

Overview of Responses and Recommendations

Budget Proposals 16/17 Phase Two: Calcot Service Point, Sainsbury's		Ian Haggett – Customer Services Manager	24 March 2016 Version 2 (Executive/Council)
Proposal:	To close the office located in Sainsbury's at Calcot		
Total budget 15/16:	£53,500	Recommended officer saving 16/17:	£20,000 (37%)
Initial proposed saving 16/17:	£20,000 (37%)	Final recommendation to Executive/Council:	To proceed with this savings proposal
No. of responses:	<p>In total, 30 responses were received, 25 of which included comments. Of those who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24 were individuals • One was a group/organisation • Four were Town/Parish Councils • One was a District Councillor <p>15 responses were from non-users of the service.</p>		
Key issues raised:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from rubbish collection, the Calcot office is the only thing provided for Council Tax payers living in the Eastern part of West Berkshire. • Accessing services by telephone or post will entail costs, as will travelling to Newbury and paying for parking. • The elderly and/or disabled will be disadvantaged. • Several agreed with or supported the proposal. 		
Equality issues:	There were no unforeseen equality issues raised, however several respondents suggested that the elderly and disabled would be most affected.		
Suggestions for reducing the impact on service users:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Provide a mobile service, perhaps specifically for those who are disabled.	Whilst this might result in premises savings, it does not address the staffing requirements, or the requirement for a suitable vehicle. This would be cost prohibitive. Revenues & Benefits staff already undertake home visits where necessary.	
	Open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only.	This will not generate any appreciable savings, since staff costs would only marginally reduce and all other overheads would remain constant.	
	Relocate the office. Extend and/or reduce the number of opening days.	The council does not have any suitable accommodation in the area so relocation would involve rental costs. Since the majority of the savings in this proposal are based on the elimination or reduction of premises and	

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		staffing costs this would not provide any significant savings. Extending opening hours would increase costs.	
	Highlight availability of planning application details at Parish Council offices	This comment was prompted by a concern that the (separate) proposal to close libraries might detrimentally affect those who do not have internet access. Nevertheless, this is a good point that will be pursued.	
Alternative options for applying the saving in this area:	Suggestion	Council response	
	Make savings within the Customer Services management team.	This option is already being actively pursued but is not part of this consultation.	
	Extend the scope to include a wider range of council services.	A wider range of council services have been provided in the past but were withdrawn due to lack of demand. Partner agencies offering services at this location (e.g. Sovereign Housing) also terminated their services due to lack of demand.	
	Relocate to Theale library or provide a peripatetic service operating from libraries in the East of the District	The libraries are themselves subject to possible closure and the peripatetic service suggested is very similar to that provided prior to 2011, which was abandoned due to lack of customer demand and operating inefficiencies.	
Suggestions for how others may help contribute:	There were no suggestions received.		
Officer conclusion and recommendation as a result of the responses:	<p>The low number of responses (12 only) received from those who describe themselves, or someone they care for, as users of the service reflects that this office is used by only a small minority of customers. There has been a sustained reduction in the number of customers using this office following the withdrawal of payment facilities in September 2015; to quantify this enquiry numbers in December 2015 were 42% lower than in December 2014.</p> <p>Despite the concerns raised about the effects of this proposal on the elderly and disabled, only two responses were received from service users who describe themselves as disabled and there were no responses received from service users aged 65+.</p> <p>It is recognised that a small number of customers may no longer be able to access services in their chosen manner,</p>		

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	<p>however there are alternative service channels readily available and there are safeguards already in place for those in the greatest need.</p> <p>It is apparent that several respondents consider that the current service is an inefficient use of resources and support the proposal for closure.</p> <p>Feedback from the consultation process has not resulted in any issue being raised which would prevent the council from proceeding with the proposal. The feedback has also not generated any viable counter-proposal which would mitigate the proposal.</p> <p>It is therefore recommended that the proposal be progressed.</p>	

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