

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL****Report by Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture and Communities****Corporate Services Committee: 13 November 2019**

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**Subject: Transformation of One Stop Shop and Library Services****1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to outline proposals to transform face-to-face services across One Stop Shops and the Library branch network to improve delivery and efficiency.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** It is recommended that members:

- note positive relocation of the One Stop Shop to Alexandria Library in 2018/19;
- agree to merge the Citizen Services and Library Services face-to-face delivery enabling residents to access One Stop Shop support from nine venues across West Dunbartonshire instead of the current three;
- agree to relocate the One Stop Shop function from the Clydebank Town Centre Office into the busy Clydebank Library 300m away;
- agree to generate £150k of efficiencies from these changes by 2021/22 to assist with the Council's budget position;

**3. Background**

- 3.1** Citizen Services undertook a significant restructure effective from 1 May 2018 to deliver revenue savings of £140,000 per annum.
- 3.2** This service review included the transfer of the face-to-face service from the Mitchell Way office to Alexandria Library in 2018/19. This has been positively received by residents and staff and has been shown to be an effective and efficient model for delivery of our face-to-face services.
- 3.3** Both Citizen Services and Library staff in Alexandria have reported this new model of working and sharing space as being very positive. The teams have made the library a welcoming and engaging space for residents for all enquiries. Citizen Service's staff have reported that they find the Library a much better environment to meet residents, and this has assisted in developing stronger relationships within the local community. The two teams have also naturally bonded and now complement one another to provide

greater resilience with each others services and tasks, such as locking up and opening. No formal complaints were received from the public following the relocation, and none have been submitted at any point since.

- 3.4** Data from people counters evidences an increase in footfall in Alexandria Library of 3,788 (5.5%) when comparing 2017/18 with 2018/19. The increase in footfall in Alexandria Library further supports the success of this model with residents happy to engage with Citizen Services in this location. The increase in footfall has the additional positive benefit of increasing the profile and viability of the Library, and offering potential for further developing its role within the community.
- 3.5** The current staffing establishment within Citizen Services for face-to-face provision across our three locations in Alexandria Library, Church Street and Clydebank One Stop shop is 8FTE.
- 3.6** The current staffing establishment within Libraries & Cultural Services for face-to-face provision across eight library branches is 21.25FTE.
- 3.7** The current One Stop Shop set-up means that citizens have to travel distances of up to four miles for face-to-face support in our three locations. It also means that Council Information Officers and Library Assistants continue to undertake traditional front-facing tasks with residents when a modest amount of training would allow them to deliver both functions.
- 3.8** The Council's Manager for Citizen Services has also been the interim Manager for the Libraries Service for the past year. This situation has created a unique opportunity to shape a merged service area with the most effective operational model possible.
- 3.9** It is also worth noting how this collaboration activity would feed into the national agenda for transforming libraries into strong community hubs. Working well these changes would deliver services which support the Scottish Government's agenda to improve literacy, raise attainment and encourage lifelong learning. This can be done through the traditional loan of fiction and non-fiction works in a range of formats including physical, digital and audiobook. Our libraries also ensure residents can access the internet and are supported in digital learning to minimise digital exclusion. Other services offered in West Dunbartonshire also include Macmillan Cancer Support, Working4U advice classes as well as a broad range of lifelong learning activities and events.
- 3.10** Consideration of this area also aligns with the Scottish Library Information Council (SLIC) vision which states: "Public libraries should operate both as social change agents and as a key strand in the social safety net, providing essential lifelines to jobs, educational opportunity, literacy, health resources and access to government and community services for all, especially the least advantaged". Providing Citizen Services from all branches would give the

residents of West Dunbartonshire – and particularly those most in need – that improved access to local services.

#### **4. Main Issues**

**4.1** It is proposed the Council merges the Council Information Officer and Library and Culture Assistant roles by developing a new role profile. This would allow multi-skilled employees to answer citizen enquiries and fulfil traditional library tasks such as checking in books or joining new members. A supporting training plan would be developed to support this change. This proposal has benefits to both the Council and our employees by developing their skills and enhancing the resilience of our service.

**4.2** The proposal offers the opportunity to improve and increase face-to-face service and locations across the authority with citizens being able to access support at any of the following locations:

- Alexandria Library
- Balloch Library
- Dumbarton Library
- Church Street
- Dalmuir Library
- Parkhall Library
- Duntocher Library
- Faifley Library
- Clydebank Library

This would be a significant expansion compared to the current three Citizen Service locations available. There would also be a significant increase in service hours available to residents, including during the evening and on Saturdays:

<b>Provision</b>	<b>Total hours available to residents</b>
Existing three Citizen Services venues	105 hours per week
Proposal to move to nine venues	287 hours per week

This change supports the Council's Strategic Plan objective to develop efficient and effective frontline services. It will also create local hubs where citizens can access information and support on Council services in safe and welcoming environments that they are familiar with.

**4.3** If approved, Citizen Services and Library service would engage with partner Council services to enhance and develop processes to ensure a smooth transition in models. The ultimate goal would be to operate the most effective and efficient methods of passing on and updating information - reducing timescales for citizens and sharing information across services.

