

EAP - Service Delivery, Performance, Customers 28th June 2021

Report Title	Restoration of Customer Services Post-Covid	
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Contributors/Checkers/Approvers		
North MO	N/a	
North S151	N/a	
Other Director/SME	N/a	

List of Appendices

None

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Options for restoring the face-to-face services to our residents that are provided by our Customer Services team across North Northants.

2. Executive Summary

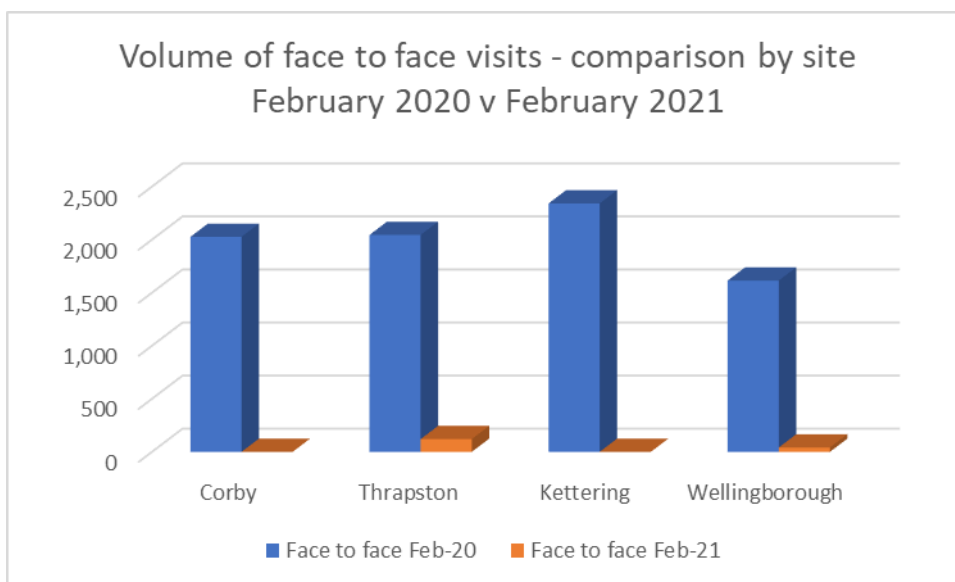
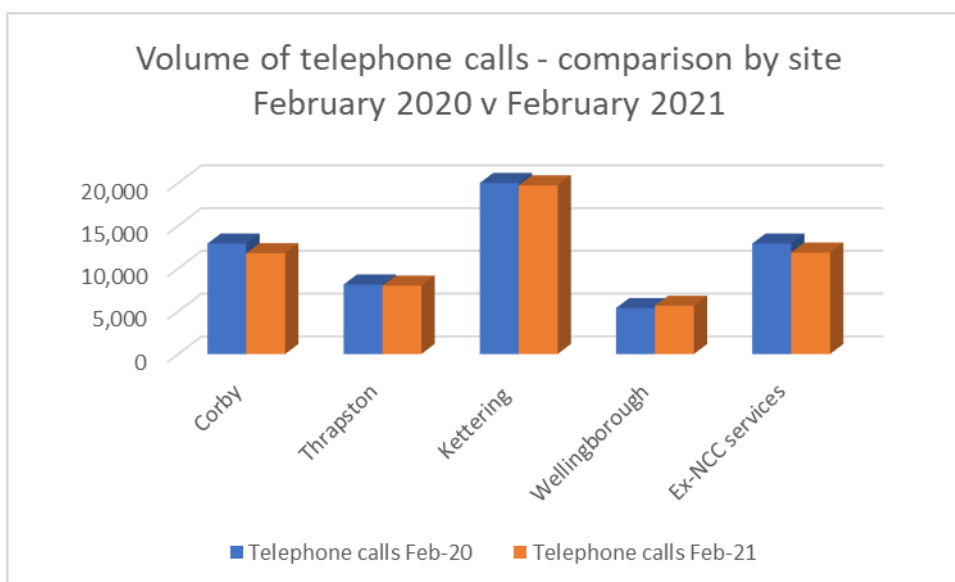
- 2.1 This report briefs members on the proposed short-term reopening of face-to-face Customer Services across North Northants and what form that may take.
- 2.2 It also begins to explore the longer-term development of a Customer Services Strategy that sets out how the Council will deliver the best, most effective services to residents locally across North Northants.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that:
- a) EAP note this report, and
 - b) Consider information that may be required at future meetings to support the development of the North Northamptonshire Customer Service Strategy,
 - c) Confirm any advice/views to be presented to a future Executive meeting.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Customer Services has provided a modified delivery model since the Council's inception. All face-to-face Customer Service points have been closed, except in municipal offices where face-to-face appointments are offered when we are unable to help customers by other means.
- 4.2 Telephone call volumes have not markedly changed in the last year despite the number of face-to-face being minimal as shown by the two charts below:-



- 4.3 It is proposed that we reopen with a continuation of the service model delivered in the last year as summarised below:-



5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 Covid has provided an opportunity for channel shift that has seen many customers find information about our services on-line and not need to contact us. It has also allowed us to resolve more queries during telephone calls so that customers only have the inconvenience of having to travel to see us face-to-face in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.2 The next steps are to bring forward a Customer Service Strategy that focuses on our commitment to delivering high quality customer service to meet all customer needs where resources are used efficiently, and most queries can be resolved at the first point of contact.
- 5.3 Whilst we could return to a drop-in model of service at all customer service points, having an appointment service will allow resources to be targeted to help customers with the most complex needs who need our help and time as well as ensuring most other contacts can be resolved quickly and efficiently.
- 5.4 This model will include library access points so that we can provide a better service locally across more areas of North Northants. Having appointments in these locations will allow us to do this and look to the future where we can provide a range of services locally through a community hub type arrangement, moving away from a traditional model where customers need to travel to a limited number of municipal buildings to access services.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

- 6.1.1 Currently, Customer Services staff are working in a covid secure way, with most staff working at home to deliver telephone and email-based customer service. A small number of staff are working in Council buildings across North Northants to provide an appointment-only service for face-to-face callers where we are unable to fully resolve their queries by telephone, email and website contact.
- 6.1.2 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

6.2 Legal

6.2.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.3 Risk

6.3.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

6.4 Consultation

6.4.1 No consultation is applicable in respect of this report.

6.5 Consideration by Scrutiny

6.5.1 This matter has not been considered by the Scrutiny Commission.

6.6 Climate Impact

6.6.1 The working model being considered allows staff to provide excellent customer service from a number of more local sites, as well as using homeworking for telephone call handling. This will deliver a significant reduction towards delivering the Council's carbon footprint.

6.7 Community Impact

6.8 The proposed way forward will allow the Council to provide face to face help to customers in more locations across a broader range of services.

7. Background Papers

7.1 Not applicable.