

additional papers 1



Council

Mon 20 Jan
2020
7.00 pm

Council Chamber
Town Hall
Redditch

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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Council

Monday, 20th January, 2020

7.00 pm

Council Chamber - Town Hall
Redditch

Agenda

Membership:

Cllrs:	Michael Chalk (Mayor)	Julian Grubb
	Gareth Prosser (Deputy Mayor)	Bill Hartnett
	Salman Akbar	Pattie Hill
	Joe Baker	Ann Isherwood
	Tom Baker-Price	Wanda King
	Roger Bennett	Anthony Lovell
	Joanne Beecham	Gemma Monaco
	Juliet Brunner	Nyear Nazir
	Debbie Chance	Mike Rouse
	Greg Chance	Mark Shurmer
	Brandon Clayton	Yvonne Smith
	Matthew Dormer	David Thain
	John Fisher	Craig Warhurst
	Peter Fleming	Jennifer Wheeler
	Andrew Fry	

8 .2 Review of the One Stop Shops (Pages 1 - 36)

NOTE: The exempt appendix (Appendix 6) attached for this item has only been made available to Members and relevant Officers. Should Members wish to discuss Appendix 6 in any detail, a decision will be required to exclude the public and press from the meeting on the grounds that exempt information is likely to be divulged, as defined in paragraph 4 of Schedule 12 (a) of Section 100 1 of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

(Paragraph 4: Subject to the “public interest” test, information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relation matters arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority).)

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REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

16 December 2019

ONE STOP SHOP REVIEW

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr David Thain
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Resources
Ward(s) Affected	Batchley & Brockhill, Winyates, Greenlands,
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	Not at this stage
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report contains a proposal to close One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow in April 2020, This is due to continued falling visitor numbers and improvements made to enable the customer to use alternative opportunities to pay for services. In addition there is a high cost of maintaining the service and the Council currently has financial pressures it has to mitigate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:

Closure of the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow from April 2020 be approved and officers work with the public to enable a smooth transition in relation to payments and other contact requirements.

3. KEY ISSUES**3.1 Financial Implications**

The preferred option to close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow will deliver £65k pa savings. in addition a potential rental income of approximately £5k in the first year and £7-£7.5k in subsequent years.

3.2 Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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3.3 Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3.1 The Council has a walk in Customer Service Centre at the Town Hall, and 3 satellite offices at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow, formerly referred to as One Stop Shops.
- 3.3.2 Several years ago, due to falling customer demand the opening times of the 3 satellite offices reduced to either 9am-12.30pm or 1.30pm-5pm Monday to Friday.
- 3.3.3 For the size of the population and size of the borough, there are a high number of Customer Service Centres compared with other councils.
- 3.3.4 The Customer Service Centres now mainly provide a cashiering service for residents. A recent survey has shown that 82% of visits are to pay their council bills.
- 3.3.5 Housing (50%) and Council Tax (40%) account for the highest service payments from customers.
- 3.3.6 In a significant recent development, the council has partnered with Allpay – an organisation where customers can pay their rent and council tax at any Paypoint or Post Office outlet.
- 3.3.7 There are Paypoint and/or Post Office locations in Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow Shopping Centres, as well as many others around Redditch Borough.
- 3.3.8 Paypoint and Post Office locations are more readily available and accessible, including weekends and evenings compared to 3.5 hours per day, Monday to Friday at One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow.
- 3.3.9 Officers across a range of services have been involved in the consideration/review and housing services have options to accommodate customer interviews at the localities or the Town Hall where appropriate (Appendix 3).
- 3.3.10 Every customer who presents at the One Stop Shop will have the opportunity to discuss alternative payment and contact options. Any problems that occur during this period can be resolved before closure.

3.4 Staffing Implications

Closure of the 3 One Stop Shops will see a reduction in staffing requirements of 2 FTE. This will be met from a combination of deleting vacant posts and

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reviewing all fixed term contract posts. Any associated costs will be met from other savings within the Customer Access & Financial Support service.

3.5 Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

Customers will benefit from an improved access to payment services within their localities, whilst still providing alternate methods to meet customer needs.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed on this proposal. The changes recommended will make the main services (to pay bills) more accessible to more of the community in their localities. Other methods of interaction with the council are still available to those who might be more vulnerable or have additional needs subject to service need.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There may be a perception that closure of the One Stop Shops will be seen as a reduction in service however the changes recommended will make the main services (to pay bills) more accessible to more of the community in their localities.

There is also a risk of a short term reduction in income for rent and council tax however this will be mitigated by communication with customers on a face to face basis, as well as wider communications to the residents of Redditch.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - One Stop Shop Business Case
Appendix 2 – OSS Survey Summary
Appendix 3 – Housing Opinion
Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment
Appendix 5 – Communications Plan
Appendix 6 – Staffing – confidential appendix

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

n/a

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Five Case Model - Business Case

Full Business Case

Customer Services

**Review of One Stop Shop provision at Batchley, Winyates
and Woodrow**

Author:	Paul Stephenson
Date:	11/12/2019
Release Version:	V6

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Appendix 1 OSS Business Case

Appendix 2 Survey Results

Appendix 3 Housing Opinion

Appendix 4 Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 5 Communications & Engagement Plan

1. Executive Summary

Following a review of the One Stop Shops, it is recommended to close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow

