

Five Case Model - Business Case

Full Business Case

Customer Services

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

Author:	Paul Stephenson
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1. Executive Summary

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

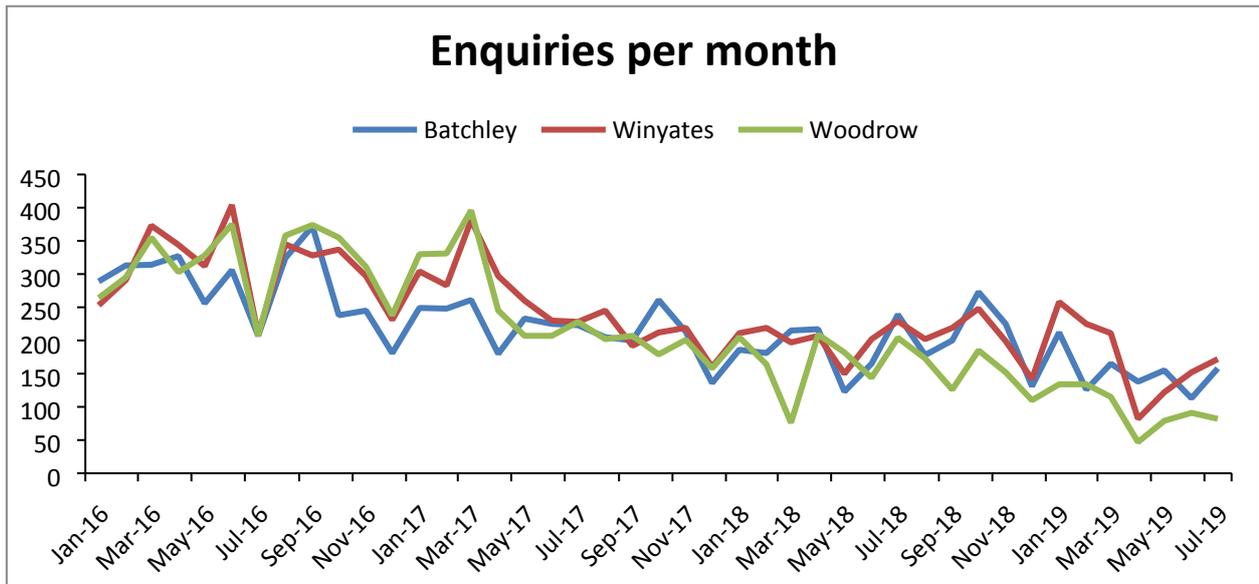
2. Introduction

- 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).

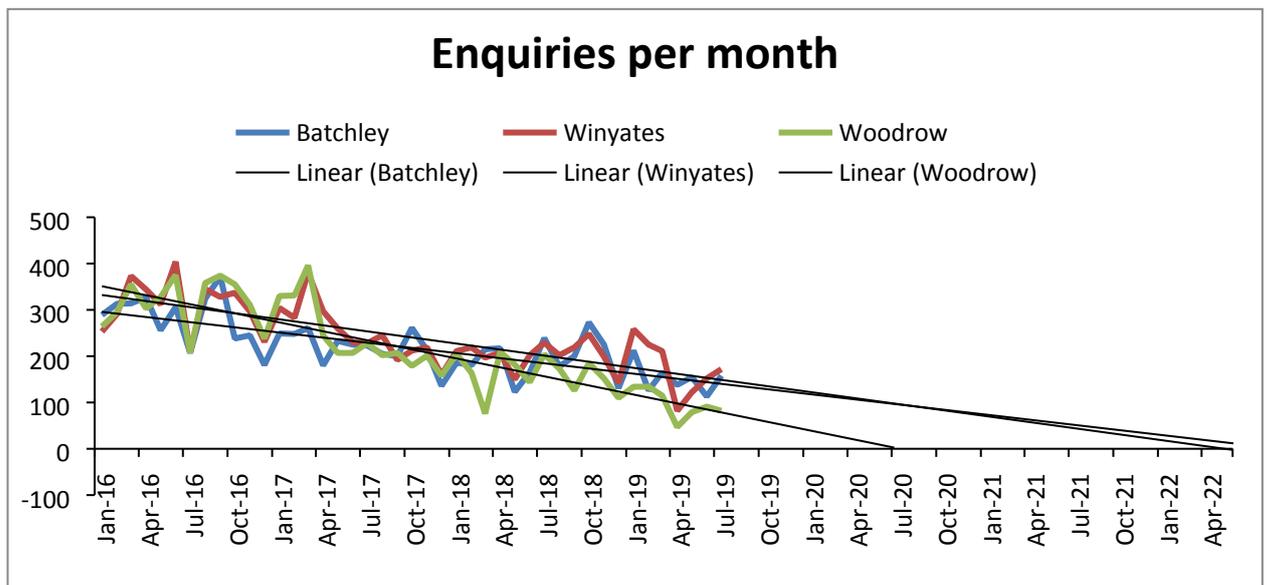
3. The Strategic Case

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.

