

## Appendix 1 Service Restoration – Limited Face to Face Public Interaction at Three Rivers House

### **Executive Summary:**

There are a number of services that, in order to restore priority one services and maintain performance, need to restore some face to face interaction with the public at Three Rivers House. There are two key areas being proposed for restoration:

- A limited number of interviews under caution in relation to Fraud, Environmental Protection and Regulatory Services.
- A limited number of appointments in relation to processing new benefit claims.

Arrangements have been designed to minimise the risk to staff and customers and ensure that Three Rivers House remains Covid secure.

### **Physical Changes to the Reception Areas**

G2G will be set up to allow for interviews under caution with appropriate recording equipment. All unnecessary furniture will be removed and chairs placed to ensure social distancing is observed. G2G is covered by CCTV and has a panic button that the Police have agreed to respond to.

The main front doors will remain locked at all times and staff will need to admit customers turning up for appointment.

Appropriate signage will be provided re use of masks, temperature check and hand gel and to be clear no general admittance.

All surplus furniture and equipment will be removed from reception to ensure that customers cannot linger and ensure social distancing.

Perspex screens will be installed at the existing desks to ensure separation and be Covid secure.

Two toilets will be available on the ground floor. These will not be available to staff members.

Chairs will be arranged in the current self-serve area for housing face to face meetings. For service reasons Perspex screens are deemed inappropriate but appropriate PPE will be available.

These arrangements will ensure that members of the public do not use any areas being used by members of staff working in the office. The only staff members permitted to enter the reception areas will be those involved in face to face contact and facilities staff. A safe route will be marked out so that staff can continue to use the main staircase.

### **Arrangements for Appointments**

No appointments will be arranged outside of Three Rivers House current opening times, i.e. Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am to 4pm. This includes CAB.

Appointments will be organised to ensure that members of the public turning up for appointments do not come into contact with each other. Initially these will be:

- 5 appointments per day (Mon,Weds,Fri) will be made available to Revs and Bens. These will be on the hour from 9am to 1pm.
- 2 appointments per day (Mon,Weds,Fri) for interviews under caution and issues of cautions. These will be on the hour at 2pm and 3pm.
- CAB will be asked to make appointments only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at twenty minutes past the hour from 9:20 to 12:20.

All members of the public will be asked to wear face coverings and to undergo a temperature check and use hand sanitiser on entry. A store of disposable face masks will be available to staff in case people turn up without face coverings.

The only entry point to the building for members of the public will be the main reception doors. Officers will meet members of the public at the front door and escort them to the designated area. They will escort them out of the building at the end by the main doors. Toilets are available but will not be advertised. Should they be used, officers should close down that toilet and inform facilities.

Touch points in the designated areas will be wiped down between appointments. Appropriate cleansing wipes and materials will be provided by facilities for this purpose.

Facilities will supply appropriate PPE (face masks, visors and gloves) to staff involved in face to face meetings. It will be the responsibility of individual staff to use the PPE appropriately.

PPE training will be provided by line managers, following the policy and guidance.

Bags and tags will be supplied so that used PPE items can be placed in the bag and tied up, secured with the date and quarantined before disposal by facilities.

Two officers will be present for all appointments for safety reasons.

Wherever possible attendance should be limited to the claimant only or the attendee and their legal representative and/or appropriate adult. Regulations allow legal representatives to be present via video link. Where this is not possible the person attending the appointment remains responsible for anybody attending with them and must provide details for track and trace purposes in advance.

When making appointments, officers will advise the attendee of the requirement to:

- Attend at the specified time as no waiting facilities are available
- Wear a face covering and be prepared to be asked to undergo a temperature check and use hand sanitiser
- To attend the appointment alone (or with legal representation only).
- Whether they are required to ring the officer on arrival.

A simple firmstep procedure will be set up in order to book appointments and record details for track and trace.

Individual risk assessments should be completed for each service making use of the arrangements (listed overleaf).

Facilities will provide training for officers on all procedures.

Separate arrangements will need to be made for taxi licensing due to the backlog of applications and license issues. Once these have been cleared these arrangements will be updated in order to incorporate their requirements.

Arrangements to start from the 28<sup>th</sup> September and be reviewed monthly.