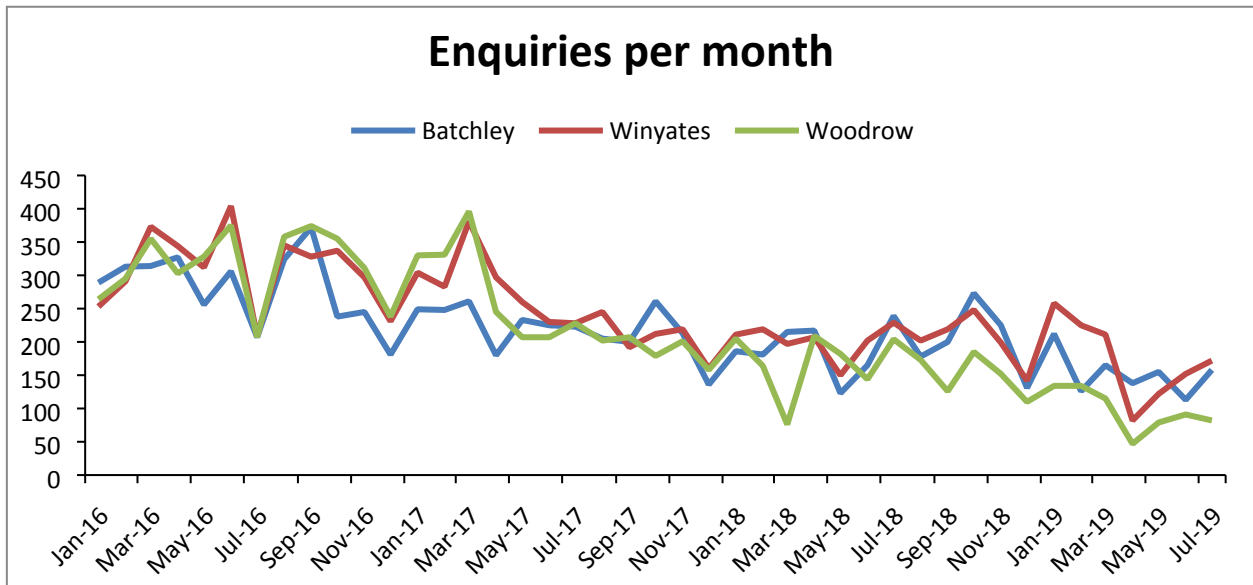
2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Council has a walk in Customer Service Centre at the Town Hall, and 3 satellite offices at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow, formerly referred to as One Stop Shops.
- 2.2. Several years ago, due to falling customer demand, the opening times of the 3 satellite offices reduced to either 9am-12.30pm or 1.30pm-5pm every day.
- 2.3. For the size of the population and size of the borough, there is a high number of Customer Service Centres compared with other councils.
- 2.4. The Customer Service Centres now mainly provide a cashiering service for residents. A recent survey has shown that 82% of visits are to pay their council bills.
- 2.5. Housing (50%) and Council Tax (40%) account for the highest service payments from customers.
- 2.6. In a significant recent development, the council has partnered with Allpay – an organisation where customers can pay their rent and council tax at any Paypoint or Post Office outlet.
- 2.7. There are Paypoint and/or Post Office locations in Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow Shopping Centres, as well as many others around Redditch Borough.
- 2.8. Officers across a range of services have been involved in the consideration/review and housing services have options to accommodate customer interviews at the localities or the Town Hall where appropriate (Appendix 3).

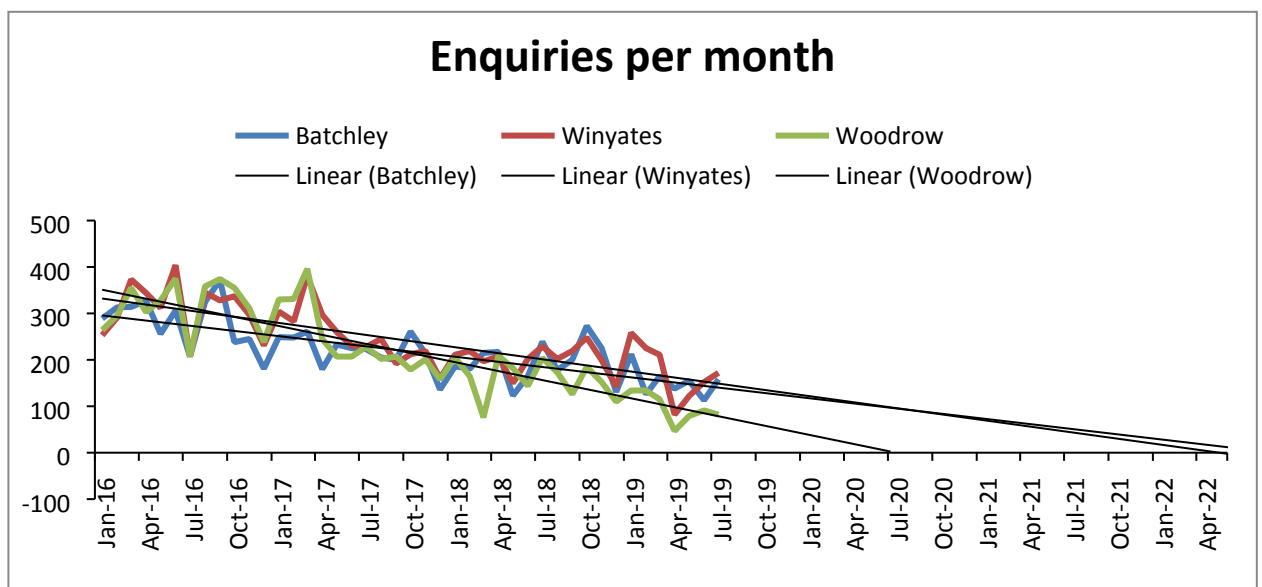
3. The Strategic Case

3.1. With significantly reduced demand, and a shift away from face-to-face contact at these centres, the need to provide a high number of walk-in, on-demand centres is now negligible.

