

SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCIA \_05\_ (23/24)

Chief Officer: Jim Carrington-West

Service: Benefits (Revs &amp; Bens)

Activity: Relinquished Benefit Officer Post

No. of Staff: 27 Shared service split SDC 16.57/ DBC 10.43

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Benefit Officer Vacancy - relinquished. Recharge to SDC	60404 FSLTHSB	(17)	Ongoing (permanent decrease in staff)

**A. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service**

Benefit Officer Vacancy - Relinquished from shared service structure and using money from DWP to fund an equivalent FTE Officer.

We currently receive funding from DWP to process VEP alerts & Housing Benefit Award Accuracy (HBAA) work. This is extra work given to us on top of our normal work to improve the accuracy of the Housing Benefit claims before they finally migrate across to Universal Credit. The DWP are aiming for the end of 2024 for all of the Working Age Housing Benefit claims to be migrated. The DWP funding was secured in the Spring Budget 2020 for 5 years up to and including 2024-25. DWP cannot provide LAs with a 5-year funding settlement because individual LA allocations may vary over time depending on the volumes of types of work. These volumes will shift over time as the reduction in the HB caseload may affect each LA differently. However, LAs should plan on the basis that funding for mandatory activities will continue for at least 5 years and secure their staff resources accordingly.

With this in mind as we have a vacancy & we are receiving funding from DWP it seemed like an opportunity to consider not filling this vacancy but instead using the money to fund an equivalent FTE Officer over the next 2 years at least from a remote processing company eg Meritec. It is becoming very difficult to find experience officers to fill these vacancies & inevitable with HB cases moving across to UC we will need to look at resources anyway.

**SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT****B. Key Stakeholders Affected:**

none
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**C. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service (include Risk Analysis)**

<p>Low impact and implication of the change in service</p> <p>Risks: (1) securing offsite company to carry out the work (2) DWP stopping or not covering the FTE hours</p> <p>How likely &amp; what impact?: (1) Low - Already work with a company &amp; other companies available (2) Low - this should coincide with reduction in HB claims due to UC migration. Also, the benefit service continues to implement more automation.</p>
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**D. Risk to Service Objectives (High / Medium / Low)**

Low
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**E. 2022/23 Budget (£'000) - at this level I would expect the budget to reflect the overall budget for the benefits service, not just that specific to this post.**

Operational Cost	569,246
Income	(520,954)
Net Cost	48,292

**F. Performance Indicators**

LPI HB002 - Ave no of days to process new Applications
LPI HB006 - Ave no of days to process change events

**SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>Actual</b>	LPI HB002 17 days LPI HB006 7 days
<b>Target</b>	LPI HB002 22 days LPI HB006 8 Days

**G. Equality Impacts**

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

**H. Net Zero Implications**

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

**SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

SCIA \_21\_ (23/24)

Chief Officer: Richard Morris  
 Service: Entire Council  
 Activity: Utility Costs  
 No. of Staff: NIL

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
			All Ongoing
Electricity for AQ stations	31200 EHPROT 9999	10	Caused by increases in energy currently being seen extrapolated for 12 months (current budget £3892)
CCTV - Market energy prices have increased around 25%.	DSCCTV 31200	32	As a result of global prices increases
Carparks - Market energy prices have increased around 25%.	HWCARPK 31200	48	As a result of global prices increases
Argyle Road		90	As a result of global prices increases

**I. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service**

Combined growth of all utility costs throughout the council
Due to the global events the wholesale price of gas & electricity has seen dramatic increase. The values used above are best estimates as revised prices has still not been received
The final cost have been taken from several SCIA's and combined into one to give a holistic appraisal. Budget have not been included in E as this would combine several budgets.

**J. Key Stakeholders Affected:**

Both internal & external customers
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**SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT****K. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service  
(include Risk Analysis)**

The impact on each of the services listed is minimal
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**L. Risk to Service Objectives (High / Medium / Low)**

Low
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**M. 2022/23 Budget (£'000)**

Operational Cost	
Income	
Net Cost	

**N. Performance Indicators**

Available data captured from AQ Monitoring Stations
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Actual	
Target	

**O. Equality Impacts**

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

**SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**P. Net Zero Implications**

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment

SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCIA \_22\_ (23/24)

