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Date: 9 December 2014

Dear Councillor,

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

A Meeting of the **Overview and Scrutiny Committee** will be held in the **Council Chamber**, on **Wednesday, 10 December 2014** at **18:00**. You are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully,

Chief Executive

To:- **Conservative Group**
Councillor Mrs. Plenderleith (Chairman), Councillor Atkin (Vice-Chairman) and Councillors Mrs. Hood and Mrs. Patten.

Labour Group
Councillors Bambrick, Heath, Mrs. Mead and Pearson.



AGENDA

Open to Public and Press

- 1** Apologies
- 2** To note any declarations of interest arising from any items on the Agenda
- 3** To receive any questions by members of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No.10.
- 4** To receive any questions by Members of the Council pursuant to Council procedure Rule No. 11.
- 5** PROGRESS REPORT ON NHS DENTAL SERVICE PROVISION (Verbal Report by Cllr Mrs Patten).
- 6** REVIEW OF CUSTOMER SERVICES AND PAYMENTS **3 - 12**
- 7** CEMETERY PROVISION UPDATE **13 - 14**

Exclusion of the Public and Press:

The Chairman may therefore move:-

That in accordance with Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the Meeting as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that there would be disclosed exempt information as defined in the paragraph of Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Act indicated in the header to each report on the Agenda.

- 8** To receive any questions by Members of the Council pursuant to Council procedure Rule No. 11.

REPORT TO:	OVERVIEW and SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 6
DATE OF MEETING:	10th DECEMBER 2014	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	KEVIN STACKHOUSE (01283 595811) Kevin.stackhouse@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC: u/ks/live files/customer access/CS review 2014/CS review update report Dec 14
SUBJECT:	CUSTOMER SERVICES and PAYMENT FACILITIES	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM 10
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the feedback from operational and site visits is considered.
- 1.2 That a recommendation is made to the Finance and Management Committee on a proposed way forward.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To provide feedback from Members of the Committee following operational visits to the Council's Customer Services Department, together with a site visit to Derby City Council.
- 2.2 This was part of the review into payment facilities in the Civic Offices, together with services provided following an increase in the number of contacts being received by the Council.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The approved scoping document for the review is attached at **Appendix 1**. Members of the Committee spent two separate mornings with Customer Services staff and members of the public; their observations and comments are attached at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.2 This also includes feedback from a site visit to Derby City Council, to view payment machines and to discuss their experience following implementation. Some further statistics showing payments at the Council offices are detailed in **Appendix 3**.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 None

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 None

6.0 Community Implications

6.1 The review being undertaken is aiming to improve the experience for people contacting the Council.

7.0 Background Papers

7.1 None

Scoping Document

Name of Review/Project:

Customer Services and Payment Facilities at the Civic Offices

Terms of reference:

A report was considered by the Finance and Management Committee on 16th October 2014, regarding the introduction of cash machines in the Civic Offices, for people paying bills. The report also considered the more fundamental issue of current payment facilities being withdrawn, together with the need to provide a better experience for people contacting the Council and visiting the offices with queries and looking for information.

The Finance Committee agreed that the issue of payment facilities should be reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that this should be part of a wider review of Customer Services given the increasing demand from people contacting the Council.

Please provide details of relevant Corporate Plan Themes and Priorities:

Value for Money Theme, with a key project (VO 4) “an improved customer experience.”

Key Issues and Aim(s) of the Review

- To review the provision of payment facilities in the Civic Offices and the potential benefits of introducing cash machines.
- To review the service provided to people contacting the Council and visiting the Civic Offices, to determine whether this can be improved.

Why should the review take place now?

There has been a steady increase in the number of transactions that Customer Services have been dealing with over the last 2 to 3 years due to the growth of the area.

In addition, the nature and length of queries has increased, due to changes in welfare reform in particular. At peak times, this becomes exacerbated for people visiting the offices to make payments and to resolve queries. This is usually at the same time as telephone calls in the Contact Centre increase.

The Council has a broad Customer Access Strategy which is designed to make it easier for people to contact and transact with the Council; this is mainly based on extending the use of technology.

This review would be a part of that longer-term strategy.

Potential outcome/s

- A change to payment services/facilities within the Civic Offices.
- A change to services provided; for example, opening times, provision of self- service terminals, the layout of the reception area.
- Changes to how visitors are filtered when arriving.
- Changes to the Telephone System.