3.2. There has been a significant fall in face-to-face enquiries at these centres, as shown on the below graph.

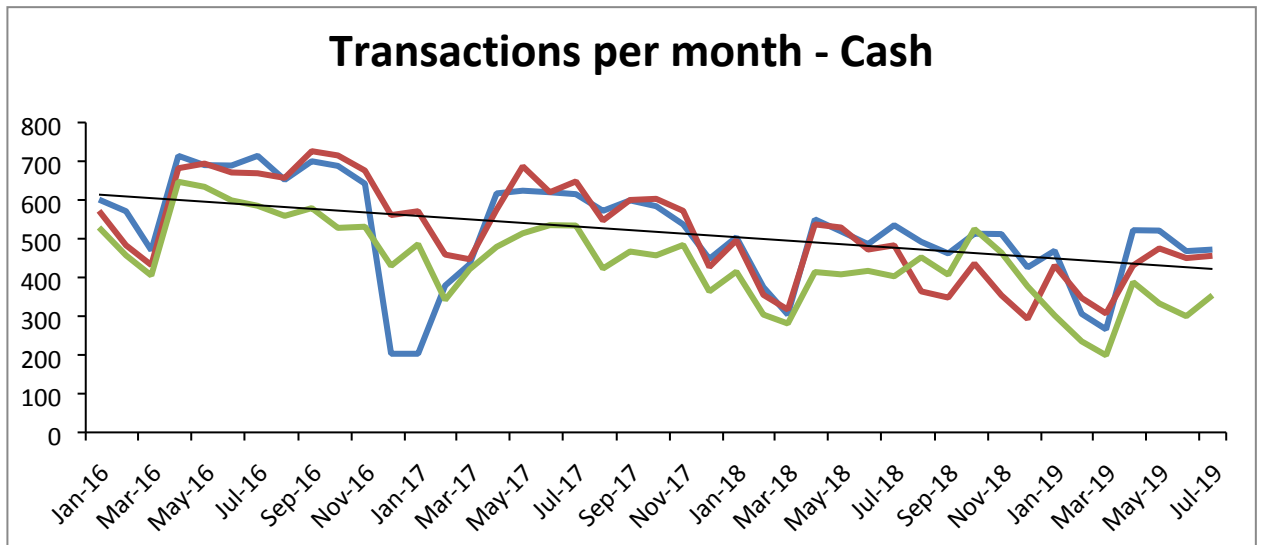


3.3. By applying a trend line to this data above, this shows that the number of enquiries at each centre will be fewer than 10 per month within the next 3 years.

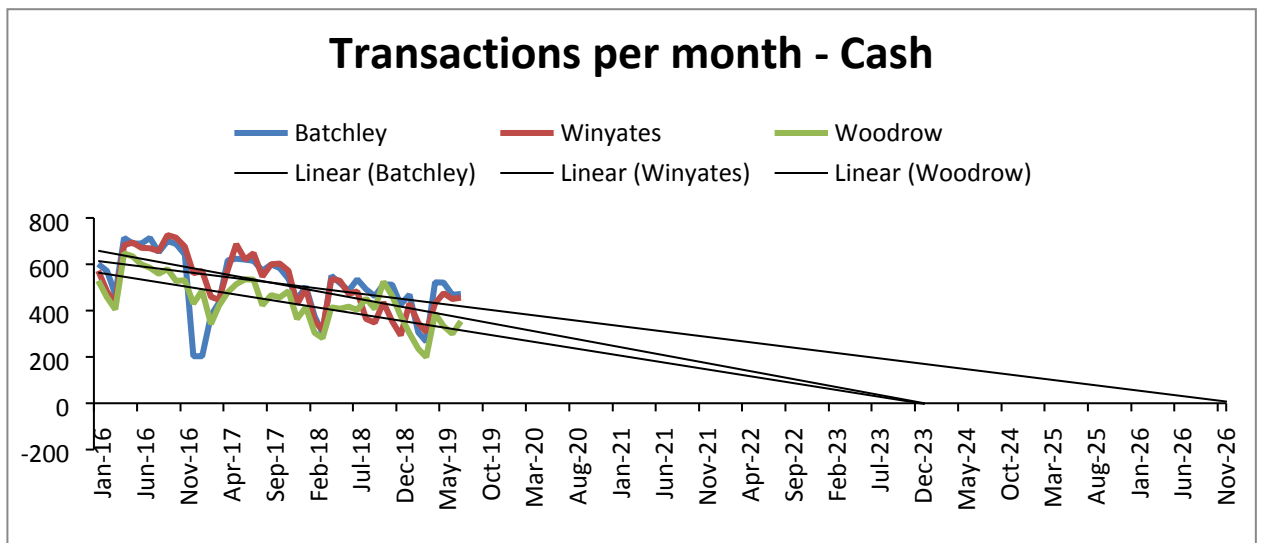


3.4. The UK banking industry report that cash transactions nationally have fallen from 60% of all transactions in 2008 down to 28% in 2018, with an estimated 9% of all transactions by 2028.

