

Options for Customer Services and Libraries

1. Options

1.1 The options as outlined are based on a number of factors and should be read in tandem with the Equalities Impact and Needs Assessment (part 2). In composing the options the following considerations were made:

- Where it is essential for face to face services based on need or service type
- Which sites are used most often
- What are the trends in terms of current customer use, but also future use of technologies and community involvement in operating sites
- Aim to improve quality of customer experience, whilst meeting the financial pressures of the local authority
- The current and future role of customer services and libraries as the front face delivery of a number of public sector functions, not just council services
- The social, demographic, educational impacts of changes to services
- Duty of the local authority to provide a comprehensive and efficient service under section 7 of The Libraries and Museums Act 1964
- The views of stakeholders, results of the impact survey and other research.

1.2 Within each of the options the following principles will apply:

- Face to face services will be designed around people who need them most and currently have no option but to visit sites for services. This will be balanced with a continuous programme of electronic service development making it as easy as possible for customers to access services via the web.
- To continue with the journey of integrating customer services and libraries, as the front facing delivery of local authority services. Whilst respecting the requirements of different services it allows staff to deal with a broad range of customer requirements; it also supports additional use of the library buildings and reduces the overheads in managing sites.
- To continuously improve the relationship between the front office and back office functions, based on the principle of enabling the customer to receive the quickest response direct from people with the skills and knowledge. This will involve cross authority changes in approach and practices to ensure customer queries are dealt with one time and first time.
- To design services that consider local circumstances, that also involve communities in their operation, and that meet the demand for countywide delivery.

1.3 Option 1 – Status Quo

Overview: To retain the opening hours as they currently stand based on the changes which have already been implemented with no more than a future 10% reduction to account for staff leaving. Additional savings through improved processes and practices over time.

The central library functions to remain though explore continued efficiencies supporting the management of the stock; stock purchasing; reading clubs, delivered services for housebound; developing and enabling community libraries, public access PCs., etc.

Longer term: Open access library and customer service centres across the county, supported by community libraries and digital access to services. To review this approach in 18 months considering the need to meet the budget pressures of the local authority.

Strengths:

- Limited impact on existing users at least in the short term.
- Takes account of customer ability to access services at times possible and convenient to them (e.g. dependent of bus time).
- Demonstrably meets the council's legal duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service.
- Allows for future consideration and consultation of the other options, and development of the service in future years.

Weaknesses:

- Does not release savings to reinvest in essential and core services provided by the local authority in the care and welfare of people.
- Does not address the pressures within the service to create an improved experience for customers.
- Continues to put pressure on staffing, including lone working.
- Does not take into account use of digital or email access that can be more convenient to the customer and more cost effective for the public purse.
- Will still need to prioritise services to people who need face to face functions through a 10% reduction of services.

Property issues:

In Ledbury continue with programme of work that brings together customer services and library functions.

Option 1 - Savings

| Area | Nett Costs £000's | Revised Costs £000's | Savings £000's | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|----------|------------|
| | | | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | Total |
| Library | 1,035 | 949 | 86 | 0 | 0 | 86 |
| Customer Services | 1,667 | 1,487 | 70 | 110 | 0 | 180 |
| Total | 2,702 | 2,436 | 156 | 110 | 0 | 266 |

1.4 Option 2 - Core Service with Top Up

To refocus the service on core activity, still creating a universal approach but with reduced hours at all sites for customer services and library functions - based on opening hours in May 2013. The provision of the centres will focus on customers who cannot access services or functions any other way but through face to face contact, with all other customers encouraged to operate a more self-service route. To support this approach by improving availability to the public access PC, but also charging for services to generate income to help sustain the opening hours.

Further information on the subject of this Report is available from
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To have the ability to increase these core hours and services by enabling partners to use the sites. The top-up would be very flexible in nature and respond to opportunities provided by the community, private sector, partnerships with education, integrate with other services, etc. An example of this is Homepoint who have a service level agreement with customer services to provide two dedicated posts at Franklin House.

The reduction in hours to create a core service would be based on use and demand across the county – Hereford library and customer service centre reduced by 20%; Leominster and Ross Centres reduced by 30%; Ledbury, Kington and Bromyard by 50%.

For the smaller libraries (that primarily provide a library function) to become community run with staffing met by volunteers or local fundraising, though supported by the central library functions – this would involve Colwall, Leintwardine and Weobley. If there are insufficient local resources to sustain a community library at these sites, the Cabinet will need to reconsider the options for these libraries, including possible closure. To also explore greater local involvement in the running of Belmont Library, although here due regard must be given to the higher number of users.

