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AN INVESTIGATION INTO LOCAL AUTHORITY INFORMATION CENTRES OR ONE STOP SHOPS

by

Brian Kenneth Dawson

A Doctoral Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of Information and Library Studies of the Loughborough University of Technology

1995

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the one-stop shop is successful in the dissemination of local authority information.

After initial chapters which explore the background to the one-stop shop, it was necessary (because the extent and nature of the one-stop shop was so vague) to conduct a preliminary survey of local authorities in England and Wales. The results of this survey, when analysed provided an indication to some factors which might contribute to the success of the one-stop shop. Subsequently four representative local authorities were selected, Hampshire County Council, West Sussex County Council, the London Borough of Enfield and Lancashire County Council. These examples were chosen as authorities which represented the success factors in practice. The authorities were visited and evaluated by observation, personal interviews with the staff concerned, plus user questionnaire when possible, using common criteria and reference to available literature and results from the preliminary survey. Both surveys were conducted within a methodological framework and reference was made to conceptual models when possible.

The success factors which emerge from the preliminary survey and further case-studies are discussed in the concluding chapter. They obviously contribute to the successful operation of the one-stop stop, but also offer guidelines to other authorities who might be considering such a venture.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the one-stop shop staff from the London Borough of Enfield, Lancashire County Council, West Sussex County Council, and especially all the staff of Hampshire County Council, both in the Information Centre and other departments for their support and enthusiasm in this project.

Also Mr Alan Poulter, my supervisor for his guidance, comments, and patience.

Finally to Rosalind, Alexandra, Christina and Emilia, for their fortitude, humour, and the stimulus to persevere.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The success of a local authority must be measured not by its size, but by the quality of the services delivered from whatever source, by its responsiveness to its clients and customers. (Michael Heseltine in a statement on the local government review on 21st March 1991)

In recent years there has been a movement to increase the public's awareness of the services provided by local authorities. Value for money has always been a primary consumer concern and local authorities are keen to communicate this aspect clearly and effectively with users of their services.

So what is meant by VFM in local government? Although the three "E's" are prescribed in the Local Government Act 1988 their detailed criteria are in fact defined by the Accounts Commission in guidelines issued to auditors. The criteria are defined as follows:

Economy - the terms under which the authority acquires human and material resources. An economical operation acquires these resources in the appropriate quality and quantity at the lowest cost;

Efficiency - the relationship between goods and services produced and resources used to produce them. An efficient operation produces the maximum output for any given set of resource inputs; or, it has minimum inputs for any given quality and quantity of goods produced or services provided;

Effectiveness - how well a programme or activity is achieving its established goals or other intended effects. <1>

A recent survey found that people were generally satisfied with their local councils, although those living in two-tier areas were less satisfied with their county council than their local council<2>; many people can be unsure of which services are provided by which authority. Authorities are very aware that to survive they must be seen to be
providing quality services, and indeed must inform their customers or potential customers about the services they provide. Information thus plays a key role in promoting the authority to the public. This can be information about the services provided but also the gathering of knowledge about the public's perception of those services. Giving information to customers is an important way of improving access with the desire to provide a fair service for all.

The one-stop shop

The appearance of information bureaux - the "one-stop" or "first-stop shop", in county halls, town halls and other local offices reflects the growing movement by authorities to break down barriers and become closer to their public, <3>

Local authorities of all types have for some years offered their customers and citizens decentralised access to services through one-stop shops. These bring obvious and immediate improvements for the customer in that:

They often facilitate a quicker response to local problems. The onus is not put on people to know who to contact. People are not passed around the system, because their problem will be taken on by the shop acting as intermediary on their behalf.

One-stop shop staff tend to have an unusually positive attitude to helping people, with an ability to see things from their viewpoint <4>

The term "one-stop shop" is difficult to define, but can be defined as an office which locally supplies the public with easily accessible service and information..... The fundamental idea is to gather public information in one place and under one roof to make it conveniently accessible for citizens.<5>

This is very much based on Westminster LBC’s service where departmental
representatives are available for consultation in one location. For example the Westminster service provides:

1. An access point for all council services and information on one floor.

2. Links to other council buildings by phone or facsimile machine.

3. A computerised database of council information.

4. An open counter service with staff who have had training in public awareness skills (and self-defence).

5. Private interview rooms.

6. Toilets, photocopiers, telephones, seats and a special counter for disabled people.

Thus a picture of a one-stop shop is beginning to emerge. At the same time some authorities may consider their reception area for example, as a one-stop shop. The term has become widely used, and in practice many authorities may operate a first-stop service, this is a frontline office where the public can direct his/her service enquiry. The enquiry may then be passed to a departmental officer or specialist information provider to provide the answer if necessary. However,

Citizens need to have clear, understandable information about decisions and policies and the reasons for these, as well as information about services offered or to which they are entitled.

This ethos is reinforced by the awareness and interest by authorities in quality and customer care. Councils now have to justify their existence, this view has been strengthened by the competition between county, municipal and district authorities, stimulated by a recent government consultation paper on the structure of local government in England and Wales which put forward the notion of the unitary authority. Potentially councils now realise for example, that if the public know what the authority
does for them they may be more inclined to value the authority.

The authority public information service, the first-stop or one-stop shop, may develop in a variety of different ways according to the type of authority, political make-up, and geographic area. Thus the metropolitan borough may place great emphasis on the promotion of its services, and have one-stop shops in many sites throughout the area, whilst a county council may have one token site in the county hall itself. The position of the one-stop shop can be crucial to success and it is advantageous if it be situated in sites frequented by the public, or only a minority may have access. The effectiveness of the information services can also vary a great deal as does the type and volume of information provided. As far as the public is concerned, the image the authority one-stop shop promotes can be a reflection on the quality of service provided by the authority in general. It is therefore essential that the one-stop shop provides an effective front-line. It is important to consider that the right calibre of staff are employed, given the relevant necessary training, and be equipped with the information they require if they are to succeed; invariably this may involve technical support and access to sophisticated computerised databases. Authorities may recruit additional staff to operate the bureaux or may employ existing staff, who could already have knowledge of the necessary corporate information. In addition to staffing the one-stop shop, the appropriate back-up personnel throughout the authority will need to be available, plus the essential management support for the project.

The information available to these front-line staff may be presented in many different ways, but it is desirable that it should always be clear and well written. Some authorities may produce a simple guide to services which can be given to an enquirer, others may offer leaflets designed by departments to describe the services they provide. Customers will require varied information which may include details of the services available and those supplied by other agencies, their rights to that service and how to use it, and the quality of service they can expect to achieve. To provide the necessary information to support the front-line staff could be a complex process and it can be
beneficial, if not essential, that individual departments within an authority are behind the project; this will require senior management commitment and direction. It may also be necessary to monitor the quality of the information provided and to check the efficiency of the staff on a regular basis. Many authorities have video-text systems installed so that the customer can conduct simple enquiries themselves, such equipment may be distributed over a wide area within the authority. In addition to video-text other authorities may have sophisticated computer networks which can store and disseminate council information. However the information is provided, it is essential that the public, as paymasters and users of local authority services, are aware of what services are available to them, and that this information is delivered in an efficient, effective and professional way.

The information bureau/one-stop shop/first-stop shop has developed to provide information on authority services to the public. With the diversity of political opinion within the local authority community it is evident that they have developed in a variety of ways. A number are managed by library department's, forming just a part of a general information service; but many one-stop shops are managed by other department's, such as trading standards, road safety and secretary's.<10> Because of the difference in structure and operation some are possibly more effective than others in providing information on services to the public.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the study will be to establish how the one-stop shop is successful in providing information about local authority services. For example they might provide a focus for dissemination of service information, and be a shopwindow for the authority to promote services. The department which manages the one-stop shop may also be a consideration, as may staff qualifications and training. The location, both individually, and within a geographical area, may in addition be an influence. Perhaps more importantly the information held by the one-stop shop, the use of information technology, and finally costs
may have an influence. All these factors may contribute to the success of the one-stop shop.

Objectives

The two primary objectives will be to find out the nature of the one-stop shop - what is a one-stop shop? In addition - what makes a good one-stop shop?

Because the nature of the one-stop shop is so vague one of the first tasks will be to conduct a literature search. It is hoped that this will to provide the background to the development of such information services.

Secondly, it will be necessary to attempt to clarify this position. In order to achieve this a survey will be undertaken of local authorities in England and Wales. This preliminary survey will attempt to assess the extent and nature of authority one-stop shop provision, and may help to reveal the success factors involved.

Thirdly, it will also be important to place the one-stop shop within the local government context. Conceptual models will be used as an aid to this and in addition will be used to look at the information processes involved.

Following this and the preliminary survey, it is intended that representative authorities may be identified which will offer the opportunity to study possible success factors in more detail.