3.5. The below graph shows a slight fall in cash transactions at the outer offices, however this is not representative of national figures in 3.4. This data suggests that customers use the One Stop Shops as part of a weekly or monthly routine, which is supported by survey data found later in the survey at Appendix 2.



3.6. By applying a trend line to this data above, this shows that the number of cash transactions at each centre will be fewer than 10 per month within the next 4 years for Winyates and Woodrow, and 7 years for Batchley.



- 3.7. Customer Services support the strategic purpose of 'Help me to be Financially Independent' whilst also providing an enabling service for other areas in the council.
- 3.8. Financial independence has links to digital independence. Customers who solely use cash as a payment method may not be getting the best deals, and will have limited buying power.
- 3.9. By working with those customers, we would be able to signpost them to money management advice, currently provided by CAB, the Financial Inclusion Team at the council, or the locality offices, as well as being able to offer free online courses hosted by Redditch Borough Council in partnership with Worcestershire County Council which would go some way towards their digital and financial independence.
- 3.10. Customers attending the One Stop Shops in June and July 2019 were asked about their reasons for visit and the summary can be found at Appendix 2
- 3.11. The survey findings (Appendix 2) show that the majority of customers visit the One Stop Shops as part of a routine, that the majority pay for other bills by Post Office/Paypoint or direct debit, and that most customers visit the Town Centre at least once per month, and nearly all customers are fully aware of the other payment methods that the council offers, yet choose to pay in cash (60%) or debit card (37%)
- 3.12. When asked 'How do you pay for other (non-council) services:
52% used Post Office/Paypoint
35% used Direct Debit
7% made online payments
This data suggests that customers are able to pay by other means, yet choose to visit the One Stop Shops and pay by cash or card.
- 3.13. Housing locality have been consulted on the proposals and the response is from locality management is: "From a housing perspective the closure of the One Stop Shops will have some impact on tenants and the teams, I consider there to be 'other' options to eradicate the impact completely by better use of alternative space within the current buildings". The full comments can be found at Appendix 3.

4. The Economic Case

4.1. Options

Option 1	Do Nothing
Option 2	Reduce opening times further so that each office is open 1 day per week.
Option 3	Close Winyates OSS only
Option 4	Close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow

4.2. These Options are considered the most practical options to support the service, and deliver the improved standards required to deliver our Strategic Purpose.

4.3. The key outcomes that have been identified are detailed below, and each one has a maximum score that reflects the importance of that criterion in delivering our Strategic Purpose:

- **Strategic Fit** – 20 - This quantifies how well the proposed option supports the Council Plan and our Strategic Purpose
- **Meets Business Needs** – 20 - Whether the proposed service change will meet both current and predicted business need
- **Meets Customer Needs** – 20 – Whether the proposed service change will meet both current and predicted customer need
- **Capacity to support Increased Income Generation** – 20 - This identifies capacity to help generate extra income for the council (e.g. rental)
- **Affordability** – 20 - This relates to the Council's financial pressures, and whether the proposed option is factored in to the financial planning of the Local Authority.

4.4. **Evaluation Criteria for Appraisal and Analysis for Options**

Evaluation Criteria		Strategic Fit	Meets Business Needs	Meets Customer Needs	Capacity to Support Increased Income Generation	Affordability	
	Weighting for Scoring	20	20	20	20	20	100
Do Nothing	Option 1	No	Part	Part	No	No	
		0	10	10	0	0	20
Reduce opening times further so that each office is open 1 day per week.	Option 2	No	No	No	No	Part	
		0	0	0	0	10	10
Close Winyates OSS only	Option 3	Part	Part	Part	Yes	Part	
		10	10	10	20	10	60
Close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow	Option 4	Yes	Yes	Part	Yes	Yes	
		20	20	10	20	20	90

4.5. Recommendation:

Option Four	Close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates & Woodrow
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5. The Commercial Case

5.1. In the One Stop Shop survey, it was recognised that some customers would like more convenient locations to pay their rent or council tax, and it is clear that many customers do not want to change their method of payment, with either cash or card in person transactions the most popular. By partnering with Allpay, the council can still ensure that customers have their preferred methods of payment, as well as having a lot greater flexibility for the customer to pay at any location, which could in turn mean the council receives more income for its services.

5.2. Using the Winyates One Stop Shop premises and turning it into a commercial let, means an income to the council of approximately £4k in the first year, rising to £7-£7.5k in subsequent years, as well as relinquishing its Business Rates liability and heating and lighting expenditure as well as giving opportunity to local business.

5.3. Closure of the One Stop Shops would enable Housing in conjunction with Property Services to review over the next 6 months which may include:

Batchley

- Convert the 1st and 2nd Floor of the building back into 2 x 2 or 3 bedroom housing stock and used as dispersed units or into the general stock.
- Convert ground floor into shop space.
- Review current arrangements with county staff who currently occupy several spaces within Batchley Office.

Woodrow

- Review locality arrangements for staff at Woodrow Office.

Winyates One Stop Shop

- Offer property as a commercial let at reduced rent for several months on the basis the tenant completes minor renovations needed
- or
- RBC renovate the premises and offer as a commercial let when complete.

6. The Financial Case

6.1. The preferred option to close the One Stop Shops at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow can realise £65k pa. The detail of the savings are in the confidential papers.

6.2. By returning Winyates One Stop Shop to a rental, this would yield an income of approximately £5k in the first year, and £7k-£7.5k in subsequent years.