To compensate for pressure at centres as a result of reduced hours instigate increased self-serve for return and issue of library stock, and significant drive for web access to services.

The central library function to remain largely in place but with management integration with customer services utilising the skills of both teams under one structure. To also explore partnerships in and out of the county to create efficiencies.

Long Term: Recognise libraries as community spaces that have the potential for a wider range of uses managed locally. That spaces and services are designed to meet the target needs of people based on development needs of children and young people, services accessed by people require face to face contact specifically older people, people with disabilities, vulnerable people and people in crisis. This is balanced with increase in on-line services reflective of modern day local government in providing access to services.

Strengths:

- Creates savings.
- Still retains a presence in the market towns as well as Hereford as the areas of highest population / use.
- Provide flexibility to increase hours through partnerships with others.
- Still provides a comprehensive and efficient library service.

Weaknesses:

- There will be impact on users of services, especially in the areas covered by the smaller libraries if not established as community libraries.
- Heavy reliance on digital access and cost of awareness campaign for customers to use self-serve functions.
- Redundancy costs for employees leaving the service.
- Potential loss to stock space to accommodate alternative use of spaces.
- Capital spend requirement, specifically at Hereford Library and to purchase self-

- serve system for library stock and improvement to public access PCs.
- The level of service change may result in a legal challenge.
- The top-up relies on in-put from a third party which may not materialise.

Property issues:

Continue with the Masters House project at Ledbury to become one integrated site for libraries and customer services. Reconfigure Hereford Library to accommodate other services.

Option 2 - Savings

| Area | Nett Costs £000's | Revised Costs £000's | Savings £000's | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|----------|------------|
| | | | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | Total |
| Library | 1,035 | 938 | 86 | 11 | 0 | 97 |
| Customer Services | 1,667 | 1,339 | 127 | 201 | 0 | 328 |
| Total | 2,702 | 2,277 | 213 | 212 | 0 | 425 |

1.5 **Option 3 – Centralised Provision**

To retain the library and customer service centre in Hereford at its current hours where there is the biggest demand, with a one day presence in each of the market towns balanced with customers being able to access services at different places within their local area (e.g. via post offices). This to be transitional change over 18 months, starting with the withdrawal of staffing from lowest use centres. During the transformation period instigate increased availability of digital services and a campaign of awareness with customers taking place on how to access services locally.

Local areas, possibly via the collective locality approach, would have the option of running their own libraries or book exchange projects.

This option includes the withdrawal of the central library functions including the delivered services and replacement book stock.

Long term: Clear remit of centralised services based on people who to whom face to face services is essential. All other contact via home visits for house bound and web for all other. Potential community delivery of library centres through the transfer of assets.

Strengths:

- Targeted public expenditure to essential and core services, and meets the funding requirement previously identified.
- Targeted provision at the highest volume location, and prioritising people who need the services most.
- Drives change for people using alternative ways of accessing services (e.g. the internet, phone, email).
- Release of capital asset for sale or community transfer.

Weaknesses:

- Limited presence in the market towns, and pressure on Hereford facilities.
- Relies on significant change of behaviour in customer use.

- Secretary of State could order a public inquiry if not satisfied that the remodelled service is a comprehensive and efficient library service.
- Even if the Secretary of State did not order a public Inquiry, the extent of service change would be likely to result in a legal challenge by dissatisfied service users.
- Relies on improved and comprehensive web presence.
- Will take time to implement.

Property issues:

For one day service at market towns to be co-located with existing facilities which would release current sites for alternative use, community transfer or sale. Potential improvements needed at facilities in Hereford to cope with demand.

Option 3 - Savings

| Area | Nett Costs £000's | Revised Costs £000's | Savings £000's | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | | | 13/14 | 14/15 | 15/16 | Total |
| Library | 1,035 | 210 | 86 | 360 | 379 | 825 |
| Customer Services | 1,667 | 930 | 77 | 360 | 300 | 737 |
| Total | 2,702 | 1,140 | 163 | 720 | 679 | 1,562 |

1.6 **Option 4 – Outsource and Partnerships**

For the services to be delivered by a third party of either a social enterprise / charitable trust, other public body, private sector or at an individual locality level by the community. It would be likely that different elements will appeal to different bodies with the libraries potentially joining a heritage trust or existing trust arrangement. This would likely mean a split of customer services and libraries though could bring new approaches and collaborations.

