

**WIRRAL COUNCIL  
CABINET  
3 NOVEMBER 2011**

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| <b>SUBJECT:</b>                          | <b>DWP HOSTED ONE STOP SHOPS</b>                                |
| <b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>                  | <b>BROMBOROUGH, HOYLAKES &amp; MEOLS,<br/>UPTON AND LISCARD</b> |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b>                        | <b>DIRECTOR OF FINANCE</b>                                      |
| <b>RESPONSIBLE<br/>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b> | <b>COUNCILLOR JEAN STAPLETON</b>                                |
| <b>KEY DECISION?</b>                     | <b>NO</b>   |

**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report details changes at the four One Stop Shops that are sited within Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) offices on Wirral. These sites will now see visitors on an appointment basis only which falls into line with the DWP methodology of seeing customers at these sites.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Members note the change to service delivery at these four sites.
- 2.2 That the Director of Finance report back on the long term proposals for each site as part of the programme of Library and One Stop Shop co-location.

**3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 These recommendations arise from decisions taken by the DWP. The changes will ensure that close working on site with DWP colleagues will continue.

**4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 Wirral has thirteen One Stop Shops across the Borough. Four One Stop Shops are based in DWP offices at Bromborough, Hoylake, Liscard and Upton. These sites were opened in 2004 and 2005.
- 4.2 Hoylake and Upton are open three days a week for 12 hours each and Bromborough is open for 20 hours. Liscard is open five days a week for a total of 35 hours. On average weekly customer numbers are Liscard 200, Bromborough 33, Upton 29 and Hoylake 9.

- 4.3 Their main focus has been to link with DWP customers so that the individual can be referred to Council staff, with the predominant focus being on benefits issues, as well as the One Stop Shop staff having quicker access to DWP staff. The breadth of knowledge and system access allows staff to assist customers to a wider range of services as individual circumstances and needs are identified. As with all sites the service at the DWP sites has been drop-in throughout the advertised opening times.
- 4.4 A number of recent factors have come together to enable a review of delivery of services at these sites. The DWP has reviewed their customer contact work and re-emphasised their methodology of seeing clients on an appointment basis. Their sites welcome and serve people on that basis. The One Stop Shops are within their offices and the occupation of a small area in each site is on a goodwill basis. At the three smaller sites the predominant source of customers remains DWP referrals, thus linking to DWP ways of working makes administrative sense.
- 4.5 Having reviewed the numbers and the content of customer visits changing to an appointment based service should not harm the quality of the service offered, and would better manage resources at every site. Discussions with DWP colleagues revealed their support in offering a similar service style without detriment to our mutual customers.
- 4.6 Publicity for the change in working arrangements has been via a leaflet issued to all One Stop Shop customers visiting the DWP sites.
- 4.7 The process for appointments at these sites is that people contact the Call Centre and book appointments within a two day time slot so that the person is not kept waiting. Customers are reminded that the drop in service is available at the other nine sites. Call Centre staff will also look to resolve the query without the necessity of a visit to an office.
- 4.8 Initially staff at the largest DWP site, Liscard, will slot in drop in people wherever possible acknowledging its size and customer numbers. This new approach could allow better management of the variable level of demand much more effectively and as a result customers could receive a better service and reduced waiting times.
- 4.9 I will review the impact of this change with colleagues in the DWP as well as evaluating the improvements that this offers to customers throughout the One Stop Shop network and will report back to Members. This links to the ongoing project of bringing Libraries and One Stop Shops together.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 Whilst there is some limited impact on drop in customers this is mitigated by adopting a more systematic approach to dealing with people on an appointments basis without any adverse impact on opening times. Delivery as a drop in service set against the DWP method of working could have impacted on the strong working relationship enjoyed locally.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 The other options available would be to stop the local presence or look at alternative sites. Neither option sits with the Council project of linking Libraries and One Stop Shops together, and could worsen the local presence and service standard.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Initial informal work with the DWP and customers to gauge the likely success of this system. The staff on site and at the Call Centre are monitoring feedback to assess the longer term viability of this method of seeing face to face customers.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 None.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS, FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 There are no financial, IT or asset implications arising directly out of this report.
- 9.2 These changes allow staff to be more efficiently utilised within the service.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 None.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 There are none arising from this report as the service is still available at all sites for the times already established and an Equality Impact Assessment is available for the service.

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 There are none arising from this report.

## **14 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 There are none arising from this report.

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**APPENDICES**      None

**REFERENCE MATERIAL**

**SUBJECT HISTORY THE LAST 3 YEARS**

| <b>Council Meeting</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|------------------------|-------------|
|                        |             |