

 Executive 16th November 2011.		Agenda Item No. 9
Title	Responding to WCC Changes to Library and One Stop Shop Hours	
For further information about this report please contact	Susie Drummond 01926 456081	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A	
Background Papers	WCC Cabinet 13 th October 2011: Warwickshire Library and Information Service - Facing the Challenge	

Contrary to the policy framework:	Yes/No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	Yes/No
Key Decision?	Yes/No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes/No
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	Yes/No
Assessment undertaken by WCC a part of consultation process with the public.	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	18/10/11	Andrew Jones
Head of Service	18/10/11	Susie Drummond
CMT	18/10/11	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	21/10/11	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	18/10/11	Andrew Jones
Finance	21/10/11	Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)	18/10/11	Moirra Ann Grainger
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Public Consultation was done as part of the WCC proposals.		
Final Decision?		Yes/No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Warwickshire County Council (WCC) Cabinet approved changes to library hours throughout the county on 15th June 2011. In Warwick District, the recommendations were to reduce library opening hours to make financial savings. Three of the One Stop Shops (OSS) are currently based in library buildings. The Cabinet report recommended that WCC work with Warwick District Council on options to limit the reduction in library opening hours.
- 1.2 Implementing integrated staffing will allow staff to be trained to deliver both OSS and library services. In order to progress integrated staffing, consultation will be required with staff. Changes to job descriptions and some terms and conditions are proposed. These changes will enable a flexible team of OSS staff, with the appropriate skills to work where customer demand requires.
- 1.3 By maintaining the current level of staffing in OSS and implementing an "integrated staffing" model, it will be possible to limit the reduction of opening hours of the libraries. By limiting the reduction in opening hours, residents and visitors will have greater access to these facilities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Executive agrees to officers entering into consultation with Warwick District Council (WDC) staff, the Council's recognised Trade Unions and officers of WCC to develop an "integrated staffing" proposal (as defined at 3.1) for the Council's joint (WDC/WCC) One Stop Shops (OSS), and that following the consultation process a final integrated staffing proposal is submitted to the Council's Employment Committee for consideration.
- 2.2 That Executive notes that the integrated staffing proposal referred to at 2.1 will not involve a Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) transfer to WCC of WDC staff.
- 2.3 That Executive agrees that should officers not achieve agreement with the Trade Unions in respect of a final proposal (2.1 refers), then delegated authority is given to the Head of Corporate and Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Community Services and the Human Resources Manager, to prepare appropriate recommendations for Employment Committee's consideration.
- 2.4 That Executive notes that implementation of a joint OSS integrated staffing model will limit the County Council's proposed reduction in hours across the District with the proposal detailed at 3.4 subject to further public consultation.
- 2.5 That Executive agrees that changes to the OSS service must be achieved within the service's current budgetary framework.
- 2.6 That Executive notes that maintenance of a viable OSS service provides the opportunity for future OSS service development in the District's towns.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 There are five OSS across the District, staffed by a joint team of WDC and WCC staff. Three OSS are in library buildings and two are in office locations. Working closely in partnership with WCC, means that the OSS deliver a wide variety of

face-to-face services including bus passes, information on planning, and assistance with benefits and council tax. They also deliver Police reception services in two locations. WCC has proposed reductions in the library opening hours from April 2012. By keeping the current staffing level, we can work with WCC to implement the integrated staffing proposal, enabling the reduction in library buildings' opening hours to be limited. If the library locations are open longer customers will benefit from access to library and OSS services. Libraries are seen by customers as key community facilities. It could also enable other services to be delivered from these locations in the future.

