



Council

MATTERS ARISING – EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 23RD JULY 2008 – ONE STOP SHOP ADVISORY PANEL

(Report of the Acting Borough Director)

1. Purpose of Report

To remind Members of the content of the appendices to the Item regarding the future of the One Stop Shops as considered by the Executive Committee on the 11th of June 2008.

2. Report / Key Issues

At the meeting of the Executive Committee on 23rd of July 2008, Members considered a report arising from meetings of the One Stop Shop Advisory Panel. It was agreed that, in order to assist Members in their consideration of the matter, the appendices to the earlier report to the Executive Committee be circulated once again to Members.

3. Conclusion

Members are requested to note the appendices.

4. Background Papers

Executive Committee:

- Agenda and Minutes – 11th June 2008; and
- Agenda and Decision Notice - 23rd July 2008

7. Author of Report

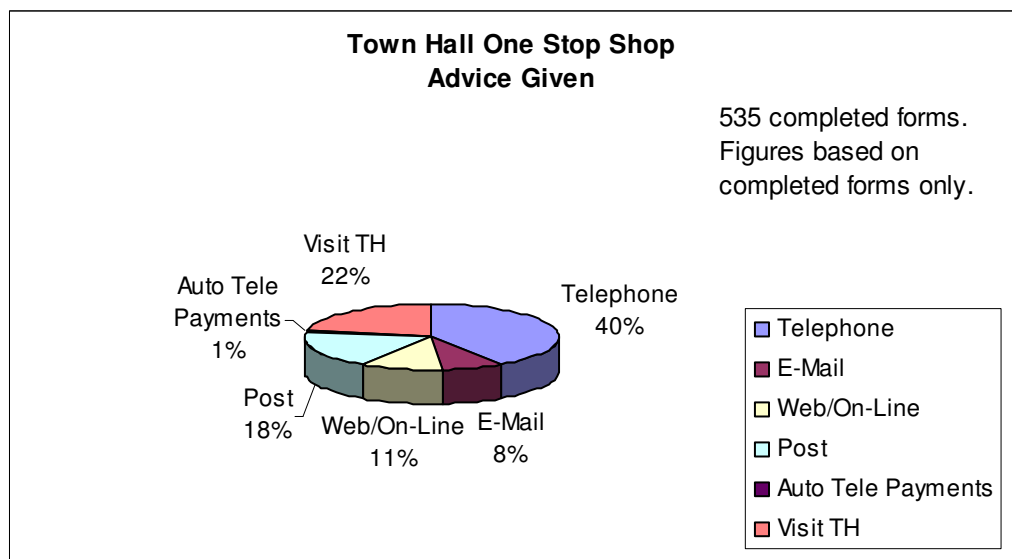
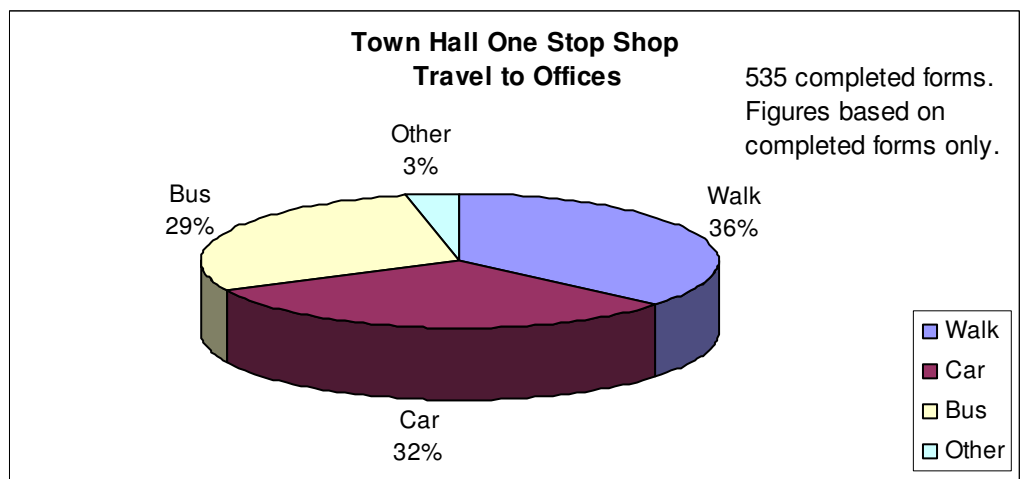
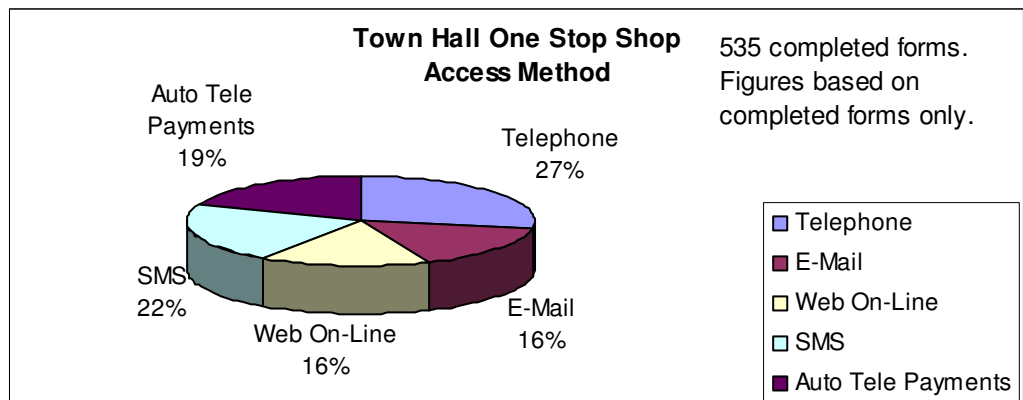
The author of this report is Ivor Westmore (Member and Committee Support Services Manager) who can be contacted on extension 3269 (e.mail: ivor.westmore@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

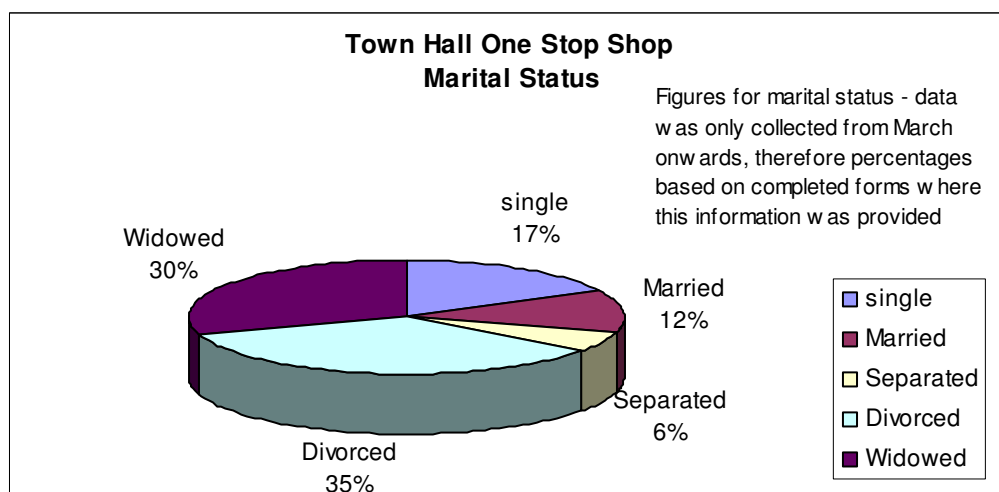
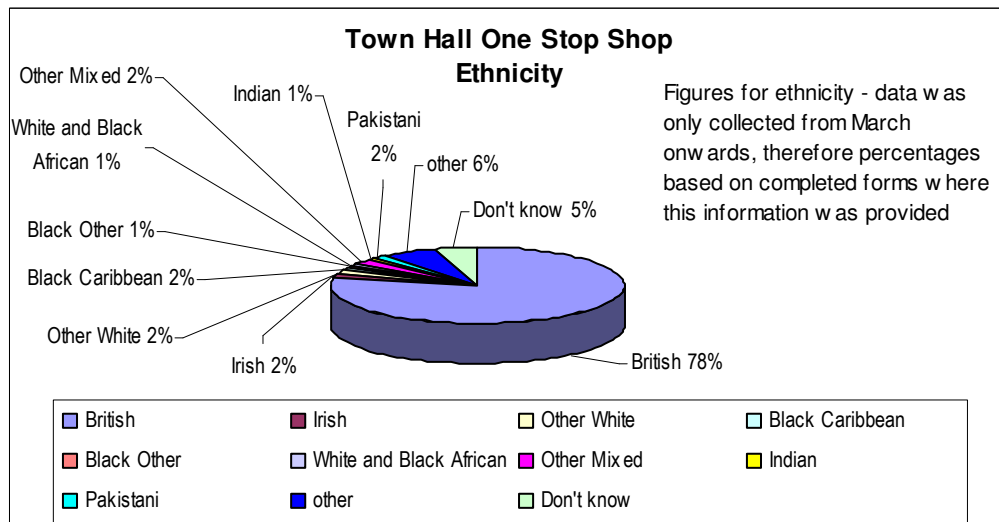
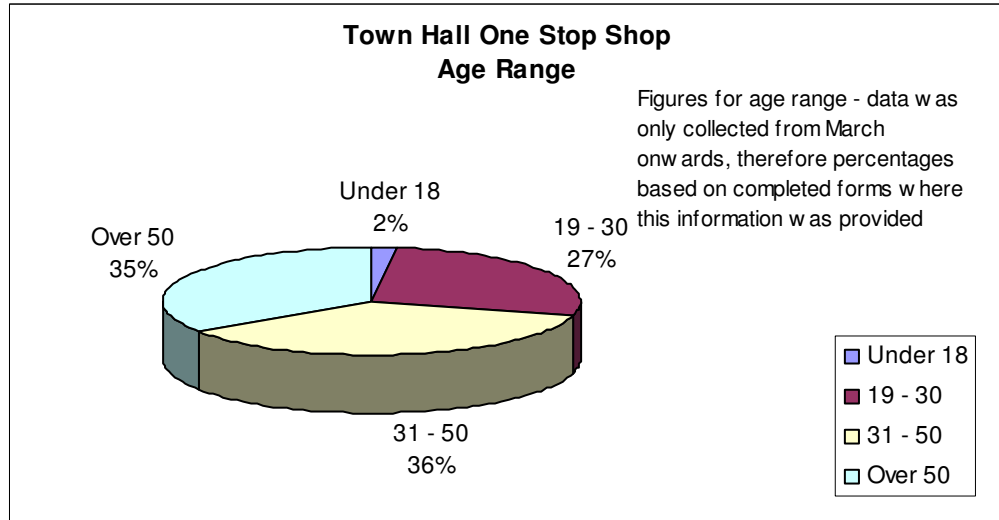
8. Appendix

