

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Business Change and Resources Scrutiny Commission

14 December 2015

Report of: Patsy Mellor, Service Director Citizen Services

Title: Phoenix Court Citizen Service Point – Service Offer

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Patsy Mellor

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RECOMMENDATION

The update the Commission on the impact of changes to the service offer at Phoenix Court Citizen Service Point (CSP). The changes reflect the decreasing demand due to the transition of services from Phoenix Court CSP to 100 Temple Street CSP. This is part of a stepped approach to the transition of services and further detailed assessment of potential service delivery options in the future.

Summary

The new Citizen Service Point at 100 Temple Street opened in December 2014. Based on citizen insight with citizens at its heart, the new Temple Street CSP offers a significantly improved service offer for citizens. In addition to 'Assisted Digital' and enquiry resolution and advice from Citizen Service Advisors, the new service offer includes access as needed to specialist officers from 'back office' services that have relocated to 100 Temple Street as part of the Bristol Workplace Programme.

To enable more citizens to access the improved service offer at Temple Street CSP and increase the footfall and utilisation of the new CSP, we have been transitioning services from Phoenix Court CSP to Temple Street CSP on a gradual basis. Following the success of this approach, Change Board and Cllr Geoff Gollop (Deputy Mayor) have approved proposals to:-

- a) Continue to transfer the service offer at Phoenix Court to further reduce footfall, leaving Housing Benefits as the remaining service 'by appointment'.
- b) To close Phoenix Court 2 further days per week on a Tuesday and Thursday to enable the continued analysis of impact and trends.

The significant issues in the report are:

The Commission are invited to continue to monitor the impact of changes to the service offering at Phoenix Court CSP and the subsequent impact on other CSP's and the CSC.

Policy

1. The proposals support the council's corporate plan to be a flexible and efficient council which enables people to seek information, request services and engage with the council in a way that meets citizen needs at a time when the council has less money and needs to deliver efficient services.

Consultation

2. Internal

Councillor Geoff Gollop (Deputy Mayor), Business Change DLT, Change Board plus relevant officers.

