

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

9 July 2020

COUNCILLOR STUART DARK - CABINET MEMBER FOR COVID 19 AND EMERGENCY PLANNING

For the period to 30 June 2020

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

I would like to commence this my first Portfolio report to Councillors by acknowledging the many human tragedies surrounding Covid-19. My thoughts are with all those who have lost a loved one or are facing personal hardship. I would also like to mirror here the debt of gratitude that the Mayor and many of us have already expressed towards our NHS staff, Key workers, businesses and volunteers in West Norfolk who have all done so much to support our region during this unprecedented threat/time and particularly the vulnerable within it.

I have over the period I have been in role, held regular and irregular meetings with the Chief Executive and Officers and relevant Portfolio leads (either virtual or socially distanced) to ensure effective delivery of existing services, required new services and support to partners as part of the co-ordinated, multi-agency regional effort and sent out detailed weekly updates and links to relevant sources and press releases to you all and our Parish Councils. I genuinely hope these have been of use and helped provide vital information and reassurance.

Thank you to all of you who have helped cascade this information out over the weeks.

The huge demand of Covid-19 has necessarily required the Council, at very short notice, to change working practices and focus across a number of delivery areas and I am very pleased to report that KLWNBC Officers, staff and contracted partners have in my direct experience shown commendable drive, flexibility and fortitude to deliver for our residents and I thank them here for it.

Some indicative headlines of the last few weeks include-
Supporting the most vulnerable:

- We effectively established a 'community hub', making use of our great, established Lily network (which has enabled us to use 40 volunteers to support our response), carrying out 1,903 doorstep welfare checks. We have also phoned over 7,000 West Norfolk residents and personally contacted 2,500 extremely vulnerable or vulnerable individuals.
- In addition we have completed 1,173 Lily referrals for support. Such as social isolation, loneliness, accessing food, services and wellbeing support.
- We have donated £10,000 to support King's Lynn Foodbank, from the 'West Norfolk Wins' Community pot.
- We have delivered over 200 food parcels to local residents in need.
- Working with partners we have ensured all vulnerable homeless individuals

were moved promptly off and remained off the street.

Support to businesses:

At the time of this report £37.545M of 'Business Support Grants' have been paid out promptly to 3237 businesses in West Norfolk. Officers are currently working through 'discretionary grant' payments to additional businesses which did not qualify under the original scheme and have to date paid out a further £511K to an additional 78.

Maintenance of Core Services and honouring an important national event:

With the exception of just one two week cycle on brown bins collections being suspended (ie. 1 missed collection for the residents affected) we have maintained refuse and recycling collections across the borough. This equates to:

- 75,000 green and black bins emptied each week
- 13,500 brown bins emptied each week
- 2,300 tonnes of garden waste collected for composting in April & May (up 85 tonnes)
- 25,000 tonnes of recycling collected in green bins in April & May (up 240 tonnes)
- 236 separate collections of bulky items in April and May

All against an operational backdrop of Covid-19 and staff having to adapt to new safety procedures.

Parks, open spaces and gardens have been kept clean and well-maintained and a thank you flowerbed was designed and installed dedicated to the NHS and key workers.

Behind the scenes, ICT staff have worked tirelessly to enable remote working and online meetings to be held and changes have been adopted to ensure 'social distancing' can take place in work settings, all to ensure core service delivery was disrupted to a minimum.

We also ran a successful and well-received VE Day celebration which engaged 100s of residents with resources and activities.

Help to others:

Redeployed Alive West Norfolk ran an 'activity club' for the children of QE hospital staff to assist them. It ran from April to the end of May. We had 1025 bookings from 88 children supporting 58 families to go to do their essential work. All bookings received a free packed lunch and all sessions provided were free of charge for Key Workers' children.

We also suspended car parking charges for key workers with cross party support in several locations during lockdown as a small 'thank you' acknowledgement.

Recent developments:

Following a thankful reduction in infection rates and related changes to national public health guidance and the easing of restrictions – particularly around lessening of travel restrictions and opening of further business premises the council has taken a proactive and pragmatic approach to ensure it complies with the new guidance, ensure public and resident safety and assist our local businesses reliant on trade and under the most considerable pressure.

You will already have seen in previous briefings the work put in place re liaison with businesses, new signage, patrols and related environmental works (such as footpath widening, barriers, installation of additional hand-washing facilities and floor markings) in Hunstanton, Heacham and the Town Centre and this evolving situation

continues to be monitored and developed.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

As further relaxation of restrictions occurs, we and our partners are inevitably moving further into planning and delivering the recognised 'recovery phase' and away from the initial 'emergency response' to Covid-19.