

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

SPORT, LEISURE, ARTS AND CULTURE CABINET MEMBER

RELOCATION OF BARTON LOCAL LINK

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 To approve the relocation of Barton Local Link from The Old Magistrate's Court to Providence House.

1.2 The key points in this report are as follows:

- Following a review of customer service sites in Barton it is proposed to relocate Barton Local Link to join the library and the adult education centre at Providence House.
- The project will also include the development of mobile working facilities for other council officers and a social enterprise café.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Barton Local Link opened at The Old Magistrate's Court in 1997 and was the council's first one stop shop.

2.2 The current accommodation however has only one private interview room. It is also a listed building which limits the scope for development.

2.3 A review of customer service sites in Barton has identified surplus accommodation at Providence House. This building currently houses the library and adult education centre.

2.4 There is already a successful precedent at AshbyLink for combining these three services in one building.

2.5 Bringing together services in one building in this way helps to develop a community hub.

2.6 A number of guest advisers currently deliver surgeries at Barton Local Link i.e. NLC Registrar, Citizens Advice Bureau, North Lincolnshire

Homes, Connexions, Working Links. These guest advisers would all transfer those surgeries to Providence House, increasing the number of services available on that site.

- 2.7 The Adult Education Service has plans to develop a social enterprise café at Providence House to meet the skills and employability needs of people over 16 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The addition of the Local Link to the site will increase the footfall and provide a customer base. In return the cafe will enhance the facilities available to Local Link, library and adult education customers.
- 2.8 In keeping with the Worksmart ethos, the scheme will also include the development of mobile working facilities for other council officers such as social workers. This will enable them to use Providence House as a local base rather than having to travel back to Scunthorpe. They will therefore be able to spend more time with service users in Barton.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 3.1 The first option is to relocate Barton Local Link to Providence House, taking advantage of surplus accommodation on the ground floor of the building. This option would:
- Bring together three key services plus guest advice surgeries in one building so that customers have easier and more streamlined access to those services.
 - Improve access to a wider range of services in Barton through the development of mobile working.
 - Increase the number of private interview rooms available.
 - Provide on site car parking, currently not available at Barton Local Link.
 - Enable the rationalisation of the property portfolio by releasing The Old Magistrate's Court and potentially result in a capital receipt following the disposal of that building.
 - Realise revenue savings from the running costs of having Barton Local Link in a separate building.
 - Enable economies of scale by sharing the reception function for the building.
- 3.2 The second option is to continue to provide the Local Link service away from other council facilities and services.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 The first option is proposed. The reasons are as listed in paragraph 3.1 above and in general terms this option:

- Releases efficiencies and creates better access to more services.
- Provides an improved customer and visitor experience at Providence House, bringing key council services together under one roof.
- Creates a multi use community hub providing access to council and partner services.
- Enables some rationalisation of the property portfolio and potential for a capital receipt upon the release of The Old Magistrate's Court.
- A further development could involve enhanced Tourist Information provision. Discussion with the council's Tourism Team will take place.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

5.1 Financial

The capital cost of the scheme is £30,000 to be met by capital funding.

5.2 Staffing

There will be no job losses. The sharing of the reception function will however enable some efficiencies.

Unions have been consulted and there have been no adverse comments.

Staff are fully involved in the design of the new service.

5.3 Property

Adaptations will be made to Providence House that will provide a better customer experience.

The Old Magistrate's Court will be surplus to the service's requirements.

5.4 Information Technology

Staff in IT Services have been fully involved in the development of the brief and the feasibility.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Statutory

The proposal has no adverse impact on the council's statutory duty to provide a library service. It will in fact bring more people in to the building and enhance the overall role of Providence House within the community.

6.2 Environmental

The proposal will result in more services being available in one building. Customers will therefore be able to access more services during one visit and will not have to make separate journeys to different buildings within Barton.

6.3 Diversity

A stage 1 Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out. This has confirmed the need for a more in depth assessment. The issues identified mainly relate to physical access. Measures are in place to manage those issues.

6.4 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder

There are no direct implications.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Users of the Local Link, library and adult education centre were consulted towards the end of 2008 on the initial proposal. Whilst broadly in favour of having all three services in one building some concerns were raised about the lack of car parking. Following that feedback the Adult Education Service funded a further 20 spaces in the car park.

7.2 Wider community consultation took place during November 2009, the proposal being publicised at over 20 locations around Barton. This resulted in comments about the location and the physical access, both pedestrian and vehicular to the site. Asset Management and Culture have advised that it is not possible to create a pedestrian access from Chapel Lane to the rear of the site. This is due to a significant difference in levels – up to 2 metres. There is insufficient space within the Providence House site to provide the required ramp without losing large areas of the car park.

- 7.3 Advice is being sought from Highways about the feasibility / safety of a second vehicle access to / from Holydyke. It is likely any such development would cost in the region of £5,000 and as such is beyond the financial scope of the scheme at this time. However we are committed to continuing to review the access needs of all three sets of customers. Further analysis is ongoing and we are exploring funding options.
- 7.4 Asset Management and Culture have been consulted and have considered and approved the scheme within the context of the property portfolio in Barton.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 That the cabinet member approves the proposal to relocate Barton Local Link to Providence House as outlined in paragraph 3.1 of this report.

SERVICE DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY PLANNING AND RESOURCES

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

None