organisational learning and the sharing of good practice. Where appropriate specific 'organisation wide' actions will of course be pursued.
91. A plan is currently being created to articulate the full breadth of issues and will be prioritised by the Recovery Board before agreed priority actions are endorsed by CMT.
92. Linked to this recovery work is our on-going commitment to staff engagement. CMT have had a number of conversations during the course of 2020 on this subject and unsurprisingly our main engagement priorities, departmentally and organisationally, are now focused around COVID-19. The staff survey we undertook in June 2020 (completed by in excess of 57 % of our workforce) has enabled us to prioritise our engagement activity on the following matters:
 - New ways of working – including the need to provide staff with the necessary equipment to support longer term working arrangements
 - Maintaining social connections to our colleagues whilst working remotely
 - On-going support for well-being, specifically mental health
 - Support with managing workloads and maintaining a healthy work-life balance when the demands are high and for many people there is less separation between 'work' and 'home'
 - Support to combat a growing sense of isolation that some of our staff are experiencing
89. In addition to this we continue to maintain close relationships with our Trade Union colleagues, as we have throughout the crisis, to ensure that we are listening and working together where we can, to support our staff.
90. It would be remiss to conclude the section of this report focussed on our people without mentioning the continued impact that the death of George Floyd and subsequent international events are having on our BAME colleagues and indeed many of the wider workforce. For BAME colleagues this comes at a time when many are facing real worries about the potential impact of COVID-19 on their own lives and the lives of their families. As an organisation we have proudly stood alongside our colleagues in support. We have provided specific support and guidance in relation to COVID-19 and have committed to review our Inclusion and Diversity Strategy, Plans and associated policies to ensure that as an organisation we are continuously learning and developing ourselves and our wider workforce.

Communications and community engagement

91. Communication and engagement are recognised as critical tools to support the ongoing work throughout the *response*, *stabilisation*, and *recovery* phases. Effective public engagement to build trust and reassurance is also crucial to the success of the County Council's Local Outbreak Strategy. Accordingly, the Authority continues to deliver a comprehensive and targeted communications and engagement strategy across external and internal audiences, which ensures the delivery of proactive, planned and consistent information, and in support of the LRF partnership.

- **Social media** campaigns remain a highly effective element of the County Council's communications approach. The design and delivery of creative and dynamic campaign assets ensure that content continues to be well-received. It also enables the Authority to successfully deliver timely key information by reaching and engaging with audiences directly, as well as providing an effective platform for dialogue and resident engagement.
- A comprehensive communications approach has been developed to promote the delivery of **Hampshire's Local Outbreak Control** Plan objectives, and the important work of the Local Outbreak Engagement Board. The communications strategy comprises two key strands: ensuring an effective and swift communications approach in response to a local incident or outbreak; and proactive prevention and amplification of NHS Test and Trace messages. A detailed communications and marketing plan underpins the delivery of the Hampshire Local Outbreak objectives, focusing on prevention messages under the umbrella strapline **Keep Hampshire Safe**. This forms the basis of universal messages that align to the Government's key lines, supported by a changing set of campaign messaging to audiences and 'harder to reach' groups. These include the BAME community, especially those in our communities identified as most at risk of harm from COVID-19, young people aged 18-24, the over 65s, single mothers with young children and the working age population aged 25-64.
- The [dedicated COVID-19 webpages](#), created and published on the County Council's website at the start of the pandemic, remain an essential portal, attracting a high number of hits to www.hants.gov.uk. The content and layout have been regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the evolving nature of the pandemic, the County Council's ongoing recovery activity, and most recently, the Authority's Local Outbreak Planning responsibilities. The webpages now contain a [data dashboard](#) to provide up to date information on infection rates across the county. Updated weekly, the dashboard shows how many positive cases have been diagnosed over a seven-day period, as well as how the county's cumulative infection rate compares with the English average. In addition, the new Keep Hampshire Safe web page contains a [link](#) signposting stakeholders and the public to nationally published [data for each upper tier and lower tier authority](#). Since their launch, the COVID-19 webpages have received a total of **94,000 views** (as at 1 August) – including almost **19,000 views** of the *Welfare support* webpage. The most visited section on the site remains the pages to book a visit to a Hampshire Household Waste Recycling Centre have received **over 899,000 views** since June. Almost three quarters of all visitors to the overall

COVID-19 webpages stay on the site to view the service updates or visit other pages on hants.gov.uk.

