

EXETER CITY COUNCIL
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – RESOURCES
23 NOVEMBER 2011

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE – SATURDAY OPENING TRIAL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides members, as requested, with an early update on the trial opening of the Customer Service Centre on Saturday mornings.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Business Transformation, staff within the Customer Service Centre (CSC) and their Union, a decision was taken to open the CSC on Saturday mornings from 10 September 2011 for a six-month trial in order to extend the availability of services to the public.
- 2.2 All services provided by the CSC during the normal working week are provided on a Saturday morning (between 9.30am and 12.30pm) both over the counter and on the telephones. This also gives an opportunity for the Council to use the facility to host special events/promotions/consultations.
- 2.3 For the duration of the trial, all staff in the CSC were offered the opportunity to work on a Saturday on a voluntary basis, being paid in either time off in lieu, or overtime. The majority of the staff have taken the time off in lieu option. For information, two-thirds of the staff within the CSC volunteered.
- 2.4 Publicity for this new initiative was given by way of a front page article in the Autumn edition of The Citizen, a media release and leaflets and posters within the CSC itself. Promotion of the facility continues with initiatives and information displays.

3. FINDINGS TO DATE

- 3.1 At the time of writing the report, the CSC had been open for a total of 10 weeks, with the following table indicating the number of customers seen or calls answered each Saturday:

	Telephone			Face to Face		
	Received	Answered	Answer Rate (%)	Customer Casual Callers	Advisor	Total Seen
10/09/11	37	33	89.2	19	26	45
17/09/11	23	23	100	18	19	37
24/09/11	29	29	100	24	31	55
01/10/11	36	34	94.4	24	40	64
08/10/11	system error - no stats			14	19	33
15/10/11	34	33	97.1	19	24	43
22/10/11	27	26	96.3	24	31	55
29/10/11	39	39	100	13	35	48
05/11/11	31	29	93.5	17	19	36
12/11/11	21	20	95	17	23	40
Average	31					45

- 3.2 The table shows a relatively consistent number of customers using the CSC on a Saturday both by telephone and face to face. These numbers compare with a week day average over the same period of **410** face to face customers and **656** telephone customers over an 8 ½ hour opening period. The number of customers on a Saturday is therefore **31%** of the week day average for face to face customers and **13%** of the daily average for telephone customers.
- 3.3 To date there has been little additional expenditure incurred by the Council from Saturday opening as most of the staff have taken the time off in lieu option and there has been minimal additional heating and lighting costs.

4. ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

- 4.1 There is no doubt that the additional opening hours of the CSC is providing greater flexibility for the City's customers to interact with the Council on either a face to face or telephone basis.
- 4.2 The withdrawal of the County Council's residents' parking permit service from the CSC will have a significant impact on the workload of the Service. However, it also offers an opportunity to provide more City Council service delivery through the Centre and this forms part of the Vanguard review of all services to improve and simplify customer access.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That members note the report.

HEAD OF CORPORATE CUSTOMER SERVICES

CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling the report:

None