What will not be included:

- Whether to replace the IT systems, i.e. the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System and the Cash Receipting System. These are the tools used to deliver the service and are considered to be fit for purpose. It is considered that they would be best reviewed (if necessary) following this project depending on whether the service is revised.
- The Northgate Contract itself, although it may be that some of the KPI's are reviewed.

Potential Risks or Limiting Factors:

- The overall level of resources deployed (although how they are deployed may come under review or additional resources may be identified).
- Any proposed changes are not affordable.
- The Northgate Contract.

Note: The IT systems are not considered to be a limiting factor at the outset albeit it may be found that greater use could be made?

Members undertaking the Review (if a sub-group is to be used):

To be advised

Possible co-options:

None at this stage

Which policy committee(s) does it relate to?

Finance and Management Committee

Key stakeholders/ consultees:

- Local residents and visitors
- Staff in Customer Services
- The Client Unit (who monitor volumes and performance)

Potential contributors and research required:

None at this stage.

Potential visits:

- Observing the service in the reception area and in the Contact Centre
- Another local authority

Are there any Budgetary Implications?

Not at this stage; it is considered that the review can be undertaken within existing resources.

Officer support required:

Advice from the Director of Finance and Corporate Services

Period for Review:

Start date: **October 2014**

Proposed completion date: **April 2015**

Phase 1:

- Ascertain current service provision - volumes, issues, etc.
- Spend time in the service area
- Outline options for payments and any other changes

Phase 2:

- Review options for cash payments and other changes identified

Phase 3:

- Consider any changes with recommendations to Finance Committee

Report date(s) to committees:

22nd October 2014

- Agree scope of review

- Consider volumes and key performance data

December 2014

- Report back on observations from service visit
- Outline options for any changes, including payment facilities

January 2014

- Progress on actions

February 2014

- Consider detail options for change

April 2015

- Report back and recommendations to Finance Committee

Publicity (e.g. of recommendations)

Any changes will affect local residents and people contacting the Council. Therefore, it is expected that sufficient communication through various channels will need to be completed prior to implementation.

Date Scoping Document Approved:

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 22nd October 2014

Meeting with Derby City Council on 24.11.14

Notes:

Present: Cllr Plenderleith, Cllr Heath, Bernard Fenton, Neil Sheard. Cllr Lisa Eldret unable to attend

Went out to tender September 2011. Machines implemented in February 2012.

2 machines (+installation) cost £33k. Look like an ATM. On separate power supplies.

Lifespan of machines is 5-10 years. Only 3 breakdowns since installation. Error rate negligible.

100,000 transactions – and no complaints. City Council to share business case document.

Touch screen. Kiosks can take the Council Tax payment cards or scan a barcode. Council staff available to help anyone who needs it.

Machines can process payments for Council Tax, rent payments, business rates, planning fees, building regs, penalty charges and licensing. Average 3,000 transactions per month over both machines.

Machines take debit/credit cards and cash. Receipts are given. Cheque payments are also taken but are “inelegant” – cost £3.33 to process each one. 1,200 cheque payments last year. 22% of cheque payments need further investigation (incomplete payment, bounce etc.)

City Council used to have 8 cashiers, now none. This was partly influenced by the refurbishment of the Council Offices – the retail premises that the function moved into had insufficient space. By the time they returned to the Council Offices, people were used to the kiosks.

Rushcliffe installed machine and also had a cashier – people chose the cashier over the machine, with hindsight, Rushcliffe would have discontinued the cashier function on installation.

Direct debits and internet payments increased after April 2012.

Reconciliation is easily achieved at the end of the day. Fine tuning the codes/refs

Kiosks can give change.

Savings to be made in processing payments. Machines can accept part-payments too.

Visit to Customer Services on 03.11.14

Notes:

Cllr Plenderleith and Cllr Heath. Angela Leese (Customer Services manager)

Visited Customer Services at 10am on the first Monday in the month. The previous Friday (31.10.14) had been particularly busy, with residents making their Council Tax payments in time for the 1st of the month. The waiting area was not overly busy, the ticketing system was explained. Discussed the layout of the waiting area, reception and Customer Services desk.

	2008/09	2013/14
Number of visitors		
Central reception	19,000	14,000
Customer Services Desk	27,000	20,000
Number of Payments	34,000	29,000

Telephone calls – contact centre	2008/09	2013/14
Number of calls	60,000	128,000
% answered in 20 seconds	75%	76%
% abandoned	11%	8%

	2008/09	2013/14
Total (Callers and Face to Face)	106,000	162,000

Comment cards are available to survey visitors' experience

Telephone system: We visited the call centre and discussed the call management procedures.

