

The Cabinet

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REPORT

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Councillor Mrs Warrander : Cabinet Member for Resources

RELOCATING THE AMESBURY CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE INTO THE LIBRARY

1. Purpose of the report:

To keep Cabinet informed of the discussions with Wiltshire County Council in respect of the proposal to re-locate Customer Services/TIC from the Portakabin into the Library and to seek approval to the use of the Library as a mini Customer Services Centre.

2. Background:

- 2.1 In 2004, Wiltshire County Council setup the Amesbury Co-location Project Board on which the District Council had Officer Representation. The purpose of the Project Board was to examine options from the redevelopment of the Amesbury Library/Clinic site to provide accommodation for the Library, PCT Health Centre, DACS, Children & Family Support Services, CAB and Salisbury District Council and Tourist Information services.
- 2.2 On the 12th January 2005, the Project Board agreed that none of the three options put forward was operationally and financially viable and that the County Council and PCT would be seeking other solutions for the provision of DACS and Children & Family Support Services.
- 2.3 The Project Board also agreed that a local solution be sought to relocate the District Council's customer contact and Tourist Information Centre from the Portakabin into the Library.
- 2.4 In order to satisfy the operational needs of Customer Services it has been agreed, in principle, that space would be allocated within the main Library premises for TIC display material and a new reception counter/desk shared with Library staff. To make the existing space more usable a number of minor non-structural alterations will be carried out. The provision of the new counter adaptations and ancillary works associated with the relocation. The capital cost of the re-location will be funded by the District Council.
- 2.5 The District Councils occupation of space within the Library will be on a rent free basis, however a financial contribution will be made towards annual running costs.
- 2.6 Wiltshire County Council has arranged to carry out and fund any external works to make access to the Library DDA compliant.
- 2.7 Cabinet will be aware of the success of the Mere Information Centre, and the current programme of work to improve and integrate customer service through the new Customer Service Unit. The service at Amesbury will be developed as part of that programme, and will enable customers to access and resolve a wide range of SDC and other community and public sector services in Amesbury. Over the next two years the following service areas are planned for delivery: Planning and Building Control enquiries, Parking services, extended resolution of environmental service and benefit requests, access to improved information for Housing queries, general Council enquiries, information and bookings regarding services and meetings with council officers. Professional and trained staff will be able to resolve diverse queries for customers in a single visit to the Amesbury Information Centre. These developments will be in addition to the range of tourist and community information already available in Amesbury.

- 2.8 It is expected that officers from both the County and District Councils will shortly be in a position to finalise detailed arrangements and timescales for the proposed re-location.
- 2.9 With the closure of Redworth House, the County Council no longer has any meeting facilities in Amesbury Town Centre. There is no appropriate space within the Library to satisfy this requirement; therefore the County Council is exploring the feasibility of building a small extension at the side of the Library. The outcome of these deliberations is not expected for some time.
- 2.10 The Council lease three rooms in the Health Centre/Clinic, these are used two days per week by the CAB and terms have recently been agreed with Amesbury Town Council for its use of this space for the remaining three days.

3 Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to approve the co-location of Customer Services to the Library and confirm in principle the Councils acquisition of a non-freehold interest in the Library on terms to be agreed by the Head of Legal & Property Services.

4 Background Papers:

File Amesbury Library/Clinic in Legal & Property Services

5 Implications:

- **Key decisions:** N/A
- **Financial:** The estimated capital cost will be in the region of £25-£30,000 and is financed from the proceeds of the capital receipt.
- **Legal:** Set out in report
- **Human Rights:** None
- **Personnel:** Improved working conditions for the Customer Services staff presently working in the Portakabin.
- **Community Safety:** Reduced anti-social behaviour when the Portakabin is removed.
- **Environmental:** None
- **Council's Core Values:** excellent service, willing to be an open council and a willing partner
- **Wards Affected:** Amesbury