Finally, it is hoped that clear success factors will emerge which can be seen to contribute to making the one-stop shop successful in providing information about authority services. These success factors, resulting from the preliminary survey and the more detailed case-study analysis, may offer guidelines to other authorities who may wish to develop a one-stop shop.
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CHAPTER 2

Background and Literature Search

To obtain background literature on the subject of the one-stop shop, reference was made to the CD-Rom version of Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) produced by Bowker-Saur Publishing; the CD-Rom 'Urbadisk' produced by the London Research Centre, which contains bibliographic details of local government related literature; the database of the Local Government Unit, Hampshire County Library; and lastly bibliographies of items selected. In searching each source a uniform strategy was adopted. Starting with the precise subject (one-stop shop) and encompassing related terms, such as "information centre/reception", combined with "local authority" for example, as well as other authority types.

The LISA CD-Rom contains over 100,000 citations from over 350 periodicals on the subject of library and information science. Several useful items were discovered, relating to the terms searched for. It became apparent though that there were few items that were really about the subject in question. A search of the London Research Centres CD-Rom - Urbadisk produced similar results. Urbadisk has references to over 350,000 items related to local government policy and planning.

A search of the Hampshire County Library Local Government Units' database produced the best results. This is a database of some 18,000 references to articles taken from local government related journals since 1986. By far the most successful source of background literature however proved to be the bibliographies of items discovered in the initial searches.
Background

It can be generally stated that the public image of local government is a poor one. Although this is a recognised perception of local government, is this really supported by any hard evidence - and if true, what can be done about it? To compound the difficulties faced by local government

the past ten years have seen substantial and dramatic change to the structure and operational culture of many areas of public service. <1>

Local authorities are undergoing a fundamental transformation from being the main providers of services to having responsibility for securing provision. There is no evidence, at the time of writing that there are any examples of contracted out one stop shop services. There are however businesses that will provide the technology to disseminate service information (as with the OXCIS system mentioned later in the chapter). Collection of service information is made much easier if the one stop shop is within the authority structure - they will be aware of established practice and management hierarchies. It is also more likely that service providers will provide an internal one stop shop with information - they could see a contracted-out one stop shop as a threat. Councils are becoming direct service providers and enablers and the views of the public - the customer, are seen to be important. Authorities are very aware that to survive in this new market they must be providing quality "value for money" <2> services and be seen to be doing so. Information thus can now play a key role by informing the user what services are available to them. However this strategy will only succeed if the advertised services are delivered effectively and efficiently. Many authority services are now being contracted out to private companies - the provision of information about these services, although primarily an authority responsibility (if the private company is providing a service previously undertaken by the authority) could nevertheless be a sensitive issue, and may need to be handled with care. The service provider, whether they be local authority or contracted out, does nevertheless have a responsibility to provide information on the services.
available to the public. This issue must be made clear to any private company wishing to provide services previously undertaken by an authority.

Communication and the public view of local government

Although marketing of the authority will not be a major function of the one stop shop, providing information could be seen as promoting authority services to the public. The one-stop shop may also act as a focus for public enquiries, how well it achieves this, may in the public's perception be a reflection on the authority as a whole.

The failure of local government to market itself and its services adequately has led to its potential role in an economic and social renaissance being largely overlooked. Instead, it is portrayed as an insatiable sponge absorbing the wealth others create. <3>

"Looked at nationally local politics is muddy and confused" <4>, the public are not aware which authority, be it parish, district, or county provide the services they use. As the public's perception is confused its attitude "may be expected to be largely hostile". <5> Many people get their impression of local government from the controversial political activities of some authorities, whereby council policies are designed to perpetuate the ruling clique in power. It is rarely possible for a council to be completely neutral and conflicts may arise within the local authority itself - and also between local and central government. Also the public image of town halls

seems to be cynically cultivated, by disinformation from central government". The image that seems to be fostered at national level is of local government being the unacceptable face of democracy or even that local government is responsible for the country's economic ills . <6>
One of the problems facing local government is that it is only a few services which people tend to be critical of. The large proportion of services, which are provided in an efficient and effective way receive little attention. There is a tremendous amount of professional skill, quality services and management expertise within local government - but is this communicated to the public? Council's "must learn to sell themselves and their services better". <7> In some cases this may mean advertising authority services, especially when authority services are in direct competition with the private sector, as for example local authority restaurant facilities.

Communication between the local authority and the public "is necessarily a communication between professionals and amateurs"<8>, although perhaps this statement is not entirely true, this communication is difficult to achieve without the essential will from both sides. What does the general public want to know about council services? As a starting point

Local authorities are primarily service industries. Like any business they need to look towards their markets and to what their customers want. <9>

The public will see no distinction between local information and information about services, thus information provision will need to be comprehensive in nature. Services are provided for people to use, it would therefore seem obvious that resources should be made available for the promotion of these amenities. How should councils communicate themselves to the public? They should attempt to establish clear lines of communication with customers. However those who require council services more, perhaps the young, disabled or elderly are often those more difficult to reach. "Access means more than ramps and handrails" <10>.

One of the problems facing ordinary people who want to communicate with the council is to know who to telephone. Because our structures are so different, a very sophisticated awareness of how a particular local authority works is needed before you know
who you want to talk to about a particular problem. <11>

It is vital that all employees in the authority are involved in this communication process and are committed to its success, any change must come from the top. Of course, it will not be necessary to train all authority staff to the same level of customer care, one-stop shop staff for example, and those staff in direct contact with the public will require a higher degree of training than other staff. It is however important that all staff reflect a positive image, some training therefore will be needed for all staff. Local government needs to transform its image, change policies and make bold decisions in order to promote itself more effectively.

In terms of image, local government must also, of course sell itself through everyday action. Local government needs to work much harder at building and developing its links with all interests within its own communities. <12>

In developing a corporate image, professionals may state that an organisation has to go through three phases - the first phase, who you are; the second phase, what you do; the third phase, what you think. <13> Local government does have a problem with the first stage, and some people are rightly confused as to which authority provides which service, for instance is it the district council or the county council who will maintain your local roads - what are parish council's responsible for? As for the second stage - are people aware of what a local authority does, and the range of services it provides? There is a danger that by putting forward the authority's views - the third stage, (quite common in the local government arena) without at first explaining who the authority is, and what it does, people will be thoroughly confused.

What does the public think of local government?

Councils have many sources of information about the public's views. Front-line staff are in direct contact with the public, and may receive complaints and praise (rarely), officers may build up a certain knowledge of what they assume the public like and want,
and elected members should be aware through "surgeries" and other means, of the views of their electorate. With local government under increasing pressure to improve the efficiency of services, they are looking to more effective ways of delivering services. For authorities to be close to their customers they must have a clear understanding of the public's views and attitudes. Local government needs to market itself

and needs to ask itself if it is providing the right service at the right time, in the right place, at the right perceived price, for existing and prospective customers. <14>

Consumers of council services want value for money, but they do not have any choice as to who provides those services, it is therefore essential that the views of the users and non-users are sought. According to Michael Clarke and Professor John Stewart in a consultation paper produced for the Local Government Training Board, there are some basic principles that need to be taken into account

a local authority's activities exist to provide service for the public;

a local authority will be judged by the quality of service provided within the resources available;

the service provided is only of real value if it is of value to those for whom it is provided;

those for whom services are provided are customers demanding high quality service;

quality of service demands closeness to the customer. <15>

In order to assess the views of the public many surveys have been undertaken, and indeed survey research among residents "is perhaps the most reliable method of getting to know customers". <16> East Hampshire District Council decided recently to undertake research "into general attitudes and views". A sample of residents aged 18+ were interviewed and data was weighted by gender, age, work status to the profile of population and by area. It was intended that the results would provide answers, which
would enable better informed decisions to be taken on authority service provision, in the future. The results showed that the

Council was generally well perceived and the quality of its services considered to be good. They also showed that there was a degree of confusion with County services and that East Hants was still too remote and impersonal. <17>

However in 1989 a survey commissioned by CESNET, the corporate support network for chief executives of county councils, found that only four of the county councils in England and Wales had made any "significant progress" in the use of market research, "using their findings to influence decisions on allocating resources". Another four counties had made use of surveys, in their libraries and museums services, the emphasis being placed on the level of customer satisfaction. Six further counties were "in the process of carrying out surveys" and thirteen had not carried out any market research. One of the common messages from any of the research undertaken seems to be "significant confusion about who provides services". <18>

Between November and December 1990 a survey commissioned by Surrey County Council, was undertaken by MORI (Market and Opinion Research International). This survey showed that although Surrey residents were generally satisfied with services there is still some confusion over who provides local services, with many people believing that district services such as refuse collection and housing are provided by the county council. <19>

The survey also pointed to the need to improve information to the public on the range of services provided by the county council. The case-studies analysed in later chapters will provide evidence that the one-stop shops, go someway to achieve this goal.(chapters 6-9)

The aim of a survey carried out for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation also in 1990, was to "examine public attitudes to local government". The results of this survey show that "knowledge about local councils was fairly high", but that the one aspect about which
people were not knowledgeable was local government finance. A survey conducted by East Hampshire, indeed supported this view, in that some 72% of residents interviewed were "unaware of the true cost of services provided by the District Council". <20> This, of course can be a contentious issue, and it maybe that there is no easy way that costs can be presented in a useful manner. "Knowledge appeared to be affected by the type of authority people lived in" - those living in single tier authorities being clearer as to who supplies which service, than those people living in two tier authorities. One aspect the researchers found puzzling was that "the use of a service did not make people more knowledgeable about the body responsible for its provision". <21>

In 1991 the Association of District Councils commissioned MORI to examine existing data about the views of the public to local authority services. The survey found that there was "considerable confusion" as to which level of local government is responsible for which service. County councils "are more likely to be found remote and impersonal" and the public were more likely to be better informed about district rather than county services. It is also interesting to note that a consistently low proportion of residents get information about councils from either council officers or councillors. <22>

The Department of the Environment undertook a survey in 1990 to assess the level of public awareness of the local government finance system. The results of this survey were published in 1992. One of the questions respondents were asked was whether they thought the information that their district council gives out about its services was adequate

Overall, half the respondents said that it was "very" or "fairly" adequate. <23>

However in shire districts "there was some confusion" as to which tier of local government provided some services. <24>
Where do people get information about authority services?