Savings on non domestic rates (NNDR) can be made by a charity (savings up to 50% of rate saving to the local authority). The services have high expenditure with little opportunity on income. This might discourage interest in operating the services and result in a continuing need for subsidy by the local authority. This option would need time to develop and tested through procurement and dialogue over an 18 month period.

The other aspect of this option is to establish formal partnerships. For example, the council already purchases the book stock through a consortium of local authorities, which increases buying power. Additionally, joint arrangements across the county could be developed on the use of sites and delivery of services on a site by site basis.

Strengths:

- Herefordshire has a tradition of outsourcing major services to trusts (Halo / the Courtyard) or the private sector (public realm contract) from which to build experience. The local authority also has a track record of cross county working (e.g. library stock purchasing; local enterprise partnership, Waste Contract; rural broadband delivery).
- Opportunities for collaboration across different sectors and functions.
- Could provide localised solutions for each site.
- Increase the service offer on the different sites.

Weaknesses:

- Library and customer services do not have a ready and significant stream of income that covers costs, so likely the local authority will still have to make available a subsidy.
- Potential break-up of existing arrangement that has involved the merger of services and co-dependencies (e.g. staff conducting joint functions).
- An unclear market for the services that would take time to test, therefore savings cannot be identified at this stage.

Property issues:

Transfer of assets creating potential for NNDR savings if operated by charity.

1.7 Recommendation of the Options

The recommendation for customer services and libraries is based on the evaluation of each option, alongside the impact assessment and risks. This recommendation is based on Option 2 (providing core services with reduced opening hours balanced with the opportunity to have additional services and functions on sites from within other public services, voluntary, private and education sectors).

This recommendation recognises the points made by stakeholders, findings from impact survey and national policy in retaining a library presence as public / community spaces, and spaces for accessing learning and reading. In retaining these places as multifunction venues there is opportunity to target services for people that need face to face contact, and play a role in providing preventive services to avoid or delay the need for intense public sector intervention – specifically older people, people with disabilities, vulnerable children and people in crisis.

Option 3 (centralised service) creates additional savings of £1,562,000 (compared to £425,000 for option 2). However, it would have more of a negative effect on people aged 65+ (48% of those over 65 who responded to the impact survey do not know how to use the internet, and/or have problems of transport and mobility); and on people with a disability. Notwithstanding the much greater savings under option 3, the greater adverse impact on two groups with protected characteristics (age and disability) make it highly likely that there would be a legal challenge to option 3. Such a challenge might allege that the council had failed to comply with its obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 (the public sector equality duty). Alternatively, a challenge might allege that the council would fail to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient' library service, as required by the Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

Option 2 provides an opportunity to migrate people who do not need face to face support to self-service mechanisms and increase community involvement in operating services. For this to be complimented by a review of practices and systems across the authority to support a lean approach to customer contact based on "one time and first time". In this way the pressure on services due to reduced opening hours can be addressed.

The option can also give opportunity to explore local contracting opportunities where possibility arises, along with increased cross county arrangements that result in reduced costs and efficiencies. The development or increase of services can be driven through a partnership with user groups and local councils as part of the principle of "topped up services" and establishment of community run libraries.

The recommendation is seeking approval for preliminary service changes. Further changes to the services to be considered in the context of financial pressures across the local authority, and having due regard to the impact of any further service changes on service users and local people. To support any longer term change data on use and customers will be collected to inform future impact assessments in the context of wider local authority change and budget pressure. This will enable a wider understanding of the impact on residents and inform the best allocation of funds to best meet the needs of people who most need support.

2 Customer Contact Centre and the Web

The customer contact centre deals with email and telephone queries and will remain in place though some efficiencies gained through re-arranging back office operations – for example more opportunity to make payments through the phone, customer services delivered within the services, and shared face to face and phone handling.

There are plans to have a more interactive web-presence which will help customers access services at a time suitable to them using personal accounts. However, it is understood that training might be needed to support customers to use the web – though recognising that for some people it may never be an option.

3 Adult Well Being Front Door

As part of Herefordshire Council's focus on core services, priority is given to the needs of people requiring social care and welfare support. This includes prioritising the requirements of adult well being in terms of face to face customer service moving to integrated teams creating a more joined up approach to addressing priority needs.

Over time, this means that the service will cater for people who need face to face interaction which could increase given the predicted demographic, though balanced with a likely overall decrease in customers who need face to face interaction as the options for self-serve become available.

