

Overview & Scrutiny Committee



Please contact: Matthew Stembrowicz
Please email: matthew.stembrowicz@north-norfolk.gov.uk
Please direct dial on: 01263 516047

Tuesday, 14 July 2020

A meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** of North Norfolk District Council will be held in the **remotely via Zoom** on **Wednesday, 22 July 2020** at **9.30 am**.

At the discretion of the Chairman, a short break will be taken after the meeting has been running for approximately one and a half hours

Members of the public who wish to ask a question or speak on an agenda item are requested to notify the committee clerk 24 hours in advance of the meeting and arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the meeting. This is to allow time for the Committee Chair to rearrange the order of items on the agenda for the convenience of members of the public. Further information on the procedure for public speaking can be obtained from Democratic Services, Tel: 01263 516047, Email: matthew.stembrowicz@north-norfolk.gov.uk.

Anyone attending this meeting may take photographs, film or audio-record the proceedings and report on the meeting. Anyone wishing to do so must inform the Chairman. If you are a member of the public and you wish to speak on an item on the agenda, please be aware that you may be filmed or photographed.

Please note that Committee members will be given priority to speak during the debate of agenda items

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To: Mr N Dixon, Mr T Adams, Mr H Blathwayt, Mrs W Fredericks, Mr P Heinrich, Mr N Housden, Mr G Mancini-Boyle, Mr N Pearce, Miss L Shires, Mrs E Spagnola, Mr J Toye and Mr A Varley

All other Members of the Council for information.
Members of the Management Team, appropriate Officers, Press and Public



**If you have any special requirements in order
to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance**
If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in
a different language please contact us

Chief Executive: Steve Blatch
Tel 01263 513811 **Fax** 01263 515042 **Minicom** 01263 516005
Email districtcouncil@north-norfolk.gov.uk **Web site** www.north-norfolk.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTES

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

To receive questions / statements from the public, if any.

4. MINUTES

1 - 10

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27th May 2020.

5. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To determine any other items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest.

7. PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

To consider any petitions received from members of the public.

8. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER

To consider any requests made by non-executive Members of the Council, and notified to the Monitoring Officer with seven clear working days' notice, to include an item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

9. RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

To consider any responses of the Council or the Cabinet to the Committee's reports or recommendations:

10. NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL'S TRANSITION FROM RESPONSE TO RECOVERY IN RESPONDING TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

11 - 22

Summary: This report details the actions taken by North Norfolk District Council in making the transition from Response to Recovery in responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic at a strategic, local and organisational level over the period early May – mid June 2020.

This includes:-

- maintaining its dedicated COVID helpline and email address operated over extended Customer Service hours including weekends and Bank Holidays since 30th March until the end of May and now operated over extended office hours;
- developing and putting in place with partners, transitioning support arrangements for the more than 2500 local residents who have been “shielding” and a similar number of people who have been self-isolating and have requested support from the Council with shopping and prescription deliveries;
- stepping down the operation of the 10 Local Co-ordination Centres as support arrangements for shielding and vulnerable people have become more formalised and established, meaning that the demand for support from the original arrangements put in place have reduced over time.
- paying out almost £52million of Small Business Grants on behalf of the Government and developed and launched a £2.76million Discretionary Grant Scheme.
- managing the re-opening of Council facilities – public toilets, coastal car parks and Cromer Pier in response to Government announcements on the easing of lockdown restrictions
- developing the “You are Welcome” reassurance programme to support local retail, hospitality and tourism businesses re-open in the coming weeks through the provision of advice and practical social distancing measures, hand washing facilities and local marketing initiatives,

so as to create safe, attractive town centre and seafront environments, in accordance with Government guidance.

- developing Return to Work policies and putting in place a range of social distancing measures within the Council's Cromer and Fakenham Connect offices which meet the COVID-secure workplace guidelines as we plan to move to a "new normal" level of public service provision.
- contributing to the development of the arrangements being made in Norfolk to develop and put in place arrangements for a Local Outbreak Control Plan for Norfolk in managing incidents of Coronavirus in the county in the coming months as the transmission and management of the virus moves into a different phase.

Options

Considered:

The report details the Council's actions in responding to the Coronavirus pandemic during the Response phase and the transitional arrangements being made for the Recovery phase as the Council prepares to operate in a "new normal" environment as lockdown restrictions are eased nationally and the District prepares for a curtailed summer visitor season. Options considered are outlined in the report.

Conclusions:

The report details the actions taken by the District Council in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic and of the preparations being made to support local communities and businesses "recover" from this unprecedented global event.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to note the Council's response and arrangements made to support Recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic; and specifically comment upon the following:-

• the short-term actions proposed in respect of:-

- **Opening up the council's services and facilities;**
- **The development and implementation of social distancing measures through the "you are welcome" programme to assist the re-opening of our high streets and tourist areas safely**
- **Delivery of the discretionary business**

grant programme

- **The council's planning for the return of staff to their main roles from working at home and redeployment into other roles;**
- **The implementation of measures so that the council is able to demonstrate compliance with the covid-secure workplace guidelines**
- **Understanding the contribution north norfolk district council will make in supporting the partnership actions outlined in the norfolk local outbreak control plan which will be a key element of managing any future outbreaks of covid19 in the district over the coming months.**
- **The longer term need to review the council's medium-term financial strategy in light of the changing financial situation of the council and as a result undertake a review of the council's proposed programme of activity as previously detailed in the corporate plan and delivery plan.**

Reason for

Recommendations: To inform corporate learning from experience gained through the Response and initial Recovery phases of the pandemic, the implication of which will remain with the District for many months to come.

Cabinet Member(s) Ward(s) affected

Cllr Sarah Butikofer, All
Leader of the Council

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

Steve Blatch, Chief Executive,
steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk
01263 516232

11. **BRIEFING ON CUSTOMER SERVICES: COVID-19 CONTACT HANDLING AND CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY**

23 - 40

Summary: A Customer Service Briefing, in order to inform the Committee of the Customer Services Covid-19 customer contacts and the management of complaints including details of the number of complaints resolved and/or outstanding.

Options considered: This is a briefing report only.

Conclusions: Not applicable.

Recommendations: **To note the report.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To brief Members customer contacts and the current complaints procedure.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

North Norfolk District Council Compliments, Complaints and Comments Policy
North Norfolk District Council Customer Service Strategy

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr. Sarah Bütikofer	All

Contact Officer, telephone number and email: David Williams, Customer Services Manager, 01263 516415, david.williams@north-norfolk.gov.uk

12. DELEGATED DECISIONS

41 - 52

Summary: This report details the decisions taken by Senior Officers under delegated powers from 20th May to 18 June 2020.

Options considered: Not applicable.

Recommendations: **To receive and note the report and the register of officer decisions taken under delegated powers.**

Reasons for Recommendations: The Constitution: Chapter 6, Part 5, sections 5.1 and 5.2. details the exercise of any power or function of the Council where waiting until a meeting of Council or a committee would disadvantage the Council. The Constitution requires that any exercise of such powers should be reported to the next meeting of Council, Cabinet or working

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Delegated decision forms – as completed by the relevant officer

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
All	All

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:
Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager, 01263 516010

13. SHERINGHAM LEISURE CENTRE: PROJECT UPDATE JULY 2020

53 - 56

To receive an update on the Sheringham Leisure Centre Project.

Summary: This report aims to bring Members of the Committee up to speed on the current status of the Market Town Initiative fund in the context of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Options considered: Options considered included:

1. Maintain the current completion deadlines for MTI projects from rounds two and three with no extension of the timeframes for project completion.
2. Request a return of funds for projects no longer viable under the current circumstances.
3. Convene a meeting of the MTI Working Group to review the status of all active MTI projects in detail.
4. Offer a blanket extension of six months to allow applicants to fully implement projects from rounds two and three of MTI funding.

Conclusions: Applicants' projects have been significantly impacted by the circumstances of COVID-19, and as a result are unlikely to fully implement their projects within the given timeframes set out in their funding agreement. Where requested, applicants should be offered an extension to their completion deadline to account for these unprecedented circumstances.

Recommendations: **To offer a blanket extension of six months to the completion deadlines of MTI projects from rounds two and three, to account for the impact and delays caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To allow successful applicants more time to implement projects in light of the delays caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr R Kershaw	Holt, Lancaster North, Lancaster South,

North Walsham East, North Walsham West, North Walsham Market Cross, and Stalham

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

Matt Stembrowicz, 01263 516047, matthew.stembrowicz@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Rob Young, 01263 516162, Robert.young@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Emma Duncan, 01263 516045 Emma.Duncan@north-norfolk.gov.uk

WORK PROGRAMMES

- | | | |
|------------|---|---------|
| 15. | THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME | 61 - 64 |
| | To note the upcoming Cabinet Work Programme. | |
| 16. | OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE | 65 - 70 |
| | To receive an update from the Scrutiny Officer on progress made with topics on its agreed work programme, training updates and to receive any further information which Members may have requested at a previous meeting. | |
| 17. | EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC | |
| | To pass the following resolution, if necessary: | |
| | “That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph _ of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.” | |
| 18. | TO CONSIDER ANY EXEMPT MATTERS ARISING FROM CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC BUSINESS OF THE AGENDA | |

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 27 May 2020 via Zoom at 9.30 am

Committee Members Present:	Mr N Dixon (Chairman)	Mr H Blathwayt
	Mrs W Fredericks	Mr P Heinrich
	Mr N Housden	Mr G Mancini-Boyle
	Mr N Pearce	Miss L Shires
	Mr J Toye	Mr A Varley
	Mrs S Bütikofer (Observer)	Mrs A Fitch-Tillett (Observer)
	Ms V Gay (Observer)	Mrs P Grove-Jones (Observer)
	Mr G Hayman (Observer)	Mr R Kershaw (Observer)
	Mr J Rest (Observer)	Mr E Seward (Observer)

Other Members Present:

Mrs S Bütikofer (Observer)	Mrs A Fitch-Tillett (Observer)
Ms V Gay (Observer)	Mrs P Grove-Jones (Observer)
Mr G Hayman (Observer)	Mr R Kershaw (Observer)
Mr J Rest (Observer)	Mr E Seward (Observer)

Officers in Attendance:

Democratic Services and Governance Officer (Scrutiny) (DS&GOS), Chief Executive (CE), Democratic Services Manager (DSM), Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer (HLS), Head of Finance and Asset Management/Section 151 Officer (HFAM) and Head of Economic and Community Development (HECD)

Also in attendance:

1 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr T Adams and Cllr E Spagnola.

2 SUBSTITUTES

None.

3 PUBLIC QUESTIONS & STATEMENTS

None received.

4 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

Two items of urgent business had been approved by the Chairman which included the Covid-19 Recovery Report and the Covid-19 Town Centre Social Distancing Report. It was agreed that these items would be taken subsequent to item 10, in

order to first provide context of the Council's initial response to the crisis.

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

7 PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None received.

8 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY A MEMBER

None received.

9 RESPONSES OF THE COUNCIL OR THE CABINET TO THE COMMITTEE'S REPORTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS

None received.

10 NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The CE introduced the report and informed Members that it outlined the position of the authority in responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic, both as an employer and service provider. It was reported that a range of support had been made available to communities, such as the Local Coordination Centres (LCCs) that had been established throughout the district, or the Government's small business grant fund, for which payments were in excess of £50m. The CE stated that the Council also continued to operate as part of the wider Norfolk Resilience Forum.

Questions and Discussion

Cllr J Toye sought clarification on why financial support had been given to the contractor responsible for running the Council's leisure centres, but not to other contractors. The CE replied that that the issue could be discussed in more detail during the delegated decisions item, but added that the leisure contractor was a designated partner of the authority, that had been appointed to manage the Council's leisure centres on its behalf. He added that the financial support was in respect to retained payments, and the Council had helped to meet some of these costs.

At the request of the Chairman the CE responded to written questions submitted by Members, the first of which requested data on the number of businesses that had received business grants, and those eligible that had not. The CE reported that to date the Council had paid out grants to 4575 businesses with a total payment of £50.4m, against an estimated 5037 eligible businesses. He added that the remaining eligible businesses were being contacted in a number of ways to promote the availability of the fund. On the Council Tax Hardship Fund, it was stated 3680 households had received assistance, and it was expected that this figure would increase in the coming months as financial circumstances changed. The CE reported that the Council did not have a definitive list of those who were self-employed that might require assistance, though details of the Government's scheme to support this group were available on the Council's website. He added that the discretionary business grant scheme was still in the process of being established,

but would be launched in early June. Cllr S Bütikofer wished to place on record her thanks to officers for delivering of the business grants scheme and the aid given to individuals by the LCCs.

The CE responded to the second written question, on actions that would be taken to reopen businesses related to the leisure and tourism industry as soon as possible, given the district's reliance on these industries. A supplementary question sought clarification on whether a risk management strategy was in place for this process. The CE stated that he expected the two urgent items agreed for discussion would cover these issues in detail, but noted that a Central Government fund had been established to aid the reopening of high streets, from which NNDC had been allocated £93,332. He added that proposals for the reopening of non-essential retail businesses would go to Cabinet within the coming weeks, to allow for a safe reopening from the 15th June.

The next written question sought clarification from Cabinet on whether they had been able to offer local leadership or strategic direction to officers, in the development of policy in response to the Covid-19. Cllr S Bütikofer stated that she had worked closely with officers throughout the crisis, and had attended Gold Command meetings from the beginning, to work with officers on the decisions being made. She added that she had also attended meetings with Norfolk Leaders twice weekly to coordinate the response across the county, and also regularly attended ministerial briefings. The Chairman asked if there were any instances in which the need to exercise influence was required, to which Cllr S Bütikofer replied that this had been the case on issues such as the closure and re-opening of car parks and the pier, or when agreeing financial support packages. She added that involving the leadership in these decisions had been beneficial for a number of Councils, and should be taken into consideration in the future. Cabinet Portfolio Holders added comments on their relevant portfolios and praised officers for working effectively and cooperatively.

