

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

**CUSTOMER SERVICE, SPORT & LEISURE
CABINET MEMBER**

LOCAL LINK PROVISION IN THE CROSBY AREA

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To approve an increase to Local Link provision in the Crosby area of Scunthorpe.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The council's network of Local Links provides access to council services for local people. They offer benefits and housing advice services, and act as a gateway to other council services. The Local Link service also works with a range of partners who can provide specialist advice and support for customers.
- 2.2 There are seven Local Link offices in North Lincolnshire. The former Local Link office in the Crosby area of Scunthorpe closed in 2009. Customers from Crosby were redirected to Church Square House.
- 2.3 Crosby has high levels of deprivation. Since the Crosby office closed the numbers of complex council enquiries at Church Square House are similar to those formerly received at Crosby and Church Square House. However, analysis suggests that some customers who used Crosby have not since used Church Square House.
- 2.4 In line with its priority for 'Excellence in Customer Service' and commitment to 'Putting Our Customers First' the council is seeking to improve access to Local Link provision in the Crosby area.
- 2.5 In 2012 we undertook a web survey to consult people about access to Local Link service in Crosby. The majority of respondents wanted access to the service in the Crosby area.
- 2.6 We have explored potential to provide access to Local Link services in the Crosby area. There is scope to provide a service at the Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) on Oswald Road. This would be subject to approval by the CAB Committee.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1 – to provide access to Local Link services at CAB on an appointment and/or drop-in basis for 15 hours per week.
- 3.2 Option 2 – to continue with current Local Link provision for Crosby residents at Church Square House.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 Option 1 will improve our service:

- Residents in the Crosby area will be able to access the Local Link service more easily
- Customers often have a range of wider needs which are similar to those of CAB clients – working in partnership at CAB will make signposting to other services easier and help clients to resolve their needs more quickly
- CAB staff will be able to help with booking Local Link appointments out of hours.

4.2 Option 2 would not improve access to Local Links in the Crosby area for local people.

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

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 Some changes will need to be made at CAB to provide the Local Link Service. The cost of this work is estimated at £16,145. The CAB will not charge the council any rent for space.

5.1.2 The cost to provide 15 hours of Local Link staffing at CAB is around £8,600 p.a.

5.1.3 These costs will be met from existing resources.

5.2 Staffing, Property and IT

5.2.1 We will need to create a new Local Link Customer Adviser post to cover the 15 hours at CAB.

5.2.2 We need to make some changes at CAB to create a small confidential room and improve the layout and flow of the reception area. We will also need new IT points and to relocate some of the existing points.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 The council is aiming to improve access to Local Link services for customers. Locating the service with CAB will enable customers to access a range of services to meet their needs in one place.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED

7.1 We completed a web survey to consult people about Local Link provision in 2012. 86% of respondents said they would like to see a Local Link service in Crosby. Responses varied about when people would like to use the service.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves an increase to the Local Link network through the provision of 15hrs of Local Link service at the Citizens' Advice Bureau in the Crosby area of Scunthorpe.

DIRECTOR OF PLACES

Civic Centre
Ashby Road
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB

Author: Helen Rowe
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: Nil