

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Cabinet

**Date of Committee** 2 November 2006

**Report Title** Delivering the Customer Service & Access Strategy – Funding options for a joint One Stop Shop in North Warwickshire

**Summary** This reports sets out the proposed funding options for Warwickshire County Council’s participation with North Warwickshire Borough Council in a joint One Stop Shop in Atherstone

**For further information please contact:**

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?** No

**Background papers**

*Customer Service Access Strategy - Cabinet, 27 June 2006*

*Delivering the Customer Service & Access Strategy – Progress report and Direction of Travel Cabinet, 7 September 2006*

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-** Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members  Cllr David Booth
- Cabinet Member  Cllr Peter Fowler
- Chief Executive
- Legal  David Carter
- Finance  David Clarke, Chris Jukes, Charles Holden

- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  Sarah Duxbury, Jane Pollard

**FINAL DECISION YES**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee  .....
- To Council  .....
- To Cabinet  .....
- To an O & S Committee  .....
- To an Area Committee  .....
- Further Consultation  .....

## Cabinet - 2 November 2006

### Delivering the Customer Service & Access Strategy – Funding options for a joint One Stop Shop in North Warwickshire

#### Report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development

##### Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- Approve the utilisation of £35,000 capital underspend from the Stratford Register Office to support the capital contribution to the joint one stop shop in Atherstone.
- Notes that the Strategic Director for Performance and Development will fund from within existing resources the additional £25,000 towards the capital contribution.
- Notes that the revenue funding will be the subject of a future bid to the Modernisation Fund.

### 1.0 Background

On 27<sup>th</sup> June Cabinet considered and approved the Customer Service & Access Strategy.

The Strategy outlines Warwickshire County Council's vision for customer service over the next three years. It aims to put the customer at the heart of everything the Council does. It recognises the importance of customers' needs and attempts to ensure that our services are driven and shaped by all those who live, work and visit Warwickshire by embedding a passion for customer focus across the organisation.

To support the achievement of the Vision, five themes have been identified which set out the key areas which we will address with respect to the redesigning of the customer experience. It is through these themes that the detailed action plans, objectives and targets for the Customer Service & Access Strategy will sit.

- **Efficient, effective and customer-focused processes**
- **Customer driven technology**
- **Localised services and solutions**
- **Empowered, committed and customer-focused staff**
- **Working in partnership with all public service providers in Warwickshire**

This approach capitalises on the opportunity to deliver existing and new services cost effectively, by understanding and re-engineering our back and front office processes from end to end. The Strategy recognises that the structure and organisation of the Council is not as important to our customers as their experience when accessing Council services. It is the ease of accessibility, quality and speed of response that counts and the associated projects and initiatives aim to improve significantly the quality of customer experience in Warwickshire.

## 2.0 Progress update

Following agreement of the Customer Service & Access Strategy, the Cabinet considered a progress report on the projects within the strategy at their meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> September. 2006. The Strategy is committed to delivering five Neighbourhood pilots by March 2007, but the momentum behind this programme activity is building and the County Council is beginning to benefit from additional opportunities for localised delivery of services through offers made by our partners.

To reflect the 'fast-changing' nature of this area of work, the table below provides an outline of the current position statement for all the agreed and potential projects associated with the Customer Service And Access Strategy. It provides the context in which the proposed development of a joint, One Stop Shop facility in Atherstone would be made:

Ref.	One Stop Shop/ Neighbourhood pilot	Partners (In addition to WCC)	Funding status	Status
1	Kenilworth	Warwick DC	N/A	Operational
2	Kings House, Bedworth	N/a	Approved – 26/06/06	Expected operational by Feb 2007
3	Interactive kiosk pilot	Rugby BC	Approved – 26/06/06	Expected operational by Feb 2007
4	Shire Hall, Warwick	Warwick DC	TBC	Expected operational by March 2007
5	Whitnash	Warwick District Council, Police	Approved – 07/09/06	Expected operational by March 2007
6	Leamington	Warwick DC	Business case to be presented to Cabinet on 01/02/07	Business case under development
7	Stockingford Extended Services in Schools	TBC	Business case to be presented to Cabinet on 07/12/06	Initial Stakeholder meeting held
8	North Warwickshire Borough Council House, Atherstone	North Warwickshire BC	Participation in project agreed by Cabinet on 07/09/06	Funding options presented to Cabinet 02/11/06
9	Nuneaton Town Hall	Nuneaton & Bedworth BC	TBC – Business case to be developed	Early discussions being held with Borough Council representatives
10	Southam Town Centre	Stratford DC	TBC – Business case to be developed	Early discussions being held with District representatives

