

		Executive - 10 th June 2009	Agenda Item No.
Title		Customer Service Centre and Riverside House One-Stop Shop	
For further information about this report please contact		Andy Jones, Acting Deputy Chief Executive	
Service Area		Deputy Chief Executive	
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Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006			
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number			
Background Papers		Executive 4 th February 2009 – minute no.789 Executive 3 rd December 2008 – minute no.647 Executive 23 rd July 2008 – minute no. 280(D) Executive 25 th March 2008 – minute no. 1031 Executive 10 th December 2007 – minute no 701 Executive 11 th June 2007 – minute no. 120	

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-192

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report author's relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director	15/05/09	Andrew Jones
Chief Executive	20/05/09	Chris Elliott
CMT	20/05/09	All
Section 151 Officer	20/05/09	Mike Snow
Legal	20/05/09	Peter Oliver
Finance	20/05/09	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	20/05/09	Les Caborn
Consultation Undertaken		
Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report. County Council Citizens Advice Bureau Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership Police Post Offices Limited		
Final Decision?	Yes/No	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report requests member approval for the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to Shire Hall, Warwick. Customers would use the phone number 01926 410410 thereby providing access to a joined-up District and County Council enquiry service.
- 1.2 The report also requests approval of the Business Case (Appendix) for the development of a One Stop Shop at Riverside House. The One Stop Shop would include a range of facilities: The Registrar's Service; a County Council enquiry service; Police Community Support Officers; Citizen's Advice Bureau; and the possibility of a Post Office.

2. RECOMMENDATION (S)

- 2.1 Members agree to the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to Shire Hall, Warwick.
- 2.2 Members agree to the development of a One Stop Shop at Riverside House.
- 2.3 Members agree to the letting of office space at Riverside House to Citizens Advice Bureau subject to the Head of Economic Development and the Section 151 Officer agreeing the service charge to be made.
- 2.4 Members agree to discussions continuing with Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership with regard to their possible relocation to the Town Hall or Riverside House.
- 2.5 Members agree to provide rent-free space in the Riverside House reception area for Police Community Support Officers to operate drop-in surgeries.
- 2.6 Members agree to officers continuing to work with Post Offices Limited to establish an outreach Post Office at Riverside House.
- 2.7 Members note the work with the County Council and bus operator to enable a bus service to operate along Milverton Hill.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION (S)

- 3.1 On 10th, December 2007 the Executive agreed to the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to Shire Hall subject to the development of an Exit Strategy and confirmation that there would be no additional costs associated with the move.
- 3.2 The Council subsequently agreed a Memorandum of Understanding with the County Council that provided the District Council with an exit strategy with 12 months notice should the partnership fail. However, as the proposal for the Council to move to a 0845 phone number caused considerable disquiet, officers were asked to consider alternative phone number options before moving.
- 3.3 Options have now been considered and there is a high degree of confidence that the District Council would be able to change to the County Council's phone number (01926 410410) thereby providing the customer with one phone number for all County and District enquiries. This change requires a revenue cost increase to the Council of £6,200. However, this can be met by revenue savings detailed within this report.
- 3.4 On 4th, February 2009 the Executive agreed that a business case for a One Stop Shop at Riverside House be developed. The business case at the Appendix details significantly enhanced customer service arrangements with a range of partners.
- 3.5 The creation of a One Stop Shop at Riverside House would see the conclusion of the District and County Councils' ambitious programme of creating five One Stop Shops throughout Warwick District reflecting the needs of local communities. The Leamington One

Stop Shop would see the two councils working with the Registrars Service, Police, Citizens Advice Bureau and possibly the Post Office creating a community hub.

- 3.6 Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) occupies 10 Hamilton Terrace along with Warwickshire Race Equality Partnership (WREP). CAB's premises are not ideal both for staff/volunteers and customers. The accommodation is set over a number of floors and is not customer friendly. The CAB has therefore expressed the desire to relocate to Riverside House as part of the community hub. A level of rent has been agreed but further discussions are still required around the service charge. CAB's relocation would mean that only WREP would remain at 10 Hamilton Terrace. Discussions have commenced with WREP to determine whether they would be interested in relocating either to Riverside House or the Town Hall. WREP's relocation would allow the council to consider options for the 10 Hamilton Terrace site.
- 3.7 The Council has been developing partnership arrangements with the Police at a number of community facilities: Lillington, Whitnash and Kenilworth One Stop Shops as well as The Crest and shortly at the Brunswick Enterprise Hub. Officers have therefore proposed to the Police that they run a surgery from Riverside House but that dedicated space is provided so that local Police Community Support Officers can drop-in when they want. The proposal helps support the Council's commitment to locality/neighbourhood working and provides thousands of visitors with easy access to the Police.
- 3.8 Discussions with Post Offices Limited are still ongoing and the model of Post Office being considered is an innovative "outreach" service. Given that Post Offices Limited are not prepared to provide any subsidy for the service, the business model would in all probability require revenue support from the Council. Should Post Offices Limited agree to the model going forward and the Council agree a Postmaster to work with, officers will report to a future Executive.
- 3.9 It is recognised that a One Stop Shop in the heart of Leamington would have been preferable, however, attempts to develop a facility at The Royal Pump Rooms proved impossible due to the space requirements of the County Council's Library Service. Therefore officers will continue work with the County Council and local bus operator to enable a bus service to run along Milverton Hill.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Officers considered the option of the Customer Service Centre remaining at Riverside House, however, this has significant drawbacks. It is recognised that at peak call volume times the Customer Service Centre has difficulty providing a responsive service as it does not have the necessary staffing resource. Given the difficult and probable deteriorating financial position, this situation could only be addressed by redeployment of staff from elsewhere in the organisation, thereby creating pressures elsewhere, or by exploring partnership arrangements to try and bring extra capacity into the service. Therefore the option to do nothing was discounted.
- 4.2 With regard to the One Stop Shop, officers had considered in detail the option of basing the facility at The Royal Pump Rooms, however, as described earlier, this was not possible. Officers also considered the potential of the Town Hall for a One Stop Shop but the internal layout and its Listed status make development possibilities extremely costly and would not be particularly customer friendly.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