7. The Management Case

7.1. It is suggested that closure of the One Stop Shops takes place on Monday 6th April 2020. This will allow the existing staff to work with every customer and discuss their alternative options around payment methods and customer contact.

7.2. Allpay for housing is now in place. Any tenant who wishes to pay through Post Office or Paypoint can request a Rent Payment Card (swipe card) on the council website (or by asking a member of staff) and the card will be issued 1st class to their home address.

7.3. Allpay for Council Tax will be implemented in January 2020, in readiness for the Annual Billing in March 2020. Customers will be able to take their bill to any Post Office or Paypoint and make a payment using the barcode contained on the bill. As of 20/11/19, the project is on schedule to complete within the timeframe.

7.7 Customer Services continue to work with all council services to improve payment methods, including working with Housing and Council Tax to promote take up of Direct Debit, as well as working with other services in conjunction with communications team to improve the branding and consistency of payment methods available to customers.

7.8 A communications and engagement plan has been devised and is contained in Appendix 5.

Appendix 2 - OSS Survey 2019

1) What have you used OSS for today?

- 82% make a payment
- 16% Speak to CSO
- 5% Use phone

2) Why OSS and not Town Hall?

- 87% convenient
- 5% parking

3) How do you pay for Council Services?

- 60% Cash
- 37% Debit/Credit Card

4) What alternative methods of payment would you use to pay for council services?

- 50% None / do not wish to change
- 20% Direct Debit
- 25% Debit Card

5) How do you pay for other (non-council) services e.g. water/gas/electric?

- 52% Post Office/Paypoint
- 35% Direct Debit
- 7% online payment

6) Statement agreement scale

- 95% of customers are aware that the council offers alternative methods of payment
- 74% go to the centre as part of a weekly/monthly routine
- 27% would like to pay at more convenient times.

7) How often do you go to the town centre?

- 77% visit up ranging from daily up to one per month
- 23% visit from between every few months to never

8) Reasons for visiting town centre?

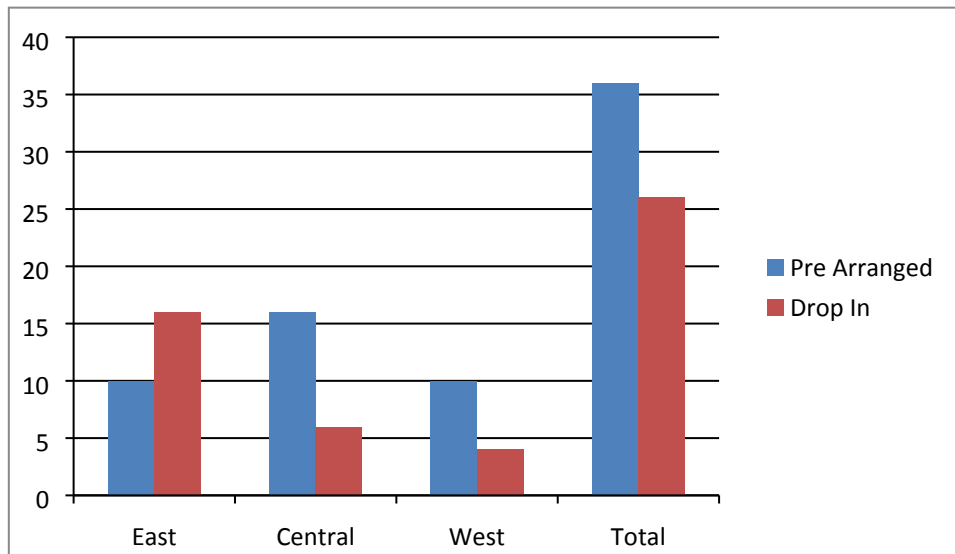
- 88% go to shop, go to the bank, meet friends or for entertainment purposes.

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One Stop Shops – Locality use of Interview Space

Below data from visits during December 2018

	Arranged	Drop In	Total
East - Winyates	10	16	26
Central – Woodrow	16	6	22
West – Batchley	10	4	14
Total	36	26	62



It is considered essential that Housing teams have access to a private interview space to meet with tenants.

Currently Officers use the 3 One Stop Shops for this purpose, throughout the day and not just during opening times. Whilst there are some drop-ins, tenants are usually requested to make a pre planned appointment.

As it is proposed that the One Stop Shops are no longer open to the public, the impact will be minimal to the teams, however, the key things to consider are as follows:

- Winyates is a separate building from the OSS and is only being used when the office is open. Housing staff had an interview space created within the building however during the past months it has been used as access in and out of the building due to health and safety (staff safety and security).
 - An interview space in a different part of the building could be identified eg: first floor, however, this will require a risk assessment to ensure staff safety with the appropriate alarm systems put in place.
- Batchley’s interview space is on the ground floor, however this is not ideal in terms of location as housing staff are on the top floor. The office is used currently when its closed which can be a vulnerability in terms staff safety, however, alarm systems are in place to mitigate any risks.

- Consideration could be given to turning an alternative part of the building eg: first floor into an interview space. Again this requires a risk assessment for staff safety with appropriate alarms and systems put in place.
- Woodrow's interview space is on the ground floor, it is currently used during office closures and to support staff safety, alarm systems are in place to reduce any risks.
 - Consideration could be given to either continue to use this space or an alternative space in the basement. This would need to be risk assessed for staff safety and the appropriate alarm systems put in place.

From a housing perspective the closure of the One Stop Shops will have some limited impacts on tenants and the teams delivering services. It is considered these impacts to tenants can be removed by creating alternative interview space (wherever possible).

