

DECISION NOTICE - CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RELATED
Key Executive Decision taken by an OFFICER

KEY DECISION Subject: -Temporary cessation of walk-in services at CSC and main reception

DECISION TAKER:

Name: Tom Pike

Job Title: Strategic Director

Signature:

Date:

REASON WHY THIS DECISION DID NOT APPEAR ON THE FORWARD PLAN AND THE URGENCY PROVISIONS WERE NOT FOLLOWED:

This key decision was taken as part of the Council's emergency response to the national Coronavirus Emergency. Due to the necessary speed of decision taking at this time it was not possible to comply with the Council's Constitution that includes the requirement to give 28 days' notice of the decision to be taken; publish details 5 clear days before the decision was taken; publish the decision within 2 days of it being taken; and provide the 5 day call-in period before implementation. Nor was it possible to comply with the Urgency provisions in the Constitution

** Delete if not outside Budget & Policy Framework*

DECISION TAKEN:

To close walk-in at Customer Service Centre and Main Reception to customers, except for those who are vulnerable and in urgent need. This is while the government's advice remains that people should stay at home and not travel for non-essential purposes.

This will be reviewed as government advice changes

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- To discourage non-essential customer journeys that could lead to the spreading of Corvid-19
- To ensure a safe working environment for staff, and reduce risk of

further staff depletion through illness

- Several services supported by the CSC had already suspended or were considering suspension of face-to-face interactions with customers, reducing the need to maintain the walk-in offer

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:

Customer Services initially moved to an appointment only service (except for urgent needs) to reduce risk of spreading Corvid-19 to staff and customers, primarily by reducing number of customers sat in waiting area. However, continuing this would not have complied with government advice to stop non-essential journeys. Some face to face services also require customer and staff to sit with each other for lengthy periods, and it was not possible to design a workable and safe way to operate with the available PPE and hand cleaning materials etc, given the typical volumes of walk-in customers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

None identified – staff that normally support customers face-to-face are supporting customers through other channels (e.g. telephony)

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

None identified

EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

Walk-in services are still accessible for those in urgent need; such as fleeing domestic violence, the majority of whom are female. A mobile phone has been provided in main reception to ensure customers with these urgent needs can still contact critical services by phone if needed.

Customer Services retains the use of translation services on the telephone.

Alternative access for services is also available via telephone and the internet

CONSULTATIONS:

Councillor(s): Matt Partridge consulted with Councillor Taylor on 24th March, who concurred with this action, with request to ensure a way for people to communicate with reception staff if they need to.

Proper Officers: Proposed and discussed at SLT 24 March 2020

Outside agencies: None (CAB advised of change, they had already withdrawn their face-to-face service by this time)

Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

I agree that this decision was reasonable in all the circumstances, was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred

I further agree that any delay likely to be caused by the call -in process would prejudice the Council's or the public interest and that the decision should not therefore be subject to call-in.

Signed:

Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date:

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION: 24 March 2020