

FC52. Payments at Advice and Support Hubs

Council considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided Council with the cost of taking payments at the Advice and Support Hubs during the lunch period as requested at the meeting of Council on 25 September 2019.

Payments were taken in Hubs between 9am and 12:30pm and then from 1:30pm to 4:30pm Monday to Friday. There were no dedicated cashiers and the staff who provided frontline advice, support, and referrals also took payments as part of a wider remit. Payments were also accepted at over 130 Paypoint outlets and Post Offices across the Falkirk Council area.

The Hubs had been operational for almost 3 years and were well established and known by customers. Generally fewer customers paid in person and of those who do a growing proportion were choosing to pay at Paypoint/Post Offices. However for some utilising the Hubs remained their preferred method of payment.

Councillor Meiklejohn, moved that Council agrees:-

- (1) to maintain the current opening times of all of the advice hubs and as part of our improvement programme will seek to carry out regular reviews of our front line services to ensure customer needs are being met. This will be reported to the Scrutiny Committee, and
- (2) to seek to actively promote other ways the public and customers can access our services where these are more convenient to them.

Council adjourned at 11.20am and reconvened at 12noon with all members present as per the sederunt.

Councillor Hughes seconded the motion.

As an amendment, Councillor Bissett, seconded by Councillor McLuckie, moved that Council agrees to extend payment hours at advice and support hubs to include the period 12.30 – 1.30pm, by adjusting the afternoon working hours within existing budgets. In conjunction with the scrutiny process.

Councillor Meiklejohn, with the consent of the Provost and Councillor Hughes as her seconder, altered the text of her motion to incorporate the terms of the amendment in place of clause 1 of the motion.

Following the alteration to the motion, the amendment, with the unanimous consent of those present, was withdrawn.

Decision

Council agreed to:-

- (1) extend payment hours at advice and support hubs to include the period 12.30 – 1.30pm, by adjusting the afternoon working hours within existing budgets in conjunction with the scrutiny process;**

- (2) carry out regular reviews of frontline services to ensure customer needs are being met. This would be reported to Scrutiny Committee, and**
- (3) seek to actively promote other ways the public can access services where these are more convenient to them.**