
Report to: Clackmannanshire Council

Date of Meeting: 22nd October 2015

Subject: 8 Bank Street, Alloa: Office Closure

Report by: Head of Housing & Community Safety

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. To agree the budget for alterations to the Kilncraigs reception to allow the Bank Street Alloa office to be closed, and advertised for sale on the open market.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Council
- 2.1.1. approve a budget of £37K to fund works to the Kilncraigs reception area to allow staff working in the office at 8 Bank Street, Alloa to be relocated.
- 2.1.2. and to note the proposals for the transfer of services from 8 Bank Street, Alloa, to the Kilncraigs office.

3.0 Background

- 3.1. The property at 8 Bank Street, Alloa was first declared surplus by the Council in September 2010, as part of the wider property holding here. Marketing of the property was then delayed in order that it could be used as decant accommodation during the works to the Speirs Centre. Since then it has been used as a base for colleagues in the Revenues service who administer the Scottish Welfare Fund, and the Revenues customer facing service to accept various documents for verification purposes for Housing Benefit and Council Tax claims and provide advice and information.
- 3.2. This can result in a poor service for customers, with people often having to travel between Kilncraigs, Bank Street, and the Speirs Centre.
- 3.3. There are also additional management challenges from having a remote office with a small staffing compliment.
- 3.4. The most straightforward route to closing Bank Street involves relatively minor changes to the reception area at Kilncraigs. These changes will create an additional secure reception area in place of some of the existing reception rooms. The new reception booths will however be available for use by colleagues in other services when not in use by Revenues staff. This proposal has been prepared after full discussions with relevant officers.

- 3.5. There will also be an ongoing saving of around £8K in running costs for the General Fund from the closure of this office.

4.0 Budget required

- 4.1. The works to Kilncraigs have been costed at £37K, which includes a contingency sum. This is considered to be a prudent estimate. The works will be managed and completed in-house, with specialist contractors used only where essential.
- 4.2. As reported in the June out-turn there is an underspend of £120K against the budget for the clearing of the former Claremont school. It is recommended that £37K of this underspend is transferred to fund the works to Kilncraigs.

5.0 Closure Plan

- 5.1. The transfer of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) does not require any alterations to the Kilncraigs office. The SWF staff will be moving from the Bank Street office by the 23rd October. There will be no drop-in face to face service from this date. There should be limited impact on customers. Most applications are already online, and telephone support and face to face assistance at Kilncraigs will be available on request as required. Digital access is also available throughout Clackmannanshire.
- 5.2. If members approve the budget for Kilncraigs, the remaining revenues service provided from Bank Street can be relocated to Kilncraigs. The new proposal also allows for digital access at Kilncraigs for customers to make online applications for Universal Credit and Scottish Welfare Fund grants with staff support as required.
- 5.3. The changes also enables all Revenues colleagues to more easily provide cover for absences etc, and staff safety and security is improved.
- 5.4. It is anticipated that works will be completed by the end of January 2016, subject to obtaining necessary consents. It is however intended that short-term temporary measures can be put in place at Kilncraigs to allow Bank Street to be closed either by the end of November, or by the Christmas holidays, depending on the works timetable.
- 5.5. Various media avenues will be used to provide the public with sufficient notice of the transfer of services.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1. The works to the Kilncraigs reception will provide a better service to customers, and allow the Bank Street Alloa office to be closed and advertised on the open market, whilst providing an annual saving in the region of £8K.

7.0 Sustainability Implications

- 7.1. None

8.0 Resource Implications

8.1. *Financial Details*

8.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

8.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

8.4. *Staffing*

8.5. Staff will be relocated to the Kilncraigs office.

9.0 Exempt Reports

9.1. Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

10.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses

Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive

People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment

Our communities are safer

Vulnerable people and families are supported

Substance misuse and its effects are reduced

Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing

The environment is protected and enhanced for all

The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

11.0 Equalities Impact

11.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No

12.0 Legality

12.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

13.0 Appendices

13.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix A - Office Layout Plan

14.0 Background Papers

14.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

Author(s)

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Approved by

| NAME | DESIGNATION | SIGNATURE |
|------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Nikki Bridle | Depute Chief Executive | Signed: N Bridle |
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8 Bank Street, Alloa