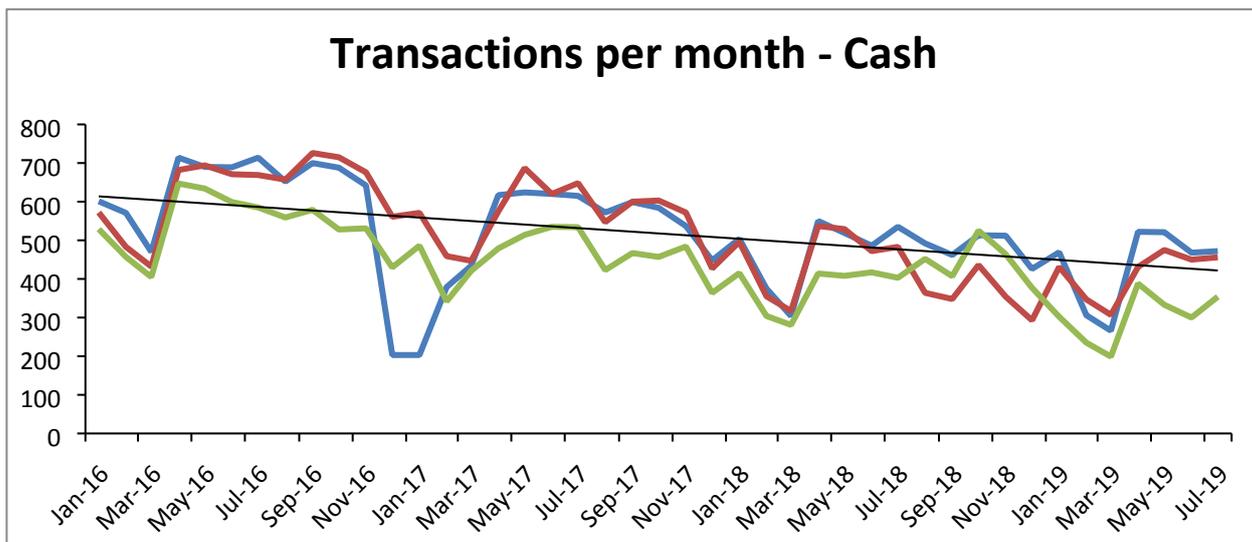


3.3. By applying a trend line to this data above, this shows that the number of enquiries at each centre will be fewer than 10 per month within the next 3 years.

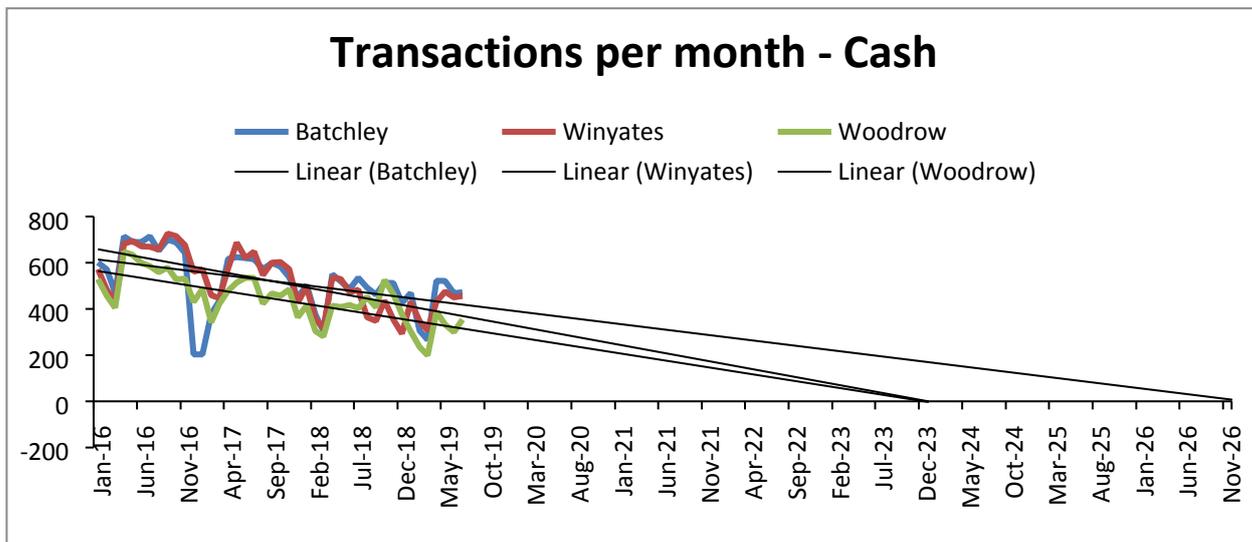


3.4. The UK banking industry report that cash transactions nationally have fallen from 60% of all transactions in 2008 down to 28% in 2018, with an estimated 9% of all transactions by 2028.

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.