- As lockdown restrictions continue to ease, and the County Council's services adapt and respond accordingly, information continues to be proactively communicated to residents and stakeholders **via regular press releases, media interview opportunities and news media liaison**, alongside effective management of, and response to, heightened reactive media contact. Take-up of key messaging across all media (newspapers, online publications, radio and TV) remains consistently high, with effective dissemination of key messaging via a 92% positive/neutral profile achieved from over 700 items of news coverage secured since the start of the pandemic.
- COVID-19 tailored **e-briefings** remain well received by Hampshire MPs, Hampshire County Councillors and district councils' chief executives. These briefings are circulated three times a week, and shared internally, as well as with the County Council's key partners, and all town and parish councils, via the Hampshire Association of Local Councils, who also receive COVID-19 related updates via our regular e-bulletin for local councils. This channel is a key tool to help the County Council maintain public trust and confidence in how the emergency continues to be managed. It also provides ongoing reassurance and demonstrates its community leadership role.
- The Recovery Community Engagement Strategy is underway, with the launch of a **Member feedback form** that enables County Councillors to share their knowledge and insight of local residents' changing attitudes and behaviours as a result of the pandemic. A new **online resident engagement forum** is scheduled for launch in mid-August, to facilitate regular flexible engagement focussing on core, actionable issues. Both will help the County Council to identify and respond quickly to emergent local concerns.
- Continued importance is placed on all forms of direct **internal communication** to County Council staff via corporate channels, to provide critical messaging; operational guidance and updates; supporting employee cohesion and wellbeing; and countering the potentially isolating implications of ongoing remote working. The **COVID-19 Insight and Engagement Hub** has been launched on SharePoint. This provides a central resource for colleagues and Members of all the latest national, local and departmental insight on people's attitudes and behaviours around COVID-19.

Recovery

92. As explained above, the recovery phase is the critical aspect of any crisis management process, which must follow at least immediately after, or run concurrent with the latter stages of the response phase. In the case of this exceptional crisis, while we know that the response phase almost certainly has many weeks if not months still to run, particularly if there is a second peak of the infection later in the year. The scale of the immediate impact on the economy is becoming clearer, with the quarter one output figures confirming a sharp fall in the economy at the end of March, which continued through April. Early

indications suggest some levelling off during May, and there are early signs of positive indications for the housing market and parts of the industrial economy following the initial easing of lockdown restrictions in May. However, the long-term position of employment may see significant deterioration as the Government Furlough scheme comes to an end later this year. The damage that high unemployment levels will cause to the wider economy, as well as the finances of the Government and the County Council are significant risks to the overall Recovery.

93. The LRF recovery processes continue on behalf of the wider HIOW partnership, led by Portsmouth City Council, with HCC officers populating a number of key roles. The position of the County Council continues to be to do all in its powers and capability to support the wider recovery, under the shared understanding that each agency must prioritise its own recovery programme and activity. In economic terms this includes the two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) that cover the county of Hampshire.
94. The Recovery work continues to aim to embrace the opportunities afforded to advance the pre COVID-19 priorities of the County Council around responding to the Climate Emergency and delivering the Hampshire 2050 work. These objectives will help Recovery to deliver a healthier and more resilient County post COVID-19, seeking to address some of the major risks to long term prosperity and quality of life in the County.
95. The Recovery process is expected to take place over an extended period, and the pace will be dictated to a large extent by the need to balance risk and progress against managing and containing covid-19 infection rates and spread. It is expected that the local outbreak control mechanisms now being developed in Hampshire will help to support and manage this process locally, whilst it is also acknowledged that the levers of recovery, such as fiscal policy, are largely operated at the national level.

Conclusion

96. This is the latest in what will be a necessarily detailed series of reports to brief Cabinet about the scale, extent and longevity of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis as it impacts on the County Council, its services and its community. In truth, even in this level of detail, the report cannot comprehensively describe the full picture of the way the County Council and especially its front line managers and staff, have risen to this challenge, in all cases with tremendous commitment, skill and resolve.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes/no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes/no
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes/no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes/no

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

See guidance at <https://hants.sharepoint.com/sites/ID/SitePages/Equality-ImpactAssessments.aspx?web=1>

Insert in full your **Equality Statement** which will either state:

- (a) *why you consider that the project/proposal will have a low or no impact on groups with protected characteristics or*
- (b) *will give details of the identified impacts and potential mitigating actions*