

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET

1)	Meeting:	Cabinet
2)	Date:	24 April 2013
3)	Title:	Customer Service Centres
4)	Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

On 16 January 2013, Cabinet gave approval for council officers to consult with the public on a revised service delivery offer to be provided from Library and Customer Service Centres located in Swinton and Dinnington and from libraries located in Wath and Mowbray Gardens.

This report provides Cabinet with the findings from the public consultation which has been undertaken and proposes a revised service offer which ensures that efficient and cost effective services can continue to be delivered in person in areas of need across the borough.

6. Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

1. Note the results of the public consultation which has been undertaken.
2. Approve the proposed changes to the customer contact service delivery model which will be implemented across the borough.
3. Recommend that opening hours and the services delivered from Library and Customer Service Centres are reviewed after a year, to ensure that they continue to meet customer needs.

7. Proposals and Details

7.1 Background

Customers are currently able to access Council services in person from six Customer Service Centres located across the borough. The level of demand for access to face to face services varies across each of the centres and footfall is higher in those locations where a Customer Service Centre is located in a multi tenanted building, where customers are able to access other services such as a GP practice, community room or library as well as Council customer services.

Both Swinton and Dinnington Customer Service Centres are standalone buildings and in order to improve efficiency and reduce the cost of service delivery, it is proposed to relocate the Customer Service function into Swinton Library and into Dinnington Library, which is based at the Community Resource Centre.

In addition, it has become evident that the need for face to face services is greater in certain communities, particularly where customers need advice relating to welfare benefits and that access to services in person, in their community environment is desirable.

The current economic pressure faced by the Council and subsequent limited resources available means that the way services are delivered must be reviewed and revised to ensure that service delivery can be maintained within budget allocation. In order to support the need for face to face customer service delivery across Rotherham communities, the Council is proposing to reduce the level of specialist benefit and council tax support which is provided in person at Dinnington and Swinton Customer Service Centre to two days a week and to deliver additional specialist support from Wath and Mowbray Gardens libraries in person, for one day a week.

7.2 Public Consultation

Public consultation on the proposed changes has been undertaken from 16 Jan – 5 April 2013 and 464 people have given us their views on the proposed changes.

Overall results from the consultation show that:

- 51% of people who completed the consultation were happy about being able to access Customer Services and Library Services from the same building. Satisfaction with the proposed change was significantly higher from people within Mowbray Gardens Library and Wath Library communities, than from within Swinton and Dinnington communities.
- 37% of people who completed the consultation were happy to pay using a cash payment machine. People have requested face to face support when making payments and they are keen to retain the social aspect of being able to talk to a person.
- 44% of people who completed the consultation at Dinnington and Swinton were happy to have merged staffing. Many people who completed the consultation feel that 'library' staff will not have time to manage both services effectively.

- 77% of people who completed the consultation were unhappy that Dinnington and Swinton would only be able to access customer services for two days a week. People who have completed the consultation have suggested their preferred days for the service to be delivered, which do not reflect the original proposal. These views have been reflected in the proposed new service model.

The consultation has provided diverse customer views. Many are happy to be able to access additional services locally and see the proposed changes as good economic sense and good utilisation of resources. Others wish to keep the status quo.

Many people who have completed the consultation from Swinton and Dinnington feel that the Library Service and Customer Services should be kept separate, as they believe that service users are different and have different needs. In particular, Dinnington Library users are concerned about the perceived security risk of delivering both services from the same location.

Dinnington Town Council are concerned about losing an additional building from within the Town and would prefer that the customer service centre at New Street is retained for Council use. In addition, they are concerned about a reduction in service to two days.

It is clear from the consultation that some customers, in particular those over 65 years old, are very concerned about using technology to access services and that any move towards delivering services using new technology will need to be supported by staff members who the community know and trust.

Specific consultation results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1:

Results	Swinton	Dinnington	Mowbray Gardens	Wath
% of customers who are happy that customer services are relocated.	37%	30%	98%	98%
% of customers who are happy to use a cash payment machine	23%	24%	n/a	91%
% of customers who are happy to have staff members who can answer both Library and Customer Service queries	33%	30%	n/a	n/a
% of customers who are happy to access specialist support for two days a week	22%	24%	n/a	n/a

7.3 Customer Service Delivery Model

To enable the Council to deliver increased levels of access in communities outside of the Customer Service Centres within current budget constraints, it is proposed that the 'in person' Customer Service delivery model is amended to the model detailed in Table 2.

This model recommends that customers are able to access specialist Council Services such as benefits advice or council tax advice from Swinton and Dinnington sites 'in person' for two days per week. Access to council tax or benefits advice outside these times can be obtained from public access free phones or by using the public access computers which are available in the library. This change will allow services to be offered from Wath and Mowbray Gardens for 1 day per week.

Access to services such as Housing, Blue Badge applications and fault reporting will be available as a drop in service for six days a week, during Library and Customer Service Centre opening hours.

To enable the Council to deliver services within budget and within space constraints, customers will need to make payments for council services using cash payment machines. To address public concerns, a member of staff will always be available to help customers pay using this technology and customers will therefore not lose the face to face contact that has been requested as part of the consultation.

