

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 29th MARCH 2012

A NEW FIRST POINT SERVICE IN OUR MAIN LIBRARIES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CUSTOMER & PEOPLE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the new First Point services that will be provided at Wellington, Madeley and Newport Libraries

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 A new First Point service is to be available from Wellington, Madeley and Newport Libraries. The principle is based on the Councils premier First Point service based at Civic Offices in Telford. The new service will see customers being able to access their local library not only to borrow a book but also to access a number of other council services including; **requesting a service** e.g. requesting an additional bin, **making a payment** e.g. council tax, **reporting a problem** e.g. Anti Social Behaviour. In addition a number of 'surgeries' will be run from our first point service including a CAB surgery; a Housing & Council Tax Benefit surgery and applications for Concessionary Travel passes and Blue Badges. A free phone service to call all council services will also be available and staff will be on hand to assist with the completion of council forms, both paper and on line.
- 2.2 This service will be launched initially at the new Wellington Library when it opens in April 2012.
- 2.3 Following a three month initial period operating from Wellington, and in conjunction with the conclusion of the Library Service restructure, the First Point Service will be rolled out to Madeley and Newport Libraries by the Summer of 2012.
- 2.4 The new service will be delivered by new Library & First Point Officers as outlined in the proposed new structure for the Library Service and is being delivered despite the 20% savings in staffing costs within the Library Service.
- 2.5 The previous investment into creating a single citizen record is helping to support access to a number of council services through a single point of contact including face to face, on line or by phone via the telephone contact centre. This approach is helping to ensure our customers are not passed around and that their enquiry is dealt with wherever possible at the first port of call.
- 2.6 The initial launch of the new First Point Services will be publicised by Corporate Communications as part of the Communication Plan for Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre. A further Communication Plan will be developed for the launches at Madeley

and Newport Libraries later in the year.

- 2.7 The current First Point service at Civic Offices along with the brand new Telford Library will be co-located together in the new 'Community Hub' in Southwater' due to open in 2014/15. In the interim alternative locations for both first point and Telford Library are being sought.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 **Cabinet to endorse the new First Point Services to be delivered from our 4 main libraries and to support the further deployment of the single citizen record (CRM) to ensure even more services can be accessible from our Libraries and from the corporate contact centre and new Community Hub in Southwater.**

4. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	The information within this report impacts on all council priorities.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	These plans are designed for the benefit of all of the borough's residents and visitors to the borough.
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The First Point Services provided in the 4 Libraries will be staffed by employees within Customer Services & Libraries with no additional staffing costs incurred. Space has been designated within the new Wellington Library site for the First Point service with costs of furniture being met from the Wellington capital budget. There will be costs associated with the purchase of a new laptop and chip and pin device and this will be funded from existing budgets in Customer Services.</p> <p>Any non staffing costs arising from implementing the First Point Services at Newport, Madeley and Telford will need to be met within existing budgets. MLB 14.02.12</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	This project relates to the provision of some services which are statutory functions (set out at paragraph 5.2 of this report) of the Council. When undertaking the provision of these functions the Council will need to ensure they are compliant with statutory requirements and give consideration to relevant Government guidance.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	These plans will increase resident's ability to access Council Services through a single point of contact and puts the responsibility on the council to present itself in such a way that it is easier to do business with. In addition there will be an opportunity for more public and voluntary sector services to be accessible from our

		libraries and from within the new Community Hub.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The deployment of 4 council first point services should ensure that all members of the community can access this new service.

5. INFORMATION

5.1 Background Information

- 5.1.1 The Library Service has recently concluded a service review of the service in order to achieve 20% savings but also to ensure that the Library service diversifies and continues to meet the needs of the community.
- 5.1.2 A key objective of the service review was to transform our Main Libraries into providers of the Council's First Point services, thereby extending this service across the Borough.
- 5.1.3 The review recommended that there should be four Main Libraries (Telford, Wellington, Newport, Madeley) which will be centres of excellence, providing the main focus for library services and activities and delivery of First Point services, situated in the South, West, North and Centre of the Borough and providing access to a widening range of other community and council services.
- 5.1.4 Library Services and Customer & Registration Services have developed the package of First Point Services that will be delivered through Wellington, Newport and Madeley libraries by Library Service officers. This will be accomplished through the provision of appropriate training and support, and will ensure that these services can be provided within existing budgets and structures.
- 5.1.5 These principals are reflected in Library Service restructure which was launched on 26th January 2012 with consultation ending in April.
- 5.1.6 There is a different delivery model for Telford Library, given it's proximity to the existing First Point Telford at Civic Offices and the planned co-location of the two services at the Community Hub in Southwater in 2014/15, therefore there are no plans to provide these services through the current Telford Library.

5.2 First Point Services To Be Delivered At Main Libraries

- 5.2.1 Payments for council services including Council Tax, Business Rates and Sales Ledger invoices.
- 5.2.2 CAB surgeries, by pre-booked appointments, to give advice on all services delivered by CAB including welfare benefits and debt. This will be delivered within the Council's core grant to CAB.
- 5.2.3 Housing & Council Tax Benefit surgeries, by pre-booked appointments, to complete the full claims process for Housing & Council Tax Benefits.

- 5.2.4 Request for Environmental Services services including bulky waste collections, missed bins, replacement bins. Additional services such as reporting potholes, street lighting concerns and other Highway related services will also go live before the end of April.
- 5.2.5 Reporting of Anti Social Behaviour issues including; abandoned vehicles, graffiti, nuisance neighbours etc.
- 5.2.6 Applications for Concessionary Travel passes and Blue Badge Parking permits.
- 5.2.7 Free phone service for customers to contact other council services that are not delivered through First Points in libraries e.g. licensing.
- 5.2.8 Booking appointments for council and partner services delivered at First Point Telford e.g. housing services.
- 5.2.9 Support in completing paper and electronic application forms and requests for services e.g. Council Tax change of address forms, concessionary travel pass application forms.
- 5.2.10 Wellington library only – explore the development of an initial point of contact for planning enquiries and information at Wellington Library in advance of the service being available in the new Community Hub in Southwater. Detailed discussions and pre application advice will be through an appointment process in line with the existing approach.

5.3 Implementation Plan/Timescales

- 5.3.1 This service will initially be launched at the new Wellington Library when it opens in April 2012.
- 5.3.2 Following a three month test period, and the successful conclusion of the Library Service restructure, the service will be rolled out to Madeley and Newport Library. This three month period will allow us to address any unforeseen operational issues and to refine, and further develop, the service before its implementation at the remaining two libraries.

**Report prepared by Andrew Meredith, Customer & Registration Services Manager
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