**Services using Limited Face to Face Arrangements at Three Rivers House**

Service	Function	What further action is necessary?
<b>Environmental Protection – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b>	Interviews under caution – These have been suspended and require restoring so the enforcement team and animal welfare can follow through to interview and, if required, prosecutions (to be restored).	In order to progress with existing prosecution cases PACE interviews are generally seen as a vital component in that process as it aids the Council evidence if matters were to go to Court. As it stands, all existing cases have been put on hold and if enforcement site visits are to recommence, PACE interviews will also need to be allowed as the two are intrinsically linked.
<b>Environmental Protection – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b>	PACE Interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train people how to put on and move personal protective equipment (PPE) that is used for normal work hazards and how to keep it clean</li> <li>• All staff to be made aware of the guidance.</li> <li>• Signage to be installed</li> <li>• Staff to be trained in the appropriate disposal of items.</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Protection – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b>	Issuing Simple Caution – at Three Rivers House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train people how to put on and move personal protective equipment (PPE) that is used for normal work hazards and how to keep it clean</li> <li>• All staff to be made aware of the guidance.</li> <li>• Signage to be installed</li> <li>• Staff to be trained in the appropriate disposal of items.</li> </ul>

<b>Electoral Services – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b>	Electoral Register must be available for inspection.	Can be done by appointment only but must be supervised by a member of Elections staff. The legislation states must be available for inspection. Decision is needed to restore this service now.
<b>Housing – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b>	Homelessness face to face interviews – to be restored when office re-opens. Some face to face interviews are essential, there is potential for us to do the majority with video calling however, this would be reliant on customer having the necessary phone and data, so if not possible customer would need to be able to do this in our office.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building to re-open to the public</li> <li>• Officers to confirm with family being visited that nobody has any symptoms of virus</li> <li>• Officers to be offered suitable PPE should they require it.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory Services – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b>	Licensing applications to be progressed for new taxi drivers we need face to face contact in TRH – to be restored.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs to be restored now to enable applications for new drivers to be progressed and relevant income to be received (and to support new jobs and the economy).</li> <li>• Review and discuss with adjacent authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Regulatory Services – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b>	Interviews under caution – to be restored.	<p>The need for each interview will be risk assessed to ensure it needs to proceed.</p> <p>In order to progress with existing prosecution cases PACE interviews are generally seen as a vital component in that process as it aids the Council evidence if matters were to go to Court. As it stands, all existing cases have been put on hold and if enforcement site visits are to recommence (as above) PACE interviews will also need to be allowed as the two are intrinsically linked.</p>

<p><b>Revenues &amp; Benefits – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b></p>	<p>Face to face interviews with benefit customers (to be restored) – new claims only</p>	<p>Benefit processing times have increased and PIs have declined during Covid. Part of this is due to lack of face to face advice to applicants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The target processing time for new claims is 7 days, the performance for Q1 is 13 days.</li> <li>• For changes in circumstances the target is 6 days and Q1 performance was 4 days.</li> </ul> <p>With benefits applications increasing some ability for face to face would improve the service to vulnerable clients.</p> <p>Face to face to be by appointment for new claims only to ensure limited staff on site and only when meetings are arranged.</p> <p>Screens to be provided between staff and customers and social distancing to be enforced.</p> <p>Timing of appointments matched to limited opening of TRH.</p>
<p><b>Fraud – Priority 1, 2, &amp; 3</b></p>	<p>Issuing cautions and financial penalties and interview under caution</p>	<p>We need to obtain evidence to support enforcement and in order to comply with legislation CPIA are required to interview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officers asked to identify reason for interview and justification and complete pre interview/visit risk assessment form for all persons (not staff) to cover if the person has for example symptoms of, or have tested positive for, Covid-19</li> <li>• For interviews under caution Interviewees will no longer be allowed to bring someone into an IUC for support. Where needed pre interview disclosure with solicitor/legal rep will be carried out by phone prior to attendance at the Council offices for the IUC. Any consultation between an interviewee and their solicitor/legal rep will have to take place prior to the interviewee attending the Council offices for interview; we will not provide any facilities for such consultation if solicitor/legal rep is attending in person.</li> </ul>