The next written question sought clarification of the Leader's and Cabinet's views on progressing the recovery phase of the Council's response to the crisis. Cllr S Bütikofer stated that due to the district's significant reliance on tourism, work on the recovery plan had started in March, to ensure that everything possible could be done to support businesses' and individuals' return to normality as soon as possible. This had included working with Visit North Norfolk and a range of businesses to listen to their concerns and needs. At a county level, Cllr S Bütikofer informed Members that she had been working with the LEP to look at additional measures that could be put in place to help businesses through the challenging times ahead.

The Chairman asked how conflicting priorities were being balanced, such as those between the tourism sector and vulnerable residents. Cllr S Bütikofer replied that this was a very difficult issue, and that careful consideration was being used to balance the needs of different groups. She added that at this stage, the key was to make very gradual changes and continue to closely monitor the situation. Cllr P Heinrich stated that it was important to remember that the tourism economy was crucial to North Norfolk, and the Council had to listen carefully to all sides to get it moving again as safely and as quickly as possible. Cllr P Grove-Jones stated that the Council would have to be prepared for a second spike, and that lifeguard cover for the district's beaches had to be given careful consideration. Cllr S Bütikofer replied that beach patrols were being considered in lieu of reduced lifeguards, but the Council had to be clear that lifeguard numbers would be limited.

Cllr H Blathwayt asked if any contingency plans were in place, should a local spike

arise. The CE replied that mitigation measures for a potential second spike had been given significant consideration in partnership with other members of the Norfolk Resilience Forum, and added that Norfolk had been selected as one of eleven pilot areas in England for local outbreak control, which would include local lockdown arrangements.

Cllr G Perry-Warnes asked whether any consideration had been given to allowing additional outside space to businesses, to allow them to operate with safer social distancing measures in place. The CE replied that this was being considered and would be addressed as part of the urgent items.

Cllr Housden raised concerns that he felt a second spike was imminent, and public convenience closures had caused issues at popular destinations. Cllr W Fredericks asked how the Council could ensure people's safety when using its public conveniences. Cllr S Bütikofer replied that there were a number of issues that required careful consideration before Council's public conveniences could be fully reopened. She referred to the need for an increased cleaning regime, checks for legionella, and checks to ensure that the toilets were safe and ready to be used. Cllr S Bütikofer added that decisions on opening the Council's public conveniences were reviewed at every Gold Command meeting. Cllr H Blathwayt asked if consideration could be given to roping off urinals at the Sea Palling public conveniences, in order to promote safer use of enclosed stall toilets. The CE agreed that this could be taken into consideration and added that the closure of restaurants, cafes and public houses had placed greater pressure on the Council's public conveniences, which had influenced the decision to allow a limited number of facilities to be reopened.

The final written question focused on activity levels at the 10 LCCs that had been established as part of the Council's response to the Pandemic. The CE replied that during the first seven weeks of operations there were 1288 requests for assistance, and from Monday 18th May when the number of LCCs had been reduced to four, there had been a further 86 requests for assistance. The CE referred to points raised by Cllr T Adams regarding the difficulties that shielded residents had faced in getting essential supplies, and stated that throughout the past 10 weeks the LCCs had helped to alleviate these issues, though online shopping capacity had now increased significantly. It was noted that the LCCs had worked well with voluntary community groups, and local businesses had been helpful in allowing residents to place telephone orders and in some cases provide a delivery service. The CE stated that one of the biggest challenges had been addressing the difficulties residents faced with paying for food, in which case the Council had arranged food parcels that were supplementary to those supplied by Central Government. He added that the Council had also supported the Norfolk Foodbank, by means of a financial contribution. In terms of ongoing support, the CE stated that NNDC staff were currently delivering between 700-900 prescriptions on a weekly basis to vulnerable and shielding households, and consideration was needed as to how this responsibility would revert back to the dispensaries as the Council moved into the recovery phase.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

11 ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS: NNDC COVID-19 RECOVERY

The CE introduced the report and stated that circumstances had continued to evolve rapidly since the lockdown began in March. It was noted that the report covered all issues that were being considered by officers for reopening, and the CE added that

officers had also established a task and finish group to consider how services could return to normal, including when the eighty percent staff remote working could return to the office. It was expected that the task and finish group would report on their initial findings shortly, which would include changes to policy and operations to allow some return to normality.

Questions and Discussion

The CE stated that the Council's contractors were being given consideration, such as those managing the pier facilities, and the leisure contractor that had been previously mentioned. It was noted that a full waste collection service had been maintained throughout the lockdown, which was commendable given the fact that the contract had begun on the 6th April. Work at the new Sheringham Leisure Centre was noted to have recommenced with social distancing precautions in place.

The CE informed Members that a supplementary item that had been added to the report covered the reduction in available lifeguards. It was noted that the RNLI had outlined their position as being able to provide a reduced service at Sea Palling from 30th May, as one of only sixteen locations around the country. There were also plans to restore further services from 20th June in Cromer, and 4th July in Wells. The CE noted that the RNLI had historically provided services for the summer season at 240 locations nationally, though this year it would only be 70 locations under the current circumstances.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle stated that the Council was suffering financially, losing up to forty percent of its income, and suggested that the Council should be actively lobbying local MPs and the Government for greater financial support through the crisis. Cllr S Bütikofer replied that the Council was actively lobbying local MPs and the Government on these issues, which included weekly calls with the two MPs covering the district. In addition, it was noted that the Council continued with all efforts to lobby for additional funding, in order to meet the shortfall caused by the crisis.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

12 URGENT ITEM: COVID-19 TOWN CENTRE SOCIAL DISTANCING

The CE introduced the report and informed Members that it was focused on how to safely reopen the district's high streets, resorts and market town's for business, whilst creating safe spaces which residents and tourists would be confident to visit. The CE stated that as a result of a Government announcement, non-essential retail businesses would be permitted to open from 15th June, and planning had already begun in that regard. The CE reported that on the 9th May, the Secretary of State for Transport announced a travel fund of £250m to support social distancing, increased walking and cycling within town and city centres, to account for reduced use of public transport. He added that consideration had already been given to how this could be achieved in North Norfolk, and that Parish and Town Council's had been contacted for input, as well as local businesses.

The CE informed Members that the report included initial proposals such as the potential widening of narrow pavement areas by removing on street parking and consideration of one-way systems in town centres amongst others. It was reported that once the broad proposals outlined in the report had been refined, it was hoped

that implementation could take place from the week commencing 15th June.

Questions and Discussion

Restaurants and take away food premises were discussed, and it was noted that the Council was considering ways it could utilise open spaces for outside eating, such as the promenades or parks. Cllr P Grove-Jones stated that many open spaces were linked to playgrounds and play areas, which would not be open to the public, hence this would require careful consideration and planning. Cllr G Perry-Warnes asked whether there would be any licensing issues for introducing new outside eating areas for restaurants, and if so, could anything be done to mitigate these issues. The CE replied that these issues would be taken into consideration alongside Government guidance. He added that the LGA had encouraged authorities to look as widely and as flexibly as possible in terms of their regulatory functions, in order to adequately respond to the recovery from Covid-19.

Beach use was discussed and it was reported that in some areas such as Mundesley, access would have to be restricted to a one-way system due to narrow access ramps.

Cllr L Shires raised the issue of the Council's communications, and stated that since the outbreak of the pandemic, she felt that they had vastly improved in a number of ways. She asked whether the communications plan could be shared amongst Members to help communicate the Council's messages. The CE thanked the Councillor for her comments, and stated that he would pass on the request to the Communicants Manager.

Cllr J Toye referred to the social distancing considerations, and suggested that he would have liked to have seen more reference to the possibility of road closures, to ensure safety and help to facilitate social distancing measures when walking or cycling. Cllr G Hayman reiterated that Covid-19 would be with us for the foreseeable future, and as a result questioned whether pedestrianisation of some areas should be reconsidered more thoroughly. He added that this would allow more space for local businesses, and also make it easier to maintain social distancing, given that many people would now stay within the UK for holidays as opposed to going abroad.

Cllr N Pearce suggested that re-opening car boot sales should be given consideration, as they allowed for open-air socially distanced shopping to take place.

Cllr N Housden stated that in terms of publicity going forward, the Council had to be very pro-active to ensure that visitors were fully aware of the district's social distancing requirements. He added that additional visitors could likely be expected as a result of a decline in overseas holidays, and therefore a significant education campaign would be needed to ensure safety in the district.

Cllr G Mancini-Boyle referred to licensing proposals he had raised previously, and suggested that he would be happy to email these to the CE for consideration.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

13 COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The HFAM introduced the report and informed Members that he would provide a

brief presentation to explain the current financial implications of Covid-19 for the Council. It was reported that at present, the Council was still facing a £1m deficit, despite having received additional funding of approximately £1.1m from Central Government. As a result, the HFAM stated that it was crucial to continue to lobby Government and MPs for further financial support. It was noted that prior to the Pandemic, a deficit of approximately £1.8m had already been predicted for the 2021/22 financial year, which suggested that budget pressures would continue to increase. The HFAM broke down funding pressures into specific categories and it was reported that cost pressures equated to a loss of £429k, income losses of approximately £1.09m, investment losses of £250k and funding stream losses of £223k. He added that the Council's reserves were already forecast to reduce by fifty percent over the next four years, and should always be considered a last resort for balancing budgets. It was suggested that priority should be given to reallocating funding within the current year's budget to address the deficit. The HFAM referred to the MTFS and stated that it had been approved in a very different financial climate, and as a result, there would be a significant impact on the medium term assumptions that would require substantial changes to resolve. He added that a further Committee report would be presented in the coming months that would focus on reprioritizing the budget, opportunities for efficiency savings, and income generation in the current financial year.

Questions and Discussion

The Chairman referred to written questions submitted in advance of the meeting, the first of which asked for clarification of the forecast deficit for the current year, and the years covered by the MTFP. The HFAM replied that whilst the current forecast deficit was approximately £2m, additional funding from Central Government meant that the net deficit had now been reduced to approximately £1m. He added that the forecast included a number of assumptions about when the economy would begin to recover, and this would have a knock-on impact that was difficult to predict. It was noted that Section 31 grants from Central Government had been helpful guaranteeing the Council's cash flow position in terms of business rates income, though uncertainties still remained that made it very difficult to predict future deficits.

The Chairman referred to his second written question which asked for officer's advice on the most prudent means for closing the budget gap, and whether the recommended level of the general reserve would change as a result of the crisis. The HFAM replied that in terms of closing the budget gap, the key message was that reserves should always be a last resort, as they could only be used once. He added that focus should be placed on reallocating and reprioritising the existing budget, making savings where possible, and trying to generate additional income, though it would be extremely difficult under the current circumstances. In regards to the question on the level of the general reserve, speaking as the S151 Officer, the HFAM stated that this was currently set at £1.9m, though this could change if difficulties in balancing the budget persisted. He added that at present he still considered the level of reserves to be adequate.

Cllr N Housden asked if there was any feedback from Central Government on whether there would be increased funding to support specific areas if local lockdowns were to be implemented. The HFAM replied that he had not heard any suggestion that further funding would be made available, and this was why lobbying had to continue. Cllr S Bütikofer noted that the potential for local lockdowns was only just emerging, and she would try to get more information as soon as possible. Cllr E Seward stated the identifying the financial position of the Council was still very much a work in progress at present, due to the high level of uncertainties. He added that

ideally the Council would be able to maintain all of its key frontline services, and this would require looking for savings, as well as continuing to lobby Government for additional funding, and potentially using reserves if absolutely necessary. It was reported that the financial year had begun with a surplus of approximately £2m, which had been placed into a delivery plan reserve, though in light of the situation, it was possible that the use of these funds could be revisited. Cllr E Seward informed Members that Government had stated that there would be a delay to planned funding reviews, and once the outcomes of these were known, some financial pressure could be alleviated. He added that at present he remained fairly relaxed, and suggested that the Council had to hold its nerve to see how the situation would unfold.

Cllr P Heinrich asked whether any figures were available on the overall loss to the local economy, or projections on the impact should the lockdown continue throughout the peak tourism season. The HFAM replied that he was not aware of any high level review at present, though a business survey had just been completed, with the results were now being reviewed. The HECD stated that the Council had commissioned a business survey, and whilst the results had not yet been fully analysed, the survey was intended to identify businesses' expectations, the impact of the crisis and predictions for recovery. He added that a wider survey of the region had been commissioned on the visitor economy, to which there had been a good level of response from North Norfolk businesses. A further district-wide analysis of the financial impact on businesses and tourism was expected shortly, and a second survey on the visitor economy was open until the end of May. The HECD stated that the results and analysis of these surveys would be shared in due course.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

14 OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS (MARCH TO MAY 2020)

The CE introduced the report and informed Members that it was a record of the decisions that had been taken under delegated authority since the start of the crisis.

Questions and Discussion

The Chairman referred to a written question he had submitted on a grant payment made to the Council's leisure contractor, and asked for the value of the grant, whether it was a one-time payment, and whether the contractor had taken advantage of the Government's furlough scheme or any other support grants. Cllr V Gay replied that the leisure facilities were at the heart of quality of life in North Norfolk, and were a significant part of the Council's work for the community. She added that the grant sum was £36,257.40 and this had been given in April, May and would likely be given in June. It was noted that the grant was not a one-off payment, and it was likely that the contractor would request additional support on an ongoing basis, as a result of contractual arrangements. Cllr V Gay stated that the contractor had furloughed staff, and she understood that only two full-time staff were being paid in North Norfolk. She added that she was not aware of any additional grants that had been received by the contractor, though Sport England had provided approximately £2k funding to the Council, to undertake a review of the impact of the crisis on the sector. The Chairman sought clarification on whether the £36k was a monthly payment, which was confirmed by Cllr V Gay.