- 3.1.1 There are currently three One Stop Shops based in library buildings. These are Kenilworth, Lillington and Whitnash. There are currently no OSS services in Leamington or Warwick libraries. The library buildings are owned and managed by WCC. It would be impractical to keep the One Stop Shop function open while the library is shut. Customers would be unable to access all services and there would be running costs to keep the building open. Thus if the proposed library hours are implemented, the One Stop Shops in library buildings will also have reduced opening hours. The proposed reduction in hours is equivalent to around 2 full time equivalent (FTE) customer service advisors. There are currently 14 WDC and 7 WCC customer service advisors on the establishment.
- 3.1.2 Currently, library staff and OSS staff work as separate teams in library locations. A customer may have to speak to two different people if they have council and library queries. As well as being frustrating for the customer, this also causes delays and queues at peak times. By implementing the proposed integrated staffing proposals, staff will be able to assist customers with all queries. The key aspects of integrated working are: additional training and support for OSS staff to be able to respond to library & police queries; additional training and support for library staff in some locations to be able to respond to council queries; ensuring that staff are able to work in both office and library locations to meet customer demand.
- 3.1.3 WCC plan to make use of volunteers to deliver library services. The OSS services will not be delivered by volunteers. The OSS team will also not be responsible for the management of library volunteers. The management of the OSS buildings will continue under the current arrangements. Where WCC owns the building housing the OSS, WCC library or property staff will continue to manage the building. The Leamington OSS is situated in Riverside House and building issues will continue to be managed by Property and/or Engineering.
- 3.1.4 Warwickshire County Council has proposed reductions to library hours in Warwick District due to economic constraints. The proposed reductions in hours will take effect from 1st April 2012 at the latest. The library hours currently proposed by WCC are (as at October 13th 2011):

Location	Current Hours (per week)	Proposed Hours	Change
Kenilworth	51	35	16 reduction
Leamington	56.5	50	6.5 reduction
Lillington	37.5	20	17.5 reduction
Warwick	51.5	54	2.5 increase
Whitnash	45	15	30 reduction

- 3.1.5 Leamington and Warwick libraries currently have no OSS facilities. Warwick Library will move from its current location to the WCC head office at Shire Hall. There is currently a OSS service in Shire Hall. The library entrance will be near the current Reception & OSS facilities. Warwick OSS staff will signpost library customers and assist with simple queries, while ensuring the OSS services are not adversely impacted.
- 3.2 There are no current plans to transfer WDC OSS staff to WCC. The OSS team is a joint team of WDC and WCC team members and management. All staff are on already on WCC pay scales. The proposed consultation will seek to harmonise major discrepancies in terms and conditions, where customer demand makes it necessary.
- 3.3 The integrated staffing proposal will involve some additional duties and changes to ways of working (such as location and hours) for OSS staff. After consultation, appropriate recommendations will be prepared for Employment Committee's consideration.
- 3.4 Based on the proposed library opening hours, by maintaining the current level of staffing, capacity of over 2 FTE will be made available. The integrated staffing model will result in OSS staff working in Kenilworth, Leamington and Warwick, and Library & Information Services (LIS) staff working in Lillington and Whitnash.
- 3.4.1 The support of WDC in the implementation of a OSS integrated staffing model will provide an additional 35 hours of operation for libraries, above the currently proposed level. Although a capacity of 2 FTE would be released, not all of this capacity would be available to increase opening hours. The capacity will be used to cover additional tasks and support the running of the OSS facilities including weekend and evening opening. One suggested model for the specific libraries is to add hours to each OSS location:

Location	Current Hours (per week)	Proposed WCC Hours	Proposed Additional Hours	Proposed Total opening hours
Kenilworth	51	35	10	45
Leamington	56.5	50	0	50
Lillington	37.5	20	10	30
Warwick	51.5	54	0	54
Whitnash	45	15	15	30

WCC will be consulting with the public on the number of additional hours that have been proposed via integrated staffing as well as partner funding and volunteers. The final details of the opening hours, including days and times, will be determined after the consultation is complete. WDC will continue to work with WCC to agree and implement the detailed opening hours.

- 3.4.2 There is a risk that the quality of service provided will be compromised by implementing integrated staffing. A comprehensive training and support program is being drafted to ensure staff have the required knowledge and skills. Quality reviews will continue to ensure service standards. Lillington and Whitnash will change to have only Library staff. The majority of customer demand at these locations is for less complex enquiries. The library staff will be

trained in the key council services, with telephone support for more complex queries.

- 3.5 By maintaining the current staffing level, WDC will limit the reduction in opening hours for residents and visitors. Integrated staffing will allow libraries to be open longer than the currently proposed levels. The library running costs will be covered by WCC. Any costs associated with the management and use of volunteers will also be covered by WCC. By making salary savings by removal of one post, to cover the anticipated salary increases, the service will be able to implement the changes within its current budget.
- 3.6 By continuing to invest in trained, professional customer service staff at OSS locations, WDC will be able to adapt to new models of working. We work closely with partners to deliver these services. As the Kenilworth Public Service Centre work continues, there are likely to be opportunities to further enhance the services available. There may also be changes to the Visitor Information function, and there are major changes proposed to the delivery of housing and council tax benefits. Possible future plans to move the Leamington OSS to the library building and ongoing discussions with partners about the delivery of services in Lillington would be assisted by having an integrated team. Having a professional and flexible OSS team will enable this work to be delivered.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 **Policy Framework** – No changes to the following policies:

- Development Plan Documents
- Fit for the Future
- Food Law Enforcement Service Plan
- The plan and strategy which comprise the Housing Investment Programme

4.2 **Fit for the Future** – our vision of making Warwick District a great place to live work and visit is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. By continuing the current level of investment in One Stop Shop staffing, and putting integrated staffing into practice, WDC will be directly contributing to the vision. By keeping libraries and OSS open as many hours as possible, customers will continue to benefit from these services. The use of libraries for study and computer use will assist in Narrowing the Gaps in the community. Library buildings are used by individuals and groups in the community, which builds strong and engaged communities.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

5.1 The Council is currently reviewing all of its services to make savings where possible. Changes to the OSS service must be achieved within the service's current budgetary framework. Two full time OSS posts were removed from the OSS establishment in 2010/11 resulting in ongoing savings. There is no requirement in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to make additional OSS savings.

5.1.1 The Executive had previously agreed to remove a OSS Team Leader post from the establishment. This was proposed in 2010 but was delayed while an experiment was run to ensure that the quality of service was sustained with reduced Team Leader capacity. The post will be removed from April 2012, with an ongoing saving of £27100.

5.1.2 The anticipated additional cost of maintaining the current staffing level is related to the Police service. Currently only staff who can work in any OSS location are trained to deliver police services. If the consultation proposals are agreed with staff, all staff will be trained to deliver police services. Job evaluation of the role covering police services has taken place. The agreed scales are:

- Non Police adviser Scale F £16830-£19126
- Police adviser Scale G £19126-£21519

The financial impact of this, assuming the consultation proposals are agreed, would be an increased cost of £8,473.

5.1.3 The overall position for the service is a net saving of over £25k. There is a possibility that the OSS Customer Service Advisor role could be re-graded again, once the consultation is complete and the impact of library tasks has been finalised. It is thought unlikely that this will result in a further increase to the cost. This saving will need to be included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and future budget.

5.2 Any additional costs incurred by opening library buildings will be the responsibility of WCC. These include:

- running costs of opening the library building for extra hours, including heating, lighting and water charges;
- building maintenance costs;
- any costs associated with volunteers, including expenses and training.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

6.1 The option to make a financial saving by a reduction in staffing levels was considered. Reducing the opening hours of the libraries will result in reduced OSS hours in library buildings. This means that fewer staff would be required to cover the opening hours of the OSS. The staffing reduction is around 2 FTE. Two full time OSS posts were removed from the OSS establishment in 2010/11 resulting in ongoing savings. There is no requirement in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to make additional OSS savings. By maintaining the current staffing level, WDC is able to consult with OSS staff on integrated staffing and increase the proposed opening hours of libraries and OSS. This will result in better outcomes for customers and future flexibility in new ways of working.

6.2 The option to not work with WCC to implement integrated staffing was considered. The current system of having two separate teams of OSS and library staff is inefficient and less effective for customers. If the current staffing level is maintained and integrated staffing is not implemented, it will be difficult to maintain appropriate staffing levels in all OSS locations. To ensure customers receive a high quality service, there would be a continued need to have both OSS and library staff in each library-based OSS. This staffing model would make it unlikely that any capacity could be released to increase library opening hours.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 The Council is committed to ensuring fair and equal access to services for customers. The One Stop Shop program has been successful in increasing the number of customers who are able to access council services in their locality. Close partnership working with WCC has enabled us to jointly provide a

comprehensive service. The OSS teams provide council services, and in library locations, library services when needed and police reception services.

- 7.2 A number of options are being considered by WCC to keep libraries open while making financial savings. Discussions are underway with Voluntary and Community Sector groups about sharing premises. A number of volunteers offered their services to assist with keeping libraries open. Leamington Town Council has allocated some funding to Lillington library for a short term boost in opening hours.
- 7.3 WCC did extensive consultation with the public and partners on the future of the library service in Warwickshire. As a result of this, they are investigating a number of options to assist with opening hours in Warwick District. Further consultation on the preferred days and hours of opening for each library will begin in November 2011.