

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FROM CABINET ON 3 NOVEMBER 2015

CAB78 CUSTOMER SERVICES AND CHANNEL SHIFT

The Assistant Director Central & Community Services explained that the Council had embarked on a channel shift programme which aimed to reduce the cost of delivery of council services by shifting the channel used by customers to contact the Council to the most efficient and appropriate method for that service. Significant progress had been made in relation to the council's corporate channel shift project, resulting in:

- The launch of an online housing benefit and council tax support claim form.
- Risk based verification for benefit applications.
- Implementation of an interactive voice response system (IVR).
- 85% of planning applications are now made online.
- Over 99% of council job applications are now made online.
- Online Support Officers helping with assisted self-service.
- 1,000's of online forms submitted.

More digital services would be launched over the next few months. The development and implementation of digital services, together with the need to make budget savings had resulted in a review of the existing model of service delivery with a view to managing demand for services. The CIC offices at Kings Court, Downham Market and Hunstanton operated a walk in enquiry desk facility. 7 members of staff were needed on the ground floor of Kings Court and one at each area office to respond to customer enquiries. Those staff were required to be trained in every service offered so that they were able respond to any enquiry which was presented. At busy times customers could have to wait up to 1.5 hours in order to be seen.

With new technology and processes available online, the need for customers to visit the offices in person would reduce. There would not be a need to retain all enquiry counters but equally a face-to-face service was required where this was the best option for that customer. It was therefore proposed to cease the drop in service for enquiries at Kings Court and to offer customers who were unable to resolve their enquiry by telephone, an appointment with a trained advisor who would be able to assist them with their enquiry at a pre-arranged time.

It was noted that the main reception at King's Court would continue to have two members of staff at all times, together with at least one Online Support Officer. They could resolve straightforward enquiries, signpost customers, help customers with self-service, receive deliveries, greet visitors, make appointments and continue to sell caddy liners as they currently did.

The opening hours for the offices at Hunstanton and Downham Market would reduce to 2 days per week to mirror the opening hours of the DWP office situation in the same buildings.

With regard to the savings to be made with the proposals, it was explained that this linked with previous undertakings relating to channel shift where reductions in staffing levels had been identified. The new arrangements would ensure a much more efficient use of staff time, targeting it to specific appointments instead of waiting on customers coming into the office. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services commented that following earlier changes made it was apparent that customers didn't react badly to change providing it was communicated well and a palatable alternative was given.

Councillor Long asked if it would be possible to look into selling caddy liners via a vending machine in the office in order to save on staff time. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services confirmed it would be something which could be investigated, but reminded Members that there would always be someone on reception at King's Court, and whilst the area offices would be opened less, the liners could be bought from the Oasis and Downham Market Leisure Centre.

Councillor Beales asked if the issue of caddy liners was a channel shift item or environment. Councillor Long reminded Members that the recycling of food was of benefit to the Council with the credits of £50 per tonne being awarded. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services informed Members that she was in the process of looking at a process of making the bags available so they could be accessed whilst ensuring it was cost neutral to the authority.

Councillor Mrs Nockolds asked what the situation would be for the Community Coffee Shop and its volunteers. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services responded that she believed the coffee shop had been brought back in house, still supported by the volunteers so their situation wouldn't be affected.

In response to a question from Councillor Blunt, it was confirmed that Duty staff would continue to be available in Housing to deal with homelessness cases and other emergency situations.

Councillor Beales commented that he felt it was more efficient to offer a specific time slot to customers rather than a walk in service, and asked if it was a core principle that would work for the Council. The Assistant Director Central & Community Services responded that as an advocate for the customer she felt it would be a better service for them, meeting the needs as required.

Councillor Beales asked whether the logistical and financial advantages to the Council would be quantified to which the Assistant Director Central & Community Services explained that a number of other proposals relating to Channel Shift which would introduce saving had yet to be in, but an early review of the impact of the changes would be carried out following 6-9 months of the proposal being implemented.