4 Naming

There are a number of issues of naming based on the integrated services with a mixture of labels - Libraries, Customer Service Centres, Info Centres or the name of town followed by Centre, e.g. the Kington Centre.

Based on the option chosen by Cabinet a review of titles takes place to create consistency and reflect services on offer.

5 HR issues

The core cost of running the customer service centres is predominately salaries with some venue costs; for the central library service this is staff but also purchase of book stock and premises. With a reduction in service delivery there will be a reduction in the number of staff needed. Options 2 and 3 will result in consultation for a restructure for libraries, customer services and the contact centre to alignment roles. The restructure will also bring the services within one division and address anomalies within budgets.

6 Risk Management

The following risks are based on delivery and achievement of the options. Risk key:

| LIKELIHOOD | IMPACT |
|------------|-----------------|
| 5 Certain | 5 Catastrophic |
| 4 Likely | 4 Major |
| 3 Possible | 3 Moderate |
| 2 Unlikely | 2 Minor |
| 1 Rare | 1 Insignificant |

6.1 Risks for Option 1: Status Quo

| Risk No. | Risk | Mitigation | Likely rating | Impact rating |
|----------|--|---|---------------|---------------|
| 1.1 | Capacity to make any improvements considering the strain on current provision. | 1. Improvement made on a continuous basis, making use of user group support / volunteers to build capacity. | 4 | 3 |
| 1.2 | Ability to implement changes in staffing. | 1. Base staff changes on turn-over. | 3 | 3 |

6.2 Risks for Option 2: Core Service with Top Up

| Risk No. | Risk | Mitigation | Likely rating | Impact rating |
|----------|---|--|---------------|---------------|
| 2.1 | Unable to access capital investment needed. | 1. Borrowing set against revenue spend via invest to save. | 4 | 4 |
| 2.2 | Excludes people from access to services. | 1. Link opening times to most popular times. 2. Link opening times to bus times. 3. Increase use of the web. 4. Move to appointment based approach if required. | 3 | 3 |
| 2.3 | Judicial Review based on reduced hours. | 1. Impact assessment to understand customer requirements. 2. Services retained in market towns. 3. Support for community libraries. 4. Increase the number of drop off and collection points. 5. Retain home delivery service. | 3 | 4 |
| 2.4 | Lack of third party investment, including establishment of community libraries. | 1. Provide central support for community libraries. 2. Flexible dialogue on opportunities for third part involvement. | 4 | 3 |

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| | | | | |
|-----|---|--|---|---|
| 2.5 | Loss of shelving for library stock. | 1. Improve electronic digital access to library stock details. 2. Volunteer support to access and understand library stock. 3. Consideration of whole design of sites and use of spaces. | 3 | 3 |
| 2.6 | Slow progress on website improvements to access services. | 1. Planned programme of web improvement based focus on high volume, high impact services. | 3 | 4 |

6.3 Risks for Option 3: Centralised Service

| Risk No. | Risk | Mitigation | Likely rating | Impact rating |
|----------|--|--|---------------|---------------|
| 3.1 | Customers unable to access services. | 1. Service retained within Hereford as area of greatest population and use. 2. Appointment based on people who need services most. 3. Increase use of digital. 4. Create other outlets to provide services. | 4 | 4 |
| 3.2 | Secretary of State orders public inquiry if not satisfied service is comprehensive and efficient. | 1. More detailed work on Impact Assessment. 2. Appointment based on people who need services most. 3. Increase use of digital. 4. Create other outlets to provide services. | 5 | 4 |
| 3.3 | No immediate savings due to additional impact assessment, creating alternative channels for service access, behavioural change using digital services. | 1. Conduct change over an 18 month period, with start of changes in December 2013. | 4 | 3 |

6.4 Risks for Option 4: Outsourcing and Partnerships

| Risk No. | Risk | Mitigation | Likely rating | Impact rating |
|----------|---|--|---------------|---------------|
| 4.1 | Unclear on savings, market interest and model. | 1. Engage with the market of costs and models. | 4 | 4 |
| 4.2 | Different approach between services delivery. | 1. Break down the services in to manageable parts for tendering. | 4 | 3 |
| 4.3 | Dependent on partnership approach, and capacity for established partnerships that benefit the county. | 1. Open dialogue with potential partners. | 4 | 3 |

7 Consultees

Engagement in shaping the options has taken several forms.