RESOLVED

To note the report.

15 THE CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The DS&GOS informed Members that the Cabinet Work Programme remained relatively clear for the month of June as statutory financial reports had been delayed by the crisis. As a result, it remained unclear at this stage when the next Cabinet meeting would take place, and what business would come forward. He reassured Members that they would be notified immediately once a future meeting date was agreed.

RESOLVED

To note the Cabinet Work Programme.

16 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE

As with the Cabinet Work Programme, the DS&GOS noted that the O&S Work Programme remained relatively clear in anticipation of Covid related reports coming forward. Similarly the statutory financial reports were also delayed meaning that at present, it was unclear when the next meeting would take place. Members were reassured that they would be notified as soon as possible once the next meeting date was agreed.

RESOLVED

To note the Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme.

17 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The meeting ended at 11.55am

Chairman

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North Norfolk District Council's Transition from Response to Recovery in responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic

Summary: This report details the actions taken by North Norfolk District Council in making the transition from Response to Recovery in responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic at a strategic, local and organisational level over the period early May – mid June 2020.

This includes:-

- maintaining its dedicated COVID helpline and email address operated over extended Customer Service hours including weekends and Bank Holidays since 30th March until the end of May and now operated over extended office hours;
- developing and putting in place with partners, transitioning support arrangements for the more than 2500 local residents who have been “shielding” and a similar number of people who have been self-isolating and have requested support from the Council with shopping and prescription deliveries;
- stepping down the operation of the 10 Local Co-ordination Centres as support arrangements for shielding and vulnerable people have become more formalised and established, meaning that the demand for support from the original arrangements put in place have reduced over time.
- paying out almost £52million of Small Business Grants on behalf of the Government and developed and launched a £2.76million Discretionary Grant Scheme.
- managing the re-opening of Council facilities – public toilets, coastal car parks and Cromer Pier in response to Government announcements on the easing of lockdown restrictions
- developing the “You are Welcome” reassurance programme to support local retail, hospitality and tourism businesses re-open in the coming weeks through the provision of advice and practical social distancing measures, hand washing facilities and local marketing initiatives, so as to create safe, attractive town centre and seafront environments, in accordance with Government guidance.
- developing Return to Work policies and putting in place a range of social distancing measures within the Council's Cromer and Fakenham Connect offices which meet the COVID-secure

workplace guidelines as we plan to move to a “new normal” level of public service provision.

- contributing to the development of the arrangements being made in Norfolk to develop and put in place arrangements for a Local Outbreak Control Plan for Norfolk in managing incidents of Coronavirus in the county in the coming months as the transmission and management of the virus moves into a different phase.

Options considered:

The report details the Council’s actions in responding to the Coronavirus pandemic during the Response phase and the transitional arrangements being made for the Recovery phase as the Council prepares to operate in a “new normal” environment as lockdown restrictions are eased nationally and the District prepares for a curtailed summer visitor season. Options considered are outlined in the report.

Conclusions:

The report details the actions taken by the District Council in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic and of the preparations being made to support local communities and businesses “recover” from this unprecedented global event.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is asked to note the Council’s response and arrangements made to support Recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic; and specifically comment upon the following:-

- **the short-term actions proposed in respect of:-**
 - **opening up the Council’s services and facilities;**
 - **the development and implementation of social distancing measures through the “You are Welcome” programme to assist the Re-opening of our High Streets and Tourist Areas Safely**
 - **delivery of the Discretionary Business Grant Programme**
 - **the Council’s planning for the return of staff to their main roles from working at home and redeployment into other roles;**
 - **the implementation of measures so that the Council is able to demonstrate compliance with the COVID-secure workplace guidelines**
 - **understanding the contribution North Norfolk District Council will make in supporting the partnership actions**

outlined in the Norfolk Local Outbreak Control Plan which will be a key element of managing any future outbreaks of COVID19 in the District over the coming months.

- the longer term need to review the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Strategy in light of the changing financial situation of the Council and as a result undertake a review of the Council’s proposed programme of activity as previously detailed in the Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan.

Reasons for Recommendations: To inform corporate learning from experience gained through the Response and initial Recovery phases of the pandemic, the implication of which will remain with the District for many months to come.

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr Sarah Butikofer, Leader of the Council	All
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Steve Blatch, Chief Executive Email:- steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk Tel:- 01263 516232	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Coronavirus global pandemic event has now seen over 8.5 million infections and over 460,000 deaths worldwide (The Johns Hopkins University, 20th June 2020). In the UK there have been over 303,000 confirmed COVID-19 infections and over 42,500 deaths (BBC News website 20th June 2020).
- 1.2 Thankfully the numbers of infections and deaths in North Norfolk has been low – 173 confirmed infections and 51 deaths (as at 18th June, Norfolk Insights Report). This could be down to a large number of factors, including strong compliance with lockdown restrictions and adherence to social distancing advice by a largely elderly population, socio-demographic profile of the District, low population density and most households living in self-contained housing, low use of public transport and the District not having an acute hospital.
- 1.3 National and local data suggests that peak rates of infection and deaths in the UK and locally in Norfolk were during the last week of March and throughout

April, since which time the numbers of infections and deaths has reduced, albeit that incidences of infection remain. During May and early June there has been much debate nationally about the rate of infection - the “R” level - in different parts of the UK and there has been a phased lifting and easing of lockdown restrictions. The lifting of restrictions has included household waste sites re-opening from 11th May; people being able to travel unlimited distances for exercise and visit garden centres from 13th May; outdoor markets and car sales being able to re-open from 1st June; some primary school pupils able to return to school from 1st June; non-essential retail businesses and zoos, as well as places of worship (for private prayer only) being able to re-open and some high school aged pupils being able to return to school from 15th June. At the time of writing this report (25th June) the Government has confirmed that food and drink businesses (cafes, pubs and restaurants) and other tourism businesses (some types of holiday accommodation and attractions) will be able to open from 4th July, and that social distancing guidelines can be lowered from the previously recommended 2 metre distance to a “1 metre plus” distance. These future changes have been facilitated through a lowering of the national Coronavirus Alert level from Level 4 to Level 3 announced on 19th June.

2. North Norfolk District Council’s response – as a timeline

2.1 Adopting the same principle as the report to Cabinet on 18th May, the following comments detail the actions taken by the District Council in response to the Coronavirus situation, mostly as a timeline, from early May through until the 20th June.

- Following the Prime Minister’s statement on the evening of the 10th May that there would be an initial easing of lockdown restrictions to allow people to take more exercise and travel unlimited distances for exercise, the Council’s position in having closed coastal car parks and all public toilets was reviewed. Initially it was agreed that the Council would re-open the car parks at Holt Country Park and Pretty Corner Woods to allow exercise by local residents travelling to those sites by car. These sites were re-opened on Wednesday 13th May.
- At that time, after consultation with partners across Norfolk, the District Council agreed that it would not open any coastal car parks or public toilets in response to the Prime Ministers statement as, other than for exercise, the Government’s guidance was that people should continue to stay at home. This position was widely adopted by the majority of local authorities and National Parks across England.
- However, following the good weather over the weekend of the 16th / 17th May, when many rural and coastal areas of England, including North Norfolk, saw large numbers of visitors, with issues of poor parking on narrow coastal access roads and anti-social behaviour associated with a lack of access to toilets (the vast majority of businesses with the exception of supermarkets being closed); and representations from Norfolk Constabulary, the District Council agreed to open nine public toilet blocks (eight along the coast and one in Hoveton), as well as the coastal car parks at Weybourne and Sea Palling, from 21st May in advance of the May Bank Holiday weekend.
- With the Community Support arrangements, particularly through the 10 Local Co-ordination Centres developed in the early days of the

lockdown working well such that the number of requests for support and assistance had declined quite markedly since the beginning of May; the Local Co-ordination Centre operation was scaled back to initially four centres, on 18th May and then subsequently three from 26th May.

- Following further good weather over the Bank Holiday weekend 23rd – 25th May, when even larger numbers of visitors visited North Norfolk, it was decided to open the remaining coastal car parks and a further 18 public toilet blocks from 29th May.
- On 25th May, the Government announced its support for local authorities in Re-opening the High Street Safely through providing grant monies for the introduction of social-distancing measures. It was subsequently announced that North Norfolk District Council would receive £93,332 through this Fund. Conversations were therefore held with Norfolk County Council's Highway Team, town and (some) parish councils and local chambers of trade about the nature of social distancing measures which might be put in place in our towns and seafront areas to reassure the public in seeking to move to a “new normal” in terms of shops and tourism businesses re-opening for business after a 13-week shutdown.
- These initial conversations were positive and in the following two weeks the District Council developed its “You are Welcome” programme and established a team of staff to support the detailed development and implementation of social distancing proposals in each location – further details of which are provided below.
- Throughout May, concern has existed around the capacity of the RNLI Beach Lifeguard Team to provide cover at all of our Blue Flag beaches and discussions have therefore been held between the Leader of the Council, Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder and key staff about the options available to the Council in providing an important lifeguard / beach warden service on our beaches over the summer months – more detail of this issue is provided below.
- During the week of the 25th May, a Task and Finish Group of our internal Silver (Service Managers) arrangements developed draft policies relating to people returning to work and the Council moving back to a more “normal” level of service. These draft policies were then the subject of consultation with staff, elected members and partners (tenants of our buildings); with the policy document agreed by our internal Gold structure on 12th June, following which a programme of measures has been implemented within our office buildings in order that the Council as a corporate body can demonstrate compliance as a COVID-secure workplace.
- On 1st June, the Council launched its Discretionary (Business) Grant Scheme with online guidance, applications able to be submitted via an online form from 3rd June and with a closing date for applications being 23:59 on Sunday 21st June.
- Whilst throughout the lockdown period two food stalls have operated at Sheringham Market, the District Council re-opened its markets at Cromer on a Friday and Sheringham on a Wednesday and Saturday from Saturday 6th April.
- As further restrictions were eased by the Government from 1st June, the Council re-opened Cromer Pier from this date for people to enjoy by walking and sitting, but due to risk of virus transmission through

surface contact, initially fishing and crabbing were not allowed from the pier and continue to be kept under review.

- The District Council's remaining public toilets (with the exception of the Rocket House in Cromer) were re-opened from 12th June, in advance of the 15th June date for the re-opening of non-essential retail businesses. The Council has not as yet re-opened the facilities at the Rocket House, pending further guidance on social distancing and the operation of the lift in that building which provides access from North Lodge Park down on to the Cromer East Prom.
- Throughout May and June, the District Council has continued to accommodate the provision of mobile testing facilities provided by the military at The Meadow Car Park in Cromer and Highfield Road Car Park in Fakenham on two days a week in each location.
- In early June Norfolk was identified as one of 11 areas of England which would pilot the development of Local Outbreak Control Plans to manage and respond to local outbreaks of Coronavirus in the coming months. The Norfolk pilot is also leading on the control of outbreaks in food factory settings and Tracy Howard, the District Council's Environmental Health Commercial Manager, is leading this workstream as part of the wider development of the Norfolk Local Outbreak Control Plan.

2.2 Throughout May and June, the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) / Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) arrangements at a County level and our internal civil contingency arrangements (as outlined in the 18th May Cabinet report) have continued to meet regularly (three times a week) and are considered to have operated well, allowing the District Council to participate in Countywide discussions on Response and Recovery and then interpret and develop local responses appropriate to North Norfolk and the Council at an organisational level. As levels of infection are now falling and considered to be at a low and stable level, consideration is being given to reducing the frequency of these SCG / TCG meetings in the next couple of weeks and as a District Council we will review our contingency plans and arrangements accordingly. Any structures and arrangements which have been in place are capable of being reinstated if there is any increase in the level of infections in the coming weeks and months.

2.3 Throughout the past thirteen weeks the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive have participated in a number of MHCLG, LGA, District Council Network and Norfolk level meetings and briefings on a range of issues relating to COVID – including Business Grants; Test, Track and Trace; issues of managing visitors in coastal areas post lockdown; Re-opening High Streets Safely; and the emerging Local Outbreak Control Plan arrangements.

3.0 Some key data and information on current actions being taken by the Council

3.1 Community Support, Shielded and Vulnerable People, Food Hubs

3.1.1 Over the period 26th March – 31st May the Council's Community Support service provided assistance to almost 2500 "shielding" individuals and a similar number of people who were self-isolating in North Norfolk in

accordance with Government guidance. Direct contact was made by District Council with all of the shielding individuals and the Council's dedicated COVID helpline and website handled almost 6100 requests (4209 calls and 1888 emails) for advice or assistance over this nine-week period.

- 3.1.2 During these nine weeks, the District Council made up and delivered emergency food parcels to 490 individuals and delivered over 2900 prescriptions to people who were shielding or self-isolating in the District, as well as passing on enquiries for assistance to the numerous local community organisations which had become established in response to COVID to provide support to vulnerable people and households at a neighbourhood level.
- 3.1.3 Over the five-week period 28th April to 5th June a team of ten council officers and nine elected members made "companion" calls to over 450 individuals in the District who were shielding to check on their wellbeing - with 191 individuals receiving follow up calls based on their request for ongoing support and friendship through the service.
- 3.1.4 During May, at a County level a database of those who were identified as vulnerable across the County was introduced and used by each district to manage contacts with our customers, both those who contacted our helpline and those who were added to the shielding and Extremely vulnerable lists, who the District Council had previously been proactively contacting. The Norfolk Vulnerability Hub provides a consistent approach to managing contact information and options are being explored for its wider use beyond the Coronavirus crisis. From the beginning of June, ongoing requests for assistance from vulnerable people across the County have been fulfilled through the Norfolk Vulnerability Hub, allowing the majority of the District Council staff who were redeployed to staff our outbound contact arrangements to shielding individuals, as well as the staff in our Local Co-ordination Centres and on prescription delivery duties, to be released back to their substantive roles.
- 3.1.5 The Council has received a number of letters and emails of thanks from individuals we have provided support to through the Community Support Programme, as well as from Town and Parish Councils, which has been very heartening at a time of pressure on our organisation and is testament to the flexibility, commitment and resilience of our staff in providing public service to our communities.
- 3.1.6 The strength of local community support models, including longstanding Good Neighbour schemes and groups established specifically in response to the COVID situation, has been crucial in meeting individual and local community needs at a local level and it will be important for the District Council moving forward to consider its ability to support these groups into the future through practical advice, volunteer development etc in order to harness the capacity and strengthen community resilience in the future.