Councillor Beales drew attention to the point raised by the Resources and Performance Panel which sought confirmation that adequate consultation and

communication would take place prior to implementation and asked for confirmation of this which was confirmed.

RECOMMENDED: That the following be agreed:

- 1) The withdrawal of a drop in service for enquiries at King's Court and to offer pre-booked appointments to customers who are unable to resolve their enquiry by telephone or online.
- 2) The reduction of the opening days at the Downham Market Office to 2 days per week (Monday and Friday).
- 3) The reduction of the opening days at the Hunstanton Office to 2 days per week (Tuesday and Thursday).
- 4) That adequate consultation and communications arrangements be put in place prior to implementation in April 2016.

CAB80: LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Councillor Lawrence invited the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) to present the report which explained that the current 'Statement of Licensing Policy' was approved by Full Council on the 25th November 2010 with a minor amendment approved on the 28th January 2010. Regulations required that the policy be reviewed every five years and a replacement for our current policy must be in place by the 7th January 2016. The policy had been drawn up in accordance with guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and best practice issued by local government regulation (the new name for lacors).

Consultation had been carried out on the proposed changes to the policy, the amended version of which was now considered.

It was noted that the Joint Panels Meeting had supported the Recommendations.

RECOMMENDED: That the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be adopted in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003.

CAB81 GAMBLING ACT - REVIEW OF POLICIES

Councillor Lawrence invited the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) to present the report which explained that the Gambling Act 2005 required every local authority to agree a Statement of Principles (previously referred to as 'Statement of Licensing Policy) in accordance with the Statutory Guidance issued under the Act to be in place by January 2016. The policy had been drawn up in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Gambling Commission and had been subject to consultation.

It was noted that the Joint Panels Meeting had supported the Recommendations.

RECOMMENDED: That the Council be invited to adopt the Statement of Principles in accordance with the requirements of the Gambling Act 2005.

CAB82 REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING FEES

Cabinet considered a report which explained that the Deregulation Act 2015 introduced a few changes to hackney carriage and private hire legislation from the 1st October 2015.

These changes were:

- The duration of hackney carriage and private hire driver's licenses would be three years;
- The duration of private hire operator's licenses would be five years; and
- Private hire operators would be able to sub-contract bookings to a private hire operator licensed by another authority.

The introduction of the three year driver's and five year operator's licenses required a fee to be set. The last review of the fees was in 2011 so it was considered appropriate to review all hackney carriage and private hire fees at the same time.

The proposed fees looked to recover the actual processing costs and costs to the Council for providing this service. In the past fees had not been calculated in this way and therefore had resulted in the service being subsidised by other service areas, however it was not intended to recover the costs previously incurred and not re-charged.

Councillor Long drew attention to the fact that in the consultation responses some drivers had indicated that they felt the meter charge made by the vehicle should be increased as there had been no increase since 2012. He asked if this should be considered at this stage or if it was a separate matter. The Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) responded that it would form part of a separate paper, and had been consulted on directly.

Councillor Pope asked for clarification on how the figures for the costs of the service had been arrived at. It was explained that although a crude figure, it had been calculated on the amount of time spent on the process. She agreed to provide Cabinet Members with the information as to how the figures had been arrived at. Councillor Beales commented on the feedback received and that it would be reassuring if the methodology was available.

Councillor Beales also commented that the licensing of the service and properly charging for those licenses was protecting the drivers to make sure it was properly run and regulated.

Councillor Long complimented the Borough's drivers and trade should be proud of the service they provided, and supported not including the deficit into the increased fee levels. This was supported by Councillor Beales.

It was noted that the Joint Panels had considered the report and supported it, with an additional resolution that they would review the policy in 12 months time.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the new fee structure for drivers of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles be approved;
2) That the new fee structure for private hire operators be approved.
3) That the new fee structure for vehicles and other sundry matters attached in the fee structure set out in the report be approved.