- 4.4** As well as improving the service for residents, this change will also allow efficiencies in service delivery. It is estimated that, if point 4.5 is agreed, six G3 posts could be deleted from the newly combined team without a disruption to citizens. It is expected that this could be delivered through a combination of natural wastage and not filling vacancies, as well as through voluntary severance. These changes would be phased in over 16 months to ensure there was plenty of time to consult with employees, manage the change process supportively, and explore and identify individual solutions.
- 4.5** In addition to the merging of the two roles it is proposed the Council relocates the One Stop Shop face-to-face service from the Clydebank Town Centre Office (CTCO) to Clydebank Library effective from 1 May 2020. This date allows for the busy April period when Council Tax enquiries are highest to be managed before the change is implemented. This timeline would also allow for essential consultation and planning.
- 4.6** Such a move would address and respond to the declining visitor numbers to the CTCO which has been a positive consequence of the Council channel shift undertaken in recent years. The biggest evidence of this is that following the decision by Council to transfer all cash and card payments to PayPoint and Post Offices there has been a reduction in footfall to the CTCO of 27,386 (35%) over the past 12 months.
- 4.7** Extensive capital improvement works began in August 2019 at Clydebank Library to change the internal design. If the proposed relocation is agreed now then this work could be adapted to ensure the branch provides an ideal setting for this new dual purpose.
- 4.8** It is important to note that the CTCO acts as a base for more than 60 Council employees from various services (listed at 4.7). The One Stop Shop team is made up of only four employees and so the CTCO would remain a busy and viable office following this change.
- 4.9** A short-life working group, including all internal stakeholders, would be established to manage this process successfully. Those participating on the working group would be:
- Citizen Services
  - Asset Management
  - Housing
  - Working 4 U
  - Registrars
  - Revenue and Benefits
  - Clydebank Municipal Bank
  - Business Gateway
  - OD&C

The short-life working group would consider the options for how the building would operate best moving forward for residents and employees.

- 4.10** The Citizen Services team would support the change using a floor-walker at the CTCO to help direct visitors to the new arrangements. The working group would establish how this would best operate thereafter. Our recommended solution beyond this would be to work with services to support the introduction of an appointments-based service for all teams working at the CTCO. An appointments based model allows for more effective management of resourcing with citizens being offered an appointment at a suitable location and time with the most appropriate member of staff who will be able to discuss and resolve their enquiry. This would resolve more resident issues first-time and ensure resourcing of teams can be effectively and efficiently managed across all services. It will also reduce the waiting times that residents currently face when turning up to access CTCO services without appointments.
- 4.11** The Municipal Bank would continue to operate as normal with users familiar with entering the CTCO and walking to the top of the building to access these services. Signage could be installed to assist with this journey.
- 4.12** The anticipated saving from merging the frontline roles in Citizen Services and library branches, and moving to Clydebank Library, would be £150,000 per annum. If the move to Clydebank Library was not approved then the savings possible from the merged service would reduce to approximately £40,000. This significant drop is because the Council would effectively be building-in duplication by operating two separate and large teams within 300m of each other.
- 4.13** In summary, the transformation of Citizen and Library Services offers the opportunity to improve and increase face-to-face service and locations across the authority. This supports delivery of developing efficient and effective frontline services creating local hubs where Citizens can access information and support on Council services in safe and welcoming environments across the Council area.

## **5. People Implications**

- 5.1** These proposals, if agreed in full, would lead to a reduction of six G3 posts by 2021/22. This would be achieved through natural wastage, redeployment within Citizen Service, Library services or the wider Council, and voluntary early release.
- 5.2** The changes would be as follows:
- One post will be reduced from Citizen Services One Stop Shop, presently eight FTE, through a vacancy review in 2020/21
  - A further five FTE posts will be removed across One Stop Shop and Library services by 2021/22.

## **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

**6.1** These changes will generate revenue savings of £25,000 in 2020/21, and a total of £150,000 per annum from 2021/22.

**6.2** There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

**7.1** There is a risk if the Council doesn't make this change that it will not be delivering the most efficient services at best value to residents.

**7.2** There is a risk of negative perception of significant change from both staff and residents regarding this proposal. This will be mitigated by using the long lead-in time to work with employees through this process. They will be encouraged to fully participate in the drafting of the merged role profile, development of a training plan, and the way the services will be delivered in the branches – including most importantly at Clydebank Library. This lead-in time will also allow us to develop solutions with Council colleagues and effectively communicate those to service users. We will also be able to illustrate the benefits by pointing to the success of Alexandria where there has been improved service delivery to residents, and better working practices for staff as detailed throughout the report.

**7.3** There is a risk that residents will be unhappy about the change in location in Clydebank. Learning from our move to Alexandria Library we will ensure the building is fit for purpose from the start, and that the benefits are positively and effectively communicated to residents. We will also ensure strong supporting relationships and robust processes are in place with partner services to avoid residents being inconvenienced by being redirected to either Clydebank Library or the CTCO. Some of these issues should be mitigated by the fact that many OSS visitors are already regular users of the busy Clydebank library.

**7.4** There is a risk that remaining services at CTCO will struggle to cope with continued face-to-face contact, and that residents will be frustrated by new arrangements. As detailed above a floor-walker will manage this process, and the short-life working group will explore and identify the best solutions moving forward.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**8.1** An initial screening has been completed and identified the need for a full Equalities Impact Assessment. The EIA, which is attached as Appendix 1, supported the introduction of this proposal without any significant concerns.

## **9. Consultation**

**9.1** Consultation has taken place with colleagues in Housing Options, Homelessness, Revenue and Benefits, Working 4 U, Business Gateway, Registrars, and Clydebank Municipal Bank. Consultation has also taken place

with Finance, Legal, HR and Procurement, as well as the Council's senior management.

## **11. Strategic Assessment**

**11.1** The proposal outlined within the report supports the following Council strategic priorities:

- Open, accountable & accessible local government
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents

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Date: 5/11/2019

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**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** All