Chief Officer: Detlev Munster

Service: Property and Commercial, Economic Development

Activity: Meeting Point Business Hub

No. of Staff: 2FTE

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Meeting Point Business Hub	CBBHUB	60	-Ongoing but reducing (as follows) as the hub becomes established 2024/25 33 2025/26 20 2026/27 14 2027/28 9

**Q. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service**

Sevenoaks DC has undertaken the creation and ongoing management of a business work hub (Meeting Point, Swanley High Street) providing a flexible workspace for local businesses and providing a location for the establishment of a business community in this part of the district. This is part of the Council's wider Economic Development Strategy, published in 2022. The space will be managed by the SDC Economic Development Team, with the creation of two new FTE posts required to run the business hub centre:

A detailed business plan was prepared earlier in the year and approved by SMT (include date). SMT agreed a working capital allocation of £50,000 per annum. The business plan will be refined prior to operation and continuously updated during the first three years of operation with an annual review being submitted to SMT.

The work hub is due to open in February 2023

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The net cost will reduce year-on-year in line with our projections for increased occupancy of the Meeting Point (as set out below), with the centre almost breaking even by Year 5.

2023/24 60% occupancy

2024/25 80%

2025/26 90%

2026/27 95%

2027/28 100%

#### **R. Key Stakeholders Affected:**

Externally, our key stakeholders are local businesses based in Swanley and the northern parishes, the wider Sevenoaks District and its neighbouring environs. Other stakeholders include the wider Swanley community and local groups who will be able to hire the premises for community meetings and events. The premises is also likely to be used for training and adult learning opportunities.

#### **S. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service (include Risk Analysis)**

The decision was taken for the hub to be operated by a dedicated team within the SDC Economic Development Team after significant market testing.

##### **Advantages**

- SDC retains ownership and manages hub within existing team, albeit with additional staff, which allows the ED Team to provide support and engage with the business support elements of hub delivery.
- Staff appointments to be Council employees on a fixed term contract. A Council employment contract is likely to be perceived as beneficial to that of a newly formed enterprise and could therefore help to recruit applicants of the right calibre. The added value of Council terms and conditions, training etc will be a benefit.
- Business Hub Manager post will boost the capacity within the ED team, and can be easily scaled up and down dependent on demand and providing additional resource to deliver the workhub strategy for the district.  
Economies of scale using existing SDC teams to support services to the hub and the potential to use existing SDC contracts where appropriate to supply the hub.
- All Council policies will apply to the hub reducing the administrative burden of setting up a new operation and benefiting from the 'in house' expertise.



### SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- More cost effective for SDC to run the hub and will keep momentum of the project going and avoid potentially empty building.
- Council control allows model to develop for workhub strategy across the district.

#### **Risks**

- Council staff may create higher budget requirement mitigated by the advantages of having Council employees who can provide additional resource allowing flexibility in approach dependent on demand.
- A council run hub may not have the same appeal. This, however, can be mitigated by developing a strong independent brand for the hub and ensuring it does not have the Council look and feel.

#### **T. Risk to Service Objectives Medium**

##### **Risks and Exit Strategy**

Managing Meeting Point comes with risks such as lack of demand leading to potential financial risk

Despite significant market testing there is no guarantee that the demand for the hub will be sufficient, and the profit and loss indicates that break-even may take some time to achieve. If demand for facilities is not as expected the Council could face financial risk by having to subsidise the operation.

Minimising risk: The Council running the hub directly will allow reduced costs using existing council systems and procedures, as well as the benefit of internal expertise and use of existing supply contracts within procurement policies.

The demand for facilities in the local area is likely to increase as knowledge of the hub grows

Working with other operators across Kent is key to both promoting the hub and understanding the market, should the Council no longer wish to run the hub, it is possible that, dependent on market conditions at the time, an alternative operator could be sought.

Should the hub be under-utilised then staffing could easily be redirected to other Council projects. Other items purchased for the hub could be used in the Council offices should there no longer be a requirement for them within the hub.

The flexibility of the space means that should one area of the business be more popular than others then changes could be made for example the boardroom could be let as a shared office space and the small offices as meeting rooms. The shared space could be a number of alternative uses.

### SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The hub demonstrates Sevenoaks District Council's willingness to test the market for workhubs locally as part of a wider strategy for the creation of a network of hubs within the local area.

The development of a business hub in Swanley shows a clear intent of the Council to support small business development. It demonstrates the Council's willingness to invest to stimulate the local economy, whilst also creating a culture where failure is sometimes an inevitable part of the learning curve, something which many entrepreneurs will relate to.