CAB83 RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN SITE LICENSING

The Housing Services Operations Manager presented a report which explained that there had been legislative changes in the last 2 years in relation to the regulation of residential caravans and park homes. These included the ability of the Council to charge fees for site licensing and taking action in the case of poor standards on sites. Importantly the Council now also had to consider the proposed arrangements for the management and maintenance of sites in respect of new site licence applications, or transfer applications. In relation to park homes, there were also changes in respect of pitch fees, sales and site rules.

A report to Cabinet in June 2014 identified the issues and approved public consultation in relation to the changes and including proposed revised residential caravan site licence conditions.

This report brings forward the results of the consultation, the proposed amended residential caravan site licence conditions and a proposed fees policy.

Councillor Long drew attention to the fact it had been a critical piece of work, particularly bearing in mind the tragic events in Ireland in recent weeks. He stressed that any work done would be for the residents' safety.

Councillor Beales sought confirmation that a key objective of the proposed schedule of charges was to provide income for the Council to monitor conditions on caravans sites with a view to maintaining and improving the quality of life of the residents. The Housing Services Manager – Operations confirmed that this was indeed the case but warned it was not possible to charge for enforcement as part of the fees and these circumstances would have to be dealt with under separate arrangements.

Councillor Pope asked why the Council was the second highest level of fees, and if the Borough had any 75 berth sites. The Housing Services Operations Manager explained that as the Government Guidance was new, each authority

was setting its fee levels. The proposed fees were in keeping with the Government Guidance, and they would be reviewed in the light of actual costs and the fees policy may be reviewed in 12 months. She undertook to provide information to Cabinet Members on the numbers of pitches on different sites. Councillor Blunt also asked if a comparison could be given of the numbers of sites at each charging level.

Councillor Lawrence congratulated officers on providing the policy which would hopefully make residents living conditions better and safer.

It was noted that at their previous meeting the Joint Panels had supported the report.

- RECOMMENDED:**
- 1) That the report be noted and the approach to dealing with, and enforcement associated with residential caravan sites be endorsed.
 - 2) That the amendments to the standard residential caravan site licence conditions be approved.
 - 3) That the adoption of the proposed Fees Policy to commence on the 1st April 2016 be agreed.
 - 4) That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Housing and Community be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the standard conditions to ensure it complies with legislative requirements, Government Guidance and caselaw.

CAB84 POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACE REVIEW

Cabinet considered a report which reminded Members of the Council's duty to undertake a review of the polling districts and polling places in respect of Parliamentary electoral areas that fell within the boundaries of the Borough. This review was last conducted in 2013, but it was the Returning Officer's responsibility to keep polling stations under review.

The following recommendations were being made for changes in order to improve accessibility and an improvement to the current polling stations, or where in the case of the Olive Branch Café it was no longer available:

Polling Place	Existing Polling Station	Proposed Polling Station
Spellowfields Terrington St Clement	First Terrington Scout and Guide HQ	The Pavilion, Churchgate Way, Terrington St Clement
Spellowfields Tilney All Saints	Eagles Golf Club	Tilney All Saints Village Hall, Church Road, Tilney All Saints
St Margaret's with	The Olive Branch	London Road Methodist Church, London Road,

St Nicholas	Café	King's Lynn
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Councillor Long drew attention to the fact that the Pavilion had planning restrictions around the use of the building after 10pm, to which the Democratic Services Manager explained it would not be open to the public after 10pm as that was the close of poll.

Councillor Long also drew attention to the poor condition that he had last seen Tilney All Saints Village Hall in, to which the Democratic Services Manager explained that the building had been refurbished and was now far more accessible than the current polling station.

In proposing the recommendations Councillor Beales drew attention to the fact that any ward member comments would be made on at Council

RECOMMENDED: That the Polling District and Polling Place Review Schedule attached to the agenda be adopted