

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: TUESDAY 7 AUGUST 2012
title: RECEPTION REMODELLING SCHEME – PROGRESS REPORT
submitted by: JOHN HEAP – HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Committee on the progress made in relation to the reception remodelling scheme in the Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives – To meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors.
 - Corporate Priorities – To be an efficient well run council.
 - Other Considerations – To promote thriving service centres.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Historically the Council have provided three separate reception areas on level B, C and D of the Council Offices Building. These have been directly related to the services offered on each floor.
- 2.2 While this has worked reasonably well in the past, best practices approaches to public service delivery have evolved in recent years. It was therefore felt that an opportunity to reflect these changes should be taken, particularly if these measures improved the efficiency of the service.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The historic arrangement often resulted in members of the public with more than one enquiry visiting a number of different reception areas. This was found to be both inconvenient and time consuming for the end user.
- 3.2 In order to improve the efficiency of the services offered, it was proposed to consolidate the reception provision. In particular, to create a single location where a range of services can be accessed, and where members of staff can operate in a customer facing capacity in a range of private and semi-private areas.
- 3.3 In order to ensure that this was fit for purpose, a range of measures were proposed including:
- The relocation of the payments area.
 - The creation of a customer service area.
 - The construction of a number of interview rooms.
 - The addition of a public intranet area.

- The relocation of the contact centre.
- 3.4 The work started on site during May 2012 and is anticipated to reach practical completion by early August 2012.
 - 3.5 As a result of the increased facilities on Level B, the decision was made to close the reception on level C. This took place on 16 July 2012.
 - 3.6 There was therefore the potential to re-configure the reception area on Level C. A range of options were put forward and considered by the Council's Corporate Management Team. The preferred option was to retain the interview room and to convert the surrounding space into a 'break out area'.
 - 3.7 In April 2012 the Tourist Information service which was originally located on Level B was relocated to the Platform Gallery. The aims of this were twofold, firstly to improve the accessibility of the Tourism Service, and secondly to make additional space available within level B of the Council Offices. The total capital budget for this and the reception scheme was £100,000.00.
 - 3.8 As a result of careful design, specification and planning, the projected cost has been kept to £92,000.00. The residual budget inclusive of the remaining contingency is therefore £8,000.00.
 - 3.9 Following instructions from the Corporate Management Team a variation order has been issued to the contractor to undertake the conversion work to Level C reception area. It is expected that this will add three weeks to the overall programme.
 - 3.10 While it is hoped that this will be kept within the initial budget, there is a chance of a minor overspend, however the project will be carefully managed, and additional resources identified if required.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

Resources – The total budget for the remodelling of Level B, Level C, and the changes to the Platform Galley, was £100,000. Although the scheme is still work in progress, the costs appear to be broadly in line with the overall budget. The approved service review savings gave as a minimum annual staff savings of £21,000 from the transfer of routine Revenues and Benefits queries into the Customer Services Area, and £44,530 per annum from the replacement of the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. The service will continue to be monitored as it matures.

Technical, Environmental and Legal – Efforts have been made to use recycled materials and components wherever possible.

Political – None

Reputation – It is hoped that the improved service delivery model will enhance the Council's reputation for being well-managed organisation.

Equality and Diversity – None

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The progress made in relation to the reception re-modelling scheme, including the proposals for the former reception area on level C, and the associated service improvements, should make it easier for visitors to have their enquiries dealt with promptly and at the first point of contact.
- 5.2 While level D reception area is currently open and in use, it is anticipated that Planning, Environmental Health and Building Control will make an increased use of the improved facilities on Level B. Corporate Management Team has asked that changes in the way visitors who currently visit level D are dealt with, are monitored so that the potential for further improvements can be identified.

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