### 3.0 Objectives of this report

On 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 the Cabinet made the following recommendation:

***'The Cabinet approves Warwickshire County Council's participation with North Warwickshire Borough Council in a joint One Stop Shop and a further report being submitted to Cabinet on the 2nd November 2006 to consider options for funding.'***

The remainder of this report therefore provides an outline of the proposed project and outlines the associated funding options.

### 4.0 Project outline

North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) are currently considering a scheme to remodel the Council House reception area to provide a One Stop Shop. Paragon Interior Groups plc (the same Company that worked on the Kenilworth One Stop Shop) have been awarded the design and build contract.

It is envisaged that the NWBC One Stop Shop will provide a fast track meet and greet area, advisors to deal with specific queries or requests for service, interview rooms for the public and for use by, for example, the Citizens Advice Bureau, computers for use by visitors to access the website and encourage self service, space for the Planning divisions microfiche reader that provides information on planning and building regulation applications.

The benefits of working jointly with the Borough on this scheme would include:-

- Pooling resources to improve services to customers
- Joined up service delivery for both authorities through a common front door, seamless and transparent.
- Opportunity to review our joint Customer Relationship Management approaches with a view to reducing transaction costs.
- Removal of customer confusion on 'which Council does what'
- Sharing of skills and knowledge in the development of One Stop Shop processes, removing service, geographical and professional barriers.

The Borough has asked the County Council to consider providing a joint One Stop Shop to the public. The Borough is asking for a capital contribution of £60,000 and £25,000 ongoing revenue to fund one member of staff. The total cost of the building work is £180,000 and the Borough will fund 3 members of staff. The capital and revenue costs to the authority represent a sound investment in securing a presence in the North of the county compared, for example, to the costs of establishing a presence on our own.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2006, North Warwickshire Borough Council's Executive Board considered and agreed a business case outlining the funding of this project. The options for WCC funding of the project, (as request by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2006) are set out in the following section.

**NB.** The report to the Executive Board of North Warwickshire Borough Council report is available on request

## **5.0 Funding options**

In response to the request from Cabinet alternative funding options have been considered for the capital contribution of £60,000 and the on-going revenue costs of £25,000 to fund one member of staff.

### **5.1 Revenue funding**

This will be the subject of a future bid to the Modernisation Fund.

### **5.2 Capital contribution**

On 7<sup>th</sup> February 2006 Council approved an allocation of £154,000 capital to support the relocation of the Register Office in Stratford upon Avon as requested in a capital development bid brought forward as part of the 2006/07 budget process. In May 2006 the Register Office was successfully relocated to Winton House, Church Street in Stratford upon Avon. The total cost of relocating the Register Office was £64,830, including fees, leaving a residue of £89,170 unspent.

Cabinet approved on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2006 the virement of £27,000 to support the extension of the one stop shop in Whitnash. Furthermore, Cabinet approved on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2006 the virement of £26,992 towards improvements at Rugby and Nuneaton Register Offices, leaving a revised unspent residue of £35,178.

It is proposed that the remaining £35,000 of capital underspend is used to partly fund the £60,000 capital contribution for the joint one stop shop in Atherstone, with the remaining £25,000 being funded from within existing resources of the Performance and Development Directorate.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

- Approve the utilisation of £35,000 capital underspend from the Stratford Register Office to support the capital contribution to the joint one stop shop in Atherstone.
- Notes that the Strategic Director for Performance and Development will fund from within existing resources the additional £25,000 towards the capital contribution.
- Notes that the revenue funding will be the subject of a future bid to the Modernisation Fund.

DAVID CARTER  
Strategic Director,  
Performance & Development

Shire Hall  
Warwick  
9<sup>th</sup> October 2006