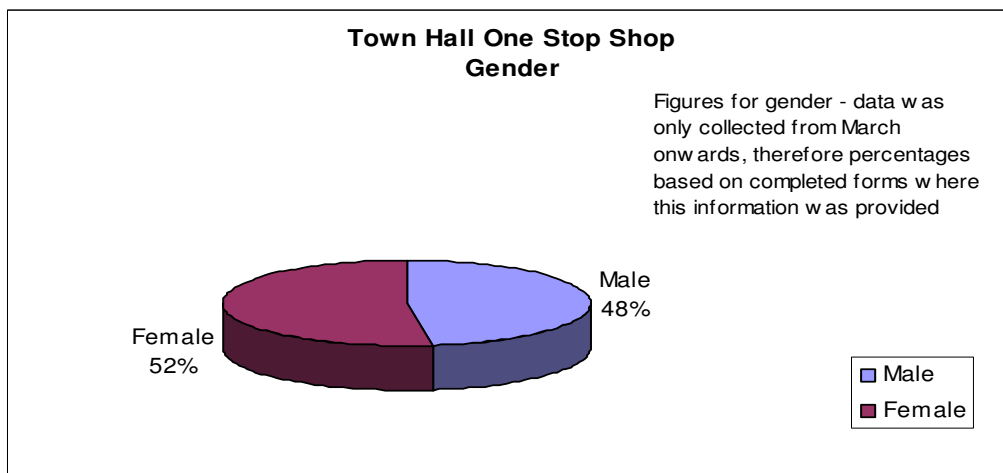
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| Appendix 1 | Analysis of the findings during the transitional period. |
| Appendix 2 | Action Plan. |
| Appendix 3 | Additional methods of payment. |
| Appendix 4 | Consultation Feedback. |

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

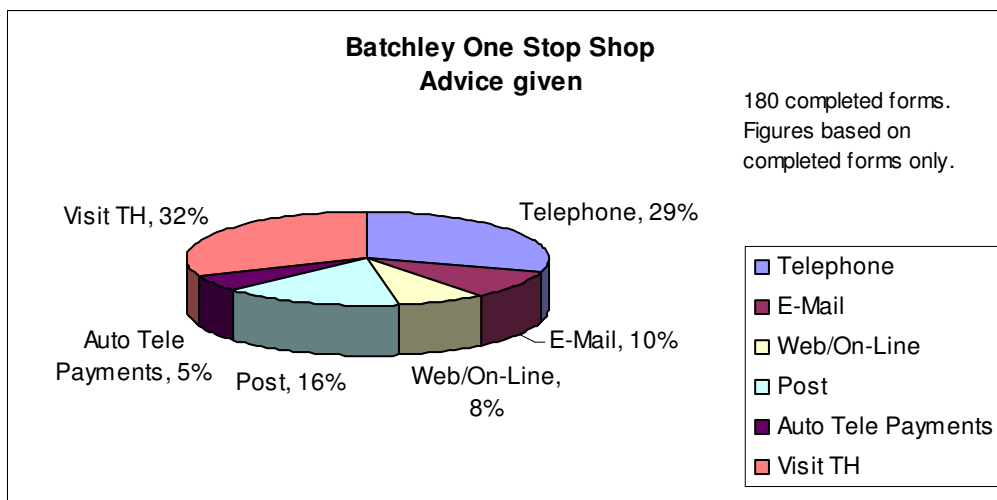
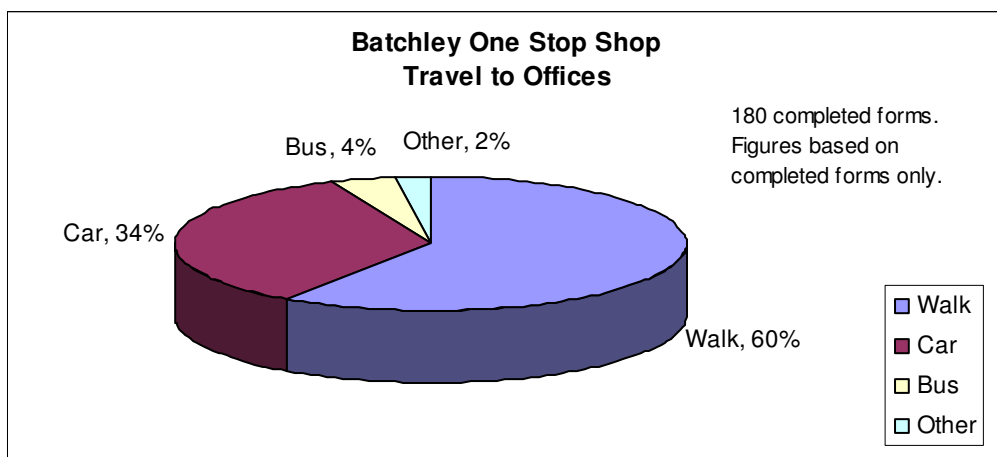
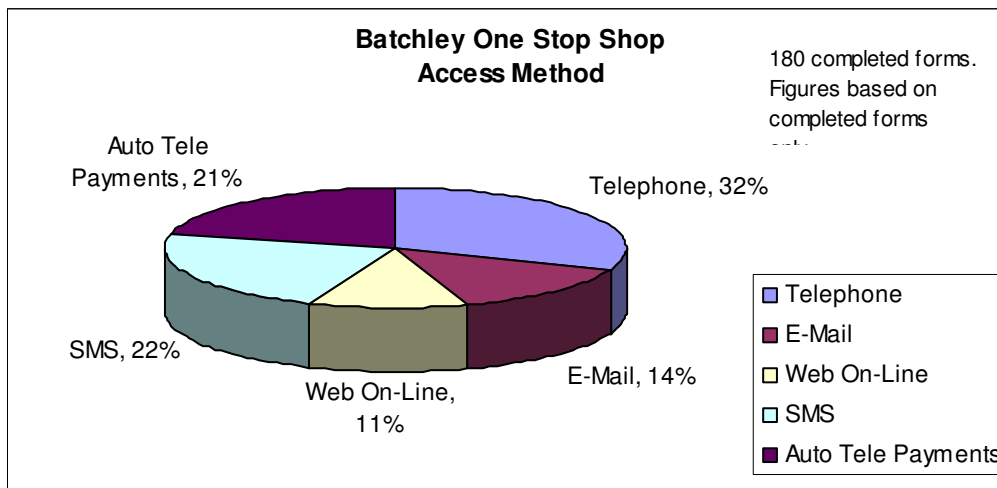
TOWN HALL ONE STOP SHOP (DATA FOR DECEMBER 2007 - MAY 2008)
(IMPORTANT NOTE: No information for the Town Hall One Stop Shop was received for January and February 2008)