Legislation

The present structure of local government was mainly established by the London Government Act 1963 and the Local Government Act 1972 and 1985. The former defined the area of Greater London and the 1972 Act established the present two tier system. The 1972 Act defined the boundaries of the metropolitan counties and districts, and the shire counties; the new structure came into operation in 1974. The 1985 Local Government Act abolished the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils making unitary authorities directly responsible for most functions in London and the metropolitan counties. In the last decade there has been a great interest by central government into the affairs of local government, with a great deal of legislation being passed through Parliament. The main powers which directly relate to public relations and information are to be found in the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Government Access to Information Act 1985. The Widdecombe Committee set up in 1985 was given the initial brief of reporting on publicity in local government. It decided that although most authorities were using their publicity services properly, some were using public funds for political ends.

The Committee, conscious that the problems identified were limited to a small but influential number of local authorities put forward recommendations which they felt would continue to encourage local authorities to keep ratepayers and electors properly informed. The government's reaction to the report was to introduce the Local Government Act 1986 which provided powers for the Secretary of State to issue a code of practice covering the content, style, distribution and cost of publicity. This is relevant to the one-stop shop and has influence on the design and distribution of authority publications. It also stressed the
need for separate accounting procedures for expenditure on publicity. These views were strengthened by further clauses in the Local Government Act 1988. <27> It was evident when investigating the later case-studies that the authorities concerned were meeting these requirements.

Under the present Conservative government

local authorities are undergoing a fundamental transformation from being the main providers of services to having responsibility for securing their provision. <28>

Thus councils are seen by the government to be very much "enablers", and competitive tendering for an ever increasing number of services is very much on the agenda. Indeed, in a recent government consultation paper 'Competing for Quality' the provision of information, for example through "one-stop shops" .... can be done by external service providers. <29>

In July 1991 John Major launched the Government's Citizen's Charter to present the Conservatives as a party with a positive agenda for public services....and the argument about how to improve the quality of public services has since become a dominant theme in public debates. <30>

Although at present the provision of local authority information, through one-stop shops is not undertaken by any private agency, this nevertheless could become a consideration. There are agencies however who will provide the equipment to disseminate local authority information - as in the OXCIS system in Oxfordshire, mentioned in the final chapter.

This changing role for local government has altered the view that there "is an ideal size for the most efficient delivery of services" <31> and the whole structure of local government is again under review. In shire counties for example, the current two-tier system, whereby the County is responsible for certain services, whilst the District council
has responsibilities for others, can "cause confusion over which tier is responsible for which service", <32> This idea has been further strengthened by survey results referred to earlier. Because of the obvious interest by central government in the reorganisation of local government, authorities are at present involved in a power struggle each trying to make the case for survival. The one-stop shop thus has an important role in providing information on local authority services. Although there is no evidence to suggest this, it may be that through actively providing information on local services this could be seen to be damaging to central government policy eg. budgetary information. Nevertheless quality, delivery, customer care and the provision of service information are all becoming increasingly important.

The importance of information

With an interest in provision of quality services, getting closer to the public, consumer participation and value for money, local authorities are keen to inform their users and potential users about the services they provide. Information can "play a key role in determining the quality of service delivered by local authorities". <33> Local authorities also need feedback from the public on their views of council actions and services. This is where analysis of comments/enquiries received by the one-stop shop can be of utmost importance. There are various mechanisms available to facilitate this - from user surveys to analysis of enquiry statistics, the later case-studies will provide some examples (chapters 6-9). Inviting the public to participate in local authority decisions will need an efficient information system in order that all can be kept informed. People need easy access to basic information, in a form they can readily understand.

Consumers can be empowered and services made more effective, if information is available about service objectives, standards aimed for and achieved. <34>

In order to improve access for the customer, and provide information on authority services, councils are establishing one-stop shops situated in town halls, local offices, such
as libraries, near centres of population and in the high streets of many towns. A survey conducted by the Local Government Information Unit in 1990 found that of the authorities that responded many were considering establishing such centres. Here the public can expect to receive an answer to their enquiry, without the need for them to be referred on to another office. The one-stop shop staff may need to refer to other information providers but the enquirer will not need to be passed from office to office as often happened before. The establishment of such centres is indeed a sign that authorities wish to break down the barriers between themselves and their customers.

The quality of information received from these front-line staff can be crucial to the impression the public may have of an authority. Accurate, up-to-date information must be provided in the most efficient and effective manner. The importance of the staff and their reaction in dealing with customers can make all the difference in creating a positive image. Some authorities have realised this importance and have created such information centres within Public Relations units or Libraries, whilst others rely on telephonists and existing departmental reception staff. As will become apparent in the later case-studies this difference in approach is due to many factors. Before a one-stop shop can be developed the political will, departmental support, and perhaps more importantly, the necessary finance must be available.

People like the reception staff, and telephonists are often excellent ambassadors for the council if given the backup and information they need.

Training of the staff to project the right image and to adopt the correct culture, whilst delivering these information services is also an important consideration.

Corporate image is not just a squiggle on a page - not just a natty logo; it is the impression given to the world by an organisation as a whole and it springs just as much from the organisation's employees and their behaviour.
as it does from the sign over the door of the reception. <37>

Projecting the correct visual image can also be of great importance, particularly as authorities are competing between themselves to be the major service provider. The public are consumers of local government services, and as consumers have learned to accept marketing concepts of brand names and professional advertising techniques; local government must accept these ideas and present itself in a positive and attractive way. As Barbara Milne, Press and Public Relations Officer for Clwyd County Council states

All printed material letterheads, leaflets, posters and display boards, signs and vehicles must have the County logo prominently displayed, in the case of the clothing for the Council front-line staff manning conferences and exhibitions the colours of burgundy and green are reflected in the corporate outfits and in the specially printed ties and neck tabs. <38>

What sort of information is provided by these information centres? Local authorities have a statutory duty under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act, which gave the public a right to access to council minutes, agendas and other background papers. However, in the quest to break down barriers and be seen to be democratic, authorities may provide much more information, which can include information on services provided by other local authorities and on public sector services such as health and welfare rights. For example the information required may be about a local school, how to get a pot-hole repaired, who to contact to destroy wasps or when the local swimming baths are open. The public will not be aware that these services may be provided by different authorities, indeed the information centre will have to answer all types of enquiry, relating to other agencies and authorities, failure to give a response will reflect badly on the centre. The information may be presented in a variety of ways - some authorities produce A-Z guides to services, these may appear in both paper and electronic versions. There can be no doubt that the electronic directory of services is by far the best option, if the necessary technology is available. As the later case-studies will show it is far easier to keep the electronic directory up-to-date. Indeed before undertaking this information gathering exercise it will be necessary to co-operate with all other information
agencies within the area in order to present the most complete available resource. Often in this way the local authority can become the gateway to other services.

The use of new technology is an important aspect of information delivery, and local authorities may store information on a computer database. Many authorities have their own computer network, Hampshire County Council has such a network with over 4000 terminals spread over the county, with links to all departments. Such a network can provide information and also record messages sent by the customer. Nottinghamshire's information centre has a sophisticated computerised data system installed, by the use of interactive technology the customer is able for example, to hear the voice of their local councillor whilst seeing a picture of him/her on the screen. Lancashire County Council use a "touch screen" system in their information centres, this enables the user to conduct their own searches of the database even when outside normal office hours. There are many other examples of the use of such technology, which plus video and cable television techniques, are becoming increasingly popular as authorities consider ways of making information more readily available.

The decision to establish a one-stop shop should not be taken in isolation and should be linked to an overall policy of getting closer to the authority customer, and potential customer. It is essential that senior management across the entire organisation is committed to the idea, as a vast amount of time and resources will be needed to make a success of the venture. Communications across the whole organisation will need to be improved, this may involve structural change and have training implications. As Dick Fedorcio, Head of Public Relations for Kent County Council says

Helping people find their way through labyrinths of democracy and bureaucracy is the single most important communication issue. <39>

Will the information centre or one-stop shop be successful in increasing the public's knowledge of local government? I hope the answer to this question, and others will become apparent as the study progresses.
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1992), p.20
CHAPTER 3

Preliminary survey methodology

As earlier chapters have illustrated, efficient local authority public information services have an important part to play in keeping the public aware of the services available to them. Central government is keen to restructure local government and to develop standards for service provision. For example, the Citizen's Charter, and Chartermark which is awarded to those authorities which meet the Government's criteria to deliver efficient services of the desired quality. Consequently the approach by local authorities to provide increased service information has become increasingly important as authorities seek to find ways to be more cost-effective and to provide good quality services, and to be seen to be more locally accountable.