7.1 Focus Groups

Focus groups were organised with staff to understand how options would have an effect on customers. Focus Groups also took place with stakeholders consisting of representatives of established user groups and town / parish councils that have a library in their area. These sessions were again aimed to gather impact on customers using the insight of people representative of users and to contribute to shaping the options. Attendees also provided written comments.

The original options and the recurring comments made at the focus groups are collected together in the equalities impact and needs assessment. To note the original options shared at the focus groups have subsequently changed based on comments made.

7.2 Staff Focus Groups

- Wednesday 31st July, covering central area (held in Hereford)
- Thursday 1st August south area (held in Ross on Wye)
- Friday 2nd August north area (held in Leominster)

7.3 Stakeholder Focus Groups

- Thursday 1st August – south area (held in Ross on Wye)
- Friday 2nd August – north area (held in Leominster)
- Monday 5th August – central area (held in Hereford)

7.4 Impact Survey

An impact survey was available in customer service centres and libraries from 4th July to 8th August 2013, with 3,457 responses. The survey's purpose was to capture customers experience who use the sites over a five week period (across both school term time and school holidays). This was to gain an understanding of use and impact of changes on people who use the centres within the period (therefore regular visitors of at least once a month). This included facilitated sessions with customers encouraging and helping people to complete the form who would otherwise not have participated. The findings are reflected in the equalities impact and needs assessment and within a separate report published by the council.

7.5 Budget Consultation, February 2013

As part of the budget consultation process 2,817 responses were received - 2,174 were submitted online, 634 paper survey responses and 9 letters/e-mails. Key results for library and customers services included:

- 80% of respondees agree to bringing together customer service centres, libraries and other facilities where these are duplicated in a particular area, 10% neither agree or disagree, 10% disagree.
- 28% of respondees agreed to reducing opening hours for customer service centres / libraries, 21% neither agree or disagree, 51% disagree

There were 1,416 comments in the "community" section, relevant to libraries and customer services were:

- Very strong support for libraries as a valuable/essential community resource.
- Concern about moving toward reliance on online info in a county with an ageing population and poor broadband service.
- Info. Centres / libraries etc. need to be open at times when people need them –

reducing hours will deny access.

7.6 Petitions

Two petitions are known by the local authority based on keeping libraries open. The 38 Degree website with 9,393 signatures (as of 3.9.13), which incorporates 8,500 signed petition submitted to Herefordshire Council. The petition headed "Save Herefordshire's Libraries", calls on Herefordshire Council to reconsider cutting Herefordshire's library and museum budget, reducing opening hours and replacing staff with volunteers. In accordance with the council's petition scheme the subject of the petition was debated at Full Council when submitted on the 24th May 2013 in the context of the overall budget position.

Love Leintwardine Library with 300 signatures for the facility to remain open.

8 Background Information

The library function has been in operation for over a hundred years (Hereford Library at its current location was opened in 1874) to enable access to a range of books that many people could not afford.

The Library service offers the following services: loan of stock (books, DVDs, CDs, Computer Games); purchase and management of stock (e.g. pre-booking); reference / research books; interlibrary loans (from different libraries); newspapers and magazines; specialist loans e.g. book clubs; school library service; delivered service to the housebound

8.1

Use of Library sites

| Library sites | 2008-09 | 2009-10 | 2010-11 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Hereford | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 262,042 | 254,803 | 236,182 | 232,817 | 227,240 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 273,715 | 263,550 | 251,849 | 241,398 | 212,577 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 5,753 | 5,872 | 6,204 | 6,265 | 5,245 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 39,304 | 47,660 | 38,166 | 37,355 | 35,868 |
| Leominster | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 131,928 | 122,478 | 112,540 | 111,954 | 105,283 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 173,699 | 163,101 | 151,497 | 156,528 | 142,058 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 4,334 | 3,980 | 3,864 | 3,804 | 3,632 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 17,513 | 22,203 | 17,957 | 17,455 | 16,604 |
| Ross | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 114,982 | 112,022 | 109,916 | 108,275 | 115,219 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 138,747 | 137,886 | 132,998 | 132,493 | 130,241 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 3,431 | 4,187 | 4,333 | 4,329 | 3,462 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 15,266 | 21,885 | 14,655 | 12,334 | 18,888 |
| Ledbury | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 91,355 | 88,666 | 82,655 | 77,948 | 72,583 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 85,755 | 85,472 | 83,111 | 78,349 | 68,517 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 3,137 | 3,203 | 3,732 | 3,672 | 2,808 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 8,201 | 9,435 | 8,014 | 6,415 | 7,313 |
| Bromyard | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 64,564 | 60,909 | 59,193 | 55,125 | 50,916 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 53,117 | 49,460 | 44,887 | 41,724 | 38,993 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 931 | 1,062 | 1,029 | 989 | 1,033 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 4,618 | 4,580 | 11,076 | 12,201 | 11,333 |
| Kington | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 38,242 | 35,096 | 35,434 | 34,435 | 36,227 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 42,368 | 39,567 | 37,301 | 35,687 | 33,223 |

