

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 7th JULY 2009

RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REPORT – REVIEW OF FIRST POINT TELFORD

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet Members of the proposed response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Leadership Board following their review of the Credit Crunch Advice Centre known as First Point Telford.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Leadership Board are noted and the detailed response set out in Appendix 1 is approved.**

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 This report summarises the response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Leadership Board following their review of the services provided at First Point Telford. The responses are detailed in **Appendix 1**. The Scrutiny Board's review has been thorough in its coverage and was assisted by the involvement of partner organisations that provide services at First Point Telford.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 None

5.0 INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Corporate Management Team will shortly be asked to consider a proposal that will allow a One Stop Shop to be developed on the ground floor of Civic Offices, the current location of the main civic office reception service. The proposal will create a permanent and much larger facility than First Point at Telford, which will allow us to build on the success of First Point at Telford by bringing together many more council and partner services into one facility, in turn offering more joined up services and improved access to services.
- 5.2 First Point at Telford was set up to provide residents and businesses with a single point of contact for multiple Council and partner organisation services, that could

help them deal with the impact of the current economic recession.

- 5.3 The creation of First Point was in accordance with the Customer Services Strategy, which includes the aim to deal with as many customers at the first point of contact in one place at a time and place convenient to customers.
- 5.4 Following Cabinet approval in January 2009, First Point at Telford was opened in February 2009. Up to 22nd May, 1854 customers have benefited from the services provided at First Point Telford. This equates to 140 customers per week.
- 5.5 First Point Telford is aimed at all residents of the Borough, to improve their access to services, in particular joined up services e.g. a customer with debt problems would contact the council about repayment of their council tax and then be advised to contact CAB for help in managing their other debts. The customer previously may not have followed this advice. Now, as both services are located in the same facility, the two teams will work together immediately to address the customers' issue there and then.
- 5.6 The review focused on the services that were provided at First Point Telford, how those services worked together to benefit the customer, the facilities that were at available at First Point Telford and the opportunity.

6.0 **BACKGROUND**

6.1 **Equality & Diversity**

- 6.1.1 Every effort is made to assist customers when accessing services to ensure that wherever possible we are able to provide them with the services/information that they require in a manner that is beneficial to them. This is the cornerstone of the Customer Services Strategy.
- 6.1.2 All of the reception staff have received Equalities & Diversity training, and aware of individual customers needs, and know how to access translation and interpretation services where they are required.
- 6.1.3 An equality impact assessment will be undertaken on the First Point Telford if it becomes a permanent facility to ensure we are addressing all equality and diversity needs and capturing vital performance management information within this process.

6.2 **Environmental Impact**

- 6.2.1 Having more public services accessible under one roof will hopefully reduce the amount of individual visits customers would have had to make had these services remained separate and located on separate sites. This in turn will help the council to continue to reduce its carbon footprint.

6.3 **Legal Comment**

- 6.3.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6.4 Links with Corporate Priorities

6.4.1 The continued development of First Point at Telford, to offer advice and guidance on issues relating to the current economic recession addresses many of the Council's Corporate Priorities, particularly the priority for a Modern, Effective Council.

6.5 Opportunities & Risks

6.5.1 The opportunities and risks associated with First Point Telford were identified and actions were put in place to mitigate any perceived risks during its development.

6.6 Financial implications

6.6.1 The operational costs of First Point Telford are estimated at £199k for a period of 12 months. This includes staffing costs and general overheads associated with running this service. Provision was made in the 2009/10 budget strategy to fund all of these costs on a one off basis for 12 months.

6.6.2 Within the current capital programme an allocation of £160k in 2009/10 was made for provision of a "One Stop Shop". This could be used to fund any conversion costs should First Point at Telford re-located to Civic Offices on a permanent basis. The current budget strategy also made provision of £20k ongoing revenue to support the operating costs of a "One Stop Shop". Further work is required to finalise the ongoing revenue costs of the "One Stop Shop", however every effort will be made to deliver this within existing staffing resources with any additional funding required being considered as part of the 2010/11 budget strategy.

6.7 Ward implications

6.7.1 Borough wide implications.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Scrutiny Review Of First Point – 9th March 2009

7.2 CB124 - Cabinet report 12th January 2009

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