High-quality information is seen to be crucial by those councils pursuing a citizens' charter approach to citizen empowerment.

Thus the one-stop shop, has been established to provide the customer with information about authority services.

The emphasis of the charter movement on the accessibility and responsiveness of services fits well with the one-stop shop concept.

It may also be hoped that increased publicity about the one-stop shop will encourage non-users to seek information about services available to them. These one-stop shops have developed in a number of ways depending on variable criteria and priorities. For example those centres in municipal authorities may hold differing information than the information centre serving a predominantly rural shire county. The political make up of the authority might also be an important consideration. Much of this sort of information, including the size, political nature, population and financial position is readily available as published material. Assessing the performance and effectiveness of such one-stop shops is not so
easy, although many authorities have established minimum quality standards for service provision. The number of authorities having or considering such one-stop shops is also not available.

In the past, the measurement of information assets (number of enquiries received, number of volumes housed, etc) was the criterion for establishing value in information services. Such measures are no longer good enough; today - and into the foreseeable future - information value is determined by how well the information provided enables the information seeker to succeed.

The survey

The extent of one-stop shop provision is not at present available in published form. It is interesting that this should be the situation, and particularly ironic in view of the information role of the service to be investigated. Therefore for this study it was felt necessary to undertake a preliminary survey of one-stop shop provision throughout England and Wales, to clarify what a one-stop shop was, which authorities had them and what they did.

Survey methodology

For this survey a questionnaire was sent to the Chief Executives of county, district and municipal authorities in England and Wales. The Local Government Management Board, having been interested in the project, kindly provided the finance for this. An accompanying letter was also included, which explained the background to the project and introduced the researcher. (Appendix 1) The questionnaire was designed as two forms, Form A: for those authorities which had a one-stop shop, (Appendix 2) and Form B: for authorities which did not have such a centre. (Appendix 3). The questions were formulated with reference to current literature and with the advice of staff from Loughborough University, Department of Information and Library Studies and the Local Government Management Board. According to Line
questions should be interesting as well as answerable...
The physical layout of the questionnaire should be planned
with a view to making it absolutely clear. Questionnaires
which look like income tax returns are not only uninspiring
but hard to complete

Mann <7> continues

One fundamental error made by too many questionnaire compilers
is to allow the questionnaire to become too long and involved.
.....the recipient of a 15 page questionnaire knows at once
what is in store - and may well opt out.

The Questions

Form A was intended to be completed by those authorities having a one-stop shop.
Because the aim of the questionnaire would be to discover the extent of one-stop shop
provision lists of potential answers were not provided, as this was felt by the researcher to
be too limiting. Indeed many of the answers are not known or could be too various.

Question 1
The initial question on Form A provided details of the name an address of the authority,
plus a contact name and address. It is hoped that the extent of one-stop shop provision in
England and Wales would become apparent. Subsequent analysis, might in addition also
reveal if there are any significant trends in provision.

Question 2  "When was the first one-stop shop established?"
It is hoped that by asking this question some details of how long one-stop shops had been
established, it may also reveal if a pattern of development was apparent.

Question 3  "How many one-stop shops does your authority have?"
This question was asked in an attempt to gain information on the scope of one-stop shop
provision, and if there are any contributing factors involved.
Question 4  "Where are they situated?"
It is quite possible that the location of the one-stop shop is an important success factor. This question may provide some answers which will aid later analysis.

Question 5  "What are their opening times?"
Opening times could also have an influence on the success of the one-stop shop. This question was asked to provide information on the range of opening hours. It is hoped that analysis of the responses will reveal possible trends.

Question 6  "How many staff do they employ?"
This question was designed to provide data on the likely staff resources needed to provide a one-stop shop service.

Question 7  "What qualifications did you ask for?"
It may be that the qualifications of the one-stop shop staff are a success factor. This question will provide data on current practice, which when analysed might reveal some interesting trends.

Question 8  "Which department manages the one-stop shop?"
Which department manages the one-stop shop may also contribute to the success or otherwise of the venture. This question will provide information about current trends.

Question 9  "What are the costs of the one-stop shop?"
It is hoped by asking this question the likely costs of establishing and running a one-stop shop might become apparent.

Question 10  "What standard information is currently provided?"
This question was asked to establish current practice with regard to the information held by one-stop shops.
Question 11 "What information will be provided in the future?"
Some authorities may realise that the information held by their one-stop shop is not as comprehensive as they might have wished. This question will provide data, which when added to responses from question 10, will provide an exhaustive picture of likely information resources needed by the one-stop shop.

Question 12 "What information will not be provided?"
Some authorities might wish not to hold certain information, this question will provide data on this. It is hoped that analysis might reveal some trends.

Question 13 "How is the information kept up-to-date and correct?"
Obviously there will be differing means by which authorities keep their one-stop shop information up-to-date. This question will provide information on current practice, which might prove interesting when analysed.

Question 14 "What information delivery mechanisms does your authority employ?"
It is hoped that this question will reveal current practice and provide data on the use of information technology.

Question 15 "Who do you see as the customers of the one-stop shops?"
This question will provide information on the likely customers of the one-stop shop, and may reveal if authorities have a differing perception of the one-stop shop customer or user.

Question 16 "How does the establishment of your one-stop shop form part of a general corporate strategy?"
Should the development of the one-stop shop be part of a general corporate strategy? This question will provide data on current practice and trends.

Question 17 "What market research if any, did you undertake before the establishment of
Is it useful to undertake market research before establishing a one-stop shop? It is hoped that this question will reveal trends in current practice.

Form B was designed to use similar questions, but it is meant for those authorities without a one-stop shop, or those authorities at the planning stage. Question 1 provided the address and contact name, which when analysed (to include analysis of responses from Form A) will provide the likely current and future extent of one-stop shop provision. Some emphasis has been placed on trying to find out why authorities did not consider it necessary to establish such a centre. Subsequent analysis might reveal if any trends emerged. For example, Question 2 "Does your authority intend to establish a one-stop shop, if not why not?"

Other questions were similar to those on Form A, such as,
- Question 3 "What standard information will be provided?"
- Question 4 "What information will not be provided?"
- Question 5 "What information delivery mechanisms will your authority employ?"
- Question 6 "What are the estimated costs of setting-up and running the one-stop shop?"
- Question 7 "Does the establishment of your one-stop shop form part of a general corporate strategy?"
- Question 8 "Who do you see as the customers of the one-stop shop?"
- Question 9 "Have you, or will you be undertaking any market research before establishment of your one-stop shop?"

It is hoped that the responses to the questions will reveal if there are any differences in view between those authorities with a one-stop shop and those without. Later analysis of the responses from both forms may also highlight trends in one-stop shop provision.
Analysis

The resulting information will be collated and fitted into an analytical framework as an aid to analysis and categorisation of the different approaches authorities may have to one-stop shop provision. To assist in this process the IBM STAIRS database system will be used. This is a freetext data retrieval system with which the researcher has experience working with. It has few drawbacks, as far as the researcher is aware, and is readily available. Should any problems occur with this system, technical advice can be provided.

Conclusion

From this general survey it is hoped a clear picture will emerge of the provision of such one-stop shops, the information they provide and the relationship to other influencing criteria. For example, the preliminary survey will show how many authorities have or are planning a one-stop shop, and the nature of these authorities. In addition, the scope of information held, not held, and what information would be included in the future. Also the use of information technology in the delivery and maintenance of the information held.

Trends as to which department manages the one-stop shop and associated costs will also become apparent, as will the number and qualifications of staff. It will also be interesting to compare opening times and locations and to see any emerging trends. Finally if any market research is undertaken and if the establishment of the one-stop shop does appear to be part of any corporate strategy.

All of these factors may contribute to the success or otherwise of the one-stop shop. It is therefore intended that the results from the preliminary survey will subsequently form the basis of a more detailed examination of a representative sample of authorities who exhibit these possible success factors.
REFERENCES


CHAPTER 4

The Preliminary Survey

There is a tendency for those who work in and serve local councils on a regular basis to forget the privileged knowledge they have about the workings of the council and the services it provides. Customers are rarely so fortunate, and if services are to reach successfully those to whom they are directed, clear understandable and ready accessible information should be available.

