

# **KENNET DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **RESOURCES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** **To be held on Tuesday, 29th November 2005**

### **REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES**

## **PROPOSED ALTERATIONS TO THE BROWFORT RECEPTION AREA**

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a capital scheme to improve the Browfort reception area.

### **2. Financial, Legal and Staffing implications**

The cost of the works is estimated at £170,000. Provision had originally been made in the 2005/06 capital programme for a cost of £150,000 as a rough guide prior to a scheme being prepared. The £170,000 budget, in contrast, has been subject to scrutiny by a quantity surveyor of the actual proposals. There are no legal or staffing implications arising from the report.

### **3. Introduction**

This project is in effect phase 2 of the changes needed to Browfort to implement the Customer First programme.

Phase 1 consisted of replacing rooms and the working area to the rear of the current reception desk with an equipped telephone contact centre. The current proposals will replace the facilities lost at Phase 1 and provide other significant benefits.

### **4. Proposals**

Attached to the report is a floor plan for the improved reception area. The main features to note are as follows:

Replacement of existing and previously existing interview rooms with rooms that are more fit for purpose, in terms of ease of access for the public, improved security for staff and the ability to conduct interviews under caution in two of the proposed interview rooms.

Improved reception desk that will double as a face-to-face contact point for those seeking information from the Council. The desk will be equipped with the Customer Relationship Management system to allow reception staff to resolve more issues at first point of contact. Similarly, the desk will be equipped with document image processing equipment to allow staff to gather information needed under Benefit Verification rules.

Improved waiting areas for the public, with self service (via a personal computer) and assisted service for the many members of the public wishing to examine planning files.

Link corridor between development control and revenues and benefits, to allow easy access to the reception area without using the foyer area.

Generally, the improved reception area would create a less cluttered and cramped area in which to receive members of the public and thereby convey a more professional approach to the important business of face-to-face dealings with the public.

## **5. Disruption**

The budget of £170,000 has been prepared on the basis that work would be carried out around existing operations, including work at weekends. However, the disruption can be minimised, and the work carried out with greater continuity, and therefore less cost, by closing the existing Browfort reception during the course of the contract, and using the Old Browfort reception area instead for staff, Members, and members of the public.

## **6. Recommendation**

It is **Recommended that** the work of improvements to the Browfort reception area as illustrated in the attached plan be approved at an estimated cost of £170,000.

Director of Resources