

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 September 2020

### **COUNCILLOR S BUTIKOFER - CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES & STRATEGY (CUSTOMER SERVICES)**

For the period June 2020 to September 2020

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

##### **Reprographics:**

During the Covid-19 Lockdown, Reprographics has worked with a number of departments and within the last couple of weeks has helped the Council Tax and Business rates to start producing soft reminder payment letters to our customers.

Reprographics has produced multiple signs in a range of sizes this has now included the signage to replace some of the early Covid signs with the new 'You are Welcome!' signage.

##### **Customer Services:**

Although our offices are currently only open to those with a pre-booked appointment service to our customers has continued to be delivered throughout the lockdown period

The following table shows the number of pre-booked customer appointments held at our offices between 23 March and 28 August 2020;

Week Commencing	Face to face appointments
29/06	4
06/07	5
13/07	7
20/07	6
27/07	5
03/08	9
10/08	3
17/08	7
24/08	7

Customers contacting the council online has increased as shown by the following table;

	April	May	June	July	August
Online Contact Us Form 2019/20	522	176	125	195	185
Online Contact Us Form 2020/21	444	355	351	351	359
Increase/Decrease	-15%	101%	180%	80%	94%

(April 2019 was disproportionately high due to customer contact regarding the Bacton Sandscaping project and the environmental impact of netting on the cliffs)

Customer contact by telephone has also increased:

	April	May	June	July	August
CS Calls 2019/20	3554	3623	2907	6536	3375
<b>Total Calls 2020/21</b>	<b>7182</b>	<b>4783</b>	<b>5518</b>	<b>5748</b>	<b>5948</b>
Increase/Decrease	102%	32%	89%	-12%	76%
Percentage made up of additional calls (CT/Business Rates, Housing Benefits, Covid-19)	73.38%	61.80%	43.64%	30.86%	29.20%

(July 2019 was disproportionately high due to customer contact regarding Garden Bin payments)

## 2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

### **Reprographics:**

The current main Reprographics equipment contract is due to end in June 2021. The contract is a 5-year rental agreement for one mono (black and white) printer and one colour printer along with the necessary software. The contract was procured and awarded via the government Crown Commercial Framework with 5 companies bidding for the contract. Xerox was awarded the contract and over the life of the contract so far, the printers have been reliable and produced good quality print. Overall, the print machines and software have met the Council's corporate printing requirements.

It is prudent to start the procurement process in good time, with the indicative timescale as follows:

September to November 2020 – Soft market testing to identify equipment availability to meet needs and indicative costs

December 2020 – Cabinet paper to seek approval to procure new print equipment

January 2021 – Procurement via Crown Commercial Framework

February 2021 - Award contract (subject to satisfactory procurement – quality/price)

May – June 2020 – Installation.

**Customer Services:**

As the council moves towards seeing more customers in the office there will be a reduction in the pool of Customer Service Advisors available to take calls. Since lockdown customer services have been the first point of contact for calls to Housing Benefits, Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Options so that back office staff time is freed up to deal with processing. There will be a need to carefully consider how best to resource these calls going forward so that customer satisfaction is maintained and service levels maintained.