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| | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>Reservations</i> | 1,202 | 1,497 | 1,379 | 1,567 | 1,296 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 3,064 | 4,747 | 5,381 | 5,619 | 5,472 |
| Belmont | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 23,671 | 29,815 | 29,235 | 27,714 | 25,020 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 33,058 | 34,747 | 30,437 | 29,654 | 26,497 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 931 | 1,190 | 1,209 | 1,216 | 1,153 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 761 | 1,468 | 1,133 | 1,084 | 1,027 |
| Colwall | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 16,662 | 16,229 | 16,230 | 16,886 | 14,685 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 21,504 | 21,871 | 21,574 | 21,539 | 18,687 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 1,223 | 1,181 | 1,216 | 1,424 | 1,266 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 4,419 | 5,906 | 3,824 | 3,526 | 3,362 |
| Weobley | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 3,780 | 3,499 | 3,040 | 3,167 | 2,930 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 9,264 | 9,579 | 7,669 | 7,699 | 7,039 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 546 | 550 | 531 | 671 | 522 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 425 | 404 | 223 | 128 | 113 |
| Leintwardine | | | | | |
| <i>Visits</i> | 2,590 | 2,359 | 2,079 | 2,703 | 2,427 |
| <i>Issues</i> | 6,669 | 5,998 | 4,699 | 5,673 | 5,324 |
| <i>Reservations</i> | 465 | 545 | 348 | 440 | 456 |
| <i>PC Sessions</i> | 131 | 114 | 52 | 81 | 101 |

Note: Ross become an intergrated customer services and library sites in 2011; Bromyard intergrated site in 2005; Kington 2009; Leominster 2013.

8.2

Face to Face Customer Service enquiries recorded on CRM January 2012 to May 2013:

| Site | Volume | % |
|----------------------|----------------|----------|
| Bromyard CSC | 5,081 | 4.2 |
| Colwall Library | 1 | 0.0 |
| Hereford CSC | 51,966 | 43.2 |
| Hereford Library | 36 | 0.0 |
| Kington CSC | 5,940 | 4.9 |
| Ledbury CSC | 8,991 | 7.5 |
| Ledbury Library | 3 | 0.0 |
| Leintwardine Library | 2 | 0.0 |
| Leominster CSC | 29,256 | 24.3 |
| Leominster Library | 18 | 0.0 |
| Peterchurch Library | 4 | 0.0 |
| Ross CSC | 19,002 | 15.8 |
| Grand Total | 120,300 | |

8.3 Overview of the services

Customer services are the first point of contact for a number of services provided by the local authority or its partners. As a broad summary this can be broken down into the following areas (January to December 2012):

| Service | calls | % | In person | % | email | % |
|---------------------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Amey | 14,948 | 9% | 1,459 | 1% | 2,436 | 30% |
| Housing Benefits | 29,062 | 17% | 22,744 | 24% | 54 | 1% |
| Blue badges | 5,844 | 3% | 3,609 | 4% | 20 | 0% |
| Council tax | 46,499 | 26% | 7,321 | 8% | 131 | 2% |
| EHTS | 13,856 | 8% | 2,698 | 3% | 835 | 11% |
| General | 22,425 | 13% | 49,737 | 51% | 3,337 | 42% |
| Homepoint/ Housing Solutions | 10,006 | 6% | 5,066 | 5% | 25 | 0% |
| Planning | 16,173 | 9% | 2,341 | 2% | 524 | 7% |
| Waste | 15,233 | 9% | 1,719 | 2% | 520 | 7% |
| Special projects | 439 | 0% | 54 | 0% | 14 | 0% |
| Total | 174,485 | 100% | 96,748 | 100% | 7,896 | 100% |

Note: These figures do not show how long a query will take with staff supporting people to complete forms etc. The figures do not include complaints/compliments which are dealt with by another team.