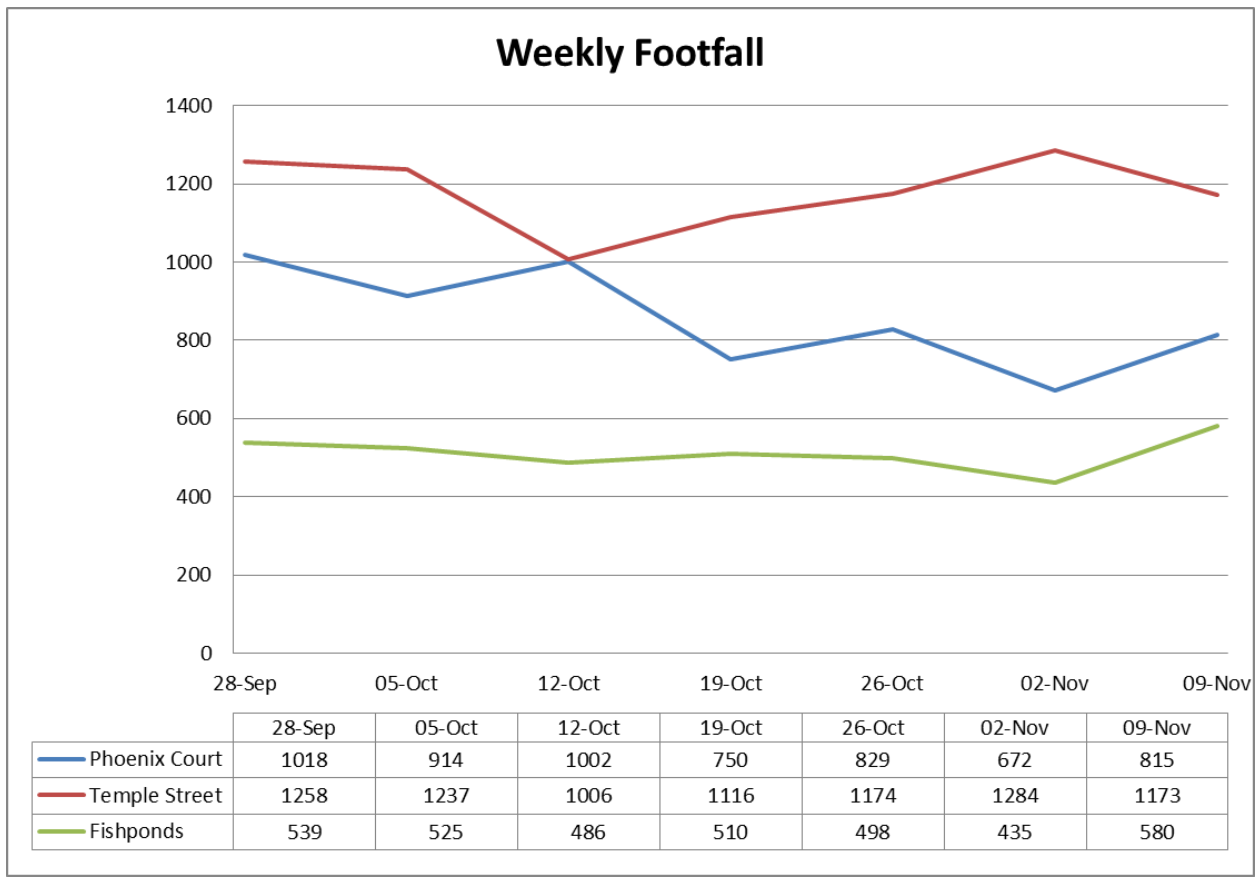
3. External

None

Context

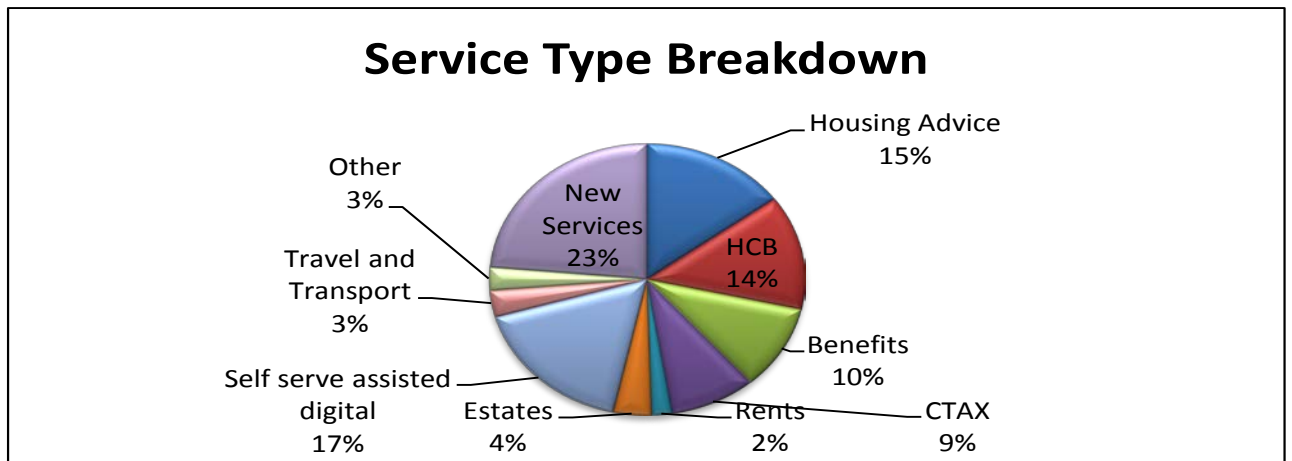
4. The new Citizen Service Point at 100 Temple Street opened in December 2014. Based on citizen insight with citizens at its heart, the new Temple Street CSP offers a significantly improved service offer for citizens. In addition to 'Assisted Digital' and enquiry resolution and advice from Citizen Service Advisors, the new service offer includes access as needed to specialist officers from 'back office' services that have relocated to 100 Temple Street as part of the Bristol Workplace Programme.
5. CSP 100 Temple Street offers a new approach for citizens. This includes an open plan layout with 'floor walker' hubs where Citizen Advisors are ready to greet citizens rather than the traditional counter or desk bound layout. A variety of seating options are available depending on need with the majority of citizen contacts taking place in the main office location rather than more formal meeting rooms.
6. Citizen & staff feedback about their experience in accessing services and working in the new CSP has been extremely positive. Comments from citizens include 'why can't it always be this easy', 'I didn't know that I could do that for myself, thank you for showing me' & 'this is so open and friendly'. Comments from Citizen Advisors include, 'It's really good to be able to communicate without barriers with everyone involved in a transaction' & 'the flexible working space is great to work in and seems to have a positive effect on everyone's mood'.
7. It is the case that the number of incidents of violence and aggression are significantly less at CSP Temple Street, even though the Homeless Advice Team (HAT) relocated their services from Amelia Court to Temple Street to coincide with opening in December. The Homelessness service at Amelia Court experienced very high levels of incident so is a demonstrable sign that the new layout and operating model is driving better behaviours in addition to improved citizen experience.