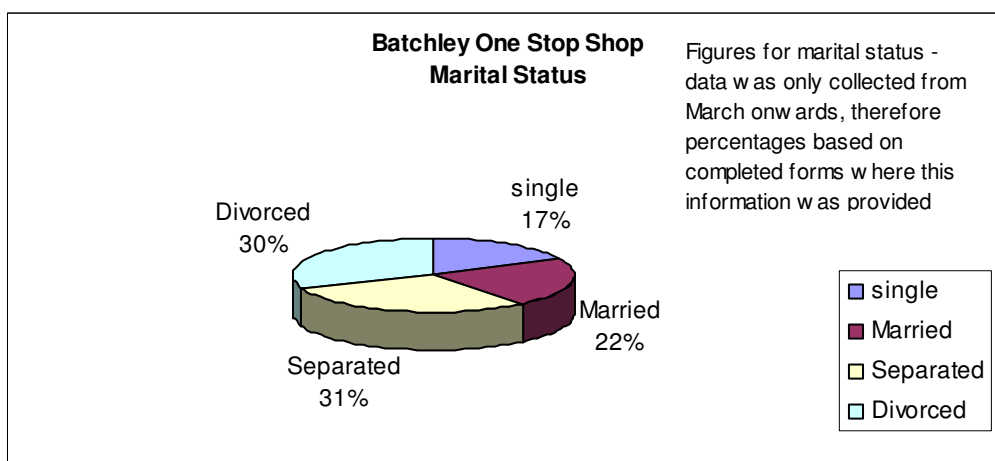
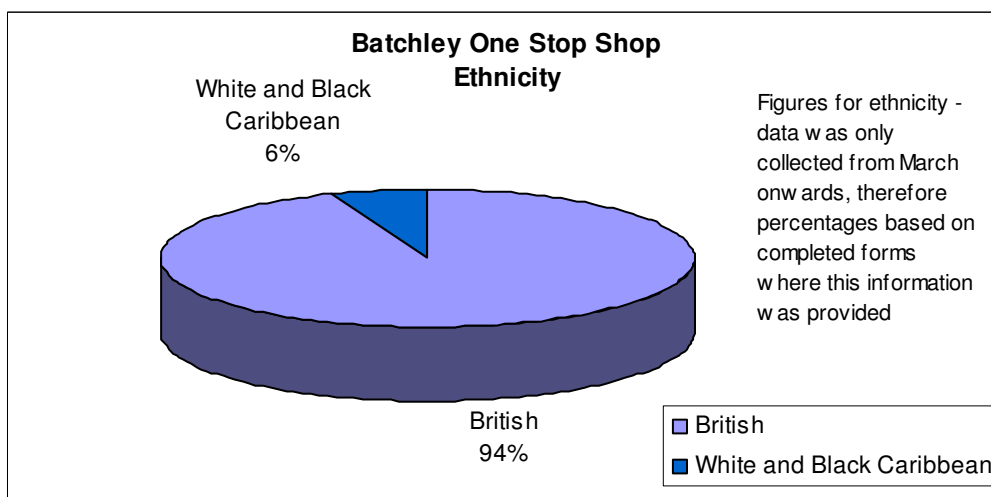
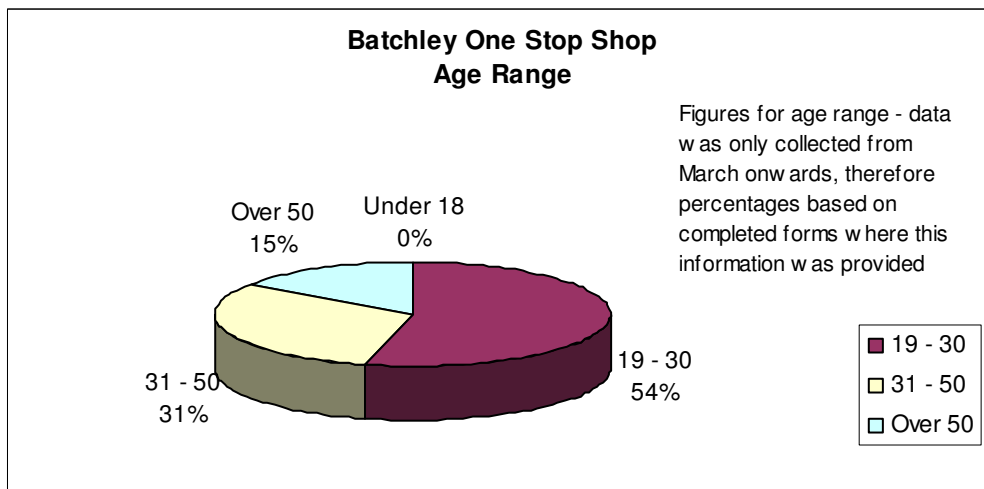