NW Leicestershire District Council "Getting Closer" (para.7.2) July 1991

A common complaint about local authorities was that members of the public sometimes had difficulty locating the right person to deal with their problems, they could be passed from office to office and have to explain their problem over and over again. Providing information on services may be beneficial to the authority in that it can show the local resident what services are provided by a particular authority and thus display evidence for value for money in relation to community charge or the recently introduced council tax. Authorities are also vying with each other to become the unitary authority for their area and it is considered important to be "closer to the public" and be seen as an effective efficient supplier of services. Many authorities are thus establishing one-stop shops to satisfy this need. The extent of this trend is however not presently available. Although this may seem a current idea Sheffield's `Civic Information Service' (in 1959) was answering about 30,000 enquiries a year, and Coventry's `Municipal Information Bureau' handled some 32,000 enquiries; of those enquiries 3,323 on the Rent Act and Improvement Grants, 4,000 of a general nature, 2,830 about health, and 2,299 about education. <1> Some authorities have taken the one-stop shop idea further. The Norwich Advice Arcade for example, which opened in 1987 encompasses other advice giving
agencies, including Age Concern and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Such services are well established as a source of community advice and information and co-operation between these agencies.

With the desire to assess the trends in current one-stop shop provision a survey was undertaken during the period April-May 1992. Questionnaires were distributed to County, District and Municipal authorities in England and Wales. Details of the questionnaire have been provided in Chapter 3. (Appendix 2 and 3)

Results

Of the 448 authorities approached 206 responded, which gives a response rate of over 45% This can be further divided by the type of authority, for example:

- County Councils: 25(47) = 53.2%
- Non-Metropolitan District Councils: 146(333) = 43.8%
- Metropolitan District Councils: 15(36) = 41.7%
- London Borough Councils: 20(32) = 62.5%

Figure 1 shows the percentage response rate. It is evident that all authorities were keen to respond and so be shown to have an interest in providing information about their services. There is a reasonable similarity in response rate for all types of authority.

Form A

Question 1

Of the 206 authorities which responded, 60 (29.3%) said that they had a one-stop shop, first-stop shop or information bureau.
PERCENTAGE RESPONSE

Percentage

Authority Type

County Cou
Non-Metrop
Metropolit
London Bor
Figure 2 shows the percentage number of authorities, by type which have a one-stop shop. It is significant that only 21.2% of non-metropolitan district councils responded positively to this question. Many district councils responded that they were presently concerned with the outcome of the current reorganisation debate and that establishment of such information centres was not a priority. The London borough councils in contrast show a 55% response - this may be accounted for by the well established trends for information provision within such authorities.

The authorities responding to this question:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Councils</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
<th>Pop</th>
<th>Net Revenue Expenditure per charge payer (£'s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bedfordshire</td>
<td>123,466</td>
<td>535,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cambridgeshire</td>
<td>340,911</td>
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<td>Kent</td>
<td>373,000</td>
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<td>Lancashire</td>
<td>306,951</td>
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<td>Leicestershire</td>
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**Metropolitan District Councils**

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salford</td>
<td>9,687</td>
<td>234,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>36,755</td>
<td>525,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solihull</td>
<td>17,864</td>
<td>203,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**London Borough Councils**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Pop</th>
<th>Net revenue expenditure per charge payer (£'s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brent</td>
<td>4,421</td>
<td>255,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croydon</td>
<td>8,658</td>
<td>319,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enfield</td>
<td>8,115</td>
<td>264,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackney</td>
<td>1,948</td>
<td>191,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston upon Thames</td>
<td>7,176</td>
<td>245,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambeth</td>
<td>2,727</td>
<td>232,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisham</td>
<td>3,473</td>
<td>226,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond upon Thames</td>
<td>5,526</td>
<td>167,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tower Hamlets</td>
<td>1,973</td>
<td>166,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wandsworth</td>
<td>3,492</td>
<td>256,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westminster</td>
<td>2,158</td>
<td>179,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Local Government Comparative Statistics - CIPFA. <3>
Figure 3 represents the breakdown of the number of authorities who stated that they had a one-stop shop by political party and authority type, it shows that 28 (46.7%) are Conservative controlled, and also that 22 (36.7%) Labour controlled authorities also had established one-stop shops.

Question 2
When was the first one-stop shop established?

Of the responses to this question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority Type</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Councils</td>
<td>1987(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1992(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Metropolitan District Councils</td>
<td>pre1950(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1974(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1975(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1979(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1984(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1988(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1990(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1991(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1992(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan District Councils</td>
<td>1985(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1989(1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
General Growth of the one stop shop

- County
- Metro
- London
- Non metro

Year:
- pre
- 1984
- 1985
- 1986
- 1987
- 1988
- 1989
- 1990
- 1991
- 1992
It can be seen from the above examples that although a relatively recent trend for county
councils (first response 1987 - Lancashire County Council) and metropolitan district
councils (1985 - Birmingham City Council), non-metropolitan district councils (pre 1950 -
"confidential") and London borough councils (1964 - London Borough of Hackney) have
a well established tradition of one-stop shop provision. Also it is evident that three
authority types show a growth in provision during 1990/1, in response perhaps to central
government legislation? Two however (non metropolitan district councils and
metropolitan district councils), show a significant decline in establishment of one-stop
shops after 1990. 1974 is significant as this was the date of the last major reorganisation of
local government. Figure 4 shows the general growth of one-stop shops.

Question 3
How many one-stop shops does your authority have?

Of the county councils that responded to this question four had 1 one-stop shops, one had
17, one 23 (Wiltshire County Council), one 8, one 9, and one 5.

Non-Metropolitan District Councils - twenty-one had 1 one stop shop, two had 2, five had
3, two had 4, one had 6, and one had 7 (Basildon District Council).

Metropolitan District Councils - three had one-stop shop, two had 2, one had 3, and one had 44 (Birmingham City Council).

Of the London Borough Councils that responded five had 1 one stop shop, four had 2, one had 3, one had 4, and one had 7 (London Borough of Tower Hamlets).

It could be assumed that there would be a link between the number of one-stop shops and population or area, however this does not seem to be the case, for example Wiltshire (pop. 561,900 area 348,070 hectares) has 23 one-stop shops, but a similar county - Leicestershire (pop. 897,700 area 255,297 hectares) has only 9. It might also be assumed that Wiltshire established its one-stop shops before Leicestershire, the opposite is in fact true, Wiltshire developed its first site in 1992, and Leicestershire in 1990.

Birmingham metropolitan borough with a population of 992,800 has 44 one-stop shops - this can be compared to Lancashire with a population of over 1,395,300 which has 17 one-stop shops. Sheffield metropolitan borough has a population of 525,800 but only has 2 one-stop shops. The London borough of Tower Hamlets (pop 166,900) has 7 one-stop shops, however the similar borough of Richmond upon Thames (pop 167,200) has only 3 one-stop shops. Indeed there does not appear to be any significant trend for the number of one-stop shops within an authority, more the political will to set them up.

Question 4
Where are they situated?

Answers show the total number of one stop shops by site - ie an authority can have many sites.

County Councils seven councils reported that they had located their one-stop shop within a library, one inner city, one shopping centre, one county hall, one within the Trading
Standards office, and one county had a mobile unit.

Non-Metropolitan District Councils - one within a market building, one mobile unit, one purpose built, two within libraries, two within housing offices, two with village halls/centre, three within Tourist offices, three within Area offices/District offices, six within the shopping area/town centre, and sixteen within the Council Office/Civic Centre/Town Hall/Municipal Office.

Metropolitan District Councils - one within a community centre, two within city/shopping centre, two within a library, five within the Town Hall/Municipal Offices.

London Borough Councils - two within District Offices, two within neighbourhood centres/Community Centre, three within the shopping centre, four within libraries, nine within town hall/civic centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmdc</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>Lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County/Mun/Town Hall</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading Standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile unit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose built</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing office</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist office</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area/District office</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inner City</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping /town centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market building</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village/community/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood hall/centre</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the results of the above table it can be seen that the county hall, municipal office, or town hall is the most popular site for the one-stop shop with over 51% of authorities stating this as their choice. 25% of respondents had a one-stop shop within a library (63% of county councils with a one-stop shop gave this answer) and 20% responded that they had a site in a shopping/town centre. These figures presented in a slightly different way show that some 76% of answers stated that the one-stop shop was situated on authority property, compared to 24% of answers giving a community location.

Question 5
What are their opening hours?

Opening hours by authority

County Councils

7 over 48 hours per week
1 over 42 hours per week
1 over 40 hours per week
1 over 36 hours per week
1 over 19 hours per week

Non-Metropolitan District Councils

1 over 54 hours per week
2 over 48 hours per week
2 over 47 hours per week
1 over 45 hours per week
1 over 44 hours per week
3 over 43 hours per week
4 over 42 hours per week
2 over 40 hours per week
1 over 39 hours per week
1 over 37 hours per week
1 over 35 hours per week
3 over 34 hours per week
1 over 32 hours per week
1 over 25 hours per week
2 over 24 hours per week
1 over 15 hours per week

Metropolitan District Councils

1 over 48 hours per week
1 over 42 hours per week
3 over 41 hours per week
1 over 34 hours per week
1 over 30 hours per week

London Borough Councils

1 over 60 hours per week
1 over 43 hours per week
2 over 41 hours per week
6 over 40 hours per week
1 over 37 hours per week

The trends for opening hours varied a great deal some offices were open from 8.30am-
7pm six days a week, whilst others were open only a few hours per week. For example Chichester District Council's information centre is open during the summer from 9-5.15, Mon-Sat and from 10-4 on Sundays, whilst Sedgemoor District Council's centre is only open for 12 hours per week. This could be because the one-stop shop is not busy enough to justify longer opening hours. Over 63% of the County Council one-stop shops are however located within a library (question 4), which could account for the longer average opening hours. Some 36% of London Borough's also stated that their one-stop shop was situated within a library, compared to only 6% of Non-Metropolitan District Councils.

