

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**24 June 2020**

### **COUNCILLOR S BUTIKOFER - CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER SERVICES**

For the period March 2020 to June 2020

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

**The following paragraphs represent just some of the actions taken by the various customer services teams to directly deliver and support the corporately identified essential services respond to meet the needs of individuals, businesses and communities resulting from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.**

##### **The Digital Mailroom has;**

- Continued to operate from the building throughout lockdown to support the essential services delivered by Council Tax, Housing Benefits, Business Support Grants and Vulnerable persons.
- Implemented scanning at the point of entry for all incoming post and distributes it electronically.
- Continued to deliver digital services to all traditional service areas of Revenues and Benefits and Planning and expanded to support other service areas to allow off site working.
- Implemented opening, sorting, scanning and distribution of all postal items enabling services to maintain delivery whilst working from home. This has been successful and benefits have been identified in regards to scanning documents e.g. Invoicing.
- Supported the numerous mailshots sent out to businesses and individuals directly in support of the councils actions to assist with the impacts of Covid-19.
- Taken on the issuing and dispatch of all Car Park permits taken via online and telephone applications to enable home working by Customer Services Colleagues
- Provided a print and post option to services where docmail is not available to facilitate other services working from home.

- Continued to support the Print Room when the operative has been on leave and was to self-isolating.
- Implemented the single point of procurement and distribution of essential PPE equipment to support to colleagues delivering the new and existing frontline services in the community.
- Processed cash transactions and were essential to the operation of the LCC hubs and provided petty cash to enable them to help the communities.

**Reprographics has;**

- Worked with a number of the essential service areas such as Council Tax, Benefits and Business rates sections, on the distribution of letters and forms to NNDC customers on how they are able to access the various grants. This has been an ongoing requirement since Lockdown started.
- Produced multiple signs in a range of sizes to ensure that the public have clear and consistent information for example on social distancing requirements and toilet closures. The need for additional and bespoke signage will continue as the District starts to re-open and adapt to new requirements to support our community and economy.

**Customer Services has;**

- Extended operating hours to cover the Covid-19 Helpline and email inbox between 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am to 4pm Saturday, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Taken on all incoming calls previously taken by colleagues in Council Tax & Housing Benefits to free the staff in those services to focus on processing work.
- Taken all Covid-19 calls and email enquiries from individuals and customers and offered assisted service for Business Support Grant applications.
- 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.
- Completed all necessary information required to enable the delivery of services to the vulnerable persons and liaise with the LCC's.
- Made calls to hundreds of businesses to ensure they were able to apply for the Business Support Grant.

- 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.
- Implemented an electronic Food Bank voucher system to enable those in need to obtain food for their families.
- Ensured that all other day to day customer services were continued.

The team was supported at the peak of the Covid-19 demand by the redeployment of staff with previous NNDC customer service experience which we are immensely grateful for. The close co-operation between teams and the quick actions of support services such as colleagues in IT have enabled great transition and the Customer services team are very grateful for the support provided and the positive spirit this was all achieved with.

## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

The services have completed Service Area Operating Manuals to ensure that they can adjust their service delivery to customers whilst ensuring compliance with government guidance as the council moves in transition to returning to work.

Preparations are underway to ensure compliance with government guidance for retail businesses so that the North Norfolk Visitor Centre is able to re-open the retail element to the public with a current target date of 4<sup>th</sup> July.