

Executive Committee

Greenlands Ward

18 November 2009

WOODROW LIBRARY REFURBISHMENT – CO-LOCATION OF WOODROW ONE STOP SHOP

(Report of the Head of Customer and IT Services and Head of Finance,
Revenues and Benefits)

1. Summary of Proposals

The purpose of the report is to consider the proposals for the co-location of Woodrow One Stop Shop in Woodrow library as part of Worcestershire County Council's refurbishment project.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) Redditch Borough Council supports in principle the co-location of Woodrow One Stop Shop in Woodrow library.
- 2) Officers investigate the feasibility of extending the use of swipe cards as a possible alternative to a payment kiosk and report back to the Committee on their findings before the expenditure requested in 5 below is committed.
- 3) The rent currently charged for the library is reviewed taking account of the extent of the investment proposed to improve a community facility and the implications of the future use of the vacated office space.
- 4) The outcome of the investigation outlined in 3 above be brought back to the Committee for consideration; and

to RECOMMEND that

- 5) the capital bid of £17,000 for the installation of a payment kiosk and the revenue bid of £6,000 per year for maintenance be approved.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 The funding outlined in the recommendations will be the subject of capital and revenue bids for 2010 - 2011.

- 3.2 The cost to install a payment kiosk in the library would entail a capital budget bid of £17,000 with an ongoing revenue cost of £6,000. The cost per transaction would be 35p. Current transaction costs for the face to face cashier service is 58p. There would be potential revenue saving through the reduction in staffing resource.

Legal

- 3.3 There are legal implications in terms of the negotiation of a lease agreement between Redditch Borough Council and Worcestershire County Council.

Policy

- 3.4 No specific policy implications.

Risk

- 3.5 There is no specific risk to Redditch Borough Council for not doing this but it may compromise the success of the County Council's capital bid.
- 3.6 There are some risks identified with supporting the project:
- a) Adverse reaction from the public if the One Stop Shop is relocated.
 - b) Adverse reaction from the public on the loss of a face to face cashier service and introduction of a kiosk.
 - c) Lack of staff buy-in.
 - d) Joint working leads to Human Resources/staff issues such as re-grading.

- 3.7 These risks will be mitigated by positive publicity, communication and full consultation with those staff affected.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.8 It is envisaged that more locally based customers will visit the refurbished unit rather than travel to other venues.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 In 2005, private consultants were commissioned to undertake a review of Library Services. This review identified service improvements and efficiencies and recommended that the service adopt a vision for future public service delivery.

- 4.2 The report acknowledged the importance of Libraries and the role they play within the community. It recommended that the service where practicable and where opportunities arose to co-locate with other services and voluntary organisations.
- 4.3 The review proposed the re-provisioning of three libraries and identified significant service improvements and efficiencies required across the Library Service. One of the Libraries identified, as part of the re-provisioning exercise was Woodrow.
- 4.4 In January 2008 the Library Service was merged with the Lifelong Learning Service to create a new Libraries and Learning Service. A new Senior Management team is in place and Woodrow has been identified as a priority area for service development, including the delivery of adult learning.
- 4.5 Although Woodrow Library currently works closely with some local organisations, opening the Library to other organisations could improve service provision to customers such as delivering Adult Learning enabling the Library to become a wider community resource.
- 4.6 It was considered that access to services provided by Borough and County Council could also be provided from the Library building, creating a One Stop, easily accessible public facility.
- 4.7 In June 2008 as part of the decision to retain the local One stop Shops, a members advisory panel was set up look at ways in which the local offices could be more relevant, accessible and better utilised.
- 4.8 The member panel has received regular updates of the progress of the co-location discussions and is in support of the project.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 There is a clear opportunity to improve access to services for the community via the library building which could host many types of learning activity as well as access to council services through the co-location. Some of the benefits are listed below:
- a) The joint facility would create a centre for the community.
 - b) There would be a boost to local moral seeing investment and improved services in the local community.
 - c) There would be an increase in footfall and the range of visitors would broaden.

