

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday 15 March 2023

Q1. Question for the Leader of the Council received from Councillor Bentley:

“Can Members conduct a review of the opening times for the Cheadle One-Stop Shop, in order to consider an extension to the availability and accessibility for this service?”

Response:

“Since reopening our receptions in September 2021, the Cheadle one stop shop has opened 9.30-4.30 on Mondays. Footfall has reduced dramatically as, pre-2021, a high proportion of transactions were related to making payments which are now completed successfully via alternative channels.

We average 10 enquiries each Monday and, outside of the opening hours, customers are accessing services online or via the telephone. Should a customer have an urgent request and wants to see a member of staff face-to-face we offer convenient appointments at the Cheadle or Leek offices.

We have five vacancies in the customer services team currently. Whilst we recruited two new members of staff in January this year, two other members of the customer services team transferred out to other service areas, so we are now advertising again, and to date we have not received any suitable applications.

With the resource available currently, extending the hours at the Cheadle one stop shop would extend the call answer times on the phones*. We continually monitor demand and direct resource as necessary. We are now preparing for our busiest periods with council tax bills going out during w/c 13 March followed by the elections in May where we expect an increase in enquiries.

*Due to booked leave and unexpected absence we saw an increase in call answer times last week – averaging 8 minutes. If we were to redirect resource from call-handling to reception duties then this would become a regular issue until we recruit to the vacant posts.”