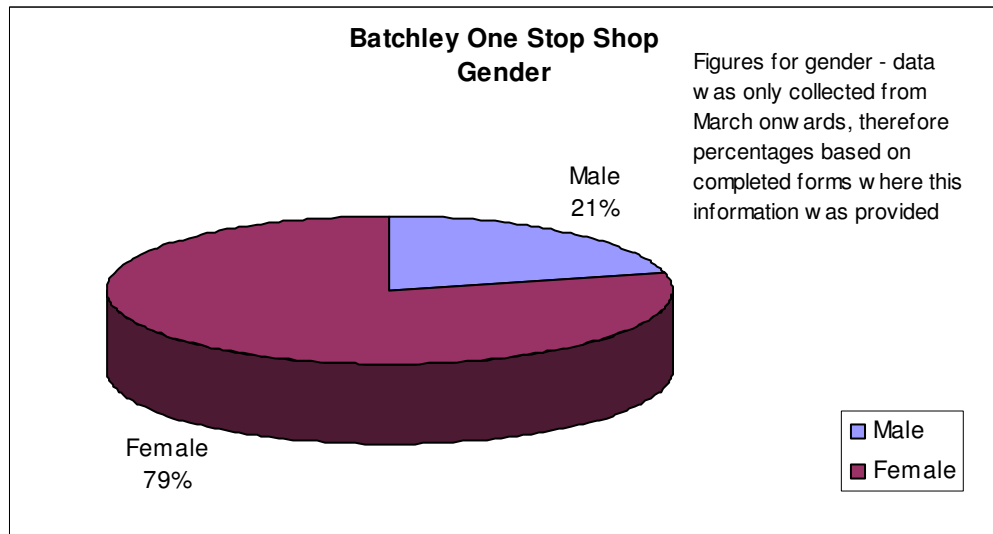




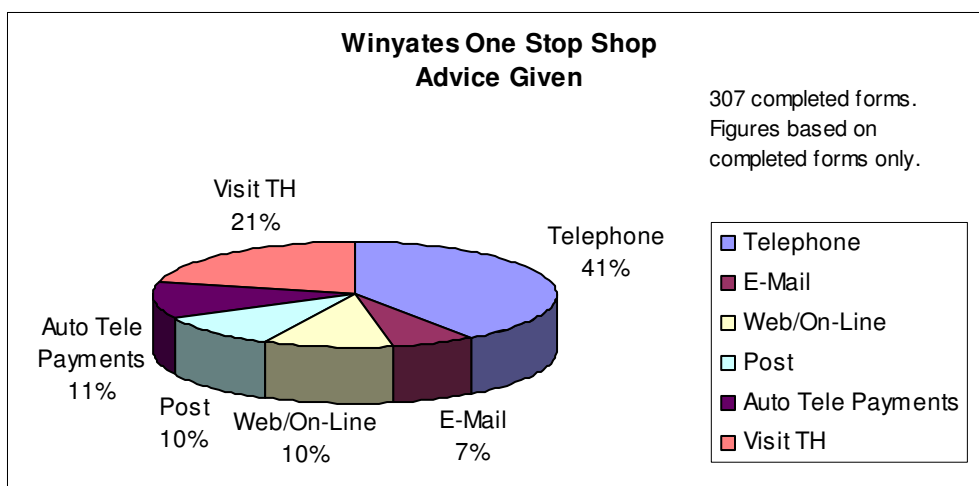
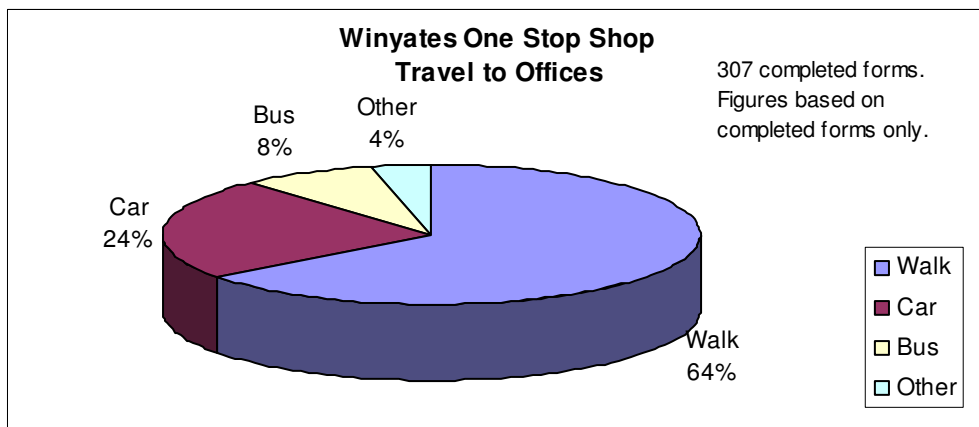
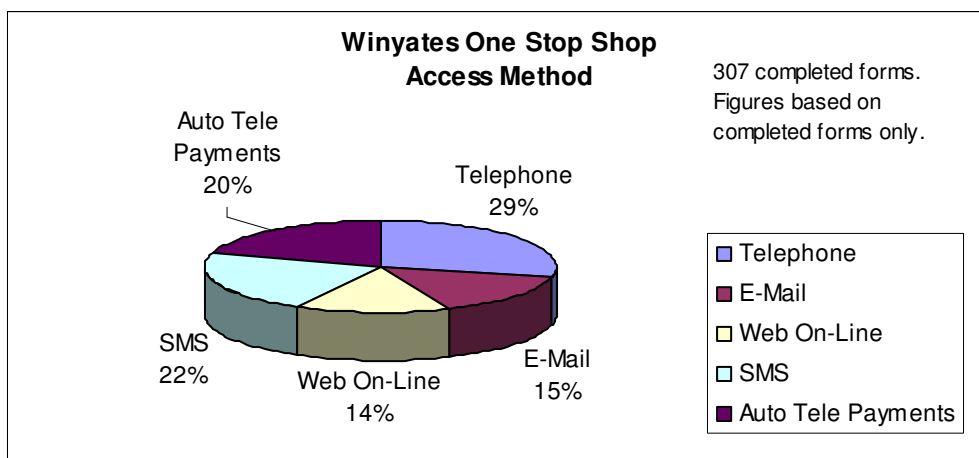
BATCHLEY ONE STOP SHOP (DATA FOR DECEMBER 2007 - MAY 2008)

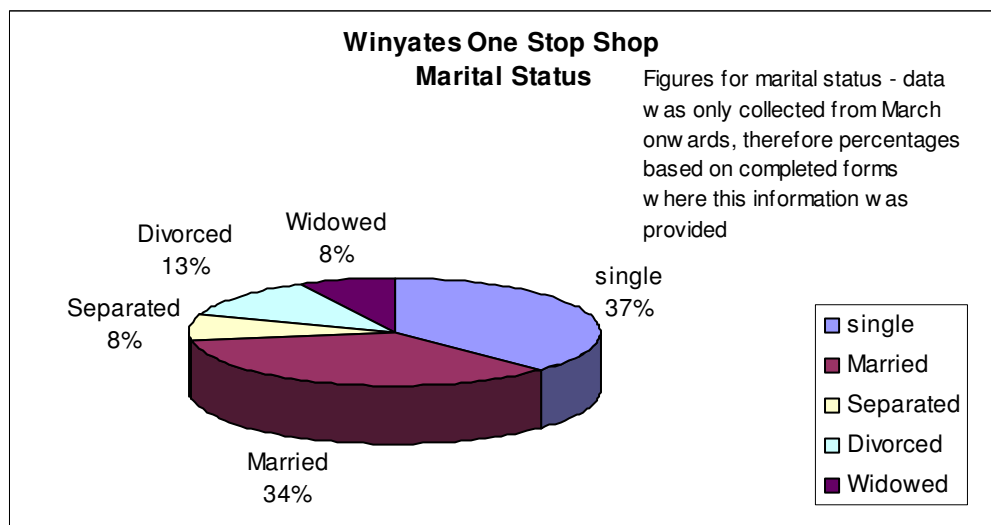
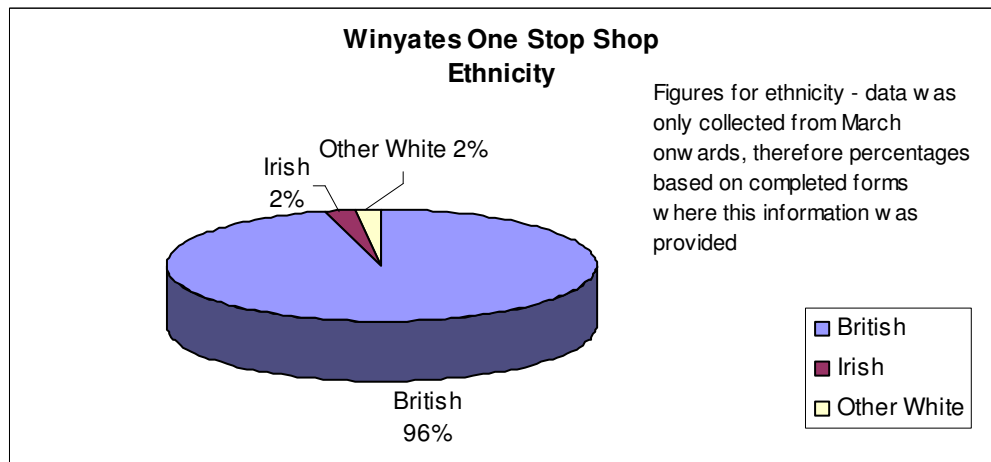
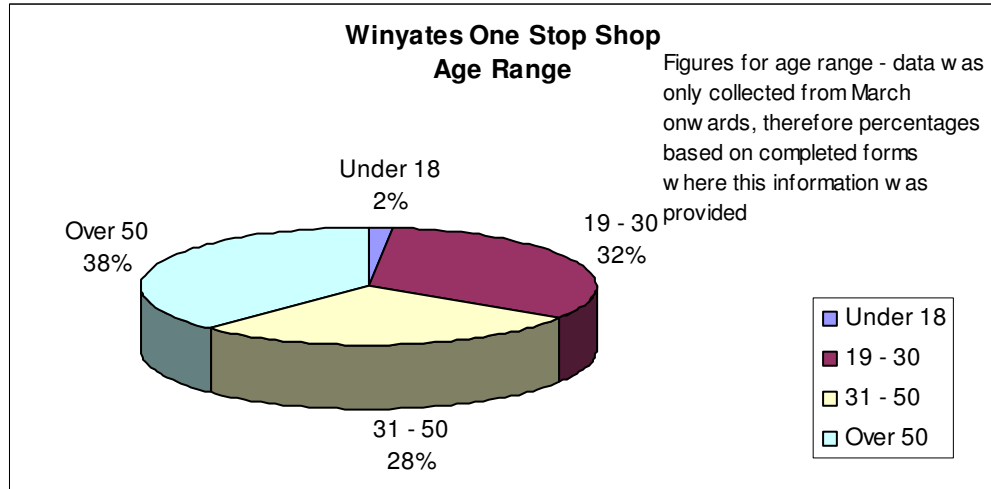