3.2 Homeless Support

- 3.2.1 The Council has continued to provide accommodation for 13 rough-sleepers and homeless people through the period of the Coronavirus lockdown and is involved in discussions with County partners and the Government about the longer-term support which might be provided so that better outcomes in terms

of housing, health and hopefully employment can be secured for this group of people beyond COVID. These discussions are ongoing and will be reported to Cabinet verbally at the Cabinet meeting or in the coming months as possible support models are developed.

3.3 Business Grants and the Discretionary Grants Programme

3.3.1 Between the 7th April and 18th June, staff in the Business Rates Team and support functions have paid out £51.9m of Small Business Grants, which is 94.4% of our identified total by value, to 4711 customers out of an anticipated 4993 account holders believed to be eligible for support through this programme.

3.3.2 The Council launched its Discretionary Grant Scheme on 1st June, with online applications able to have been made from 3rd June through until 21st June. The Council has developed its own criteria for the scheme, whilst taking reference from the national guidance, to deliver a scheme which hopefully meets the specific needs of North Norfolk businesses given the impact they have experienced from COVID-19. Our scheme offers support to the following categories of business.

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces. Examples could include mills, units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators, which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Regular market traders with fixed building costs, such as pitch fees or storage costs, who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Bed & Breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates;
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.
- Businesses which are wholly involved in the hospitality, leisure and events industry but do not have a business premises open to visiting members of the public.
- Public Houses with a rateable value of £51,000 or higher
- Hotels with a rateable value of £51,000 or higher
- Day Nursery Premises

3.3.3 At the time of writing this report (20th June) the Council had received 224 applications for assistance under the Discretionary Grant Scheme. These are currently being reviewed, with payments to be made during the week of the 29th June. Details of the numbers of grants paid will therefore be reported verbally to the meeting of Cabinet on 6th July.

3.4 The “You are Welcome” campaign to support the Re-Opening of our High Streets and Tourist Areas Safely programme

- 3.4.1 Following the announcement of the Re-opening the High Street Safely Fund, the District Council held initial discussions with colleagues in County Highways and with Town Councils and Chambers of Trade to explore what type of social distancing measures might be implemented in towns across the District.
- 3.4.2 A number of small, temporary, highways related schemes have been proposed to assist with large numbers of pedestrians and people queuing to enter retail premises on narrow pavements. This has seen the suspension of a small number of on-street controlled parking spaces, allowing for the widening of pavements and advisory one-way pedestrian movements / queue guidance to be implemented.
- 3.4.3 In addition the District Council has commissioned some advisory “decals” (floor-placed images) to assist in social distancing; ordered some hand sanitising stations and is supporting local marketing campaigns. Recognising the character of our towns we are investigating the purchase of some good quality planters for use in some areas to minimise the use of unsightly plastic and metal barriers, although Government guidance has stated planters are not eligible expenditure under the Re-opening the High Street Safely Fund grant monies. Consideration is also being given to whether we could employ some Welcome Ambassadors in areas of key visitor pressure to provide advice to visitors on the social distancing measures in operation.
- 3.4.4 The first social distancing measures were introduced in Cromer and Sheringham town centres on Friday 19th June, with the schemes in other towns across the District due to be implemented during the week of the 29th June, before the 4th July when the Government has announced that food premises and tourism businesses will be permitted to re-open. We will implement these schemes as soon as we can dependent on the supply of the decals, hand sanitisers and planters.
- 3.4.5 Cabinet will be updated further on the roll out of the “You are Welcome” programme at its meeting of 6th July.

3.5 Beach Lifeguards

- 3.5.1 Early in the COVID lockdown the RNLI advised nationally that it believed it would be unable to recruit and train enough lifeguard staff to cover the usual 240 beach locations around the UK coast where it provided a beach lifeguard service. In North Norfolk we were advised that the RNLI would probably only be able to service three of our beaches and even then at significantly reduced periods compared to a normal year. The Council was subsequently advised, in early May, that cover would be provided, based on risk assessments and a review of previous seasons activities, at Sea Palling from the 16th May; Cromer from the 20th June and one other beach (at that time not agreed) from the 4th July.
- 3.5.2 This concerned the District Council as the provision of lifeguard cover on our six Blue Flag beaches (Sheringham, West Runton, East Runton, Cromer, Mundesley and Sea Palling) and Wells Beach, which had a Rural Beach Award, was considered important in terms of our tourism offer. The Leader of the Council, Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio holder and Leisure and Localities Manager therefore met to establish if on beaches where the RNLI said it

would be unable to provide a service this year, alternative arrangements could be made to provide a Beach Warden, rather than a lifeguard, service.

- 3.5.3 However, in early June the RNLI advised that it would be able to provide a service at Cromer from 13th June (a week earlier than previously advised) and that cover could be provided from 4th July at Mundesley, Sheringham and Wells. This means that compared to last year it will only be the quieter beaches of East and West Runton where a lifeguard service cannot be provided this year. Whilst this is regrettable, the position now proposed by the RNLI is considerably better than originally proposed and the Council is grateful for the efforts which have been made to provide this vital service to the District in the next few weeks. The Council comities to consider if it would be possible to provide a Beach Warden service at East and West Runton beaches.

4. Alignment with Corporate Plan objectives

- 4.1 As outlined in the report to Cabinet discussed on 18th May, the Coronavirus Pandemic is an unprecedented event of global scale, which has required a significant and co-ordinated response by North Norfolk District Council. Despite the significant challenges presented by the pandemic over a prolonged period, it is believed that the Council has responded well in maintaining core service provision, whilst at the same time delivering a range of support and activity during both the response and now the recovery phase.
- 4.2 The Council's task is not done however and in the coming weeks as town centre and tourism businesses re-open and we welcome back larger numbers of visitors to the District it will be necessary for the Council to ensure the continued provision of social distancing measures, maintaining our public toilets and clean beaches and promenades etc, as well as supporting the partnership arrangements being developed to manage future outbreaks of infection in support of actions proposed through the Local Outbreak Control Plan.
- 4.3 Whilst it is believed that the Council has responded well to the challenges presented by COVID and has achieved much which has been appreciated and valued by communities across North Norfolk in terms of supporting shielding and vulnerable individuals, payment of grants to businesses and closing and re-opening facilities and the implementation of social distancing measures in our town centres and tourist areas; there is always scope for learning and improvement and the Council is therefore undertaking a "lessons learned" review to capture learning from this event to date, the learning from which will be applied as we move through the Recovery phase and manage any local outbreaks of infections in the months ahead.

5. Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 6.1 The Council's Head of Finance and Assets continues to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's expenditure and income and is preparing a detailed financial report for the August Cabinet meeting.

6. Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 See comments made at 6 above.

7. Legal Implications

8.1 Decisions taken under emergency provisions through delegated powers / authority are detailed within a separate report on this Cabinet agenda.

8. Risks

9.1 This report details the Council's response to the global Coronavirus pandemic and proposes future actions in support of North Norfolk's Recovery from this significant global event. Decisions taken have been informed with reference to Government advice and guidance and decisions taken through the Norfolk Local Resilience Forum arrangements in the interests of the North Norfolk community. Options have been considered in the agreement of specific actions, including relevant and associated risks with decisions taken under emergency provisions discussed, agreed and recorded at meetings of the Council's Gold Civil Contingency arrangements with the overriding objectives of protecting public health and life of North Norfolk residents and managing pressure / demands on local NHS capacity, resources and infrastructure.

9. Sustainability

10.1 None as a direct result of this report.

10. Equality and Diversity

11.1 None as a direct result of this report – many of the actions taken by the Council have however sought to protect and support some of the most vulnerable people in our communities by virtue of their age, frailty, underlying health conditions or housing situation.

11. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

12.1 None as a direct result of this report.

12. Recommendations:-

Cabinet is asked to note the Council's response and arrangements made to support Recovery from the Coronavirus Pandemic; and specifically comment upon the following:-

- **the short-term actions proposed in respect of:-**

- opening up the Council's services and facilities;
 - the development and implementation of social distancing measures through the "You are Welcome" programme to assist the Re-opening of our High Streets and Tourist Areas Safely
 - delivery of the Discretionary Business Grant Programme
 - the Council's planning for the return of staff to their main roles from working at home and redeployment into other roles;
 - the implementation of measures so that the Council is able to demonstrate compliance with the COVID-secure workplace guidelines
 - understanding the contribution North Norfolk District Council will make in supporting the partnership actions outlined in the Norfolk Local Outbreak Control Plan which will be a key element of managing any future outbreaks of COVID19 in the District over the coming months.
- the longer term need to review the Council's Medium-Term Financial strategy in light of the changing financial situation of the Council and as a result undertake a review of the Council's proposed programme of activity as previously detailed in the Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan.

Additional Recommendation to Agenda Item 10 – North Norfolk District Council's Transition from Response to Recovery in responding to the Coronavirus Pandemic

As part of its response to COVID19, the District Council has been working with local authority partners across Norfolk and with the New Anglia LEP to propose and agree a package of measures to support local businesses respond to and recover from the significant economic “shock” which has been brought about by the COVID lockdown, which has impacted upon all sectors of the economy.

As well as administering the Government's Business Grant Scheme and developing and operating our own Discretionary Grant Scheme, as detailed Section 3.3 of the substantive report on the Cabinet agenda, officers and the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for the Economy have been involved in recent weeks in a number of working groups with partners to develop an Economic Recovery Plan and some sector specific interventions. This work has recently culminated in agreement of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Norfolk and Suffolk Economic Recovery and Restart Plan - <https://newanglia.co.uk/economic-recovery-restart-plan-is-launched/> - and a proposal to establish a Norfolk Strategic Fund aimed at “kick-starting” some key economic infrastructure and workforce skills projects across the County in support of the Government's objectives of accelerating delivery of projects which will enable or facilitate the earlier delivery of economic recovery – ie projects which can deliver in the next two years.

Details of the Norfolk Strategic Fund were discussed and agreed by the Norfolk Leaders Group at a meeting on the afternoon of 3rd July. This report and recommendation seeking North Norfolk District Council's support for and participation in the Norfolk Strategic Fund proposal is therefore prepared for members information and discussion, as a supplementary paper to the substantive COVID report on the Cabinet agenda of the 6th July, to allow the Council to discuss the Fund in a timely manner recognising the partnership objectives of wanting to “launch” the Fund during July with project appraisal during August allowing for successful projects to be commenced during the autumn.

It is proposed that the Norfolk Strategic Fund be made up with £1million from Norfolk County Council; £1million from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership; £1,050million from the seven District Councils (£150,000 each) and with a proposition being put to Government that the local funding commitment is “matched” through either Business Rate Pool funds or other Government funds available locally giving a “Fund” of at least £6million.

The Fund would be administered by the County Council's Economic Programmes Team, using similar criteria as for projects developed for funding through the existing Business Rate Pool Programme, with projects being approved through the Norfolk Leaders Group. Applications for the Fund would be invited from projects which could be delivered quickly to facilitate the County's economic recovery from COVID with the objective of safeguarding employment levels and rebuilding the local economy at a time of significant economic uncertainty.

North Norfolk District Council is therefore being asked to provide a £150,000 matchfunding contribution towards the Norfolk Strategic Fund and, following discussion with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Head of Finance and Assets, it is advised that this

contribution could be met from the previously agreed North Norfolk District Council Delivery Plan Reserve.

Cabinet is therefore asked to approve the District Council's participation in the Norfolk Strategic Fund proposal through providing a matchfunding contribution of £150,000 and attaching any conditions to our participation if appropriate.

Recommendation:-

To agree the District Council's support for and participation in the Norfolk Strategic Fund with our £150,000 contribution being funded from the Delivery Plan Reserve.

Reasons for Recommendation:-

To support the Council's Corporate Plan objectives in wanting to support local economic growth as part of a co-ordinated partnership response to the COVID pandemic on our local economy which seeks to lever in additional resources to Norfolk through collaborative working.

Report author:-

Steve Blatch, Chief Executive

Tel:- 01263 516232

Email:- steve.blatch@north-norfolk.gov.uk

BRIEFING ON CUSTOMER SERVICES: COVID-19 CONTACT HANDLING AND CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY.

Summary: A Customer Service Briefing, in order to inform the Committee of the Customer Services Covid-19 customer contacts and the management of complaints including details of the number of complaints resolved and/or outstanding.

Options considered: This is a briefing report only.

Conclusions: Not applicable.

Recommendations: **To note the report.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To brief Members customer contacts and the current complaints procedure.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

North Norfolk District Council Compliments, Complaints and Comments Policy
North Norfolk District Council Customer Service Strategy

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr. Sarah Bütikofer	All

Contact Officer, telephone number and email: David Williams, Customer Services Manager, 01263 516415, david.williams@north-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Introduction

At a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in August 2019, Members requested a Customer Service Briefing, in order to bring the Committee up to speed on customer contacts and the current complaints procedure.

