

8. TEMPORARY WALK-IN CUSTOMER SERVICE FACILITIES



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PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. A Council resolution on 26 June 2012 requested staff to report back on options and costs associated with the establishment of temporary walk-in customer service operations at sites where service centres are currently not operating due to earthquake damage, that is the Linwood and Sockburn service centres.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. The Sockburn and Linwood service centres are currently closed as a result of earthquake damage. A portable building for walk-in customer services is on-site at Linwood and will be operational on 26 July. Suitable temporary solutions are in place for Lyttelton and Akaroa. A temporary walk-in customer service solution for Beckenham is under urgent action. There is currently no temporary solution for Sockburn.
3. This represents a reduction in the 2009-19 LTCCP level of service until the new library and service centre as approved in the 2012/13 Annual Plan has been constructed.
4. Note that temporary accommodation for other council staff displaced by the closure of Sockburn is being addressed as a separate issue. Property options in the area are limited due to the migration of displaced businesses and thus it could take some time to identify a solution. However, it is most unlikely that any such solution would be in a location that was convenient for walk-in customers.
5. The Sockburn service centre has been closed since 9 May 2011. Evidence suggests that customers have relocated their Council business from Sockburn primarily to the Riccarton service centre where monthly transaction volumes have increased from 800 to 3500. An extra work station has been installed and staffing increased to accommodate this. The Sockburn transaction volume was about 1700 per month, so Riccarton has more than absorbed this level of activity.
6. There is a manual receipting service for rates payments at Hornby Video, and this has also helped spread the load. Monthly transactions there have increased from 85 to nearly 1000.
7. These transaction volume increases may also be at least partly attributable to Civic Offices being closed for a long period, with customers moving their Council business elsewhere across the network.
8. Setting up a suitable portable building facility at Sockburn or Hornby would cost about \$25 000 to fit out, plus weekly hireage of \$200. These options are discussed below.
9. Consideration has also been given to establishing a walk-in service point in the Upper Riccarton Library, either within the library or a portable building sited outside.
10. Analysis of the transactions at nearby service centres and the manual receipting facility at Hornby taken in conjunction with the approximate costs of a portable building, suggest that an additional temporary solution for Sockburn cannot be justified.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The portable building option would cost approximately \$25,000 plus a weekly hire cost of \$200 per week. In addition, there would be costs associated with additional EFTPOS terminals and cash collection.

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Do the Recommendations of this Report Align with 2009-19 LTCCP budgets?

12. No. Additional funding for refurbishing and wiring a portable building, plus rental, would be required, as outlined above.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Have you considered the legal implications of the issue under consideration?

13. Yes, and there are none.

ALIGNMENT WITH LTP AND ACTIVITY MANAGEMENT PLANS

14. Yes; the LTCCP and the unit's Activity Management Plan specifies a service centre at Sockburn.

Do the recommendations of this report support a level of service or project in the 2009-19 LTCCP?

15. Yes. The 2012/13 Annual Plan includes the provision of a new library, service centre and community centre in the Hornby area, which in effect replaces the Sockburn facility. The reduction in the level of service at Sockburn is mitigated to some extent by the manual receipting service for rates payments at the Civic Video Store on the Hornby Mall.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIES

16. Not applicable.

CONSULTATION FULFILMENT

17. Not applicable.

CONSIDERATION OF THE OPTIONS

OPTION ONE: PORTABLE BUILDING AT SOCKBURN

18. The costs of this option are approximately \$25,000 in capital expenditure, plus a monthly hiring fee of \$200 per week.
19. There are practical and customer safety issues with this option. It could not easily be sited at Sockburn as it would need to be far enough away from the current earthquake damaged facilities, but be not too far away for power and EFTPOS cabling to be easily run from within the damaged building. Furthermore, customers may be reluctant to go there, because of post-earthquake safety issues with the building. Cash handling security and staff access to toilet and tea facilities would also present difficulties.

OPTION TWO: PORTABLE BUILDING AT HORNBY

20. Another location option would be on the hard standing at the Heartland Centre on Shands Road. The main problems here are the length of cabling that would be required and the taking up of scarce parking, cash security would also be a challenge as unlike Linwood, there is no readily accessible safe in a separate secure building.

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OPTION THREE: PORTABLE BUILDING OUTSIDE UPPER RICCARTON

21. The Upper Riccarton library is already a customer destination. However, locating a portable building there would present significant practical difficulties. Cabling would have to be routed a significant distance to reach the car park hard standing, the only possible location. This presents other objections: the taking up of parking spaces that are at a premium and permission would also be required from the Ministry of Education due to the shared nature of the site.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

22. Libraries have been approached to assess the possibility of creating a service centre space within the Upper Riccarton library. However, libraries staff have indicated that there would be insufficient space for a walk-in service point.
23. The possibility of moving into the WINZ facility at the Heartland Centre has also been considered and canvassed with the senior management of the site. Although supportive in principle, there is just not enough room in an area where staff and various functionaries are already operating in very close proximity.

CONCLUSION

24. Based on the analysis of the options as outlined above and the associated costs, the preferred option is to do nothing further, and accept the reduction in level of service until the new Hornby library and service centre has been built. It is clear from the transactional data that customers have moved their council business elsewhere since May 2011, and the service centre network has effectively and efficiently accommodated these changes.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee recommend that the Council take no further action, and accept the reduction in level of service until the new Hornby library and service centre has been built.