Consideration could also be given to allocating interview space within the town hall as many of our tenants visit this building frequently and for some tenants it is the closest building for them to attend. Officers can use 'hot desks' within housing options to ensure ground floor access/ interviews.

Since 2013 the majority of tenants interviews have been by appointment, however, the current one stop shop arrangements allow an opportunity for the tenant to request this.

Closing public offices within the district centres will remove this option and tenants will need to use the alternative methods which will be well publicised and advised.

Appendix 4 Equality Assessment - Guidance and Recording Form

1. Introduction

Redditch Borough Councils is committed to providing equality of access and recognises that discrimination does not need to be intentional for unfair treatment or adverse impact to occur. Our approach to equality recognises that the range of different groups in our society may have different needs and we seek to ensure that our services are fairly and equitably provided to all sections of the community.

We *are* **legally required** (The Equality Duty, The Equality Act 2010) to demonstrate that we have given 'due regard' to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This means that equality considerations need to be evidenced in our decision-making processes and policies. This template will support you to evidence how the Duty has been taken into account. The Equality duty is to meet 'needs', rather than any desires or preferences for a particular treatment or service. Complying with the General Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve making use of an exception or the positive actions provisions in order to provide a service in a way which is appropriate for a particular group. The General Duty also explicitly recognises that disabled people's needs are different from those of non-disabled people. In considering the requirements to meet the needs of disabled people, public bodies should therefore take account of disabled people's disabilities. This might mean making reasonable adjustments for them or treating them better than other people.

2. When is Equality Assessment required?

Any potential impact on equality should be considered **before any key decisions are made** and should be integrated into day-to-day policy-making, business planning and other decision-making arrangements. This is particularly relevant when making difficult financial decisions; if we are proposing to **stop, reduce or change a service** then we must have relevant equalities evidence to justify this.

Due regard means consciously thinking about the three aims of the General Duty as a part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions we make, when:

- Developing, evaluating and reviewing policy
- Designing, delivering and changing services
- Commissioning and procuring from others

You must consider what evidence is available and whether any more information is needed. You cannot assume that a policy will benefit all service users without evidence to support that conclusion. It is not necessary in every instance, to have hard statistical data. We can also use more qualitative sources such as service user feedback or external sources, for example, information available from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, local or national representative groups etc. Local, regional or national statistical information and research may also be used if relevant.

3. How is the Equality Assessment to be carried out?

To assess a service or policy, consider and use any or all of the following options:

- Walk through the processes as a customer would, or as a member of staff and test it from their point of view - this can be done by the service manager or jointly with the team. Record this experience and make a record of any actions required as a result.
- Set up a customer test with volunteers from community or staff groups. Get them to access the service from start to finish, assess their experience and feedback. Make a record of what was discovered, who the group members were and any actions required as a result.
- Conduct statistical analysis from any service usage information available or customer satisfaction surveys looking for patterns of usage by defined equality groups and obvious gaps in usage.

If further evidence comes to light after the initial completion of this assessment, if possible, go back to the original assessment and update it. Equality Assessment should be seen as a living, on-going process rather than a one off exercise.

4. Who carries out the assessment?

The manager of the service is responsible for ensuring that the assessment is carried out and recorded on this form.

A list of every completed Equality Assessment will be published on the relevant Council's website. Any Elected Member or member of the public can ask for copies of the assessment and any information that has been used in the completion of the assessment.

For further information or assistance please contact:

Policy Team on 01527 548284 or 01527 881616 or equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Useful documents:

[Bromsgrove](#) Equality Strategy

[Redditch](#) Equality Strategy

Quick start guidance to the Equality Duty can be found [here](#)

Equality Assessment Record

Please ensure the following:

- That the document is understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents, and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy, but must be complete.
- That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.

Title of service/policy/procedure/spending review being proposed	One Stop Shop Review		
Name of service area	Customer Services		
Name of Officer completing this assessment	Paul Stephenson		
Date assessment completed	14/11/19		
Name of decision maker (in relation to the change)	Executive		
Date decision made			
Sign off on completion	Name	Signature	Date
Lead officer completing assessment	Paul Stephenson		14/11/19
Equalities	Rebecca Green (Policy Manager)		14/11/19

Overview – Set the context

Provide a clear overview of the aims of the service/policy/procedure and the proposed changes being made. Will current service users’ needs continue to be met? Why is the change being proposed? What needs or duties is it designed to meet?

The proposal recommends closure of the Customer Service Centres (known as One Stop Shops) at Batchley, Winyates and Woodrow. The reasoning behind the case for closure is that over the past 10 years, visitor numbers have fallen significantly due to changes in working practices at the Town Hall, and within each service area. This has resulted in the One Stop Shops mostly being used solely to pay their council bills (mainly Rent and Council Tax), incurring a high cost for the council in regards of staffing and overheads.

Customers who wish to pay their rent in person can now use a rent payment card which is accepted at a Post Office or Paypoint location. This will be a better, more effective alternative as they are open longer hours than the One Stop Shops (OSS are only open for ½ day Monday-Friday). There are at least 1 Paypoint or Post Office within the centres at Winyates, Woodrow and Batchley. Customers who wish to pay their Council Tax in person will shortly be able to pay using their bill at any Post Office or Paypoint location.

Housing appointments will be conducted in the existing locality buildings, in customer homes or at the Town Hall or any other council premise subject to customer need.

The suggested date of closure is April 2020 and the roll-out of barcoded billing is planned for January 2020.