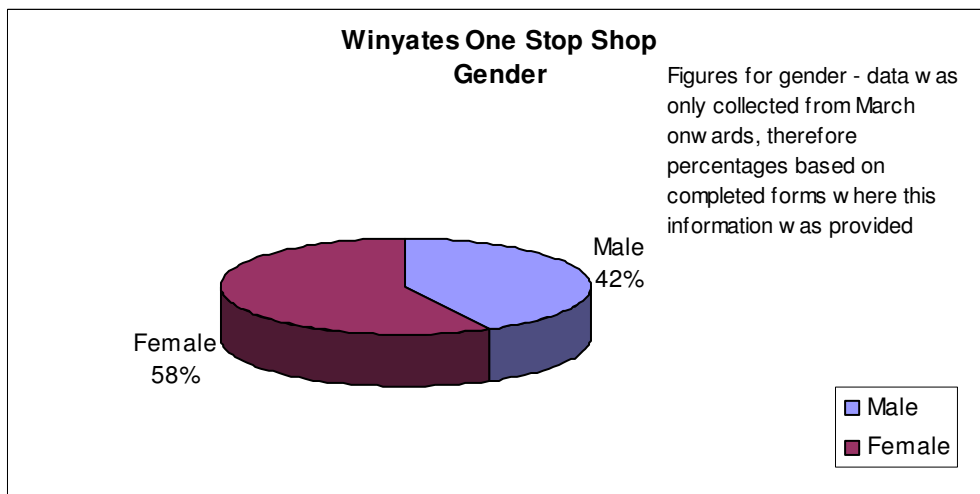




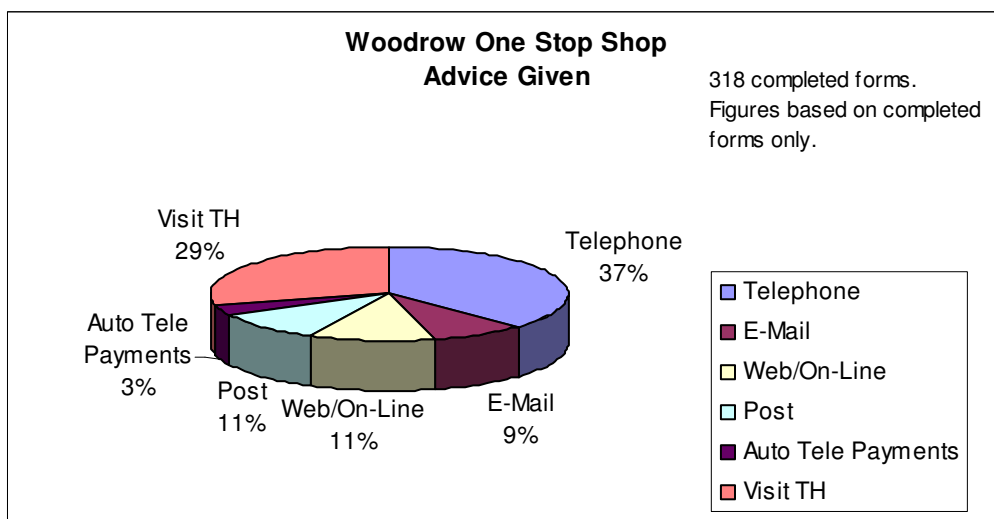
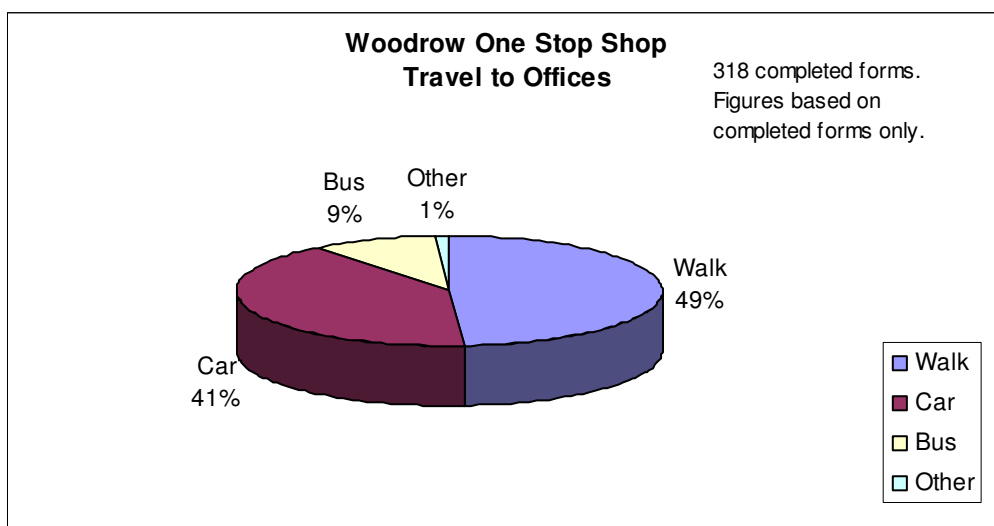
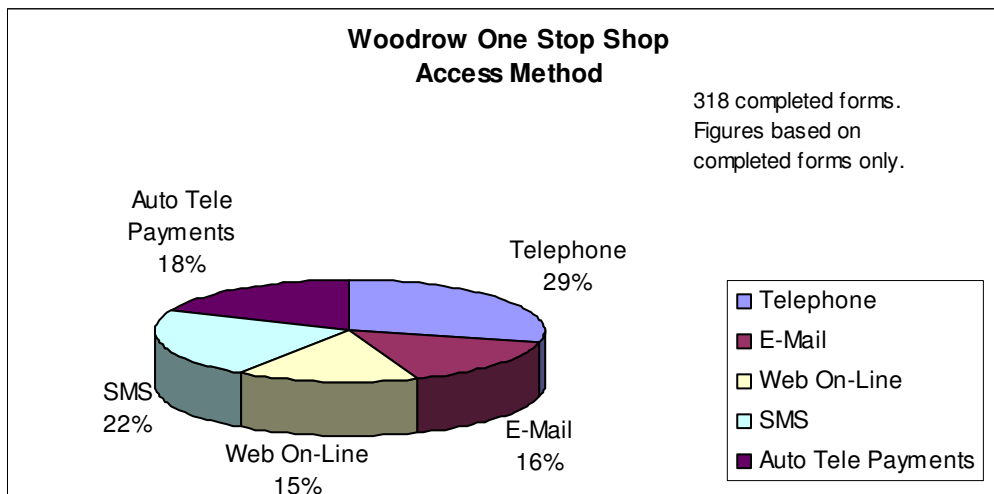
WINYATES ONE STOP SHOP (DATA FOR DECEMBER 2007 - MAY 2008)

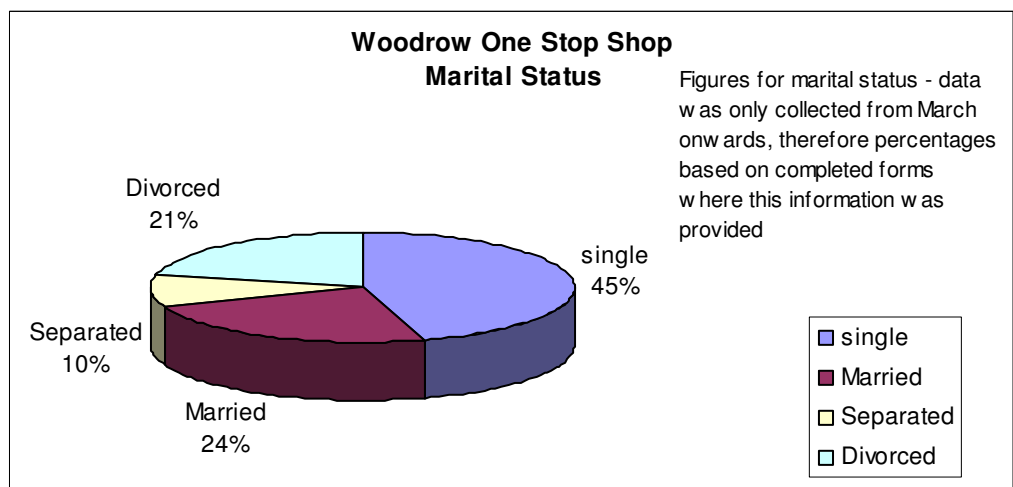
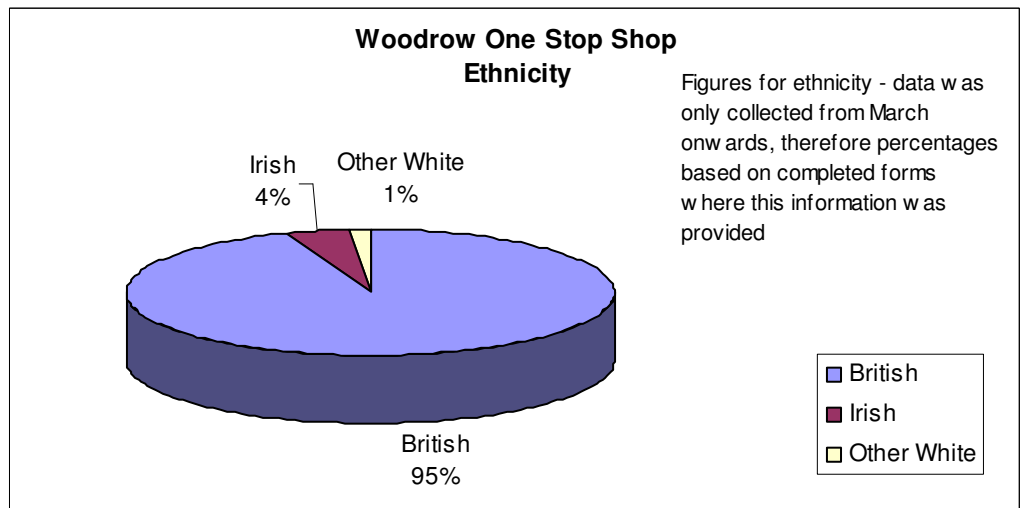
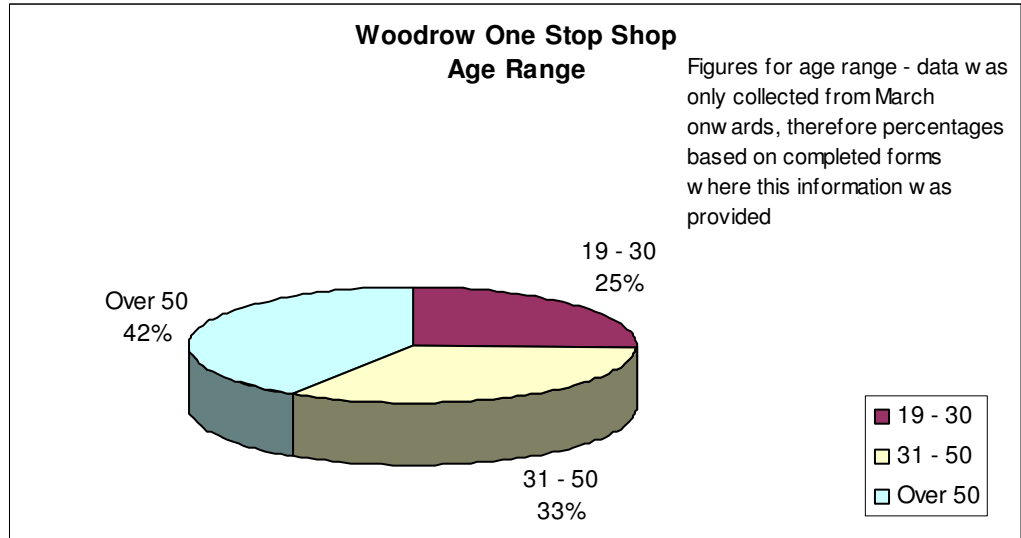