The new Corporate Plan introduced in 2019 recognised customer focus as a key challenge and the associated delivery plan included a number of actions including procuring and conducting an annual resident survey and customer satisfaction survey. Good progress was being made to deliver on the action plan when due to Covid-19 it became necessary to prioritise resources to managing the council's response to Covid-19.

This report will provide a briefing on the variety and quantity of contacts received by Customer Services from individuals and businesses seeking direct help and guidance due to the impact of Covid-19.

The current corporate Compliments, Complaints and Comments policy (Appendix 1) was produced in 2016 having regard to guidance provided by the Local Government Ombudsman at that time and is consistent with the complaints handling process operated by the majority of Councils.

The corporate plan recognises the need to improve customer insight and the need to have a robust complaints policy and procedures to inform service improvements and decision making is recognised. Guidance from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LG & SCO) will also help to inform the future review of the complaints policy and will improve how managers can learn from the insight provided and use this knowledge to improve customer satisfaction when customers contact and access services from the council.

2. Customer Contacts – Covid-19

2.1 Customer Contact Volumes

The customer services team managed 62,425 customer contacts in 2019/20 taking thousands of customer telephone enquiries and hundreds of face to face meetings, web chats, web forms and emails every week. The customer services team consistently resolves over 90% of all telephone enquiries and 99% of all face to face enquiries at the first point of contact. The following table shows the number of customer contacts that were managed by the customer services team across all contact channels throughout 2019/20. The 2020/21 column is for general customer contacts for the period 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 (This excludes Covid-19 related contacts).

Table 1 – Customer Contacts managed by the Customer Services Team

Customer Contacts received by Customer Services	2019/20	2020/21
Calls Answered	39781	7136
Face to Face visits (Cromer)	14761	0
Face to Face visits (Fakenham)	4407	0
Workbench Contacts	2416	1005
Web Chats	1060	298
Emails		
Totals	62425	8439

Customers are increasingly able to self-serve by using our online web forms with 34,842 transactions completed digitally throughout 2019/20. Not all these transactions can be fully automated end-to-end therefore, they require customer services or back office action to complete the service request.

In 2019/20 a total of 97,267 customer contacts through customer services or online transactions have been recorded and there will be thousands of customers who directly contact service area staff by telephone, letter and email and are therefore cannot be included within this figure.

2.2 Customer Services support for NNDC Covid-19 activities

In recent months Customer Services have been taking all calls, and emails from individuals and businesses seeking help from the council on our dedicated Covid-19 Helpline and email inbox.

In order to free up back office staff to focus on essential services such as Council Tax, Business Rates, and Housing Benefit, the Customer Services team has taken all incoming calls for these service areas. Table 2 shows that Customer Services

took an additional 13,110 customer contacts between 26 March 2020 and 30 June 2020.

Table 2	Benefits Direct Line	Council Tax & Business Rates Direct Line	COVID-19 Helpline
Calls Answered	2959	3312	4984
Workbench Contacts			139
Emails			1716
Totals	2959	3312	6839
Total Additional Contacts			13110

The 4984 calls received through the covid-19 helpline can be broken down into five service areas as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Covid - 19 Helpline Call Breakdown	
Benefits	112
Council Tax	252
Business Support/NDR	1717
Communities/Vulnerability	2332
Other	572
Total	4984

In the period from 26 March through to 30 June 2020 the Customer Services team have managed 21,459 customer contacts which equates to 35% of all contacts received in the previous year.

At the outset of the pandemic customer demand was at its peak and has gradually fallen away as time has moved on. The council acted swiftly to deal with the anticipated peak in calls by redeploying staff with previous experience of working in our customer services team back into customer services on a temporary basis. The support of the redeployed staff was essential to maintaining quality customer service at that time and the redeployed staff have all now returned to their service areas.

The customer services team has also provided additional support to individuals and business affected by covid-19 by;

- Operating extended hours to cover the Covid-19 Helpline and email inbox between 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm on Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays.
- Taken all Covid-19 calls and email enquiries from individuals and customers and offered assisted service for Business Support Grant applications.

- Made calls to 695 businesses to ensure they were able to apply for the Business Support Grant.
- Made calls to 848 businesses to support the business survey initiative.
- Made calls to 70 businesses to assist them claim the discretionary grant.
- Implemented an electronic Food Bank voucher system to enable those in need to obtain food for their families.
- Taken all calls on the Covid-19 Helpline and email inbox from vulnerable people and Norfolk County Council Social Services Staff seeking assistance with obtaining food, prescriptions and other support for vulnerable people.
- Completed all necessary information required to enable the delivery of services vulnerable persons and liaised with the Local Coordination Centre's.
- Provided information to support businesses to comply with lockdown restrictions.
- Provided advice and signposted to information and support agencies for businesses and individuals in need of assistance.

3. Customer Compliments, Complaints and Comments Policy

3.1 Complaints Process Summary

The full Customer Compliments, Complaints and Contacts Policy is attached at Appendix 1. The following is a brief summary of the policy process;

Stage 1

The complaint is logged onto the Corporate Customer Contact database by the Corporate Customer Contact Coordinator and passed to the relevant service area for investigation. An acknowledgment letter/email is sent within 3 working days to confirm receipt.

The service will investigate the complaint and send their final or interim response within 15 working days.

Stage 2

If the customer is not satisfied by the stage 1 response they can request that a further investigation by the relevant service area manager for further investigation.

The manager will investigate the complaint and reply within 28 working days.

Stage 3

If the customer remains dissatisfied with how their complaint has been handled or with the results of the investigation they can request a further investigation from

somebody external to the service department concerned usually a Head of Paid Service and their response will be made within 28 working days.

If the customer remains dissatisfied the council's response they are able to contact the Local Government Ombudsman who investigates complaints of inefficient or dishonest administration against local authorities.

4. Complaint Data

Complaints are received and recorded by the complaints coordinator at each stage of our complaints process. Table 4 below shows 204 customer complaints were recorded across all three stages of the complaints process. As one complaint can go through all three stages this does not mean that 204 customers made complaints the number is likely to be lower than this.

Table 4 - shows all complaints recorded from 1 June 2019 to 30 June 2020

	TOTAL
Stage 1	148
Stage 2	28
Stage3	28
Total	204

As explained at 2.1 above a complaint that is not satisfied at stage 1 can progress through the complaints process stages 2 and 3 which takes time, therefore a proportion of the stage 2 and stage 3 complaints will have been raised as a stage 1 prior to 1 June 2019. The actual number of complaints received in this period is therefore less than 204 for both the reasons identified above. The record of stage 1 complaints received is reflective of the number of new complaints made to the council in this 13-month period which equates to approximately 11 complaints a month.

Of the 148 stage 1 complaints recorded in this 13-month period 28 (19%) customers continued through to stage 3 of the complaints process.

Customer complaints are received across all service areas and they are categorised into one of the following types of expression of dissatisfaction;

1. Decisions – the decision reached on their application
2. Staff – staff attitude or behaviour when contacting the council
3. Process – how the council delivered its service
4. Failure – the service not being delivered on time or not provided at all.

Table 5 - shows the breakdown of complaint types by service area received between 1 April 2019 through to 30 June 2029 placed into these 4 generic categories.

Complaint Type	Eco Dev	Env H	Legal	Assets	Planning	DT & IT	CLT	Total	
Decision	0	9	2	1	19	8	0	39	17%
Staff	1	4	0	8	7	1	0	21	9%
Process	14	10	5	57	38	1	2	127	56%
Failure	7	23	1	6	2	0	0	39	17%
	22	46	8	72	66	10	2	226	

The complaint type with the majority of complaints recorded in this period are those categorised as process complaints at 56%. Process complaints are generally where the customer considers that the council should have acted differently, such as requiring evidence or proof documents that causes delay in assessing applications for council tax support, or failed to sufficiently take account of their views on a planning application.

Table 6 shows a more detailed breakdown of complaints received over the 13 months between 1 June 2019 and 31 June 2020 by Head of Service Area and then broken down into service areas.

Table 6 – showing breakdown of complaints by Head of Service Area - 1 June 2019 to 30 June 2020

H of S Eco Dev		
Leisure	17	
Eco Dev	1	
Strategic Housing	1	
Total	19	9.3 %
H of S Env Health		
EHO	37	18.1 %
H of S Legal Service		
Benefit	5	
Legal	0	
Dem Service	2	
Total	7	3.4 %
Head of Assets		
Property	13	
Council Tax & B Rates	56	
Finance	0	
Accountancy	0	
Total	69	33.8 %
H of S Planning		
Building Control	0	
Planning	63	
Total	63	30.9 %
H of S DT & IT		
Customer Services	1	
Housing Options	7	
IT	0	
Total	8	3.9 %
Corporate Leadership		
Elections	1	0.5 %
Grand Total	204	

The table shows that 76% of all complaints made by customers in the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2020 relate to the 3 main regulatory services with Planning receiving 30.9%, Assets, specifically Council Tax & Business Rates with 56 complaints or 27% and Environmental Health (46) & or 18.1% of all complaints received. This is not surprising as they represent the council's services that make decisions that directly influence the quality of life of individuals, businesses and communities.

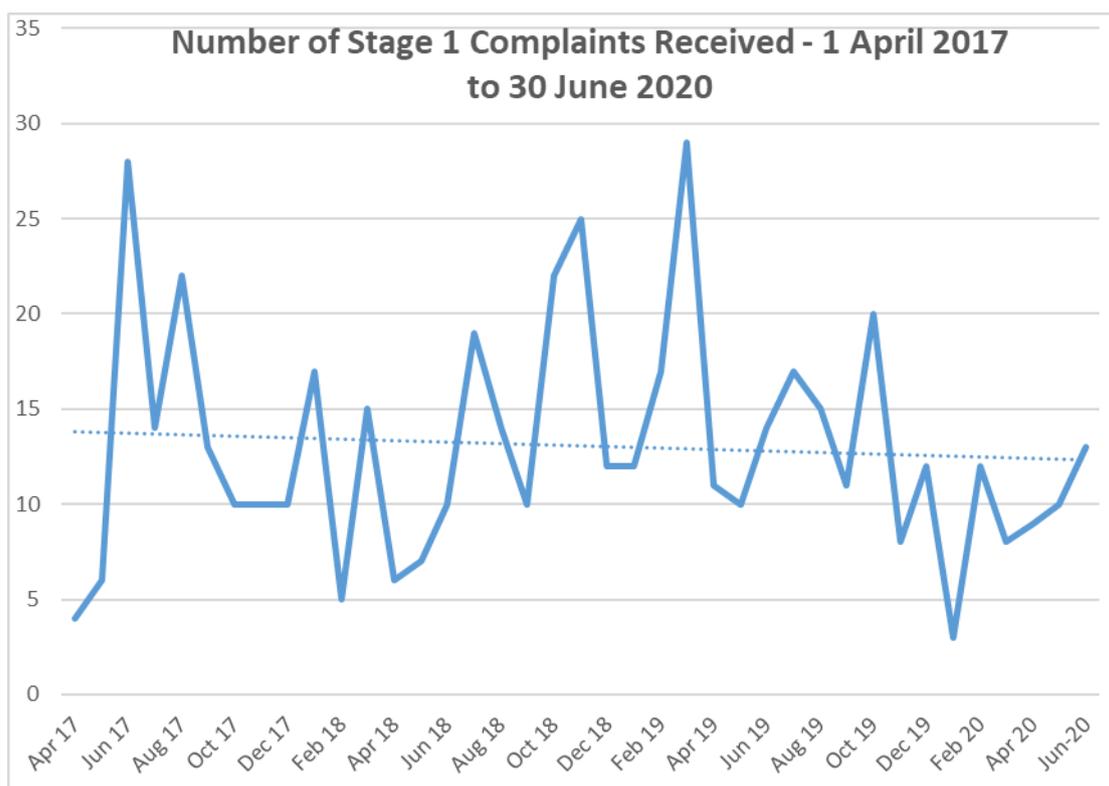
Currently the council has 15 recorded complaints that are being processed within the 3 stages of the complaints process as shown in table 7 below

Table 7 - Complaints recorded at 9 July 2020

Stage 1	10
Stage 2	3
Stage 3	2

5. Stage 1 Customer Complaints Trend

The following graph shows the trend in Stage 1 complaints received between 1 April 2017 and 30 June 2020.



The number of stage 1 customer complaints received by the council has been consistently low over this three-year period and the trend line is showing a gradual decline in complaints being made over time. The number of complaints per month remains exceptionally low given the many thousands of varied customer transactions completed by the council in that time.

6. Compliments

It should not be overlooked that the council and its staff receive compliments from customers, here are just a 4 of the 20 recorded compliments received since January 2020;

- 6.1 *I'd like to say how helpful XXXX XXXXX from waste / bins has been his help advise and sharp communications have made my contract and covid adjustments easy
Thank you XXXX*
- 6.2 *I was absolutely delighted to read of the installation of a Changing Places assisted accessible facility in the Cromer Visitors' Centre, and your intention to install these first rate "disabled loos" in other places within North Norfolk. Thank you - it will make such a difference to both visitors and residents. Many of us have to plan outings, even to the shops, around the availability of accessible toilets, and to have such a marvellous facility available will be a great incentive to visit Cromer. I have been quick to criticise the Council's attitude to disability issues in the past, but this installation deserves praise and thanks. XXX XXXXXX - Chairperson, Norfolk Association for the Disabled*
- 6.3 *In these extremely difficult and trying times the speed at which you dealt with my car park permit application deserves credit. Thank you for your speed and efficiency*
- 6.4 *I felt I had to drop you an email to say a huge "Thankyou" to your team (Customer Services) for all their help regarding the council grants and general business rate queries etc. I am fully aware they are working from home in what must be such difficult circumstances however they have still maintained such a high level of professionalism during this period and I must say I am extremely impressed. Regarding the grants, I have three business premises and was only paid the grant for two and queried not receiving the third payment. Between XXXXX and XXXX they got to the route of the problem only to find I had put the incorrect sort code on the third one on the form!! Your two "detectives" have been amazing along with all the staff I have spoken to previously in your department, (XXX,XXX,XXX,XX), amongst others I have spoken to at various times at one point or another and they have always been incredibly helpful and a breath of fresh air when sometimes situations are complicated. Please convey my thanks and appreciation to all concerned particularly XXXX and XXXX who have been fantastic. I hope you and your team are keeping safe and keep up the good work. If I was their manager I would be recommending a pay rise for all the employees in your team, they are a credit to you!*

7. Conclusion

The Customer Services team manage customer enquiries as the first point of contact for the majority of the council's customers on a daily basis. With the effects of covid-19 and lockdown restrictions impacting on daily life the Customer Services team and their colleagues throughout the council have stepped up to the frontline in playing their part in managing the council's response to provide vital support to individuals, businesses and communities at this unprecedented time.

