

Customer Access Point

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Presentation 1st June 2021

Background

At its meeting of 20 January 2021, Cabinet agreed the following (report C/20/70):

- To agree that officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Digital Transformation, continue to undertake further work to identify a customer access point in Folkestone and to bring detailed proposals back to Cabinet for approval during 2021;

This report due to be considered by Cabinet 23rd June 2021

Cabinet Report 23 June 2021

- Looks to set out the new service
- Seeks agreement to open the CAP at the Civic Offices initially
- Seeks agreement to move the CAP to Folca once that becomes available
- Seeks to continue discussions with the DWP to joint locate for youth hub services at FOLCA

Background

Key principles set out in January Cabinet report

- To ensure services are appropriately delivered and to maximise the use of technology and on line means to provide access to those services;
- To recognise that some parts of the community are unable to access services through these means and to have an appropriately located access point for those who may be digitally excluded;
- To ensure that any new facilities maximise the opportunity to be sustainable and offer net zero carbon or better;
- To optimise the use of public transport for accessing those facilities;
- To optimise a joint facility with partners to provide economies of scale, efficiencies etc
- To provide the potential for joint community use in order to maximise the use of the asset.

Reasons for the CAP

- Central Folkestone is the most populous centre in the district. In locating this here, it will facilitate access for those who either cannot or have difficulty accessing digital services;
- A central location in the town centre is more favourable than the current civic site in that it is closer to public transport links and local footfall to associated public amenities;
- By being in the town centre, this can encourage increased footfall into that area thereby stimulating localized regeneration activity;
- It can be part of the overall Place Plan for Folkestone and provide part of a more vibrant mix of community facilities moving forward;
- Investing in the town centre is explicit support for the town and conveys a focal point and sense of confidence to other potential investors;
- Being in a town centre location offers the opportunity to engage closely with other public sector partners to provide a complementary range of services, that are sometimes offered to the same customers; and
- A district council Access Point will be clearly differentiated from the services and activities of Folkestone Town Council

Services Provided from CAP (1)

- Supporting Self Service - To help those who are not digitally enabled to self-serve or who need to be shown how to do this.
- To signpost and direct others to services and to help them access those services
- In person and document verification
- Facility for pre arranged appointments
- Some office / meeting space for “touching base”
- Able to collect / print hard copies (if required)

Services Provided from CAP (2)

- Note the CAP is not designed to be a “mini Civic Offices” – services provided are to be different
- Emphasis will be on digital delivery / self service
- Some services (eg housing options) are functioning well via an appointment system and will continue to do so
- Services will remain under review and developed if it is felt change is needed

Other Changes

- Looking to co-locate with DWP – they wish to develop a “youth hub” in the town centre. Discussions are ongoing
- Folkestone Community Works CLLD programme also being investigated to meet the needs of DWP and other employability service providers within Folca.
- Staff implications currently being worked through although these are expected to be manageable

Questions?