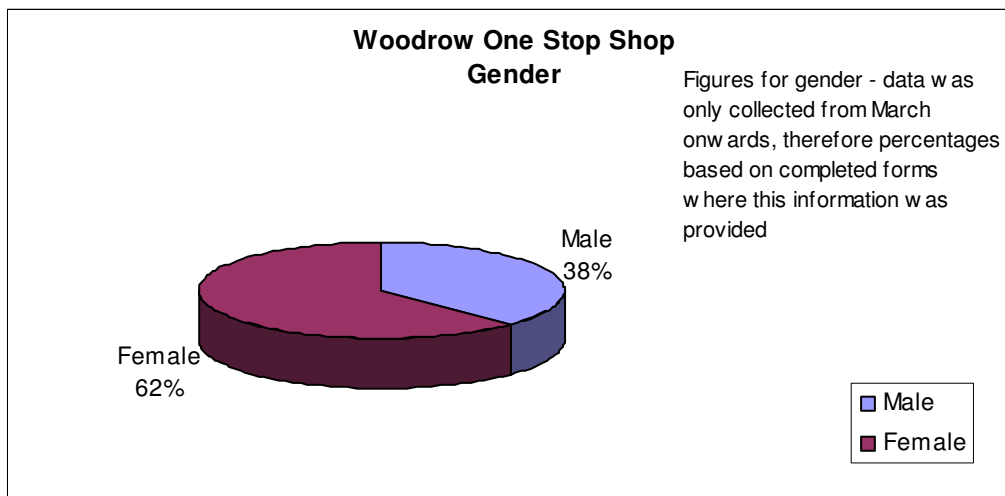




WOODROW ONE STOP SHOP (DATA FOR DECEMBER 2007 - MAY 2008)







Action Plan – Closure of local OSS

Action	Measures of success	Start date	Finish date/ milestones	Resource	Lead	Update Dec 2007	Update Feb 2008	Update May 2008
<p>1. Each customer currently using the local office will be given alternative options for accessing services.</p>	<p>Questionnaire and action plan for every customer who visits the outer offices.</p> <p>Identify customers who cannot access services in another way.</p>	<p>December 2007.</p>	<p>June 2008.</p>	<p>CSA's to complete questionnaire Office services to input information.</p>	<p>Customer Services Manager.</p>	<p>Started using questionnaire in the outer offices from the beginning of Dec 07 These will be monitored weekly.</p> <p>Numbers of face to face enquiries reduced in all offices in November when compared with January to March figures.</p> <p>Woodrow reduced by 36% Winyates reduced by 46% Batchley reduced by 22%</p> <p>There has been a 2% increase in the numbers of face to face enquiries at the Town Hall One Stop Shop over the same period.</p> <p>There has been no significant change in numbers of calls to the Council, either through the Contact Centre or on the switchboard.</p>	<p>From end of February Age added to the Questionnaire.</p> <p>To identify any issues with specific age groups in accessibility.</p> <p>Customers are being advised and shown how to access services in different ways.</p> <p>Report on progress to CMT beginning of March 2008.</p> <p>Further press releases and notices planned through March to June 2008.</p> <p>Discussing alternative access points via kiosks (already in place) in sure start centres.</p>	<p>Action plans continued to the end of May.</p> <p>1340 customers have agreed to use alternative methods .</p> <p>Number of face to face enquiries continues to reduce in each office compared March to May Woodrow 21% Winyates 16% Batchley 15% Increase to Town Hall OSS is 5% in May 08 due to changes to concessionary fares. Woodrow had 1099 enquiries in February 08 50% of these enquiries were from customers who visit regularly. 30% of these are linked</p>

						<p>Discussing options for other Officers such as Wardens to assist customers in accessing services.</p> <p>Focus group of random sample of residents to assess needs and preferences. Report attached.</p>	<p>enquiries.i.e. for the same customer. This demonstrates that in Woodrow 183 customers were unique customers.</p> <p>Surestart staff awareness to offer services using kiosks already in place by Receptionists end June 08 Officers by end July 08</p> <p>Work with Wardens to enable them to assist customers accessing services. By end September 08</p> <p>Additional Focus group arranged for beginning of June To discuss access to services.</p>
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<p>2. Identify repeat contacts and service failures</p>	<p>Percentage of service failures against total number of enquiries established and identified in key services (top 3 services).</p>	<p>September 2007.</p>	<p>December 2007.</p>	<p>Staff time, Business Development Manager (BDM) 50% and Customer Services Manager (CSM) 10%.</p>	<p>BDM.</p>	<p>Highest level of repeat calls identified :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits data captured face to face ▪ Repairs data captured. ▪ Environmental Services reports to be compiled from M3. 	<p>Completed. See next action point.</p>	
<p>3. Improve processes to reduce the need for repeat contacts</p>	<p>Percentage of repeat contact reduced by 15% (12month target).</p>	<p>December 2007.</p>	<p>First phase : 3 % of repeat contact reduced by April 2008 (top 2 services). 2nd stage 3% of repeat contact reduced by June 2008.</p>	<p>Staff time (BDM 50% and Service teams 5% of 1fte).</p>	<p>BDM.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits workshops with CSA's ongoing. ▪ Business Process Re- engineering for repairs now analysing data. ▪ Adding service standards for Environmental Services on M3. 	<p>Nature of repeat calls identified Highest : 60% new claims 27% evidence requests.</p> <p>Length of FTF enquiries established: 14minutes average 50 mins highest new claims average 20mins Lean Thinking process will continue to work on this project.</p> <p>Since October 2007 repeat calls reduced by 21%.</p>	<p>Alexander (lean thinking) project training complete. Benefits workshops to start in June.</p> <p>Alexander completed review.</p> <p>Omfax upgrade on schedule. R & M utilising Solihull expertise to update scripting.</p> <p>Review of scripts planned Waste - June Abandoned Vehicles – mid July Landscape - mid August Cleansing - mid September</p>

							Upgrade of Omfax in June will reduce abortive visits and improve accuracy of prioritising (separate action plan) Since October 2007 repeat calls reduced by 3%	
4. Increase the availability of on-line services (information and transaction)	Number of on-line services increased.	October 2007.	April 2008 10 % increase of services available on line.	Staff time IT Services Manager (ITSM) Possible System development costs (if identified in services plans).	ITSM.	Transport Portal with Virtual Streetscene. Extension of e-forms availability.	Launch of RSS News feeds, Emergency Alert Mechanism, and LHA Rates Finder. Also Licencing Application Database online.	Modern.Gov system installed for Committee administration.
5. Increase the number of customers using on line services, including on line payments	Increased number of customers using on line services.	December 2007.	June 2008 10% increase in the number of website hits/ transactions	As above.	ITSM.	5% increase in web page views Oct- Dec 2007 6% increase in Web payments Oct – Dec 2007.	7.8 % increase in web payments Dec – Jan 2008. (Web payments in February reduced due to non collection of Council Tax).	42.2 % increase in web page views Jan – Apr 2008 44.6% increase in web payments Jan – Apr 2008 (118% in web payments Apr 2007 - Apr 2008).