The council receives a very low number of customer complaints with 204 complaints in 13 months in comparison to the 100,000+ customer contacts it manages each year across the extensive and diverse services it provides to the residents and visitors of North Norfolk.

The majority of complaints are resolved at Stage 1 of the complaints procedure with only 19% moving onto Stage 2.

By recording and monitoring customer complaints it is possible to provide valuable insight and learning about how the council's performance is perceived and how it can be improved. The council is committed to embedding the customer at the heart of all that we do and the management of complaints is recognised as an integral part of service provision by all Heads of Service. Complaints systems are not mechanisms for apportioning blame but an important part of the council's learning and development. Heads of Service and Managers review complaints to identify how they can learn from them and improve services.

The Council has recognised the importance of customer focus by making it a key area within the Corporate Plan 2019-23. The Corporate Plan states "We want our customers to be at the heart of everything we do and will strive to improve access to our services further through stronger community engagement, developing more formal mechanisms of inviting customer feedback and comment and, where possible and practical, seek to deliver our services at a more local level through strengthening partnerships with local Town and Parish Councils. The Council will seek further to improve democratic engagement and participation by people of all ages, but particularly through working with schools and colleges to ensure that the voice young people is heard and informs council decision-making." The tasks in the Corporate Delivery Plan will drive improvements throughout the council so that customers can influence how the services are delivered.

Insight from customer complaints and guidance from the Local Government Ombudsman will help inform the changes and new ways of working that will be focused on improving customer satisfaction when contacting all service areas.

8. Implications and Risks

Prompt action to deal with any performance issues identified by this report will reduce the risk to delivery of the Annual Action Plan and the achievement of the Council's priorities as laid out in the Corporate Plan.

9. Financial Implications and Risks

There are no financial implications and risks directly arising from this report

10. Sustainability

There are no sustainability implications directly arising from this report

11. Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report

12. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

There are no Section 17 Crime and Disorder implications directly arising from this report.

Appendix 1.

Customer Complaints, Compliments and Contacts Policy final
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**Customer
Complaints,**

**Compliments and
Contacts Policy**

16 September 2016

Version Final

Customer Complaints, Compliments and Contacts Policy final
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Introduction

This policy sets out how customers can make a complaint about Council services, and how we will respond to and learn from complaints received.

North Norfolk District Council is committed to delivering excellent customer service. Listening to our customers and learning from customer feedback enables the Council to improve its services and meet the needs of customers more effectively.

We want to make it as easy as possible for customers to let us know their views, including how to make a complaint.

Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions can be made through any of our contact channels:

- In person
- Telephone
- Email
- Website
- Letter
- Social media

Compliments, Complaints and Suggestions can be received by a variety of people:

- Customer Services Team
- Service area teams
- CEO/Director
- Corporate PA team
- Any member of staff

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- Councillors (personally or on behalf of residents/constituents)

All compliments, complaints and suggestions however received must be logged onto the Corporate Customer Contact database. The Corporate Customer Contact Co-coordinator will ensure that the customer is sent an acknowledgement and will monitor and review the progress of the contact to ensure compliance with the policy.

Having a corporate repository of all customer contacts for compliments, complaints and suggestions will ensure consistency of the standard of replies to customers and will enable analysis of trends and reporting across the Council.

Our Customers

This policy applies to any customer of the Council, or a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

A customer of the Council is anyone who:

- accesses, uses or receives any Council service
- is affected by any Council policy or action
- contacts the Council to seek or report information

Compliments

Definition of a compliment:

A compliment is an expression of praise for an action completed or a standard of service delivered. This includes compliments to the Council by a customer relating to the quality of service provided by individual staff members or service teams.

Once the compliment is logged on the corporate customer contact database, a thank you letter will be sent to the customer and a copy will be passed through to the appropriate Head of Service, the Corporate PA Team and Communications Team.

The Head of Service or Service Manager will notify the member of staff or team members in person either by letter or email to thank them for the excellent service delivered.

The coordinator will provide a summary of compliments received to be included in the monthly data report to Management Team.

Complaints

Definition of a complaint:

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action (or lack of action) or about the standard of service, regardless of whether the action was taken. This includes standards of service provided by the Council itself or by a person or body acting on behalf of the Council.

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The response may be to put things right straightaway, or to investigate the matter further. A complaint could include any of the following concerns:

- a customer cannot access a service
- we delay or fail to deliver a service
- we provide a poor quality service
- we reduce or withdraw a service
- a policy is inappropriately applied or disadvantages a customer
- a policy unfairly discriminates against a customer
- a member of staff's attitude or competence causes concern
- we fail to meet our statutory responsibilities

A complaint is not:

- a first request for service
- avoidable contact (although this can be)
- dissatisfaction about other bodies i.e. central government, etc.

The Customer Complaints Policy does not apply under certain circumstances or conditions including:

- employee complaints relating to employment issues or disciplinary and grievance processes – which are dealt with through the Council's Human Resource policies and procedures
- Council decisions where there is an existing appeals process, such as planning applications
- matters that are already subject to legal proceedings

- complaints relating to ongoing insurance claims against the Council
- issues that have arisen and are being handled through the Council's 'Whistleblowers' scheme

Complaints Procedure

Customers may make a complaint about the Council:

- In person
- Telephone
- Email
- Website
- Letter
- Social media

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Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

Wherever possible we aim to resolve complaints at the point of service delivery and as quickly as possible but within a maximum of 15 working days.

We encourage customers in the first instance to contact the service they wish to complain about. Service staff will do all they can to put things right and resolve the issue informally.

If a customer is unsure they should call Customer Services to identify who they should contact.

If it is not possible to resolve a customer's complaint informally, the complaint will be investigated through the Council's formal procedure.

Stage 2 - Formal Resolution - Complaints Process

We will acknowledge all formal customer complaints within 3 working days. The corporate complaints coordinator will ensure an appropriate service manager investigates the complaint and provides the customer with a full response within 28 working days.

If the customer is not satisfied with the Stage 2 response, they will be required to identify why they feel the response failed to satisfy their complaint and ask for the complaint to be reconsidered – within 28 working days of receipt of the Stage 2 response.

Stage 3 – Formal Resolution – Review

A Corporate Director (or a senior officer nominated by a Director) will investigate the complaint – re-examining the complaint and the Stage 1 and 2 responses; a response will be sent to the complainant in the Corporate Director's name within 28 working days.

How to appeal against the outcome of a complaint

Where a complaint has progressed through all stages of the Council's complaints procedure and the customer is still not satisfied, they may appeal to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Exceptions

Where a customer complains about the behaviour of a Director or Senior Manager, the complaints coordinator should seek advice from the Chief Executive or Leader of the Council, who will advise on the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint.

Responding to Complaints

On receipt of a formal complaint we will:

- At each stage respond to complaints or send a holding letter or email to the customer in line with the timescales indicated in the 3 stage procedure.
- We will, at all times, deal with customer complaints courteously, openly and fairly.

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Complaints – Upheld

Where we have made a mistake or failed to provide the expected standard or quality of service, we will acknowledge and apologise for this. We will also set out the actions we will take to put things right and improve our services. This could include:

- reinstating a service to a customer
- changing how we deliver our services
- reviewing and amending information about our services
- reviewing Council policies or procedures
- providing appropriate staff training and guidance

Complaints – Not Upheld

Where we have investigated and do not uphold the complaint, we will:

- explain the reasons for our decision clearly
- provide any relevant evidence to support the decision
- inform customers how to progress their complaint if they remain dissatisfied

The coordinator will provide a summary of the complaints received to be included in the monthly data report to management team.

Unreasonably Persistent Complainants

We aim to respond to all complaints positively, and ensure that customers are satisfied with the way their complaint has been handled.

Very occasionally, a complainant will persist in communicating about a matter after they have received a full response to their complaint which impacts on Council resources and capacity to respond to the complaint effectively.

Continuing to respond to these complainants can take up a lot of time and reduce capacity to deal with other complaints effectively.

The Council has adopted an Unreasonably Persistent Complainants Policy that should be followed if an officer considers that a complainant's actions or behaviour is unacceptable or unreasonable.

Learning from Complaints

We collect and review feedback from our customers, and use this information to drive service improvement.

All formal customer complaints are recorded on the Council's corporate tracking system. Data about complaints is collated and shared across the Council to identify performance trends and review how we handle and respond to customer feedback. This includes:

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- how well we meet our target response times
- how effective we are in capturing complaints across the Council
- how customers prefer to contact us

Customer complaints are regularly reviewed across the Council to identify how we can improve our services. This includes:

- service managers making operational improvements in response to specific complaints
- regular review of upheld complaints at directorate and corporate performance reviews to identify issues that need addressing
- development of action plans to improve services, based on specific issues or trends in complaints

The Council will publish information about complaints – to inform customers about

how we handle complaints and show how we make changes as a result of customer feedback.

Confidentiality

Any personal data provided to the Council will be managed in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1988. The Council will use this information to respond to the customer and improve services.

Personal data will be kept anonymous in producing and sharing information about complaints with other services and partners.

Document Information and Version Control

Document Name Customer Complaints, Compliments and

Contacts Policy

Document Description This policy sets out how customers can

make a complaint about Council services, and how we will respond to and learn from complaints received.

Document; Status Current

Lead Officer; David Williams

Sponsor Nick; Baker

Produced by; Customer Services

Relevant to the services listed or all NNDC; All NNDC

Approved by CLT

Approval date September 2016

Type of document; Policy

Review interval Every 5 years

Next review date September 2021

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Officer Delegated Decisions (May to July 2020)

Summary: This report details the decisions taken by Senior Officers under delegated powers from 20th May to 18 June 2020.

Options considered: Not applicable.

Recommendations: **To receive and note the report and the register of officer decisions taken under delegated powers.**

Reasons for Recommendations: The Constitution: Chapter 6, Part 5, sections 5.1 and 5.2. details the exercise of any power or function of the Council where waiting until a meeting of Council or a committee would disadvantage the Council. The Constitution requires that any exercise of such powers should be reported to the next meeting of Council, Cabinet or working party (as appropriate)

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Delegated decision forms – as completed by the relevant officer

Cabinet Member(s) All	Ward(s) affected All
Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Emma Denny, Democratic Services Manager, 01263 516010	

1. Introduction

1.1 Officer delegated decision making process.

The officer delegated decision making process has been refreshed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic so that decisions that need to be made quickly can be. The reporting of decisions taken in this way has been strengthened, so it is clear that it is an officer decision that is being made, and the consultation requirements around those decisions. These decisions are available to the public through the website and are reported to Members through a weekly information bulletin. Key decisions are reported to Cabinet. The process for reporting and consulting on these decisions is contained in the Constitution at Chapter 6, 5.1 and 5.2 and the publication of these decisions is a legal requirement.

2. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

- 2.1 Following the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, the Council had to realign its resources and the committee meeting cycle was reviewed and adapted to accommodate the business coming through. The regulatory committees and Cabinet continued to meet from the outset, although not always on the scheduled cycle, with the oversight committees and some working parties recommencing from May 2020. Committee meetings continue to be held remotely. All decisions taken under delegation from mid-March onwards are recorded on the Council's website: <https://www.north-norfolk.gov.uk/tasks/democratic-services/officer-delegated-decisions/>
- 2.2 Several of the key decisions that were taken under delegation in the early stages of the pandemic, have now been re-visited and reversed and this is reflected in the summary list of officer decision (Appendix A). All of the decisions taken since March 2020 are included in the list.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The Constitution requires that for the exercise of any power or function of the Council in routine matters falling within established policies and existing budgets, where waiting until a meeting of the Council, a committee or working party would disadvantage the Council, an elector or a visitor to the District, then the officer exercising the power must consult with the Leader, the relevant portfolio holder and if it relates to a particular part of the District, the local member.
- 3.2 For the exercise of any power or function of the Council, which in law is capable of delegation, in an emergency threatening life, limb or substantial damage to property within the District, the senior officer shall consult with the Leader or the Deputy Leader. The Covid 19 pandemic was considered to fall within this category.
- 3.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive the delegated decisions list at their meetings so they can fully understand why they were taken and assess the impact on the Council.

4. Financial and Resource Implications

As many of the decisions taken by officers under delegated powers were key decisions there is a financial impact. The majority of the decisions reported to Cabinet on 6th July were related to Covid 19 and had not been included in the Budget set by Full Council on 26th February 2020.

5. Legal Implications

The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 require that all decisions, including those taken by officers, must state:

- The decision taken and the date it was made
- The reasons for the decision

- Details of options considered and rejected and the reasons why they were rejected
- Declarations of interest and any dispensations granted in respect of interests

Officers taking a decision under delegation are required to complete a form.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Several decisions, including key decisions, have been taken by senior officers under delegated authority during the Covid 19 pandemic. Each decision has been recorded and a summary is provided at Appendix A

Recommendation:

Cabinet is asked to receive and note the register of officer decisions taken under delegation.