The average opening hours were:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council Type</th>
<th>Hours per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Councils</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Metropolitan District Councils</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan District Councils</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Borough Councils</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general average is thus over 40 hours per week.

Question 6
How many staff do they employ?

County Councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>self service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>2 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>existing library staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Non-Metropolitan District Councils

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>1 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>2 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>four</td>
<td>3 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>4 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>5 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>6 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>7 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>8 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>three</td>
<td>9 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>11 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>23 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>120 staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metropolitan District Councils

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>2 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>3 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>7 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>8 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>13 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one</td>
<td>350 staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
London Borough Councils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff Level</th>
<th>Number of Councils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 staff</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 staff</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 staff</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 staff</td>
<td>two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 staff</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 staff</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 staff</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 staff</td>
<td>one</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis by authority type shows:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority Type</th>
<th>Staff Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County Councils</td>
<td>0(sself service) - 51 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Metropolitan District Councils</td>
<td>1 - 120 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan District Councils</td>
<td>2 - 350 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Borough Councils</td>
<td>4 - 19 staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above table that the London borough councils employ significantly fewer staff than in other authorities. This could be accounted for by assuming that generally the London borough's had less sites - and so needed less staff - this is not always so however, as the results to the earlier question has shown. Staff levels vary widely, for example Hertfordshire County Council's one-stop shop is self-service but Birmingham City Council employs some 350 staff, with 44 one-stop shops. To give further examples Lancashire has 51 staff but does have 17 centres, Basildon District Council has 120 staff with 7 one-stop shops, Richmond upon Thames has 8 staff with 3 one-stop shops, and Westminster has 19 staff with 2 sites.
Question 7
What qualifications did you ask for?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmdc</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None specific</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local Knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not caring/helpful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific-GCSE</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exp. graduate(manager)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exp of customer care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exp of loc government</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exp of info/advice work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library(assist/prof)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some 37% of respondents had "no specific" qualification requirements (London Borough
of Wandsworth) for their one-stop shop staff. 10% felt that a library qualification or experience of library work was desirable, (London Borough of Enfield). Other responses included "experience of advice work" (London Borough of Hackney) and "experience of customer care" (London Borough of Lambeth). "Previous experience" and "experience of local government" were also considered necessary qualifications by some authorities. The general lack of qualifications needed by one-stop shop staff is a worrying trend, and perhaps points to a lack of concern on the part of authorities. The training of staff should be an important consideration in view of the above results.

Question 8
Which department manages the centre?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmdc</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Museums &amp; Library</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR/customer Relations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading Standards</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary's Dept</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning/Transport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Leisure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal/Admin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Exec</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial/Revenue</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corp/Community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The "Chief Executive's Department" was given by over 13% of respondents as their response to this question eg. London Borough of Lewisham, other answers included "Arts/Museums and Library Department" (over 11%) eg Wiltshire County Council, and "Public Relations/Customer Relations" (10%) eg Lancashire County Council. Perhaps a more interesting comparison can be made by authority type, for example 45% of county councils responding suggested that the Arts/Museums & Library departments manage their one-stop shop; whilst some 16% of non-metropolitan district councils responding to this question stated the Chief Executive's department as their choice (which maybe largely due to the fact that non-metropolitan district councils do not manage Library departments at present), and some 36% of London borough councils who responded favoured the PR/Customer Relations department. As the above table shows there was a diversity of opinion as to which department should manage the one-stop shop - most facets of local government service are represented. It would be nice to think that the most popular answer (Chief Executive's Department) perhaps reflects the corporate nature of one-stop shop provision, in that information on all services should be provided.

Question 9.

What are the costs of the one-stop shop ie. setting-up and running costs?

County Councils  (1-23 sites, 0-51 staff)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment</th>
<th>Running</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£11,000</td>
<td>£80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£24,000</td>
<td>£19,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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It can be seen from the above table that costs varied a great deal. Establishment costs, for example varied from as little as £1000 to £300,000. Running costs again varied greatly from £700 (Maidstone District Council with 1 one-stop shop) to £4,199,570 (Birmingham City Council with 44 one-stop shops). It is difficult to make any meaningful comparison for this question as many respondents included both staff and building expenditure, whilst others included one or left both out of their answer. It is however obvious that there is a relationship between expenditure and number of sites and number of staff employed.

For comparison, eight of the 52 authorities planning to introduce one-stop shops provided anticipated start-up and/or running costs. Again responses varied widely as the scale and nature of one stop shop provision would differ between authorities. Notably, most authorities anticipated high ongoing expenses and lower start-up costs. The one exception (a county council), clearly perceives long-term benefit from initial investment of £175,000.

Question 10
What standard information is currently provided?

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Again it is apparent from the table that the answers to this question varied a great deal, however some 35% of all respondents felt that providing information on their services was important, (52% of all answers to this question included "authority services") as did over 26% who provided general information. (Hertfordshire County Council) 30% of respondents had an A-Z guide in their one-stop shop eg. Bedfordshire County Council. Some 25% also held tourist information (Chichester District Council) although no county council's gave this in their answer, whilst over 16% of respondents had information relating to planning or the "citizens charter" (London Borough of Wandsworth). Only 4% of answers stated that information was held on "other authorities" - which does beg the question as to what response customers are given should they try to obtain information on other authorities? It is also interesting to note that only 5% claimed to have any information relating specifically to council agendas/minutes, this is despite government legislation which requires all such information to be readily available. It maybe however that this information is available from the local library.

Question 11
What information will be provided in the future?

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From the above table it is possible to see the diversity of information respondents felt would be provided in the future. The most popular response was "all relevant" (18% of respondents) eg Bedfordshire County Council.
Question 12.
What information will not be provided?

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Over 26% of respondents felt that they would not want to provide tourist information in their one-stop shop eg. West Wiltshire District Council, this was usually because there was a separate tourist information centre in the locality. Some 10% decided against holding information on other authorities (Bradford Metropolitan Council), it is perhaps significant that half of these were metropolitan district councils.

Question 13.
How is the information kept up-to-date and correct?

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It is noticeable from the above table that up-dating methods varied immensely, from "manual" to "exhibitions" to "hard work" (a humorous answer). Only some 5% of respondents used any form of computer network (London Borough of Hackney), whilst over 21% relied on "departmental liaison" (West Wiltshire District Council). Some 18% still used "manual up-dating" methods eg. (London Borough of Tower Hamlets). This is an extremely worrying set of figures as there is virtually no mention of IT.
Question 14
What information delivery mechanisms does your authority employ?

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<td>Receptionist/staff</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/TV/cable TV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microfilm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minicom(hard of hearing)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 56% of respondents used some sort of computer or viewdata delivery mechanism eg London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Over 16% stated that they had a viewdata system eg. Plymouth City Council.
Question 15.
Who do you see as the customers of the one-stop shop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmdc</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers/Departments</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members/Councillors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General public/everyone</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents/locals/citizen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourists/Visitors</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charge payers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic residents</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Residents</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While many respondents gave more than one target customer group and a variety of terms were used, some 53% of responses included the term "general public", "everyone", "residents", "locals", or "citizens". However from the above table it can be seen that over 31% of respondents thought that the "general public/everyone" to be the main customers of their one-stop shop eg Hertfordshire County Council. 28% felt that "members/councillors" eg Forest of Dean District Council, were also important users. Although members could be expected to use the "one stop shop" from time to time they should not perhaps be considered as major customers. "Users" were also considered to be important clients (23%) eg Bedfordshire County Council, and "tourists/visitors(23%)" eg
South Northamptonshire District Council. "Officers/departments" (21%) eg. Kent County Council and "residents/locals/citizens" (21%) eg. Basildon District Council, were considered equally important. It is also interesting that county council respondents did not mention "tourists/visitors" as customers of their one-stop shops, the most popular answers being "general public/everyone" and "members/councillors".

Question 16.

How does the establishment of your one-stop shop form part of a general corporate strategy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmdc</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library strategy</td>
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<td>Decentralisation</td>
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<td>Corporate</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mission statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closer to the public</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formed part of strategy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Citizens Charter</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer Care/first</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Right to information</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve accessibility</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer orientated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve responsiveness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQM/Quality</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of officer</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Over 18% of respondents felt that the establishment of their one-stop shop formed part of their "customer care/first" corporate strategy eg. Sedgemoor District Council. An interesting correlation perhaps can be drawn here, with the answers to question 10 referring to the information held by the one-stop shop, some 52% answered that they held information on authority services and yet only 18% of respondents were involved in "customer care" strategies? One authority gave "death of an officer" as the strategy for establishment of their one-stop shop. This referred to an incident when an officer in an "open" office was doused with petrol and set alight by an irate member of the public - leading the authority to introduce a reception/one-stop shop facility to stop the need for members of the public to go into council offices.
Question 17.