All of the alternative payment methods (direct debit, 24 hrs automated telephone line, bank standing order, postal cheque, online payment) are still available as alternatives.

Customers who need to contact the council for advice can still continue to use alternative methods of contact such as telephone, email, via the internet or visiting the town hall.

Who is the proposal likely to affect?	Yes	No
All residents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific group(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All Council employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific group(s) of employees	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (identify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Detail- Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include current service users and those who could benefit from but do not currently access the service.

Adults with disabilities – will be able to use post office/Paypoint in each of the centres to pay for their services, or alternatively can use on of the alternative payments in the overview, or visit the town hall where disabled parking spaces are provided free of charge or via local buses which are adapted for people with disabilities. In certain circumstances, home visits are also a possibility for customers who would find accessing any other means of contact difficult, at the discretion of the relevant service area.

Adults with young children – will be able to use post office/Paypoint in each of the centres to pay for their services, or alternatively can use on of the alternative payments in the overview, or visit the town hall.

Older people – will be able to use post office/Paypoint in each of the centres to pay for their services, or alternatively can use on of the alternative payments in the overview, or visit the town hall.

The service will now benefit people with disabilities, adults with young children and older people all across the Borough, as there are numerous post offices/Paypoint locations. This will enable the predominant services currently provided by the One Stop Shops (Paying rent & Council Tax) to be accessed by people in their own localities.

Evidence and data used to inform your equality impact assessment

What **data, research, or trend analysis** have you used? Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you.

Equality data is not gathered on service users accessing the One Stop Shops, however a recent survey has shown that 85% of visitors to the centre come to pay for council services, 10% come to ask a question of the Customer Service Advisor and the remaining 5% either use the telephone or attend a pre-arranged appointment.

Results from the 2018 Redditch Community Survey
 43% of people stated their main method of contacting the council was by telephone
 Further 20% said preferred method was website
 Only 6% said their preferred method was face to face

Engagement and Consultation

What engagement and consultation have you undertaken about the proposal with current service users, potential users and other stakeholders? What is important to them regarding the current service? How does (or could) the service meet their needs?

How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)? Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

A survey was conducted with 267 customers of the One Stop Shops in July and August 2019, to ascertain their reasons for using the One Stop Shops.

This showed that 85% of visitors to the centre come to pay for council services, 10% come to ask a question of the Customer Service Advisor and the remaining respondents either use the telephone (13 people) or attend a pre-arranged appointment (4 people).

Public Sector Equality Duty

Due regard must be given to the three aims of the Equality Duty. This means that you must consciously think about the three aims as part of the process of decision-making. Consider the current service and any proposed changes, thinking about what issues may arise.

Equality Duty aims	Evidence
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic</p>	<p>Evidence shows that 85% of the people using the One Stop Shops come to make a payment. Although the proposal is to close the One Stop Shops, in order to reduce any negative impact, the proposal is that customers can make their payments at other local locations via the Post Office or Paypoint. This has in fact <i>increased</i> the accessibility to this part of the service for everyone, as there are more places across the Borough they can use and opening times are longer.</p> <p>All of the alternative payment methods (direct debit, 24 hrs automated telephone line, bank standing order, postal cheque, online payment, payment in person at Redditch Town Hall) are still available as alternatives.</p> <p>Customers who need to contact the council for advice can still continue to use alternative methods of contact such as telephone, email, via the internet or visiting the Town Hall.</p>
<p>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups How does the proposal/service</p>	<p>With customers able to make their payments at other local locations via the Post Office or Paypoint, accessibility to this part of the service has become more accessible for everyone, as there are more places they can use and opening times are longer.</p>

ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users? Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).	
Foster good relations between different groups Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim?	n/a

Is there evidence of actual or potential unfairness for the following equality groups?

- Does the proposal target or exclude a specific equality group or community?
 - Does it affect some equality groups or communities differently and can this be justified?
 - Is the proposal likely to be equally accessed by all equality groups and communities? If not, can this be justified?
- (It may be useful to consider other groups, not included in the Equality Act, especially if the proposal is specifically for them e.g. lone parents, refugees, unemployed people, carers)

Impact of proposal- Describe the likely impact of the proposal on people because of their protected characteristic and how they may be affected. How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be negatively affected? What are the barriers that might make access difficult or stop different groups or communities accessing the proposal? How great will that impact be on their well-being? Could the proposal promote equality and good relations between different groups? How?

If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?

What mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact? (Include these in the action plan at the end of the assessment) Equal treatment does not always produce equal outcomes; sometimes you will have to take specific steps for particular groups to address an existing disadvantage or to meet differing needs.

Protected Group	Impact of proposal	Justification for any actual or potential unfairness identified	If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?
Age	High	Mitigating actions being	See actions below

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of local, well established Council office for payment could be worrying or confusing • Older residents might not be aware of alternative methods of engaging with the Council 	implemented	
Disability	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of local, well established Council office for payment could be worrying or confusing • Some residents with disabilities (& potentially carers) might not be aware of alternative methods of engaging with the Council 	Mitigating actions being implemented	See actions below
Transgender	n/a	n/a	n/a
Marriage and Civil	n/a	n/a	n/a

Partnership			
Pregnancy and Maternity	High <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of local, well established Council office for payment could be worrying • Some new mothers might not be aware of alternative methods of engaging with the Council 	Mitigating actions being implemented	See actions below
Race	Medium	Mitigating actions being implemented	See actions below
Religion or Belief	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sex (Male/ Female)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sexual Orientation	n/a	n/a	n/a

How will you monitor any changes identified?