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Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Delegated Power being exercised;	Key Decision y/n	Officer exercising Delegation	Details of decision made	Consultations undertaken	Date of decision	Date Reported to Council/Cabinet
<p><i>Chapter 6; Full delegation to Chief Officers</i></p> <p><i>Section 5.1: routine matters</i></p> <p><i>Section 5.2 Emergency powers</i></p>				<p><i>Section 5.1 : Leader or Portfolio Holder/Local Member</i></p> <p><i>Section 5.2: Leader or Deputy Leader</i></p>		
Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	To close a number of public conveniences which had seen vandalism and theft / removal of toilet rolls and liquid soap in response to panic buying as people prepared for anticipated Government statement on Coronavirus lockdown. The decision was taken to close 17 of the Council's 39 public conveniences in response to incidences of theft and vandalism over the past week and to allow redirection of cleansing staff to other activities.	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	19.03.20	18 May 2020
Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	Decision taken to close Coastal Car Parks operated by the District Council in light of large numbers of people visiting the coast over the weekend of 21 st and 22 nd March against Government guidance on social distancing and non-essential travel to try and limit the spread of Coronavirus	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	23.03.20	18 May 2020

Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	To close all public conveniences operated by the District Council on a temporary basis.	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	24.03.20	18 May 2020
Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	To close Cromer Pier for public access in light of Government guidance on social distancing and non-essential travel during the Coronavirus situation (extended on 16 April 2020)	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	24.03.20	18 May 2020
Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	To establish 10 Local Co-ordination Centres to support delivery of frontline community support to Shielding and Vulnerable People in the community in response to the Coronavirus national lockdown.	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	26.03.20	18 May 2020
Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	To send letter to all households in North Norfolk detailing contact details and community support arrangements in response to national Coronavirus lockdown – providing information on dedicated helpline and email address, Hardship Fund and Benefits advice, business advice, community volunteering etc. This was a Norfolk wide initiative – the costs of which district authorities agreed to meet at a district level	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	26.03.20	18 May 2020

Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Section 5.2	Yes	R. Young <i>Head of Economic & Community Growth</i>	To support the Council's leisure contractor with its immediate and longer term cashflow issues as a result of the Government's response to the Covid 19 emergency, which has statutorily required the closure of all leisure centres for use by members of the public for their intended use.	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	26.03.20	18 May 2020
Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	Decision taken to close Car Parks at Holt Country Park, Pretty Corner Woods and Vale Road Beach Access at Trimmingham in response to a request from local police due to large numbers of people undertaking non-essential travel to these sites for walking and exercise over weekend of 28 th and 29 th March against Government advice to limit the spread of Coronavirus	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	31.03.20	18 May 2020
Section 5.1	No	R. Young <i>Head of Economic & Community Growth</i>	North Walsham High Street Heritage Action Zone - Funding In the light of the funding offer and the current pandemic crisis, officers reviewed the budgetary position and the matter reported to Cabinet at its pre-Cabinet meeting, where the decision was taken to proceed with the scheme and to identify an appropriate source from which the necessary budget to be drawn.	Cabinet	04/05.20	4 th May 2020

Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Section 5.2	Yes	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	To re-confirm previous decisions made on 23 rd , 24 th and 31 st March to close coastal car parks and car parks at Holt Country Park, Pretty Corner Woods and Vale Road Beach access, Trimmingham; as well as all District Council public conveniences in support of the Government extension of the Coronavirus lockdown.	S.5.2 – Leader of the Council	16.04.20	18 May 2020
Section 5.1	Yes	E. Duncan <i>Head of Legal</i>	Cromer Sport Hub – mediation Mediation with a clear negotiation envelope was undertaken on 29 May 2020. A settlement figure was reached representing, in the view of the Head of Legal a good settlement option, and was well within the recommended settlement envelope.	S 5.1 – Portfolio Holder	29.05.20	01 June 2020
Section 5.2	No	S. Blatch <i>Chief Executive</i>	Street signage Printing of 7340 street signage decals – cost £33,030 plus VAT.	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	03.06.2020	06 July 2020
Section 5.1	no	D. Ellis <i>Head of Finance</i>	Staithe Street car park, Wells To reopen and operate as a public pay and display car park.	S 5.1 – Portfolio Holder	01.06.2020	6 July 2020

Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Section 5.2:	Yes	Chief Executive	to temporarily suspend coach parking facilities in the Cadogan Road Car Park, Cromer and Station Approach Car Park, Sheringham and re-line for use as car parking spaces for this summer season	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	08.06.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	No	Chief Executive	To re-confirm previous decisions made on 24 th March and 16 th April to close Cromer Pier for public access in light of Government guidance on social distancing and non-essential travel during the Coronavirus situation in support of Government advice that people should only leave home for a limited number of essential activities	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	08.05.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	Yes	Chief Executive	Decision to allow COVID mobile testing facilities to be operated by military personnel to operate from NNDC car parks at The Meadow, Cromer and Highfield Road, Fakenham	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	30.04.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	Yes	Chief Executive	Adoption of Return to Work guidance and implementation of measures within the NNDC offices and Fakenham Connect so that the Council is able to demonstrate compliance with the COVID-secure requirements outlined by the Government.	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	08.06.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	Yes	Chief Executive	Decision to re-open Cromer Pier for public access, including the public toilets, from 1 st June.	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	29.05.2020	06.07.2020

Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Section 5.2:	Yes	Chief Executive	To move forward with a programme of social distancing measures to support the Re-opening of our High Streets and Tourist Areas Safely under the “You are Welcome” project branding.	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	08.06.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	Yes	Chief Executive	Decision to re-open the following public toilets from 22 nd May: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach Road, Wells-next-the-Sea • The Quay, Blakeney • Lushers Passage, Sheringham • Water Lane, West Runton • The Meadow, Cromer • Beach Road, Mundesley • Coast Road, Walcott • Beach Road, Sea Palling • Station Road, Hoveton 	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	20.05.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	No	Chief Executive	Decision to re-open the Beach Lane, Weybourne Coastal car park following a request from Weybourne Parish Council from Friday 15 th May.	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	14.05.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	No	Chief Executive	Decision to re-open the Clink Lane, Sea Palling Coastal car park from 21 st May.	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	20.05.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2:	No	Chief Executive	Decision to re-open the following Coastal car parks from 29 th May. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach Road, East Runton • Runton Road, Cromer • Pauls Lane, Overstrand • Gold Park, Mundesley • Cart Gap, Happisburgh 	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	20.05.2020	06.07.2020

Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Section 5.2:	No	Chief Executive	Decision to re-open the car parks at Holt Country Park, and Pretty Corner Woods from Wednesday 13 th May in response to the Prime Minister’s statement of the 10 th May that people would be allowed to travel for exercise.	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	11.05.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2	Yes	Chief Executive	<p>Decision to re-open the following public toilets from 29th May.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stearman’s Yard Car Park, Wells • Bridge Street Car Park, Fakenham • Bridewell Street, Walsingham • Albert Street Car Park, Holt • Holt Country Park, Holt • The Lees, Sheringham • Beach Road Car Park, East Runton • Runton Road Car Park, Cromer • Cadogan Road Car Park, Cromer • West Prom, Cromer • North Lodge Park, Cromer • Pauls Lane Car Park, Overstrand • New Road Car Park, North Walsham • The Promenade, Mundesley • Cart Gap Car Park, Happisburgh • Ludham Bridge, Ludham • Horning Village Car Park, Horning • Adjacent Lathams, Potter Heigham 	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	20.05.2020	06.07.2020

Record of Decisions taken under Delegated Authority (Appendix A)

Section 5.2	Yes	Chief Executive	<p>Decision to re-open the following public toilets from 29th May.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Queens Road Car Park, Fakenham • Highfield Road, Fakenham • Newgates Lane, Wells • East Prom, Sheringham • Vicarage Street Car Park, North Walsham • Coast Road, Bacton • Womack Water, Ludham • Hickling Broad, Hickling 	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	08.06.2020	06.07.2020
Section 5.2	No	Chief Executive	<p>Agreement to request made by Fakenham Town Council for the Bridge Street public toilets in the town to be opened, initially on Thursday 21st and Thursday 28th May, to support the phased re-opening of the town's Charter Market.</p>	s.5.2 – Leader of the Council (Gold Command meeting)	18.05.2020	06.07.2020

Sheringham Leisure Centre: project update July 2020

Detailed information relating to any aspect of the project can be obtained from Robert Young (Senior Reporting Officer) or Kate Rawlings (Project Manager) and clarification of any aspect of the table's content can be provided at or following the meeting.

	Forecast/ expected position	Current position	Notes/ comments
Time	Completion of phase 1 of the project (completion of the new building, ready for its occupation): 29 Aug 2021	Delays in the completion date are anticipated due to the compounding effects of the previously reported on-site (infrastructure etc.), the poor weather earlier in the year and then the impacts of COVID-19. The occupation of the leisure centre is expected to be 29 th August, however the demolition and finalisation of the project, will be after that date. The expected total overrun, taking account of the inefficiencies inherent in the working practices required by current public health guidelines, is fourteen weeks.	The construction programme is being fully updated and potential options for reducing the length of any overrun are being evaluated.
Budget	£12,697,139	£12,697,139	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change to overall budget, however additional costs have been incurred due to the on-site issues previously reported, and the consequent programme delays – these are expected to amount to £130,000 • The value engineering target has been met by the construction contractor, in order to achieve the identified savings at the contract stage • Some consequential increases in professional fee costs may be incurred due to the programme delays - these

			<p>will obviously depend upon the extent of the delays in completion and have yet to be calculated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The construction contingency (currently £119,000) and client contingency (£74,191) are being reviewed and may in part be used to cover the cost increase mentioned above.
Issues log		<p>The principal issues to-date have been the causes for delays identified above, resulting from the on-site issues, weather, COVID-19 shut-down and ongoing working practices.</p> <p>The Council was asked by the contractor (Metnor) to be supportive during the period affected by the pandemic crisis and, in accordance with the procurement advice issued by government, the Council continued to pay invoices for the period that the site closed down (which in effect pays for a small element of the work 'up front'). This will be reconciled later in the programme.</p>	<p>The site operations were closed down due to COVID-19 for a total of 5.4 weeks (26th March – 4th May 2020).</p> <p>Site recommenced with safe site operating procedures in place to manage risk of virus spread, however this inevitably led to a slow start (losing a total of four days, against 'normal')</p> <p>Sub-contractors and suppliers were similarly affected</p> <p>It is forecast that a further seven days will be lost due to the inefficiencies resulting from the need to maintain social distancing, managing the hygiene, health and safety of the workforce.</p>
Risk log	A risk log is being maintained. These are routinely monitored and revised, and controls are introduced to manage/ mitigate risks and provide assurance	The risks remain as previously reported, however, the risk associated with any potential 'second spike' have to be considered. In addition, the risk of contractors' or sub-contractors' businesses or suppliers failing needs to be revised; however, there are no known	The risk log will be updated to take account of the current situation and any anticipated risks, with mitigation.

		problems to report with respect to this.	
Project Governance	The Portfolio Holder (PH) is Cllr Virginia Gay, the Council's Senior Reporting Officer (SRO) is Robert Young and the internal Project Manager is Kate Rawlings. Various other technical experts from within the Council are involved in the project as appropriate. The Council has procured the services of: an Employer's Agent, Project Manager and Cost Consultant (all provided by REAL Consulting); a Technical Architect (Saunders Boston Architects); and a Mechanical, Electrical and Pool Filtration Consultant (Silcock Dawson)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project team and responsibilities remain unchanged and meetings and reporting are occurring as scheduled. One meeting was skipped whilst the site was closed down. 	All project meetings have carried on more or less as normal – although held virtually.
Communications	<p>The Communications Plan covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned activities at key milestones • Responses to issues and events as they occur • Routine communications to interested parties (including via the website) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications about the project have taken a back seat due to the recent events, however it is now reaching a visible milestone, when the steelwork will emerge above the site hoardings, and so the communications plan will be reviewed and key milestones suitably marked. • The name of the new Sheringham Leisure Centre needs to be agreed in order for the signage design to be agreed and the relevant fixings included within the scheme. • Opportunities were being explored to use this substantial project to showcase the career opportunities that can arise. That is having to be rethought, due to the current circumstances, and the various constraints that is imposing (resources and practicalities/ logistics), 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The website continues to be kept up to date as the key source of information. • The Locality Leisure Services team will work with the new Communications Manager and his team (together with Metnor and Everyone active) to revise the communications plan, plotting the milestones in the project and devising ways in which we can count down to the completion of this very significant investment in health and wellbeing in the district.

		however we will work with the contractor in the coming months to identify appropriate ways shine a light on the project and find ways to inspire young people.	
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MARKET TOWN INITIATIVE – INTERIM UPDATE

Summary: This report aims to bring Members of the Committee up to speed on the current status of the Market Town Initiative fund in the context of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Options considered: Options considered included:

1. Maintain the current completion deadlines for MTI projects from rounds two and three with no extension of the timeframes for project completion.
2. Request a return of funds for projects no longer viable under the current circumstances.
3. Convene a meeting of the MTI Working Group to review the status of all active MTI projects in detail.
4. Offer a blanket extension of six months to allow applicants to fully implement projects from rounds two and three of MTI funding.

Conclusions: Applicants' projects have been significantly impacted by the circumstances of COVID-19, and as a result are unlikely to fully implement their projects within the given timeframes set out in their funding agreement. Where requested, applicants should be offered an extension to their completion deadline to account for these unprecedented circumstances.