<p>6. Encourage the use of other payment methods e.g. direct debit, telephone payments, automated telephone payments</p>	<p>Increased number of payments made by these methods.</p>	<p>October 2007.</p>	<p>April 2008 10% increase (in total) in the number of payments made via these methods.</p>	<p>CSA promotion Cashiers promotion Local publicity.</p>	<p>CSM.</p>	<p>CSA's are promoting other methods of payments.</p>	<p>A phased publicity project plan now in place to advertise alternatives in both OSS, CC and cashiers.</p>	<p>Posters displayed in OSS and cashiers advertising the alternatives available for access A-Z leaflets available in all council outlets CSA's continue to promote alternatives Telephone payments May 07 - 1337 March 08 - 1088 Direct Debit April 07- 21428 April 08 - 23036 Automated telephone payments will be available from end June 08.</p>
<p>7. Introduce alternative methods of payment e.g. swipe cards</p>	<p>Housing rents set up with payment outlets.</p>	<p>September 2007.</p>	<p>May 2008.</p>	<p>Costs associated with introduction (Liz Tompkin to supply).</p>	<p>HSM.</p>	<p>Report on introduction of new payment scheme to go to January Executive Committee.</p>		<p>Report as Appendix 3.</p>

<p>8. Increase the number of staff with access to mobile technology</p>	<p>Increase in numbers of appropriate officers e.g. visiting officers able to handle multiple customer enquires outside of council premises (in customer's homes and other locations).</p>	<p>December 2007.</p>	<p>May 2008 10% increase in the number of staff with access to mobile technology.</p>	<p>It services team 10%, Possible System development costs.</p>	<p>ITSM.</p>		<p>34 users have access to email remotely. 13 users have access to run applications remotely. 4 users have access to mobile technology. The customer access strategy and T government strategy will include further actions for mobile.</p>	<p>42 users have access to email remotely. 17 users have access to run applications remotely. 4 users have access to mobile technology.</p>
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ADDITIONAL METHODS OF PAYMENT

Swipe Cards

What are swipe cards?

A durable plastic card (similar to a credit or debit card) encoded and embossed uniquely to identify the individual payer. They are designed for bill payments that are weekly/frequently paid.

How are swipe cards used?

Tenants issued with a swipe card could pay their rent by cash, a cheque or debit card in the following ways:-

- A) At any Post Office (in Redditch, there are 10);
- B) Dependant on who Redditch negotiated the service with access could be via
 - At any convenience store or outlet that displays a "Paypoint" sign (in Redditch there are 12 of these) **OR** at any "Payzone" (in Redditch there are 24 across the Borough).

Why provide swipe cards for rent payments?

- They reduce the risk of data entry errors.
- Increases convenience and maximises opportunities for payment by giving more flexible opening times for and access to multiple networks.
- Best value reviews on access to services has led many social landlords to switch to swipe cards to reduce admin and collection costs.
- Cards are wallet/purse sized and are therefore convenient to carry.
- Many of Redditch Borough Council's tenants use these access channels for other bill payments.
- Tenants are given a printed receipt to show payment.
- The payment transaction shows on the rent account the next working day.

SWIPE CARDS SUMMARY OF COSTS:

TRANSACTION COSTS FOR RENT PAYMENTS ONLY:

	INITIAL SET UP COSTS	ESTIMATED RUNNING COSTS per Month*	ESTIMATED RUNNING COSTS per Annum*
ALLIANCE AND LEICESTER	£ 2,723.00	£ 2,405.00	£28,860.00
ALL PAY	£ 4,943.05	£ 2,795.00	£33,540.00

**based on Warwick DC 6500 transactions*

SWIPE CARDS ALLIANCE AND LEICESTER - RENTS

<u>Set up costs</u>			
Item	Description	Quantity	Costs
Saffron Interface		n/a	£ -
Plastic Cards	1 colour	6000	£ 1,059.00
Card Carriers	2 colours	6000	£470
Envelopes	price per 1000, £28 A+L	3000	£ 84.00
Main bulk card personalisation	per 1000 (A + L =£130)	3000	£ 390.00
Training	On Webconnect at RBC	n/a	n/a
Sub total			£ 2,003.00
Postage	2nd class post	3000	£ 720.00
Total including postage			£ 2,723.00

<u>Running Costs</u>			
Item	Description	Quantity	Costs
Replacement cards	For lost card	1	£ 0.85
File transfer	Monthly		£ 35.00
Transaction charges Post Office	Per		£ 0.43
Transaction charges Payzone	Per		£ 0.37
Debit card fee			£ 0.29
Maximum transaction value			£ 999.99
Anticipated transaction cost per month	Volume of rent transactions for TH and OSS's	*4828	£ 1,786.36
Possible transaction cost per month	Based on Warwick DC costs who have just under 6000	6500 @ 37p per trans	£ 2,405.00

** Based on rent transactions for last 12 months, TH 31016, Woo 9455, Win 9453, Ba 8007 = 57931 / 12*

SWIPE CARDS - ALL PAY - RENTS

<u>Set up costs</u>			
Item	Description	Quantity	Costs
Saffron Interface			£ 700.00
Plastic Cards	1 colour	6000	£ 1,537.20
Card Carriers	2 colours	6000	£ 470.85
Envelopes	price per 1000, £55 allpay,	3000	£ 165.00
Main bulk card personalisation	per 1000 (allpay £250)	3000	£ 750.00
Training	On Webconnect at RBC,	n/a	£ 600.00
Sub total			£ 4,223.05
Postage	2nd class post	3000	£ 720.00
Total including postage			£ 4,943.05

<u>Running Costs</u>			
Item	Description	Quantity	Costs
Replacement cards	For lost card	1	£ 0.75
Software Webconnect allpay only	Monthly		£ 20.00
File transfer A+L only	Monthly		
Transaction charge Post Office			£ 0.43
Transaction charges Paypoint			£ 0.43
Debit card fee			£ 0.45
Maximum transaction value			£ 150.00
Anticipated transaction cost per month	Volume of rent transactions for TH and OSS's	*4828	£ 2,093.90
Possible transaction cost per month	Based on Warwick DC costs who have just under 6000	6500 @ 43p per trans	£ 2,795.00

* Based on rent transactions for last 12 months, TH 31016, Woo 9455, Win 9453, Ba 8007 = 57931 / 12

Bar Codes

What are bar codes?

They are a number which is converted into a series of special characters which represent the number as a 'graphic' and comprises of a series of vertical lines varying in thickness. The Council already uses bar codes on bills and invoices. The use of this facility is designed for quarterly or one off payment as this is not as durable as a plastic card.

How are bar codes used?

Customers can use the bar code number to pay by cash, a cheque or debit card in the following ways:-

- A) At any Post Office (in Redditch, there are 10);
- B) Dependant on Redditch negotiated the service with access could be via
 - At any convenience store or outlet that displays a "Paypoint" sign (in Redditch there are 12 of these) **OR** at any "Payzone" (in Redditch there are 24 across the Borough).

Why provide card codes for council tax and other debt payments?

- Increases convenience and maximises opportunities for payment by giving more flexible opening times for and access to multiple networks.
- Many of Redditch Borough Council's customers use these access channels for other bill payments.
- Customers are given a printed receipt to show payment.
- The payment transaction shows on the account the next working day.
- Bar codes are already established and provided to customers.

BAR CODING SUMMARY OF COSTS:

TRANSACTION COSTS FOR RENT PAYMENTS ONLY:

	INITIAL SET UP COSTS	ESTIMATED RUNNING COSTS per Month**	ESTIMATED RUNNING COSTS per Annum**

ALLIANCE AND LEICESTER	£ 1,400.00	£ 1,931.20	£23,174.40
ALL PAY	£ 1,460.00	£ 2,076.04	£24,912.48

The figures produced are only estimated on rent transactions of 4828 per month.

