

PART 1 - PUBLIC

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**Decision Maker:** Adult & Community Services Portfolio Holder

**Date:** For pre-decision scrutiny by the Adult & Community PDS Committee on 25 January 2011

**Decision Type:** Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

**Title:** CLOSURE OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE RECEPTIONS

**Contact Officer:** Anne Watts , Assistant Director - Strategy and Performance  
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**Chief Officer:** Terry Rich Director of Adult and Community Services

**Ward:** N/A

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**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

This report sets out proposals to close adult social care reception services at The Walnuts and Yeoman House area offices. The proposal to close these services, with effect from 4 April 2011, follows a number of changes, which have had a significant impact on the demand for reception services. These include the relocation of children's' social care teams from The Walnuts and Yeoman House to the Old Town Hall. The majority of callers by far, are for children's social care and housing services and it is now proposed to manage these services differently.

This report identifies the impact of these proposals on service users, and the financial implications of the proposed changes, including savings and overall redundancy costs.

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**2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

The PDS Committee are asked to:

**2.1** Comment on the proposed closure of Adult Social Care receptions at The Walnuts and Yeoman House area offices.

The Portfolio Holder is asked to:

**2.2** Agree the proposed closure of Adult Social Care receptions at The Walnuts and Yeoman House area offices. This is subject to consideration of the breakdown of redundancy costs, which are presented as a part 2 item on this agenda.

### Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing policy.
  2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council.
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### Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Estimated cost savings and costs contained in part 2 report
  2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
  3. Budget head/performance centre: ACS Customer Services
  4. Total current budget for this head: £209k
  5. Source of funding: Adult & Community Services Revenue Budgets
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### Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 9 FTE posts, inc 2 currently vacant
  2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: 324 per week
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### Legal

1. Legal Requirement: No statutory requirement or Government guidance.
  2. Call-in: Call-in is applicable
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### Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): less than 10 a day
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### Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

### 3. COMMENTARY

3.1 The adult social care receptions are located at Yeoman House, Penge and The Walnuts, Orpington. There is also a housing and children's social care reception at Joseph Lancaster Hall, Civic Centre. The function of the adult social care receptions is to receive visitors to the area offices; handle enquiries from face-to-face callers; book meeting rooms and process internal and external post.

3.2 Following the relocation of children's' social care teams from Yeoman House and The Walnuts to the Old Town Hall it is evident that the provision of reception services to adult social care teams is no longer an efficient use of limited resources. It is therefore proposed to close the receptions at Yeoman House and The Walnuts and to transfer staff to the Children & Young Peoples' department to provide reception services to the children's social care teams currently located in the Old Town Hall.

3.3 Because of the relocation of children's social care teams to a central location, there is also no longer a need to operate a petty cash service from these two offices.

#### 3.4 Equality Impact Assessment

An assessment of the impact of the closure of receptions on customers, service users, and other staff has been carried out and alternative arrangements can be provided, which will mitigate any impact on service users.

Consultation is currently being undertaken with service user representatives, through the various partnership groups, who have been invited to comment on these alternative arrangements.

3.4.1 The majority of service user visits are related to children's social care, who will continue to manage face-to-face reception services for these callers in the Old Town Hall; and housing services who will take over the management of reception services in Joseph Lancaster Hall.

3.4.2 Children & Young People and Adult & Community Services departments currently share petty cash services at Joseph Lancaster Hall and responsibility for children's social care petty cash will remain with the Children & Young People's department wef April 2011, as part of the proposed changes.

3.4.3 Adult social care receptions have experienced a significant and continued reduction in the number of enquiries from face-to-face callers.

| Daily average of personal callers in 2010 |                 |               |                |
|---|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
|   | Housing related | Care Services | Freedom Passes |
| March to May                              | 3               | 12.5          | 5.5            |
| June to August                            | 1.5             | 9             | Less than 1    |
| Sept to Nov                               | 2               | 7             | Less than 1    |

3.4.4 The majority of adult social care callers (over 95%), already make contact through Bromley Social Services Direct (BSSD), and for the period September to November 2010, a daily average of 111 calls were answered by this service.

Therefore, a telephone link at both The Walnuts and Yeoman House offices will provide equivalent direct access to a wide range of council services including housing benefits, housing advice, Bromley Social Services Direct, Freedom Passes, council tax, and adult social care staff in both Yeoman House and The Walnuts. Telephone links are currently working successfully from a number of locations including the central library, Civic Centre and Anerley Town Hall.

- 3.4.5 Enquiries will also be handled by library staff at the new library in The Walnuts, as well as the existing library services in Anerley and Penge, and elsewhere in the borough, which already provide a wide range of information and advice on Council services to personal callers. Libraries also have longer opening hours than those currently provided by adult social care reception services.
- 3.4.6 A report elsewhere on this agenda provides further information on a scheme to use Future Jobs Fund candidates in Bromley libraries, employed to provide support to certain groups (in particular older people) to enable them to access the Council's website, which will also be of benefit to anyone who may have previously visited the area offices for information.
- 3.4.7 Alternative arrangements for the payment of allowances made through the appointee service to a very small number of service users will be implemented by March 2011, which means that these service users will benefit from developments in electronic banking, and local arrangements with banks and other cashier's services. This is a positive development which enables people to use mainstream services to support their independence and no one will be adversely affected by this change.
- 3.5 The number of personal callers has reduced significantly with the centralisation of children's social care, as few adult social care service users visit the area offices. The introduction of the voice recognition system by the council, and the replacement process for freedom passes being managed by London Councils has reduced numbers still further. There are now alternative means of maintaining a similar level of contact without the need to provide adult social care reception services in future.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposals contained within this report will achieve savings of £50,000 in 2011/12 and £150,000 per annum from 2012/13.
- 4.2 Further information relating to the financial implications of these proposals is contained in Part 2 of this agenda.

**5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Further information is contained in Part 2 of this agenda.

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| <b>Non-Applicable Sections:</b>                       | Policy & Legal Considerations |
| Background Documents:<br>(Access via Contact Officer) |                               |