5.1 Revenue

- 5.1.1 The Council will incur increased ongoing revenue costs of £6,200 by relocating to Shire Hall. Although the County Council will be providing rent-free accommodation, there will be County Council telephony charges. £5,500 of this amount can be met from the Customer

Service Centre's computer equipment cost budget and the remainder can be met from savings at 5.1.2

- 5.1.2 The business case for the One Stop Shop anticipates annual savings of £35,000 by the deletion of two customer service advisor posts (subject to Employment Committee agreement) and a more creative use of staff currently undertaking customer service roles.
- 5.1.3 The Council charges CAB £20,000 per annum for occupying 10, Hamilton Terrace. It is proposed to keep the rent as now so CAB is no worse off. However, the relocation of CAB begins the release of 10, Hamilton Terrace allowing the Council to consider disposal or letting at a more attractive rent. The last open market valuation of 10, Hamilton Terrace was £415,000. This valuation was in November 2008.
- 5.1.4 The overall annual revenue saving to the council is £34,300.

5.2 Capital

- 5.2.1 The capital costs of relocating the Customer Service Centre are £10,000. These costs are due to network changes and can be met from the Building on Excellence budget.
- 5.2.2 The estimated costs of the One Stop Shop development are £300,000. There is £180,000 remaining in the One Stop Shop capital programme and £70,000 from the Building on Excellence budget can be utilised for accommodation changes. The County Council has agreed to contribute to the costs to ensure that there is no shortfall. A full tender process will take place for all aspects of work.
- 5.2.3 In order to facilitate the CAB move it is proposed that the Council assists with moving costs. The estimated cost for this is £10,000. Again there is funding in the Building on Excellence programme for this.
- 5.2.4 The balance currently in the Building on Excellence capital budget is £140,000. Following these changes the balance will be £50,000.
- 5.2.5 The overall capital cost to the Council is £270,000 which can be met from within current capital budgets.

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 A corporate objective of the Council is to increase the ease of access to services for customers. The integration of the District and County Council's Customer Service Centres will mean that a customer will only need to call one number to contact either council.
- 6.2 A corporate strategy target is to increase the number of multi-agency One Stop Shops from 1 in 2007 to 5 in 2011. Leamington One Stop Shop will be the fifth in the programme.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 Customer Service Centre

- 7.1.1 Through a number of reports during 2007 and 2008 (see Background Papers) members had agreed to the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to Shire Hall, Warwick. However, there was considerable member disquiet around the proposal to change to a 0845 number as the District Council's main phone number and the 23rd, July 2008 Executive report item was "called in". Members wanted to know whether there was a 01926 alternative to the 0845 proposal.
- 7.1.2 Officers therefore undertook considerable work to ascertain whether the District Council could use the County Council's 01926 410410 number upon moving to Shire Hall. This

option would be the ideal as customers would then have a truly joined-up service with one number for both Councils.

7.1.3 Significant work has established that it would be possible with the District Council receiving an extremely high degree of assurance that the County Council's phone network has the capacity necessary to handle the increased call volumes.

7.1.4 The project is therefore at a position where the following milestone events have been achieved:

- The Executive has agreed the business case for the relocation of the Customer Service Centre to Shire Hall;
- That in order to protect the quality of the District Council phone service the relocation will be in two phases:
 1. The District Council will relocate to County Council premises but run an "as is" service;
 2. Within a six month period the District Council and County Council teams will begin to join-up, answering customer calls at the first point of contact. Work has already started on this aspect of the project.
- Employment Committee has agreed the necessary changes to staff terms and conditions;
- A draft Partnership Agreement has been agreed and will shortly be signed-off;
- The project is being overseen by the One Stop Shop Programme Board as requested by the Executive;
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been agreed by both parties as requested by the Executive. The MoU provides an Exit Strategy for the District Council should the relationship between the parties break down.

7.1.5 Officers now feel in a position to once more recommend to the Executive that the relocation of the Customer Service Centre goes ahead.

7.2 One Stop Shop

7.2.1 The Business Case for the development of a One Stop Shop at Riverside House is at the Appendix. Although it is disappointing that the development of a One Stop Shop in The Pump Rooms, providing customer access in the heart of Leamington Town Centre is not possible, there is the potential to create an exciting "Community Hub" at Riverside House with a number of partner organisations with many synergies.

7.2.2 A One Stop Shop in Leamington would complete an ambitious programme of developing One Stop Shops in all Warwick District's main towns as well as in Lillington. The Council can rightly be proud of the steps it has taken to deliver services in local communities. With the infrastructure in place there is the opportunity to engage more fully with partners in the statutory and third sectors.

7.2.3 It is recognised that an issue for some residents of Leamington will be access to the One Stop Shop. Officers will therefore continue work with the County Council and local bus operators to try to enable a bus service to run along Milverton Hill.