BAR CODING

	Allpay	Alliance & Leicester
Set up costs		
Set up (bar code testing at PO)	£ 460.00	£ 400.00
Issuer Identification Number (one off fee)*	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,000.00
	£ 1,460.00	£ 1,400.00
Running Costs		
Post Office transaction fee	£ 0.43	£ 0.40
Payzone/Paypoint transaction fee	£ 0.43	£ 0.35
**Estimated transaction cost per month at 43p (AP) and 40p (AL) (4828 Rent transactions RBC)	£ 2,076.00	£ 1,931.20
**Estimated transaction cost per annum (4828 Rent transactions RBC)	£24,912.48	£23,174.40
Bar code software prices start at about £100		

*A + L recommend that RBC purchase our own Issuer Identification number

** The figures produced are only estimated on transactions of 4828 per month which is the current usage for **rent** payments at RBC.

Redditch have approximately 35,000 dwellings and 15,000 sundry debt accounts

KIOSK SUMMARY OF COSTS:

	OPTION 1 – PURCHASE	OPTION 1 - MAINTENANCE COSTS per annum	OPTION 2 – LEASE Per annum to include maintenance costs
ALL PAY	£ 28,000.00	£ 4,400.00	£ 11,652.00
R P KIOSK	£ 21,415.00	£ 2,174.00	£ 13,717.00
SCAN COIN	£ 25,575.00	£ 1,723.00	n/a

KIOSKS

ALL BILL PAYMENTS

	Allpay	RP Kiosk	Scan Coin
OPTION 1 – PURCHASE			
Initial Purchase	£ 28,000	£ 14,490	£ 16,638
Cash receipting system connection		n/a	£ 525
Uninterrupted power supply		included	£ 431
Bar Code Scanner		included	£ 1,943
Chip and Pin Card Reader		£ 1,675	£ 2,888
Bank note dispenser	n/a	n/a	£ 3,150
Training	included	£ 750	
Set up costs		£ 4500	
Total	£ 28,000.00	£ 21,415.00	£ 25,575.00
Annual software charge	£ 2,200.00		
Annual Maintenance Charge*	£ 2,200.00	£ 2,174.00	£ 1,723.00
Total	£ 4,400.00	£ 2,174.00	£ 1,723.00
OPTION 2 – LEASE			
Annual Rental Charge	£ 9,900.00	£ 5,772.00	N/A
Annual Maintenance Charge*	£ 1,752.00	£ 2,173.00	N/A
	£ 11,652.00	£ 13,717.00	N/A

**A resource will be required to maintain cash within the Kiosk this is not part of the maintenance charges*

CUSTOMER ACCESS CONSULTATION

Methods

1. Focus groups

2 for residents.

1 for staff who are residents.

- Independent facilitator.
- Used a random list of residents supplied by Worcestershire County Council.
- Advertised in the local press and in One Stop Shops.
- Various age group groups and backgrounds.
- Residency in Redditch ranged from 7 months to 72 years.
- Higher expectation from those who have lived in Redditch the longest.

2. Questionnaires

Developed by the Council's Communication team and independent facilitator.

Sent to:-

- Access group.
- Sent with homelessness questionnaire.
- Sure start users.
- RICA.
- Shopmobility users.
- Dial-a-ride users.
- One Stop Shops.
- Website.
- Businesses through EDU.
- Leisure venues.

Both methods were advertised through local press, in One Stop Shops and the website.

Focus Group Exercise

Which Council services do you use most frequently?

- Refuse.
- Highways (confusion regarding Borough Council / County Council responsibility).
- Council Tax (payment).
- Leisure.
- Warden Control Services.
- Housing Repairs.
- Planning.

If you need help or information about Redditch Borough Council services what methods do you use to make contact with the Council?

- Use Contact Centre as it is place of work.
- Bulky collection booked through One Stop Shop (concern raised about parking for Town Hall).
- Local issues carried out Face to Face.
- Telephone.
- Telephone for Council Tax enquiries.
- Telephone for complaints although email gives a physical record.
- Switchboard is easier if unsure of who you need to speak to.
- Email.
- Email can be instantaneous Normal post for complaints.
- Internet, the website is good and has good information.
- Web as first point of contact, depends on service and complexity.

What has been your experience when using this method / these methods?

- Waiting times in Town Hall One Stop Shop (OSS) can be variable but good service.
- Face to Face contact is very good when getting information.
- Separate planning reception is good (general agreement).
- Not used OSS, ring Contact Centre for County Council issue, very helpful.
- Website is good although difficult to keep up with the information.
- Use website a lot which is adequate.
- Website is informative.
- Telephone payments is useful.
- Telephone contact is very good.
- Only a selection of phone numbers are on the website.
- Internal address book does not have all numbers.

- Switchboard is better with direct dialling if extension number known.
- Intranet is useful for telephone numbers and other information.
- Quicker response to email.
- Experience of people being unsure who was responsible for providing a service, Borough Council or County Council and should that matter ?

When you last contacted the Council, to what extent did you feel the response was sufficiently answered?

- Minimal contacts, always had appropriate responses.
- Bulky waste is a good service.
- Got answers immediately, never unacceptable delay.
- Internal communication sometimes a problem.
- Generally good.

To what extent do you expect all of your enquiries to be dealt with by one call or visit?

- Depends on enquiry (some people disagreed) for example benefits, as to the complexity.
- Depends on the nature of the call.
- Wouldn't expect the person to know everything, but they can find out.
- Expect the majority of calls to be dealt with in one call, shouldn't be expected to make multiple calls.
- Should deal with everything, I shouldn't be expected to chase it up (general agreement).
- Realisation that sometimes the customer has to provide the necessary information and this can cause delays.
- Problem of overlapping services such as Landscape services and Planning for trees.
- Turnaround of staff and changes in structure / organisation cause problems, and training needs to be updated.
- Better arrangements now that call centre is in place.
- Experience of fly tipping was handled well and followed up to me swiftly.
- Direct Debit problem was well handled with undertaking to reimburse me if necessary.

What methods - i.e. new or improved - would you like to be available to enable you to contact the Council?

- Don't like text messaging.
- Text messaging is good to engage younger people.
- Text messaging to email is acceptable.
- Email is good, provided from letterheads and website.
- Information about what the services do.
- OSS/Contact Centre should deal with majority of services.
- Interactive Voice Recognition (press 1 for ...), mixed response to this some liked it if utilised properly e.g. only 2 or 3 options.
- Person who deals with request for service should stay constant so that they have the history and knowledge of the request.

What would help you to be able to contact the Council more easily?

- Encourage charities to help older people with computer skills.
- Training for Council Officers to understand technology.
- Gap for 16-18 year olds in accessing service.
- Warden/Independent living schemes have good information available.
- Local papers for some information, regular space in local free newspapers.
- People need to be reminded a number of times.
- More noticeable advertising, for example for Neighbourhood Groups.

Are there any other issues about contacting the Council you would like to express?

- Haphazard in advertising.
- Good services, good quality, although some services have limited hours when open to the public.
- Can come in or book appointments.
- Restricted hours can be a problem.
- Website needs advertising.
- Need service standards, need to communicate with customers what these standards are.
- Set up automated response to all emails some have them.
- Good Council, customer expectations are too high.
- Confusion as to the role of the councillor and what influence they have.
- Should have published communication standards otherwise people don't know if standards are being achieved (agreed by all, for all forms of communications).

- Generally do a good job, realisation that everyone's requirements could be different.
- It is generally people who have been here 'all their lives" that criticise, whereas people coming into the area appreciate what a great service they have.
- A fantastic place to live with good services compared to other New Towns.
- Good landscaping but the cost to maintain could be a resource issue.
- Recycling was confusing as to what materials are taken.

Questionnaires

Some percentages do not add up to 100% because of multiple choices.

1. Access channels - most preferred

Telephone 48%.
Website 18%.
Face to Face 18%.
Printed information 9 %.
Council notice boards 7%.

2. Methods of Access

Always use the same method 33%.
Vary the method according to the issue 51%.
Vary the method according to the time of day 16%.

3. Getting in touch (ease of)

Telephone 92%.
Website 83%.
Face to face 61%.
Post 58%.

4. More methods to contact the Council

More Telephone based help 43%.
More website based services 42%.
Longer opening hours 27%.
Text messaging 9%.

5. What would help customers to contact the Council

More appointments 49%.
Information on Council notice boards 20%.
Training to use a computer 18%.
Access to a computer 13%.

6. Preferred time of day to contact the Council

9 am to 5 pm 58%.
5pm -10pm 24%.
Saturdays and Sundays 12%.
7am -9am 12%.

7. Services used most frequently

Housing Repairs, Council Tax and Highways were the highest.

8. Enquiry dealt with immediately

74% felt that their enquiry was dealt with immediately and
70% thought that all of their enquiries should be dealt with by one
call/visit.