- d) There would be computer access within the library which would help to promote self service.
 - e) There is the potential for efficiency savings through cross skilling/joint working.
 - f) There would be some revenue savings arising from co-location.
 - g) The Centre would provide a better space for the One Stop Shop, including access to private, soundproofed interview rooms along with a good sized meeting room with computer access.
 - h) There is the potential for increased and better opening hours to include Saturdays.
- 5.2 Similar projects have been implemented and are successful in Tenbury Wells, Upton on Severn and Malvern and there is a larger on ongoing project in Worcester City.
- 5.3 Worcestershire County Council are submitting a substantial capital bid in the region of £500,000 to refurbish the library which focuses on the benefits of co-location of the One Stop Shop.
- 5.4 There is currently a face to face cashier service in Woodrow One Stop Shop which could not be transferred into the library. Officers have investigated payment kiosks and space for this has been included in the refurbishment proposals. The cost of acquisition and ongoing maintenance will need to be financed by Redditch Borough Council.
- 5.5 Officers have visited and talked to authorities who have payment kiosks and their feedback is as follows:
- a) An increase in direct debit and automated payments.
 - b) Initially general concerns about using the machines from customers (this has improved over time).
 - c) Essential to have a promotional package and customer support initially.
 - d) Communication with customers is key to success.
 - e) Staff on site are able to manage the machines.
- 5.6 The cost to install a payment kiosk in the library would entail a capital budget bid of £17,000 with an on going revenue cost of £6,000. The cost per transaction would be 35p. Current transaction costs for the face to face cashier service is 58p.
- 5.7 Swipe cards have already been introduced which allow Council tenants to pay rent in local retail outlets and officers are considering whether this could be extended for other payments such as Council Tax.

5.8 The library building is owned by Redditch Borough Council. The contractual expiry date of the lease has passed and Worcestershire County Council are "holding over" on a Continuation Tenancy. They are continuing to pay a rent of £14,500 per annum at the moment. The County are asking that when considering a new lease, recognition is given of the improvement work which will be carried out and the fact that the One Stop Shop will have access to the new facilities.

5.9 The current opening times for both facilities are:

One-Stop-Shop opening hours		Library opening hours	
Mon	9.00 am to 12.30 pm	Mon	1.00 - 5.30
Tue	9.00 am to 12.30 pm	Tue	Closed
Wed	1.30pm to 5.00 pm	Wed	Closed
Thu	1.30pm to 5.00 pm	Thu	9.30 - 1.00 & 2.00 - 5.30
Fri	9.00am to 12.30 pm	Fri	1.00 - 5.30
Sat	Closed	Sat	9.30 - 1.00 & 2.00 - 5.30

These hours could be realigned and revised to best suit customer needs.

5.10 The current staffing levels in Woodrow One Stop Shop are 1 part time cashier and 2 part time customer service advisers (1.5 Full Time Equivalent) This could be reduced to 1 Full Time Equivalent if the OSS was co-located in the library.

5.11 This reduction could be achieved through vacancy management.

5.12 The space which would be vacated by the One Stop Shop in Woodrow would be very small and the rest of the building is occupied by Housing Services staff.

5.13 It would not be possible to let this space commercially but it would afford an opportunity to consider relocation of some staff from offices occupied over Batchley One Stop Shop which would in turn allow consideration for this space to be converted back to Council accommodation.

5.14 There would be cost implications involved in conversion back to living accommodation and Officers will report to Members on the feasibility of this option.

5.15 Although there would be some costs savings for Redditch Borough Council, after the initial capital spend, the focus of this project is about providing better, more accessible and more relevant services for the local community.

6. **Other Implications**

- Asset Management - There are implications for asset management both in terms of the lease arrangements for the library and the use of office accommodation.
- Community Safety - None specific.
- Human Resources - There are HR issues in respect of joint staffing arrangements and reduction in staffing numbers.
- Social Exclusion - Non specific.

7. **Lessons Learnt**

- 7.1 None this is a new matter.

8. **Background Papers**

None

9. **Consultation**

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough and County Council Officers and the Customer Services Members Advisory panel.

10. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Jane Smith Head of IT and Customer Services, who can be contacted on extension 3000 Jane.smith@redditchbc.gov.uk for more information.

11. **Appendices**

None.