

03 October 2019

Letter from the Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Re: Shadow Scrutiny Committee Consideration of Community Access Points
Proposal - 30 September 2019**

Dear Martin,

At the meeting of 30 September 2019, the Shadow Scrutiny Committee considered the proposed approach to Community Access Points ahead of the Shadow Executive decision on the 08 October 2019. Members would like to thank officers for attending the meeting and taking questions.

The Committee raised a number of points, summarised below. It is requested that the Shadow Executive consider this feedback when discussing the proposed options at its meeting on 08 October.

Day 1 requirements vs longer term transformation:

- Members agreed that it was important that the public are clear about where they can go to access services once the new council is launched, and that service continuity is protected.
- The majority of Members felt that the focus for Day 1 should be on retaining the current access points via council offices and locations already used for such purposes (E.g. Marlow and Princes Risborough) and not on adding more.
- Members felt strongly that any future expansion of service beyond the existing council contact points must be based on detailed evidence and analysis of need, so that there is not a risk that the new council would be in a position of having to close down unnecessary access points in the future.

Locations:

- A Councillor for South Bucks suggested that the South Bucks District Council offices were not in an accessible location – and that there if locations were being considered, there should be one in Gerrards Cross to serve the local population.
- It was felt that two locations in Wycombe Town Centre would be unnecessary
- Members suggested that Town and Parish Councils should be involved in discussions identifying suitable places in each area and that their offices could potentially be used as access points in the future.
- Members suggested using technology such as Skype (or equivalent) at access points to enable more accessibility.
- It was suggested that consideration should be given to extending opening hours of existing locations where there is an identified need.

Communication:

- Members highlighted that public communications would be important to manage expectations. Communications would need to be clear around what will actually be available and on offer at community access points.

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Budget:

- Members were concerned that the budget was not sufficient. In particular:
 - Members felt that if the proposed 18 access points were set up, in reality this would require extra staffing to manage these, in addition to the proposed approach to training existing staff/volunteers.
 - To undertake the required building works to ensure access points had private spaces.

The Committee welcomed the opportunity to consider the proposals ahead of the Shadow Executive meeting and trust that our feedback will help inform its decision.

Yours Sincerely,

Cllr Alex Collingwood
Chairman – Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr John Gladwin
Vice Chairman - Shadow Overview and Scrutiny Committee