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered

The actions required to address these findings are set out below.

Action Required	By Whom	By When	Completion Date
Rent card implementation	Paul Stephenson	11/11/19	11/11/19
Council Tax barcoded billing	Paul Stephenson	02/12/19	
Communication on changes with One Stop Shop customers	Paul Stephenson	01/01/20-05/04/20	
Wider communication of changes with communities, including targeted messages to community groups/venues and translated materials as required	Paul Stephenson Rebecca Green	01/01/20-05/04/20	

When you have completed this assessment, retain a copy and send an electronic copy to the Policy Team (Equalities) attaching any supporting evidence used to carry out the assessment.

Glossary

Direct discrimination

- Treating someone less favourably than someone else in the same circumstances, e.g.:
 - In employment, racist or sexist banter, derogatory comments and innuendo
 - Failure to treat grievances seriously or to investigate effectively

- Unfairly denying access to employment, training or facilities and services

Indirect discrimination

- Where a provision, criterion or practice is applied equally to all but has the effect excluding or reducing the access for a particular group and is not a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Even if this effect is unintentional, it can still be unlawful, e.g.:
 - Unnecessary height restrictions for access to employment opportunities
 - Refusing training for promotion to people who work part-time
 - Requiring fluency in a language where this is not necessary
 - Relying on word of mouth to recruit to employment or training opportunities
 - Qualification requirements that are not justified for the level of the job.

Policy, Practices and Services

- Refers to any activity the council does, be that a service we provide, an initiative we run, a policy we write or a procedure we observe.
- It may refer to the way we do things which are customary
- It may refer to activities we undertake such as meetings, focus groups or publications we produce.

Protected Characteristics

Age - consider all age groups although legal protection only applies to people aged 18 or over

Disability - consider all types of impairment, physical and mental, sensory, visible and hidden

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning disability • Families and carers of disabled children • Mobility impairments • Wheelchair users | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health needs/ disorders and psychological conditions • HIV/ Aids • Sensory impairments such as sight and hearing • Cancer and long term progressive conditions such as MS |
|---|---|

Gender – refers to the physiological fact of being male or female

- consider whether something has a different impact on men or women - particularly if it's more of an impact on women, consider the impact if they have caring responsibilities whether its childcare or other types of care

Gender re-assignment - Transgender (Gender Dysphoria)- or the preferred term, Gender Confirmation

- Consider all stages of re-assignment, before, during and after re-assignment treatment or gender confirmation surgery

Marriage and Civil Partnerships –

- It *only* covers those who are married or in a civil partnership (NB single status is not protected in the Equality Act)

Pregnancy and maternity

- Physical state of pregnancy
- On maternity leave or planning maternity leave or returned from maternity leave
- Includes breast feeding

Race – this includes race, colour, nationality, national or ethnic origin and caste (caste through case law, not explicitly referenced)

- Race is a generic overall term
- Colour refers to the colour of a person's skin
- Nationality applies to internationally recognised nationalities
- National Origin applies where you have changed your nationality in your life time or there is something about you that indicates that your parents or grandparents' origins were in another part of the world – e.g. name, religion
- Ethnic Origin applies where identifiable groups have established a unique and different ethnicity to the rest of the population – this currently applies to Jews, Gypsies, Sikhs Irish and Scottish Travellers
- Caste is the traditional organisation of South Asian, particularly Hindu, society into a hierarchy of hereditary groups.

Religion or Belief – all established religions and beliefs (and non-belief) including but not limited to the following:

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| • Christianity | • Baha'i | • Rastafarianism |
| • Hinduism | • Buddhism | • Atheism |
| • Islam | • Jainism | • Agnosticism |
| • Judaism | • Paganism | • Humanism |
| • Sikhism | • Parsi or Zoroastrianism | |

Sexual orientation

- Gay – usually refers to men with sexual orientation towards other men although sometime refers to women with sexual orientation towards other women
- Lesbian – refers to women with sexual orientation towards other women
- Bisexual – refers to men and women with sexual orientation to either or both their own gender or the opposite gender
- Heterosexual refers to men and women with sexual orientation towards the opposite gender

Appendix 5 - Communications & Engagement Plan

Task	By whom	How	Start	End	Officer Responsible
1-2-1 discussion with customer re: change in payment/contact method	Customer Services	Face to face at OSS	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Posters re: Allpay Housing at all sites	Customer Services	Posters	01/12/19	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Posters re: Allpay Council Tax at all sites	Customer Services	Posters	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Posters in OSS at outer offices and Town Hall	Customer Services	Posters	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Amendment to council tax letter templates	Council Tax		01/01/20	31/01/20	Revenues Asst Manager
Letters to customers who may not present after January due to 10 monthly instalment (Council Tax)	Customer Services	Letter / payment data	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Email notice to housing staff	Customer Services	Email	16/01/20	31/03/20	Asst Cust Services Manager
Press Release promoting Allpay Housing	Comms Team	Press Release	07/12/19	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Orb Notice to staff (internal) re closure	Comms Team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Orb Notice to staff to change literature if applicable	Comms Team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Standard / Advertiser Press Release	Comms Team	Press Release	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Facebook/Twitter Notices	Comms Team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Comms Manager
Website alert re: closure	Web team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Web Team
Update website content	Web team	Online	16/01/20	31/03/20	Web Team
Notice to relevent community Groups	Policy Team	Letter / Email	16/01/20	31/03/20	Policy Manager

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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