There are 6 options to help service delivery – this is the most effective number, more would be frustrating. Looking to upgrade to Intelligent Voice Recognition system (IVR)

In October 2014, 1705 automated payments were taken over the telephone (usually approx. 1500)

Approx. 300 calls a month are for the County Council, approx. 800 calls a month for housing maintenance, approx. 100 switchboard calls per day

Payments made at the Council Offices August 2014:

Split of Payments	Number of transactions
Debit/Credit Card	477
Cheques	682
Cash	1,099

After the meeting, Angie Leese shared a spreadsheet showing the number of payments made at the enquiry desk from April 2013-October 2014. This showed that April and May were the busiest months, coinciding with the start of the new financial year. Average number of transactions per month is 2,500.

Visit to Customer Services on 01.12.14

Notes:

Cllr Plenderleith and Cllr Heath

Visited Customer Services at 10am on the first Monday in the month. The waiting area was no more than a third full at any time and enquiries were being dealt within approximately 10 minutes.

During this visit, and after the visit on 03.11.14, we spoke informally to some of the residents who were waiting, asked why they were waiting and, if it was for Council Tax payment, whether they would welcome a kiosk to make a quicker payment. Opinion was divided fairly equally: some would prefer to hand their cheque/cash directly to a person and were reasonably content to wait; others thought the option of a kiosk would speed things up.

During both visits, we were able to see at first hand the processes Customer Services have put in place to reduce waiting times to the minimum – both in the Council Offices and on the telephone. We were satisfied that these processes are as efficient as possible – and it is the sheer volume of enquiries that is causing the pressure at peak times.

We were also able to appreciate the difficulties presented by the physical layout of the reception area itself – and discussed whether remodelling would be feasible given the structure of the building.

APPENDIX 3

Number of Payment transactions at enquiry desk 2013/14												
	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14
Cash	1976	1518	1289	1307	1290	1320	1354	1141	950	1279	812	1068
Card	705	627	530	530	531	567	578	498	453	571	363	478
Cheque	1275	1039	958	922	866	902	1122	826	743	799	386	851
Total transactions	3956	3184	2777	2759	2687	2789	3054	2465	2146	2649	1561	2397

Number of Payments transactions at enquiry desk 2014/15												
	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14					
Cash	1246	1163	1207	1221	1099	1181	1139					
Card	600	506	549	500	477	535	502					
Cheque	1081	826	788	963	682	820	927					
Total transactions	2927	2495	2544	2684	2258	2536	2568					

REPORT TO:	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	10th December 2014	CATEGORY:
REPORT FROM:	Stuart Batchelor Director of Community & Planning	OPEN/
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Malcolm Roseburgh 01283 595774 malcolm.roseburgh@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Cemetery Provision	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Districtwide	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 Report to be noted

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To update Members on this service which has been previously monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 Detail

Background Update

3.1 Current demand at Gresley leaves approx. a year before it is full.

3.2 Plots currently available within district council managed sites are as follows:

Site	Full Grave	Cremated Remains plots
Gresley	11	63
Newhall	106 (plus additional section not yet mapped out)	98 (new area designated for cremated remains)
Marston	276	9
Findern	13	3
Aston	0	20
Etwall	0	Unlimited (remains scattered in Remembrance Garden)

New Land

3.3 Gresley - The main thrust of the original report was the shortage of cemetery space in the urban core once Gresley Cemetery ran out and adopting the principle to explore opportunities of finding new space. Since then Property

Services identified 9 SDDC owned areas of land but on closer scrutiny none were appropriate to pursue due to size, access, legal or alternative use reasons. Similarly use of Common Land was explored but again was non-viable for legal reasons.

- 3.4 Consideration was then given to other non SDDC land close to Church Gresley. Not many options were identified and those that were would have housing land values making their acquisition unaffordable. A full evaluation of these sites on the back of this initial assessment has not been undertaken due to other service priorities and officer capacity.
- 3.5 Findern – working with Property Services to claim back and fence our land. Anticipate in the New Year. Additional space should give us approximately 770 Plots although some capacity would be lost to paths etc and the fact this site only allows for single graves due to the high water table.
- 3.6 Etwall – previous interest from developer to extend site as part of planning application has been withdrawn.
- 3.7 Newhall – Property Services are currently making some informal enquiries regarding a piece of land adjacent to the cemetery.
- 3.8 Otherwise no progress. Not been a service priority.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None.

5.0 Corporate Implications

- 5.1 None

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 Providing burial space is an important Council service that should be maintained.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 Provision of burial space in the urban core will continue to be sought.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 None