

Cleator Moor Area office

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Councillor E Woodburn
LEAD OFFICER: Jane Salt, Head of Customer Services
REPORT AUTHOR: Jane Salt, Head of Customer Services

Summary and Recommendation: Executive are asked to agree in principle that the Council's front line customer service delivery in Cleator Moor be transferred to the Library and for the office to become a Local Link where County and District Council share customer service delivery.
To delegate the final decision to the Leader and Head of Customer Services once the budget and IT queries have been clarified.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of the County wide initiative to improve access to services there was agreement at a joint meeting in February 2008 to develop and deliver a programme for the opening of face-to-face one stop shops to be branded as Local Links.

1.2 At its meeting on 9 December 2008 Executive agreed to commit to partnership working with joint service provision from the buildings.

The refurbishment of the Library in Cleator Moor provides an opportunity for Copeland to work with the County Council to join up the face of the Council for our customers and to become a Local Link.

1.3 Joining with the County will create an opportunity to extend the opening hours to allow greater access to library services and improved access to information on county council and district council services in one location.

1.4 This would mark the start of the regeneration of Cleator Moor Town Square.

2. ARGUMENT

2.1 The member of staff who covers the Cleator Moor area office is a Customer Services officer and is expected to deal with all front line enquiries as well as pick up some telephone enquiries via the Customer Relationship Management system.

2.2 There are issues due to the fact that there is only one member of staff in the area office at Cleator Moor which means that the office has to close at lunchtime. In addition if the member of staff is detained on the phone or in the interview room with a customer there is no-one to greet the customer at the counter.

2.4 Work to refurbish the Library is due to start after Easter and part of this work will include the provision of a counter large enough to deliver both County and District Council services in one place.

2.5 By developing the Local Link approach this provides the first step towards improving the co-ordination of service delivery from and the regeneration of the Cleator Moor Town Square.

2.6 Through the retirement of the existing employee at Cleator Moor Library, County Council have an opportunity to recruit a new member of staff who will be jointly selected and trained by Copeland

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

3.1 It would be possible to remain in the Council Centre but we would lose the opportunity to improve the level of service we deliver.

3.2 To move the Customer Service office to the refurbished Library and join up the face of the Council.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Moving into the library will resolve the customer service issues associated with working from CBC building in the current situation.

4.2 The move will enable establishment of a Local Link which will improve and co-ordinate customer service provision from Cleator Moor.

4.3 This move also supports the planned regeneration of the square which aims to revitalise the listed buildings on the square, internal and external, in terms of both appearance and use through greater partnership working with both the County and Town Council's and Regen North East Copeland.

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOURCES OF FINANCE)

5.1 It is anticipated that the member of staff will no longer be able to take the overflow of calls from the Copeland Centre but in the short term we do not

anticipate any further resources will be needed. However we may need to review this if the impact of the recession starts to increase calls significantly.

5.2 The County Council are currently willing to cover the Saturday opening hours so there will be no additional cost to Copeland.

5.3 There will be some costs associated with the Council Centre that will remain even if we do not occupy the building and these will be in the region of £10k. However as part of the regeneration of Cleator Moor Town Square the occupation of all the buildings and associated costs will be reviewed.

5.4 Copeland Borough Council will be able to occupy the Library rent free but will have to pay towards the running costs in the region of £2,500. In part this can be offset by the reduction in rent that Customer Services pay for the existing accommodation. For 2009/10 this would reflect an additional cost of approximately £1,200.

6. PROJECT AND RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The project for upgrading the Library is a County Council initiative and they will manage the associated risk.

6.2 If the move is approved the timescale will mean that publicity must start as soon as possible to give sufficient notice to the customers who visit Cleator Moor Council Centre as well as the other occupiers.

7. IMPACT ON CORPORATE PLAN

7.1 Broaden access to services.

List of Appendices

None

List of Background Documents: Cleator Moor Task Group Executive report 9/12/08

List of Consultees: Corporate Team and The Leader

CHECKLIST FOR DEALING WITH KEY ISSUES

Please confirm against the issue if the key issues below have been addressed. This can be by either a short narrative or quoting the paragraph number in the report in which it has been covered.

Impact on Crime and Disorder	None
Impact on Sustainability	None

Impact on Rural Proofing	Improve service delivery in rural office
Health and Safety Implications	Remove lone worker risks
Impact on Equality and Diversity Issues	None
Children and Young Persons Implications	None
Human Rights Act Implications	None
Monitoring Officer Comments	None
S151 Officer Comments	None

Please say if this report will require the making of a Key Decision NO