

Downham Market & Hunstanton Offices – Closure Review

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Background

- Downham Market and Hunstanton offices were open 2 days a week
- Increase in digital services
- DWP withdrawing from both offices
- No longer selling food waste bags
- Significant reduction in enquiries resulted in a poor use of staff time

- Report to CPP in July 2017
- Requested to carry out consultation with users and report back results
- Cabinet report in August 2017
- Closure date agreed as 30th September 2017
- Full Equalities Impact Assessment carried out and reviewed by the Corporate Equalities Group



Closure Action Plan

- Partners informed of changes
- All customers visiting the offices were advised of the closure
- Engaged with Communications Team
- Liaison with Property Services
- Arranged for transfer of TIC to King's Lynn

Equality Impact Assessment

- Withdrawal of a 'Community Hub'
- Some customers may be digitally excluded for a variety of reasons
- Customers potentially having to travel to King's Lynn instead of accessing services locally
- Elderly customers missing the contact with staff

Mitigating Actions

- Communication of alternative methods of contact
- Promotion of online services and the benefits they could bring
- Promotion of the Visiting Officer service
- Signposted customers to other agencies (Town and/or Parish Council)
- Promotion of the Community Information Points



Customer Feedback

- Results of consultation indicated customers would use the telephone as alternative method of contact
- Some negative comments and correspondence sent to members
- Listened to customers views and tried to offer alternatives
- Focused on potential barriers to accessing services and not resistance to change



After Closure

- Increase in telephone calls
- All equipment returned to King's Court
- Property Services investigating future use of premises
- Hunstanton – part of One Public Estate project
- Downham Market – still discussing lease arrangements with NCC



Customers

- Very little feedback following the closure
- Comments focused on concerns about travelling to King's Lynn to supply documentation
- Can be posted but some customers prefer not to
- Can be scanned and emailed or photographed and uploaded
- Visiting Officer visit if required



Conclusion

- Closure has freed resource for the very busy Contact Centre
- Some negativity from customers
- No significant issues
- Communications plan worked well
- CIC worked hard to ensure as little inconvenience as possible for customers

- Questions?