#### **Exit Strategy**

If at an agreed point the Council felt that Meeting Point was not performing adequately the space could easily be diverted into a number of uses

- An operator could be sought for the hub with a similar business model but as part of an existing network of centres. Continued dialogue with operators will take place.
- The space could be divided to provide commercial office space, either for Council staff or to let to single or multiple businesses.
- The use class and location of the building would mean that conversion to commercial retail space was also a possibility or alternative community uses would also be possible should there be demand.
- Consideration could also be given to changing to residential use, currently possible under permitted development rights.
- Hub staff employed by the Council would be on fixed term contracts providing the ability to extend if the project is successful and an end point if it is not.
- Many fixtures and fittings would be useable either by other local businesses or in other Council buildings and therefore minimising any waste.

#### **U. 2022/23 Budget (£'000)**

Operational Cost	-
Income	-
Net Cost	-

#### **V. Performance Indicators**

### **SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Key targets and benchmarks will be set for the management and operation of Meeting Point KPIs will cover amongst others:

- Users reporting satisfaction with hub facilities and willing to recommend to others
- Users reporting increased business, jobs created, increased wellbeing
- A varied events programme supporting a range of stakeholders
- 60% small offices and 40% fixed desks let by summer 2023
- Wider business and community use of facilities
- Connections and collaboration achieved
- Business support delivered on site

The operation of the hub will be reported bi-annually to Sevenoaks District Council SMT and to the People and Places and Innovation and Improvement Advisory Committees. An annual report will be submitted to Cabinet.

Meeting Point will be subject to audit as per other Council owned premises and Council-run services.

#### **W. Equality Impacts**

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. Regardless of different groups of people, all customers have to be consistently supported in line with Housing legislation.

#### **X. Net Zero Implications**

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the council's ambition to be Net Zero by 2030. There is no perceived impact regarding either an increase or decrease in carbon emissions in the district, or supporting the resilience of the natural environment]

**SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

SCIA \_23\_\_ (23/24)

Chief Officer: Adrian Rowbotham  
 Service: Council Tax Income  
 Activity: Council Tax Discount  
 No. of Staff: nil FTE

Activity Budget Change	Cost Centre & Account Code of Budget	2023/24 Growth / (Saving) £000	Later Years Comments (ongoing, one-off, etc.)
Provide a one year 100% reduction on the District Council element of Council Tax for new certified Passivhaus 'Classic', 'Plus' & 'Premium' homes built in the District, in any year until 2030		2	2023/24 until 2029/30 (7 years)

**Y. Reasons for and explanation of proposed change in service**

As per the Net Zero actions endorsed by Council, it is proposed that new certified Passivhaus 'Classic', 'Plus' & 'Premium' homes built in the District, in any year until 2030, receive a one year 100% reduction on the District Council element of their Council Tax.

The number of new properties of this type is unknown but the loss of Council Tax income amounts above are based on ten new Band D equivalent properties per year.

It is likely that the emerging Local Plan will include a policy to encourage new development "to use nationally recognised eco building standards such as Passivhaus and Breeam and to meet the Future Homes standard as a minimum".

This proposed change to the SDC portion of the Council Tax could be made under section 13a Local Government Finance Act 1992.

**Z. Key Stakeholders Affected:**

Occupiers of new certified Passivhaus 'Classic', 'Plus' & 'Premium' homes

**SERVICE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT****AA. Likely impacts and implications of the change in service  
(include Risk Analysis)**

It is hoped the discount will further incentivise the development of homes with a lower than usual, or even a positive, environmental impact.

Each claim would see a loss of Council Tax income at a time when the budget is facing a greater number of pressures than usual.

**BB. Objectives (High / Medium / Low) Risk to Service**

Low

**CC. (£'000) 2022/23 Budget**

Operational Cost	-
Income	(11,841)
Net Cost	(11,841)

**DD. Performance Indicators**

N/A

**EE. Equality Impacts**

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

**FF. Net Zero Implications**

Members are reminded of the Council's stated ambition to be Net Zero with regards to carbon emissions by 2030. The decisions recommended in this paper directly impact on this ambition. The impact has been reviewed and there should be a decrease on carbon emissions produced in the district as a result of this decision.

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Certified nationally recognised eco building standard homes such as Passivhaus produce fewer carbon emissions than traditional build homes.