What market research if any, did you undertake before the establishment of your one-stop shop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of A-Z</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural development</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MORI</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public attitudes survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market research/yes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked to Westminster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits/other authorities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access local needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot questionnaire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of demand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents survey</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55% of respondents had carried out some form of market research. With some 15% undertaking MORI surveys eg. Basildon District Council.
Form B

Form B was completed by those authorities intending to set-up a one-stop shop.

Question 1 was for contact name/address only (Appendix 3)

Question 2.

Does your authority intend to establish a one-stop shop if not why not?

Of the county councils which responded 8 (32%) said that they had plans to establish a one-stop shop.

Of the non-metropolitan district councils which responded 38 (26%) said that they had plans to establish a one-stop shop.

Of the metropolitan district councils which responded 3 (20%) replied that they wished to set up a one-stop shop.

Of the London borough councils which responded 3 (15%) replied that they wished to set up a one-stop shop.

The authorities responding to this question :-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Councils</th>
<th>Area (hectares)</th>
<th>Pop</th>
<th>Net revenue expenditure per charge payer (£'s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckinghamshire</td>
<td>188,279</td>
<td>641,500</td>
<td>848.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>232,846</td>
<td>959,000</td>
<td>847.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset</td>
<td>265,375</td>
<td>658,300</td>
<td>610.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devon</td>
<td>671,096</td>
<td>1,030,500</td>
<td>780.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durham</td>
<td>243,362</td>
<td>599,400</td>
<td>836.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area (hectares)</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Net revenue expenditure per charge payer (£'s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Wight</td>
<td>38,100</td>
<td>129,700</td>
<td>778.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lincolnshire</td>
<td>591,485</td>
<td>591,300</td>
<td>764.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powys</td>
<td>507,469</td>
<td>117,400</td>
<td>960.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District Councils</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babergh</td>
<td>146,982</td>
<td>77,700</td>
<td>88.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td>6,087</td>
<td>143,100</td>
<td>233.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>10,952</td>
<td>372,600</td>
<td>214.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bromsgrove</td>
<td>21,974</td>
<td>88,600</td>
<td>85.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnley</td>
<td>11,073</td>
<td>94,400</td>
<td>184.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carlisle</td>
<td>102,992</td>
<td>104,100</td>
<td>151.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelmsford</td>
<td>34,224</td>
<td>151,700</td>
<td>133.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copeland</td>
<td>73,711</td>
<td>71,900</td>
<td>123.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotswold</td>
<td>117,000</td>
<td>75,400</td>
<td>114.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynon Valley</td>
<td>17,723</td>
<td>64,600</td>
<td>242.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dacorum</td>
<td>21,020</td>
<td>132,000</td>
<td>115.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Derby</td>
<td>7,803</td>
<td>217,300</td>
<td>139.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Staffordshire</td>
<td>38,822</td>
<td>97,000</td>
<td>126.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eden</td>
<td>215,814</td>
<td>47,700</td>
<td>128.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exeter</td>
<td>4,719</td>
<td>103,600</td>
<td>113.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gillingham</td>
<td>4,507</td>
<td>95,100</td>
<td>120.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinkley &amp; Bosworth</td>
<td>29,742</td>
<td>98,900</td>
<td>66.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holderness</td>
<td>53,994</td>
<td>51,800</td>
<td>120.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>7,337</td>
<td>278,000</td>
<td>294.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes</td>
<td>29,211</td>
<td>90,800</td>
<td>127.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merthyr Tydfil</td>
<td>11,114</td>
<td>59,700</td>
<td>243.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Bedfordshire</td>
<td>50,351</td>
<td>114,800</td>
<td>80.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Pop</td>
<td>Net revenue expenditure per charge payer (£'s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Devon</td>
<td>91,539</td>
<td>64,100</td>
<td>112.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Sussex</td>
<td>33,292</td>
<td>119,600</td>
<td>81.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milton Keynes</td>
<td>31,044</td>
<td>185,000</td>
<td>176.67</td>
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<td>Newcastle under Lyme</td>
<td>21,109</td>
<td>118,700</td>
<td>118.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Wiltshire</td>
<td>76,588</td>
<td>114,300</td>
<td>91.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oadby &amp; Wigston</td>
<td>2,372</td>
<td>51,900</td>
<td>121.07</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poole</td>
<td>6,378</td>
<td>132,400</td>
<td>84.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester up'n Medway</td>
<td>15,997</td>
<td>149,300</td>
<td>10.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochford</td>
<td>16,898</td>
<td>73,600</td>
<td>108.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepway</td>
<td>35,691</td>
<td>88,500</td>
<td>166.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Derbyshire</td>
<td>25,900</td>
<td>72,800</td>
<td>93.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenage</td>
<td>2,606</td>
<td>74,400</td>
<td>180.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taff Ely</td>
<td>16,672</td>
<td>97,300</td>
<td>165.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttlesford</td>
<td>64,158</td>
<td>66,300</td>
<td>80.59</td>
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<td>Welwyn Hatfield</td>
<td>12,765</td>
<td>91,900</td>
<td>180.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Somerset</td>
<td>72,700</td>
<td>32,600</td>
<td>124.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Metropolitan Districts**

| Barnsley              | 32,863| 222,800                                     | 878.04                             |
| Wigan                 | 19,894| 310,400                                     | 953.53                             |
| Wirrall               | 15,772| 335,300                                     | 1004.90                            |

**London Boroughs**

| Bromley               | 14,170| 300,100                                     | 778.85                             |
| Camden                | 2,200 | 185,500                                     | 1467.39                            |
| Sutton                | 4,343 | 168,000                                     | 889.38                             |
Number of authorities intending to establish a "One Stop Shop"
Figure 5 shows this result in graph form and figure 6 shows the political breakdown of this response. It is perhaps significant that over 51% of respondents were Labour controlled, compared to the large response from Conservative controlled authorities replying to Form A - who already have established one-stop shops. Many authorities felt that they would like to establish a one-stop shop but were unable to do so at present because of financial restraints or until the unitary debate was closed.

Question 3.
What standard information will be provided?

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<th>nmde</th>
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<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Departmental</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other authority</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All county</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-Z</td>
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<td>Forms</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaflets</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Charters</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71
This table again shows the diverse nature of responses - the full range of information needed by the one-stop shop is represented. The most popular responses to this question were "general" (15%) and "A-Z" (13%). It is worth making a comparison with the responses to this question on Form A, when 26% of respondents stated that they provided general information and 30% an A-Z. A similar number of respondents (15%) stated that they hold "customer care/charters/contracts/quality" information, compared with 16% on Form A.
Question 4.
What information will not be provided?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmdc</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anything not related to</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not as wide as in</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourist</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other authority</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Council</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The answers to this question reflect the response to a similar question in Form A. For example, of the answers given 60% stated that tourist information would not be provided - this compares to a similar finding of some 55% of responses on Form A to the same question.

Question 5.
What information delivery mechanisms will your authority employ?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmdc</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multi-media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewdata</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the table shows there were many forms of delivery mechanism which would be utilised in any future one-stop shop, from "newspaper" to "local TV/radio". Over 34% of respondents stated that they would be using some form of information technology to deliver their information. In Form A 56% of respondents were using information technology.

Question 6.

What are the estimated costs of setting up and running the one-stop shop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Councils</th>
<th>setting up</th>
<th>running</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£175,000</td>
<td>£80,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£60,000</td>
<td>£360,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Non-Met Districts £10,000  
£100,000  
£2,000 £35,000  
£5,000 £3,000  
£70,000  
£14,380 £150,000  

Met Districts/London Boroughs no response to this question.

Like the answer to the similar question in Form A responses varied a great deal but it is evident that costs were widely different, for example setting up costs varied from £2000 - £175,000p.a., and running costs from £3000 - £360,000p.a. It was obvious that costs would vary as they are representative of the scale of one-stop shop provision within each authority, which would of course be expected to differ.

Question 7.

Does the establishment of your one-stop shop form part of a general corporate strategy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cc</th>
<th>nmcd</th>
<th>mdc</th>
<th>lbc</th>
<th>Tot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication with charge-payers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Care</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting community aspects of Loc Gov Bill</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy objective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closer to the public</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve services</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unitary authority</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75
Information | cc | mdc | mdc | lbc | Tot |
---|---|---|---|---|---|
New office | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
Citizens Charter | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
Equal Opportunities | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
Mission statement | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
More accessible/ease of decentralisation | 2 | 1 | 3 | |
Decentralisation | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
Just part of service | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
Report | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
Part of review | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
Several | 1 | 1 | 1 | |

Over 28% of respondents stated that the establishment of their one-stop shop formed part of a "customer care/closer to the public/charter" strategy (compared to 18% on Form A). This perhaps shows that the Government's policy for greater accountability in local government is beginning to take effect.

