



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE LEADER

TOPIC – LOCAL ACCESS POINTS

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee and all Members of the relevant Scrutiny Panel (individual Ward Members are consulted separately where appropriate). In addition, all Members are notified.

Five or more of these consulted Members can require that the matter be referred to Cabinet for determination.

Contact Officers:

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Committee Administrator:

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SUMMARY

- On 16 January 2008 Cabinet approved plans for the establishment of Local Access Points (LAPs) at New Alresford Police Station, Bishops Waltham Citizens Advice Bureau and a location to be confirmed in Whiteley (CAB 1601 refers).
- Subsequent discussions have raised concerns about the suitability of New Alresford Police Station for a LAP, and the Library has been identified as a more suitable alternative.
- Meadowside Leisure Centre has now been identified as the most suitable venue for the establishment of an interim LAP in Whiteley.
- The recommendations set out in this paper will reduce the total project cost over the three years of the project by £6,780.
- This initiative relates to almost all aspects of the Council's Corporate Strategy.

DECISION

- 1 That the Local Access Point for New Alresford is established at the Library rather than the Police Station as previously approved.
- 2 That the interim Local Access Point for Whiteley is established at the Meadowside Leisure Centre.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**New Alresford**

Report CAB1601 proposed the Police Station as the most suitable location for a LAP in New Alresford. Since then a number of concerns have arisen that have brought its suitability into question:

- Officers have been unable to agree with the Police Estates Section with regards to formal arrangements for the Council to use the Station.
- A key element of the service will be surgery sessions from Housing and Benefits Officers and there are serious doubts over the willingness of some clients to use the Police Station.
- It has become apparent that in the event of leave, sickness or training for the Station Enquiry Officer, the Police close the Station to public callers. This would totally compromise our ability to provide a service on those days.

These concerns caused further consideration to be given to other venues, and the Library has emerged as a more suitable option. The Library is more centrally located and is used by a greater number of people. The staff members at the Library are very enthusiastic about the idea and there appear to be no obstacles to overcome with Hampshire County Council.

The only disadvantage is that the private consultation room for confidential discussion is not accessible to people with severe mobility problems so alternative home visits would be required in those instances.

Whiteley

Report CAB1601 also set out the likely long-term location for a LAP in Whiteley, but the short-term arrangements were unclear at that time. Agreement has since been reached with the team at Meadowside Leisure Centre for use of a community meeting room at the Centre on one day a week. Whilst only a temporary measure, this would be a cost-effective solution for the period until the permanent facility is available.

The other option considered was the use of a vacant unit within Whiteley Retail Village. This quickly proved to be an expensive option and the unit would have been far larger than required and not especially suitable for the nature of our service.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

N/A

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

None

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

N/A

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

In New Alresford the use of the Library will be at no cost, as was the original agreement in principle with the Police. There will be a cost saving of approximately £500 per annum resulting from the use of the HPSN connection at the Library, which negates the need for a new broadband connection.

In Whiteley the cost implication to Meadowside Leisure Centre of one day per week loss of income is £950 per annum. This will be met from the LAP budget, but is more than compensated for by the saving of £5,000 included in the original budget for adaptation of the premises once identified. This is not required at Meadowside.

The changes set out in this paper will reduce the total project cost over the three years of the project by £6,780. With a number of further small operational savings that have been identified, the total project cost in 2008/09 has now reduced from £46,660 to £37,656 and the total cost over three years has reduced from £110,662 to £100,080.

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision

Councillor George Beckett – The Leader (signed 5 August 2008)