Recommendations: **To offer a blanket extension of six months to the completion deadlines of MTI projects from rounds two and three, to account for the impact and delays caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To allow successful applicants more time to implement projects in light of the delays caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Cllr R Kershaw	Holt, Lancaster North, Lancaster South, North Walsham East, North Walsham West, North Walsham Market Cross, and Stalham

Contact Officer, telephone number and email:

Matt Stembrowicz, 01263 516047, matthew.stembrowicz@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Rob Young, 01263 516162, Robert.young@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Emma Duncan, 01263 516045 Emma.Duncan@north-norfolk.gov.uk

1. Current Status of the MTI Fund

- 1.1 Subsequent to the payment of grants from the third round of MTI funding, a total of £399,914.83 has now been awarded to eligible applicants from North Norfolk's four inland market towns from the available £400,000.
- 1.2 Whilst some projects may be expected to return funds due to reduced costs, changes in circumstances, or an inability to secure all relevant permissions to implement projects, at present remaining funds total £85.17. As a result, no further rounds of funding are planned to take place.
- 1.3 Any returned funds will be placed in the general reserve.
- 1.4 From a total of twenty-seven applications, eighteen were awarded funding, with nine in round one, five in round two, and four in round three.

2. Status of MTI Funding Rounds 1, 2, and 3

- 2.1 Grant payments for round one of MTI funding were made throughout the month of January 2019, with completion expected in January 2020. To date only two round one projects have not been completed due to unforeseen circumstances that have been closely monitored by officers. One project in the town of Holt is known to have experienced problems that are likely to affect its deliverability (in which case funds for that will be expected to be returned), and one project in Stalham was delayed due to issues with contractors and additional funding required for planning permission.
- 2.2 Grant payments for round two of the MTI were made throughout the month of September 2019, with completion originally expected in September 2020. Whilst feedback on progress has generally been positive, Covid-19 has caused several projects, though still likely to be viable, to be delayed. It is anticipated that most applicants will not have fully implemented round 2 projects by the September deadline, and may require an extension in most cases.
- 2.3 Grant payments for round three MTI projects were made throughout the month of December 2019. As a result, the anticipated date of completion for MTI round three projects is December 2020. It is expected that some round three projects may also require an extension to the completion deadline.
- 2.4 The outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic has caused a number of active MTI projects to stall, with most applicants focusing on the crisis at hand.
- 2.5 Officers are in the process of contacting all applicants with active projects and have been informed that several projects are behind schedule as a result of the crisis and may seek to extend the completion date of their projects.
- 2.6 It is therefore recommended that Members approve a blanket six-month extension to the completion date of all applicable projects (where required). This extension would allow applicants time to adjust and complete projects in a timely and safe manner, or to discuss with officers any matters that might affect their deliverability and the timescales involved. Some project applicants may wish to review unimplemented projects in the light of the impact of Covid-19 on town centres, and the temporary measures that have been taken to reopen the high streets safely.

3. Pending Overview & Scrutiny Process Review

- 3.1 Prior to the outbreak of the Coronavirus Pandemic, it was anticipated that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee would undertake a process review of the Market Town Initiative within the 2019/20 municipal year.
- 3.2 Taking into account the expected delays caused by Covid-19, a full process review is now likely to take place in early 2021, in order to allow all projects to achieve completion prior to review.
- 3.3 In light of this delay, it may be beneficial to convene a meeting of the MTI Working Group to allow Members involved in the initiative a chance to review the status of all active MTI projects.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1. The Market Towns Initiative represents a good opportunity for the Council to support its inland market towns during a period of change.
- 7.2. A total of £ £399,914.83 of funding has been awarded across the four market towns. A total of £85.17 remains from the original £400,000 available, and whilst some funds may be returned due to an inability to complete projects, it is not expected that any further funding will take place.

8. Implications and Risks

Reputational risk to the Council remains a possibility if funding is spent incorrectly, although agreed funding conditions allow for the return of funds should this be the case.

9. Financial Implications and Risks

The funding for the project was allocated within the budget for 2018/19. Financial information has been sought from applicants in order to ensure that the financial risk to the Council is as limited as possible, and so that funds can be returned if not used within the guidelines of the Market Towns Initiative.

10. Sustainability

The initiative focuses on the revitalization of market town centres, to assist in the maintenance of sustainable patterns of behavior. Project sustainability is a key consideration of the judging process and it has been made clear that any ongoing costs must be met by the applicants.

11. Equality and Diversity

The Equality and Diversity policies of applicants' relevant governing bodies has been sought where applicable in order to ensure compliance with NNDC policy.

12. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

None.

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North Norfolk District Council
Cabinet Work Programme
For the Period 01 August 30 November 2020

Decision Maker(s)	Meeting Date	Subject & Summary	Cabinet Member(s) Lead Officer	Corporate Plan Theme	Status / additional comments
Please note that programme from July to September is subject to change due to the impact of Covid 19					
August					
Cabinet	03 Aug 2020	Out-turn report	Eric Seward <i>Duncan Ellis</i> <i>Head of Finance & Assets</i>	<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Aug 2020				
Council	Tbc				
Cabinet	03 Aug 2020	Treasury Management Annual Report	Eric Seward <i>Lucy Hume</i> <i>Chief Technical Accountant</i>	<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Aug 2020				
Council	Tbc				
Cabinet	03 Aug 2020	Debt Management Annual Report	Eric Seward <i>Sean Knight</i> <i>Revenues Manager</i>	<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Aug 2020				
Council	tbc				
Cabinet	03 Aug 2020	Financial Impact – Covid 19	Eric Seward <i>Duncan Ellis</i> <i>Head of Finance & Assets</i>	<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	
Scrutiny	12 Aug 2020				
Council	tbc				



Key Decision – a decision which is likely to incur expenditure or savings of £100,000 or more, or affect two or more wards. (NNDC Constitution, p9 s12.2b)

* Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (As amended by the Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Exempt Information) (England) Order 2006)

North Norfolk District Council
Cabinet Work Programme
For the Period 01 August 30 November 2020

Decision Maker(s)	Meeting Date	Subject & Summary	Cabinet Member(s) Lead Officer	Corporate Plan Theme	Status / additional comments
Cabinet Scrutiny	03 Aug 2020	Covid 19 – Recovery Plan	Sarah Butikofer Steve Blatch Chief Executive	Customer Focus	
Cabinet	03 Aug 2020	Property Transactions (Lease renewal Cromer Promenade)	Greg Hayman Andrew Brown Nicky Debbage Renata Garfoot	Financial Sustainability Local Homes for Local Need	 Exempt Information
Cabinet	03 Aug 2020	Business & Planning Bill – Licensing Fees	Nigel Lloyd Tracy Howard	Financial Sustainability	
Cabinet	03 Aug 2020	Decisions taken under delegated authority	All Emma Denny Democratic Services Manager		
September					
Cabinet Scrutiny	07 Sep 2020 16 Sep 2020	Budget Monitoring P4	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis Head of Finance	Financial Sustainability	



Key Decision – a decision which is likely to incur expenditure or savings of £100,000 or more, or affect two or more wards. (NNDC Constitution, p9 s12.2b)

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North Norfolk District Council
Cabinet Work Programme
For the Period 01 August 30 November 2020

Decision Maker(s)	Meeting Date	Subject & Summary	Cabinet Member(s) Lead Officer	Corporate Plan Theme	Status / additional comments
Cabinet	07 Sep 2020	Performance Management Q1	Eric Seward Helen Thomas Policy & Performance Management Officer	<i>Customer Focus</i>	
Scrutiny	16 Sep 2020				
October 2020					
Cabinet	05 Oct 2020	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis Head of Finance	<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	
Scrutiny	14 Oct 2020				
Council	18 Nov 2020				
Cabinet	05 Oct 2020	Council Tax Discount Determination 2020/21	Eric Seward Lucy Hume Chief Technical Accountant	<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	
Scrutiny	14 Oct 2020				
November 2020					
Cabinet	02 Nov 2020	Budget Monitoring P6	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis Head of Finance	<i>Financial Sustainability</i>	
Scrutiny	11 Nov 2020				



Key Decision – a decision which is likely to incur expenditure or savings of £100,000 or more, or affect two or more wards. (NNDC Constitution, p9 s12.2b)

* Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (As amended by the Local Authorities (Access to Information) (Exempt Information) (England) Order 2006)

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Meeting	Topic	Lead Officer / Member	Objectives & desired outcomes	Time cycle
May 2020				
Cabinet Scrutiny	NNDC Covid-19 Response	Sarah Butikofer Steve Blatch	To review the NNDC response to the Covid-19 pandemic	
Cabinet Scrutiny	Covid-19 2020/21 Budget Impact Report	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To review the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's 2020/21 budget	
Scrutiny	Review of delegated decisions		To review any delegated decisions that have been made as a result the Covid-19 Pandemic	
July				
Cabinet Scrutiny	NNDC Transition from Response to Recovery Coronavirus Pandemic	Steve Blatch Sarah Bütikofer	To brief Members on NNDC's transition from the response to the recovery stage of the Covid-19 Pandemic	
Cabinet Scrutiny	Review of Delegated Decisions	Emma Denny	To allow Members an opportunity to review decisions taken under delegated authority	
Scrutiny	Sheringham Leisure Centre Project Update	Rob Young Virginia Gay	To update Members on the status of the Sheringham Leisure Centre Project	Quarterly
Scrutiny	Market Town Initiative - Interim Update	Matt Stembrowicz Richard Kershaw	To update Members on the current status of MTI projects in relation to the impact of Covid-19	Requested by Chairman
August				
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Debt Management Annual Report	Eric Seward Sean Knight	To review the Report and make any necessary recommendations to Council	Annual
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Out-turn report	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To make any recommendations to Council	Annual
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Treasury Management Annual Report	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To make recommendations to Council	Annual
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Financial Impact Covid-19	Duncan Ellis Eric Seward	To review any budget revision suggestions in relation to the financial impact of Covid-19	
September				
Cabinet Scrutiny	Budget Monitoring P4	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To review the budget monitoring position	

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Meeting	Topic	Lead Officer / Member	Objectives & desired outcomes	Time cycle
October				
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Council Tax Discount Determinations	Lucy Hume/Eric Seward	To determine the Council Tax discounts for 2020/21	Annual
November				
Cabinet Scrutiny	Budget Monitoring P6	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To review the budget monitoring position	Periodical
Scrutiny	Crime & Disorder Briefing	Nigel Dixon Matt Stembrowicz	PCC and district Superintendent to provide a briefing on TBC	Annual
December				
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Treasury Management Half-Yearly Report	Eric Seward Lucy Hume	To consider the treasury management activities	Six Monthly
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Medium Term Financial Strategy	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To review the Medium Term Financial Strategy	Annual – before 2021/22 Budget
January 2021				
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	2021/22 Base Budget and Projections for 2022/23 to 2023/24	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To review the proposed budget and projections	Annual

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Meeting	Topic	Lead Officer / Member	Objectives & Desired Outcomes	Time cycle
February				
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Treasury Strategy 2020/21	Eric Seward Lucy Hume	To review the treasury management activities and strategy for the investment of surplus funds	Annual
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Capital Strategy	Eric Seward Lucy Hume	To review the deployment of capital resources to meet Council objectives & framework for management of the capital programme	Annual
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Investment Strategy	Eric Seward Lucy Hume	To review the Council's Investment Strategy for the year 2020-21	Annual
March				
Cabinet Scrutiny	Budget Monitoring P10	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis	To review the budget monitoring position	
April				
Cabinet Scrutiny	Enforcement Board Update	Nigel Lloyd	To receive an update Enforcement Board cases – inc how to raise concerns, resourcing of team and overview of properties	Six-monthly

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

Meeting	Topic	Lead Officer / Member	Objectives & Desired Outcomes	Time cycle
Outstanding/To be Confirmed				
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Affordable Housing Strategy		Pre-Scrutiny of the affordable housing strategy	
Scrutiny	Waste Contract Monitoring	Nigel Lloyd Steve Hems	To review the performance of the new waste contractor	Six Monthly
Scrutiny	Monitor resource implications for Homelessness Strategy			Requested by Committee
Scrutiny	Website design/functionality		To review the functionality of the Council's website	Requested by the Committee
Cabinet Scrutiny	Performance Management TBC	Helen Thomas	To monitor the performance of the Council and consider any resulting recommendations	Quarterly
Cabinet Scrutiny Council	Annual Action Plan TBC	Sarah Bütikofer Helen Thomas		Annual
Scrutiny Council	Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2018/19	Matt Stembrowicz	Committee to approve and recommend to Council	Annual
Scrutiny	Market Towns Initiative Monitoring/Process Review	Matt Stembrowicz Richard Kershaw	To monitor the implementation of successful MTI applicants and review the funding process	Requested by the Committee
Scrutiny	Beach Huts & Chalets Monitoring	Maxine Collis Greg Hayman	To monitor performance of Beach Huts & Chalets	Requested by the Committee
Scrutiny	Ambulance Response Times/First Responders Briefing			Requested by the Committee
Scrutiny	Equality & Diversity Policy			
Cabinet Scrutiny	Budget Monitoring P2	Eric Seward Duncan Ellis		TBC

**Overview & Scrutiny June 2020
Outcomes & Action List**

	ACTION BY <i>(Additional comments in italics)</i>	PROGRESS / COMPLETION
<p><u>ITEM 10: NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC</u></p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>1. To note the report.</p>	O&S Committee	Complete
<p><u>ITEM 11: ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS – NNDC COVID-19 RECOVERY</u></p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>1. To note the report.</p>	O&S Committee	Complete
<p><u>ITEM 12: ITEM OF URGENT BUSINESS – COVID-19 TOWN CENTRE SOCIAL DISTANCING</u></p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>1. To note the report</p>	O&S Committee	Complete
<p><u>ITEM 13: COVID-19 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</u></p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>1. To note the report.</p>	O&S Committee	Complete

ITEM 14: OFFICER DELEGATED DECISIONS (MARCH TO
MAY 2020)

RESOLVED

1. To note the report.

O&S Committee

Complete