In addition, to enable Customer Service facilities to be transferred to Dinnington and Swinton Libraries successfully, both Swinton and Dinnington Libraries will undergo limited refurbishment. This will ensure that space is utilised effectively and that the two services can be sensitively amalgamated, whilst also supporting the delivery of a modern, vibrant library service.

Table 2: The proposed Customer Contact service delivery model

Location	Riverside House	Rawmarsh Library and Customer Service Centre	Aston Library and Customer Service Centre	Maltby Customer and Leisure Centre	Swinton Library and Customer Service Centre	Dinnington Resource Centre	Community Libraries across the borough	Other places
Where can I make a payment	You can pay at our cashiers desks or by using one of our cash payment machines	You can use our cash payment machine	You can use our cash payment machine	You can use our cash payment machine	You can use our cash payment machine	You can use our cash payment machine	<p>You can use our cash payment machine at Wath library.</p> <p>Our other libraries do not have any payment facilities.</p>	<p>You can pay free of charge at any post office or pay point facility.</p> <p>You can also set up a direct debit to make regular payments or you can pay online.</p>

Location	Riverside House	Rawmarsh Library and Customer Service Centre	Aston Library and Customer Service Centre	Maltby Customer and Leisure Centre	Swinton Library and Customer Service Centre	Dinnington Resource Centre	Community Libraries across the borough	Other places
Where can I get help and advice on....	A drop in or appointment service is available Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm	A drop in or appointment service is available during opening hours	A drop in or appointment service is available during opening hours	A drop in or appointment service is available Mon – Fri 9am – 5.30pm	A drop in service is available each Monday and Wednesday 9am – 12 noon & 1pm – 5pm. Customer appointments are also available by request.	A drop in service is available each Monday and Friday 9am – 12noon & 1pm – 5pm. Customer appointments are also available by request.	A drop in service is available at Mowbray Gardens Library each Thursday and from Wath Library each Wednesday from 10am – 4pm	You can telephone our specialist helplines.
Council Tax	Public access free phones are available during opening hours.	Public access free phones are available during opening hours.	Public access free phones are available during opening hours.	Public access free phones are available during opening hours.	Public access free phones are available during opening hours.	Public access free phones are available during opening hours.	You can use our kiosks & computers Our helpful library staff will assist you to get online.	Council Tax: 01709 336006
Benefits	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks & computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.		Benefits 01709 336006

Where can I get help and advice on:	A drop in or appointment service is available Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm	A drop in or appointment service is available during Library and Customer Service Centre opening hours	A drop in or appointment service is available during Library and Customer Service Centre opening hours	A drop in or appointment service is available Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5.30pm	A drop in or appointment service is available during Library and Customer Service Centre opening hours	A drop in or appointment service is available during Library and Customer Service Centre opening hours	A drop in service is available at Mowbray Gardens Library each Thursday and from Wath Library from each Wednesday from 10am – 4pm	You can telephone our specialist helplines:
Housing								
Licensing								
Blue badges								
Parking								
Submitting planning applications	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can use our dedicated housing kiosks to bid online for council properties at Maltby CSC	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful customer service and library staff will assist you to get online.	You can also use our kiosks and computers. Our helpful library staff will assist you to get online.	Housing: 01709 336008 Other services: 01709 336000

Where can I tell you about....	We would prefer you to tell us about these problems using our website or mobile app. You can find this at www.rotherham.gov.uk
Street or environmental issues	Alternatively you can telephone us on 01709 336003 Computers are available in our Libraries and Library & Customer Service Centres and our helpful library staff will assist you to get online
Problems with waste collection.	Free phones are available in our Library & Customer Service Centres
Where can I get help and support for adult social care	We have lots of information on our website. You can find this at www.connecttosupport.org/rotherham If you need further information or would like us to assess whether you are eligible for care services, please telephone us on 01709 822330
Where can I get help and support for children's social care	We have lots of information on our website at www.rotherham.gov.uk If you need further information, please contact us on 01709 823987

8. Finance

Changes to the in person customer contact service delivery model will realise savings of approximately £160,000 in 2013 – 2014. Approximately £80,000 will be realised through merging staffing structures at Swinton, Dinnington, Rawmarsh and Aston Customer Service Centres and Libraries and approximately £80,000 will be realised by implementing cash payment machines in Customer Service Centres.

These changes will also allow the Council to deliver additional services at Wath and Mowbray Gardens at no additional costs.

Refurbishment of Swinton and Dinnington Libraries will be managed within existing budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The proposed changes to the service delivery model will require customers to use alternative ways to access services, such as public access computers, self service payment machines and public access telephones. Staff members will be on hand to support customers through this change, but customer satisfaction levels may be impacted in the short term.

Delays in implementing the new service model will impact on budgets for 2013-14.








10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposed changes to service delivery support the Council's Customer Access Strategy and will deliver key efficiency and value for money improvements.

Increasing service provision within some of the Council's deprived communities supports the Corporate Plan and its policy and performance agendas.

The rationalisation of assets is essential to reduce budget pressures and to support the delivery of front line services in the most cost effective way possible.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

-  Customer Access Strategy 2011 – 2015
-  Cabinet report – Customer Service Centres 16 January 2013.
-  Public Consultation – customer service centres Jan – April 2013
-  Staff consultation – Customer and Cultural Services
-  Ward members
-  Dinnington Town Council
-  Parish Councils

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