

TO: **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 21 December 2004**

SUBJECT: **JOINT ONE STOP SHOP INITIATIVE**

FROM: **CUSTOMER INFORMATION AND ADVICE DIRECTORATE**

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## **1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise the Employment Committee of employment issues in relation to the Joint Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council One Stop Shop Initiative.
- 1.2 To seek Committee approval to continue negotiations with the Unions with a view to reaching agreement and implementing changes to Warwick District Council employees' terms and conditions to harmonise them with those proposed for the Joint One Stop Shop initiative.
- 1.3 To seek Committee approval to give notice of a change to terms and conditions for One Stop Shop employees in the event it is not possible to reach agreement.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Best Value Customer Access Review made the following proposal:

**To Work Jointly with The County Council to Provide a One Stop Shop Service for Public Services to:**

- improve the convenience of Public Service One Stop Shops in the District
- increase the number of services available from each venue
- extend opening hours
- increase the number of enquiries completed at first point of contact
- increase the number of users
- maintain the existing excellent customer satisfaction ratings
- share property costs

This was agreed by the Executive.

- 2.2 A Joint Member briefing was held in September, following which a Programme Board has now been set up. The Board comprises four members from the District Council and three members from the County Council.

## **3. JOINT ONE STOP SHOP PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Joint One Stop Shops are to be trialled in libraries within Warwick District as part of a 'Learning Stage'. The Programme Board has recommended that Kenilworth is trialled as the "larger library" pilot and that the necessary preliminary work be undertaken for both Lillington and Whitnash as "smaller library" pilots. If these are successful and the decision reached to extend the One Stop Shop provision, Warwick would follow.

- 3.2 A feasibility study will be carried out in relation to the provision of Joint One Stop Shop facilities in Leamington next financial year.
- 3.3 In respect of the rural areas, the Library and Information Service is currently preparing plans for the next generation of mobile libraries, which will come on stream in two years time. It is anticipated that they could provide rural outreach for the One-Stop-Shop initiative.
- 3.4 The day to day management of the project will be the responsibility of the District Council. Operational management of the staff will be by the County Council.
- 3.5 The long term delivery and management of the One Stop Shop service will be assessed and evaluated during the course of the 12 month Learning Stage.

#### **4. EMPLOYMENT PROPOSALS**

- 4.1 The Warwick District Council Connections Team currently employs 2 team leaders, 6 full time advisors and 1 part time advisor. All Warwick District Council employees currently employed in the provision of the One Stop Shop service will ultimately join the Joint One Stop Shop service – it is not intended that anyone employed in the One Stop Shops will be placed ‘at risk’ because of this initiative. The Joint One Stop Shop Service will also employ members of staff from the County Council.
- 4.2 For the duration of the ‘Learning Stage’, the groups of staff from the two different authorities will be working for the same team – so far as possible the aim is to harmonise different terms and conditions in order to minimise differences for employees working alongside each other and to reflect the needs of the service.
- 4.3 If, at the end of the ‘Learning Stage’ both Warwickshire County and Warwick District Councils decide to make permanent the joint working arrangements, the arrangements for joint staffing will need to be reviewed and a decision reached as the best model for service provision.
- 4.4 At this stage no decision has been made, and will not be made until the conclusion of the ‘Learning Stage’, in relation to the long term delivery and staffing of the Joint One Stop Shops. However, given that the service may be located within, and managed by, the Libraries Services, if proposed arrangements became permanent there would be a strong case for Warwick District Council staff to TUPE transfer to Warwickshire County Council.
- 4.5 Negotiations are ongoing with the unions to achieve contractual changes and it is accepted by both authorities that in some instances staff will have some entitlements protected on a personal basis.
- 4.6 In the event it is not possible to reach agreement it will be necessary to give notice of a change to terms and conditions to One Stop Shop employees.
- 4.7 If at the end of the Learning Stage Warwick District Council employees do TUPE transfer to the County Council, they will do so on the revised terms and conditions.

4.8 If a decision is reached not to transfer the service, and employees, to the County Council, any negotiated contractual benefits to staff would be protected for three year period in line with the Employment Stability Agreement.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

5.1 Consultation with unions is ongoing and regular updates take place at the Joint Communication Forum. GMB/MPO and UNISON representatives are invited to attend any of the weekly Customer Access Best Value Review Progress meetings.

5.2 Two staff newsletters 'Improving Our Customer Focus' have been made available to all staff. A copy of the latest one is attached for information.

5.3 Reports in relation to the Customer Access Best Value Review and its Implementation Plan have been made available to all staff via the CMT Agenda and briefed during the team meeting process.

5.4 Teams in both Warwick and Kenilworth have been briefed and consultation is ongoing.

## **6. POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK**

6.1 These changes are taking place in order to support the on-going Customer Access Best Value Improvement Plan.

6.2 Capital costs are being met from the IEG budget – £215,000 from each authority has been agreed.

6.3 It is estimated that the move will free up considerable revenue resources (£64,000 in the case of Kenilworth) which are planned to be ploughed back into the service.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 Members are requested to approve the continuing negotiations with a view to reaching agreement on the changes to terms and conditions.

7.2 Members are requested to approve the implementation of agreed changes.

7.3 Members are requested to approve giving of notice to changes to terms and conditions if agreement is not reached.

Andrew Jones,  
Head of Revenues and Customer Services

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Employment Committee 25<sup>th</sup> May 2004 - Customer Access Best Value Review  
Executive 10<sup>th</sup> May 2004 – Customer Access Best Value Review  
CMT -13<sup>th</sup> October

<b>Areas in District Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**For further information about this report please contact:**

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