

## **Cabinet Member Report to Full Council 22 July 2020.**

### **Cllr Stephen Burroughes – Cabinet Member for Customer Services, ICT & Operational Partnerships.**

- **Contracts & Corona Virus.**

Continuing to work with contractors and partners to understand and manage the impacts of corona virus. Including understanding any additional costs operators have incurred by changing their working arrangements to ensure that they are 'Covid secure'. Working with specialist advisors to ensure that these costs – particularly in relation to our leisure operators – are reasonable. However, we also recognise our duty to ensure that our contractors have been paid properly during the crisis and have prioritised making sure that this happens.

- **Leisure Contract.**

Continuing with a procurement process to appoint new operator for our leisure centres in the north of the district. This includes a new operator for the newly refurbished Bungay Pool and Gym, which is scheduled to reopen in October. It has been challenging to meet procurement timelines for this service due to the lockdown, as many providers furloughed most of their staff. Again, we have been working with advisors, who have been liaising with the leisure market to ensure that we have sufficient plans in place for the residents of East Suffolk.

- **Norse Budgets.**

Working with Norse to review their programme of work for the coming year and to ensure that we understand where there are options to increase efficiencies and make savings in a way that will not lead to a reduction in service. Norse are responding well to this exercise and recognise the need for their delivery model to change to meet new challenges and future growth.

- **WFH capability**

Due to the recent ICT refresh, staff and members were able to work remotely from the start of lockdown. New mobile and telephone solutions were implemented to enable Customer Services staff to operate fully from home and additional support has been put in place to assist users with home broadband or connectivity issues. So far so good.

- **Virtual meetings**

Whilst staff and members can use MS Skype for video/telephone conferencing, Zoom was introduced for public facing meetings thereby enabling council meetings to continue and be accessible, these meetings are also made available on the EastSuffolk YouTube channel for anyone to watch should they wish to do so.

- **Online services**

The East Suffolk web site has provided updated information on all service changes (e.g. car parking, green waste collections) as well as introducing new online services to better support residents.

- **Electronic post room**

Established electronic post room for all outgoing post where it is centrally printed, enveloped and franked.

- **Business grants**

A new eform and online digital business process were quickly put in place to accept and action over 5,500 grant requests from East Suffolk businesses, over £63million has been paid out to date.

- **Data sharing**

New data sharing protocols have enabled data extracted from many of our business systems to be merged with other agency and government data to support the identification and support of vulnerable residents as well as the cross Suffolk 'Home But Not Alone' initiative.

Work is in hand to build on the channel shift changes and new ways of working which have been achieved and offer significant opportunities for more efficient working, reduced environmental impact and financial savings.

**Digital Programme** – As part of our continuing ‘digital revolution’, the Digital Theme Delivery Team presented an update on the Digital Programme to the Strategic Plan Delivery Board at its first meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. This work was well received. There are 102 projects being managed within the Digital Programme which range from customer facing and organisational/internal developments through to infrastructure. Two projects relevant to the Covid19 response are:

- **Digital tech support to East Suffolk vulnerable residents (grandpads)**  
24 devices have been issued to vulnerable residents to help them deal with the impact of isolation, these easy to use devices which have been designed for the older market, will enable users to stay in touch with friends and family through video calls as well as introduce them to online digital services in a safe and supported way. The initial response has been very positive and Communities Team will be closely monitoring the impact these devices are having on these residents’ wellbeing. Additional funding is being sought to extend the service. There is no cost to the user.
- **East Suffolk Smart Towns**  
Cabinet has recently given approval to the funding and implementation of the East Suffolk Smart Towns project, this will involve providing town technology solutions (e.g. free to use public wifi, footfall trackers, digital platforms) to all 12 of our market towns as well as a comprehensive digital business support programme. This will attempt to help ‘accelerate’ our market town centres recovery from the lockdown and support local groups, businesses and their town communities.

I am happy to take questions via email or provide further information if required.

**Clr Stephen Burroughes**

Cabinet Member