
Meeting: Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 18th December 2012
Subject: Customer Service Centre, Leighton Buzzard
Report of: Cllr Maurice Jones , Executive Member for Corporate Resources
Summary: The report details the outcome of further consultation with relevant Ward Members on the reduction in opening days of Leighton Buzzard Customer Services Centre and confirms that the Centre will close for two days a week.

Advising Officer: Deb Clarke, Assistant Chief Executive, People and Organisation
Contact Officer: Deb Clarke, Assistant Chief Executive, People and Organisation
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: Primarily Leighton Buzzard North, Leighton Buzzard South, and Linslade. However customers from any part of the area may access any Customer Service Centre
Function of: Not applicable

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. This report contributes to the council achieving our priority of Value for Money.

Financial:

2. A saving of around £25k which is already built into the budget will be achieved by closing Leighton Buzzard Customer Services Centre for two days a week.

Legal:

3. No legal issues are identified

Risk Management:

4. No strategic risks are identified

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Staff affected by the review of Customer Services Centres have been consulted as part of the process of the review. No redundancies of permanent staff are envisaged as a result of these proposals.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. Consultation on the review of Customer Services Centres included data on the diversity of those consulted. No adverse impacts were found on any particular group.
7. This data is available and was summarised in the previous report

RECOMMENDATION(S):

The Committee is asked to note that:-

- 1. The Leighton Buzzard Customer Services Centre will close for two days a week from January 2013.**
- 2. Customers using the Centre and generally within the area will receive appropriate notice of the change in opening.**
- 3. The effect of the closure on customer service will be reviewed during May 2013 to ensure that there have been minimal adverse effects**

Background

8. At its meeting on 23rd October 2012, the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from the Assistant Chief Executive, People and Organisation, on the outcome of the review of Customer Services Centres (the 'Face to Face') review.
9. Whilst generally the implementation of the outcome of the review was accepted by the Committee, there was considerable disquiet regarding the proposal to close Leighton Buzzard Customer Services Centre for two days a week.
10. As there was a considerable degree of debate on the proposals for Leighton Buzzard, the Interim Assistant Chief Executive (People & Organisation), in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources, undertook to carry out further consultation with ward members and to not implement the particular proposal with regard to Leighton Buzzard, pending the outcome of such consultation. A report would be presented to the 18 December meeting of this Committee, which would provide Members with the opportunity to consider these outcomes.
11. Following debate, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved (inter alia) as follows;

'That implementation of the recommendation regarding the Leighton Buzzard customer service centre be postponed and that a further consultation with Members and other relevant stakeholders be undertaken, the outcomes of which be presented to this Committee at its 18 December 2012 meeting'

Consultation with Members

12. On 13th November 2013, the Executive Member for Resources, together with the Assistant Chief Executive for People and Organisation, met with members at Bossard House in Leighton Buzzard, which is the location of the Leighton Buzzard Customer Services Centre.
13. Members present at that meeting included Cllrs Berry, Warren, Bowater, Shadbolt, Johnstone and Mustoe.

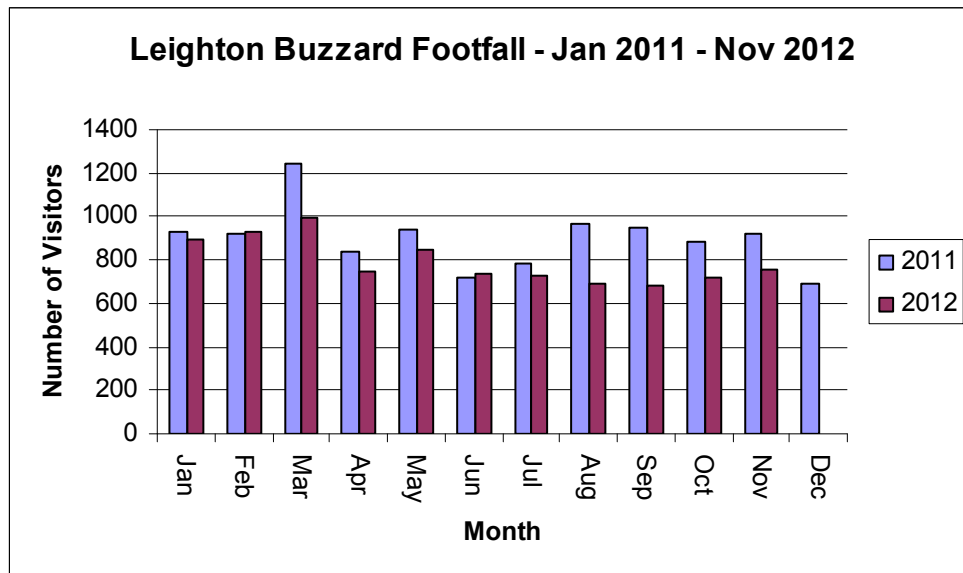
14. There was a full discussion of the merits and issues with the closure of Leighton Buzzard Customer Services Centre for two days a week.
15. The outcome of the discussion delivered the following key decisions and actions.

Key Decisions

Continue with proposal to close 2 days per week
 Install CAP – Library / close proximity (dates to be confirmed as part of Customer First phase 2)
 Savings Confirmed at £25k

Actions:

Provide footfall for 2011 /2012 for comparison
 Develop customer notice period and communication plan (including partners)
 Dates for CAP install (to be confirmed as part of Customer First phase 2)
 Review service demand – weekly and monthly



Background papers and their location: (open to public inspection)

Presentation to Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, October 12