8. This also contrasts with the building design and layout at Phoenix Court CSP and limitations in capacity that has previously resulted in very long waiting times, frequent queuing outside on the pavement and a more formal traditional counter and desk based customer service and poor citizen experience. This has also resulted in incidents of violence & aggression.
9. To enable more citizens to access the improved service offer at Temple Street CSP and increase the footfall and utilisation of the new CSP, we have been transitioning 'appointment based' services from Phoenix Court CSP to Temple Street CSP on a gradual basis whilst still providing a 'drop in' service for 'quick' enquiries or signposting to other services as part of our commitment to excellent customer service and first contact resolution. Services that have transitioned are Housing/Homeless Advice, Home-Choice Bristol, Local Taxation and more recently Estate Management & parts of Travel and Transport.
10. The table below shows the level of footfall at Phoenix Court CSP from the three weeks either side of the current one day closure on a Wednesday. It also includes Temple Street and Fishponds (being the two CSP's most likely to be affected). There has been little impact on Fishponds and the downward trend is still continuing at Phoenix Court. There has also been no noticeable impact at Temple Street.



11. In addition to the transition of services from Phoenix Court CSP, 'new' services have also been introduced to Temple Street CSP as they have relocated from other buildings to Temple Street as part of Bristol Workplace Programme. The combination of these factors means that Temple Street is now the CSP with highest overall level of demand

12. The chart below shows the 'Enquiry type' breakdown at Temple Street CSP and shows that 23% of the footfall relates to 'new' services.



13. Following the transfer of the estate management service and related activity it has gone smoothly with little impact to the citizens or team members.
14. Since the Wednesday closure was introduced in October, there has been no discernible impact upon citizens and clear signposting has helped us to communicate the changes well. We had expected an increase in footfall on Thursdays, following the closure, but this does not seem to be the case in significant numbers, but there has been a significant decrease in footfall from Phoenix court on Thursdays (25-30%), indicating that citizens are encouraged to migrate towards self-serve rather than using the service at Temple street or returning to Phoenix court the day following closure. There is a small impact upon footfall at Fishponds of approx. 10% every 2 weeks, but this is manageable with the extra resources available. There is a small increase in footfall at Temple street on the closure day at Phoenix court (17%) but this was expected and increased staff resources available as a result of the Phoenix closure have ensured that Temple street have been able to manage the increased footfall well.

Proposal

15. To further monitor the decision to enable further transitional changes and close Phoenix Court for a further two days a week to continue to test impact on citizens and CSP footfall. We are proposing to stay open on a Monday and Friday due to the implications to housing benefit and to continue the signposting to estates for required timely activity. Another important implication is the accelerated training plan to enable the team to be fully cross trained and to enable the spread of the Temple Street ethos.
16. Business Change Scrutiny Commission are invited to continue to monitor the impact of the changes described above.

Other Options Considered

17. No other options have been considered.

Risk Assessment

18. No specific risks are identified other than a potential for increased demand on other days at Temple Street, Phoenix Court & Fishponds CSP's. This will be mitigated by close monitoring and ability to allocate resource flexibly and swiftly and if necessary Phoenix Court can reopen on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Public Sector Equality Duties

19. a) Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following "protected characteristics": age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.
- b) An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed at the time Temple Street CSP opened and did not identify any issues that couldn't be reasonably addressed. This has been reviewed and no new issues identified.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

None

Financial

(a) Revenue

None

(b) Capital

None at this stage

Land

Not applicable

Personnel

Not applicable