Question 8.
Who do you see as customers of the one-stop shop?

Charge/poll tax payers | cc | nmdc | mdc | lbc | Tot |
---|---|---|---|---|---|
Public | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
Users | 2 | 8 | 1 | 11 | |
Community | 2 | 2 | | | |
Councillors/members | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
Parish | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
Potential users | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
Users unable to travel | 1 | 1 | | | 1 |
As in most questions a great diversity of response, however 21% felt that "users" were the main customers of their one-stop shops, interestingly only half this figure stated that they thought the "public" could be users of this type of service. Analysis of the answers on Form A to the same question showed that 31% of respondents thought that the "general public/everyone" were customers of the one-stop shop.

**Question 9.**

Have you, or will you be undertaking any market research before establishment of your one-stop shop?
Some 38% stated that they wanted to carry out market research before establishment of their one-stop shop. Interestingly 50% of county councils, and over 39% of non-metropolitan district councils responded that market research would be undertaken.

Summary

Setting up a one-stop shop

Some 54% of authorities who responded to the questionnaire had set up a one-stop shop or were planning to do so. Of the number of county councils responding 76% had or planned to have a one-stop shop, 47% of non-metropolitan district councils, 67% of metropolitan district councils, and 70% of London borough councils. Obviously this is a good reflection of the priority authorities are giving to the establishment of such information centres. It is significant that it is perhaps a lesser priority for non-metropolitan districts? It is also noticeable that of the authorities who had a one-stop shop some 46% were Conservative controlled, whilst 52% of authorities who intended to set up a one-stop shop were Labour controlled.

When established

70% of authorities with one-stop shops established their unit after 1985 - after the Local...
Government Access to Information Act 1985 (see Chapter 2).

How many - what opening hours?

Over 55% of authorities with one-stop shops had one site, which usually (51%) was situated within their authority building. Opening hours varied a great deal but 56% of the one-stop shops were open over 37 hours per week with a further 27% open for more than 44 hours per week.

Staff

Staffing of the one-stop shop proved very difficult to analyse, but the majority of authorities with one-stop shops had 2 or more staff. However one authority had no staff as the one-stop shop was self service, whilst another employed some 350 staff. Authorities asked for a wide range of qualifications with 36% stating no particular preference.

Management

There was again a wide variety of departments provided by respondents in answering which department managed the one-stop shop, indeed it would seem that every local government service was represented.

Costs

The costs of setting-up and establishing the one-stop shop varied a great deal but setting
up costs could be between £1000 - £300,000, and running costs between £700 - £4 million depending on the size of the operation.

Information

22% of the respondents with a one-stop shop or those that wished to set one up, thought that an A-Z guide to services a good idea. Over 25% felt that information on general services should be included and some 17% mentioned that service charters should be held. Those authorities that had one-stop shops provided a wide sample of information they would wish to hold in the future, including "service agreements", and "business information", some stated that they would provide information "as needed" or "meet demand", however the most popular response was that "all relevant" and "health" information would be provided. When asked to state what information would not be provided 22% of respondents with, or planning one-stop shops decided that they would not include tourist information, other answers included information on "other authorities" and "commercial" information.

Information Technology

Only 5% of respondents stated that they would use a "computer network" when they were asked how they intended to keep information up-to-date (Form A: question 13). The majority preferred manual systems including "departmental liaison", "circulation lists" or publicity such as "leaflets" and "newspapers". However some 46% of respondents with or planning a one-stop shop stated that they used or would be using a computer system or viewdata for their information delivery. The political persuasion of the authority also seemed to make little difference in the wish to use information technology. It is perhaps interesting to note that of the authorities with one-stop shops some 56% stated that they used computer or viewdata technology for information delivery, this is compared to only 34% of authorities who were planning a one-stop shop.
Customers

The "general public", "users", and "councillors/members" were seen by respondents as their main customers. Other notable customers were stated to be "officers/departments", "residents/locals/citizens" and "tourists/visitors".

Corporate strategy

Over 29% of respondents with or planning a one-stop shop answered that the establishment of their "one stop shop" formed part of a "customer care", "closer to the public" or "citizens charter" strategy; however some 75% stated that the establishment of their one-stop shop did form part of a corporate strategy of some kind.

Market Research

Of the respondents having a one-stop shop or planning such, over 47% stated that they had conducted, or would conduct market research before establishment of their one-stop shop. Again the political make-up of the authority seemed to have no effect on the wish to conduct market research.

There has been a significant interest by the local government community in the results of the preliminary survey and in the further case-study analysis. This interest has been further stimulated by the work of the Local Government Commission - which is looking at the structure of local government, and recognises the value of one-stop shops in bringing local government services closer to the public they serve. Indeed, in its proposal to the Commission, the Isle of Wight County Council (the first authority in England to be reviewed) has suggested the setting up of a network of such centres <4>, one of many
authorities which will follow this lead.

The Local Government Management Board in particular has been keen to see the results of the analysis and has offered help and advice throughout the project. They have subsequently published the results of the preliminary survey. Other publishers and central government sources, notably the Charter Office has shown interest in the preliminary survey and the further case-study analysis.
REFERENCES


Case-study survey

The preliminary survey has provided a picture of the extent of one-stop shop provision in England and Wales. Analysis of the survey results have identified possible success factors.

However-

**How successful is the one-stop shop in the provision of local government information?**

No performance measure, whether used in isolation or together can give the complete picture, if only because it is never possible to apply them comprehensively and exactly....most measures are relative, since there can be no absolute objective standard. <1>

According to Potter <2>

The performance of a local authority can be assessed on three broad criteria:

* how economical it is in the way it determines budgets and plans services
* how efficient it is in its use of resources; and
* how effective it is in the services it provides.

Establishing what the objectives of the information service is an important part of performance measurement. Without a clear statement of objectives it will be difficult to know what is to be measured. <3> For example it is interesting to compare the mission statements of a public library authority,

...to supply to any person, whether adult or child, of an organised range of books and related material sufficient to meet his(her)
needs and demands; giving skilled professional assistance and providing ready access to the wider range of material which cannot be immediately to hand; an adequate reference and information service for all those requiring it and particularly the County Council itself; the provision of accommodation for research, study and the needs of the community relative to these objectives <4>

and that of an information centre/one-stop shop,

The Information Centre has been set up to ensure that Hampshire residents can find out about the many services the County Council provides. <5>

The major difference between the two is that the public library offers access to information in the widest sense, whilst the information centre or one-stop shop offers access to information primarily about services. Thus the one-stop shop can be seen to be the interface between the public and the authority. It is therefore crucial that it performs well and promotes a satisfactory image for the authority, and in addition proves to be cost-effective in terms of the expenditure as opposed to the return in more effective dissemination of quality information. Without a one-stop shop the authority must rely on individual departments to provide service information, some such as Libraries may indeed already have corporate responsibility to provide authority information, but may not provide this information as effectively as the one-stop shop.

In his study on 'Qualitative evaluation of information technology in communication systems' <6> Booth mentions a list of fourteen factors to be considered when evaluating a "communication system", these are listed under two headings:-

Quantitative: How much information can be transmitted
At what speed can it be transmitted
Cost of transmission
Reliability of transmission
Noise/interference associated with system

Qualitative: Timeliness of information received
Accuracy of information received
Precision of information received
Relevance of information received
Conciseness of information received
Richness of information received
Flexibility/adaptability of systems
Accessibility of system
User-friendliness of system

It will be evident that many of these criteria can be adapted to assess the one-stop shop, Meadows <7> provides a more relevant formula however

assessing how well an information centre or service is running
entails three different areas of investigation.

The first he suggests is the acquisition of information by the centre or service and the constraints or problems involved. Secondly is the organisation of the centre itself. Finally how well the requirements of the users are met.

To assist in this assessment and to enable these functions and others to be investigated it will be advantageous to produce a representative model of an authority with a one-stop shop, as well as a detailed model to represent the information flow within the one-stop shop itself. It is hoped that these models will aid further analysis later in the project.

The purpose of a model is not to develop the definitive way of representing the components of a complex activity. It is not important that a model be completely accurate...Models have value because they provide us with a framework for understanding. <8>

The authority without a one-stop shop

As mentioned in an earlier chapter the enquirer requiring service information may be confused, they will have no focus for their enquiries, they may not know which level of local government, or indeed central government they need to approach. <9>. Indeed "finding the right person" is a frequent response when people are asked about information
They will of course have the resources of the library available to use and in some cases a public relations unit, but many people may not be aware that they can obtain answers to service enquiries from their local library. Indeed according to a recent survey, local government enquiries accounted for only 2% - 6% of the total enquiries in the libraries sampled.

The enquirer is thus faced with approaching individual departments direct, this may be achieved in person or via a telephone, where a switchboard operator might make the decision as to the appropriate department. The departmental response may vary, some departments may have information sections - for example in social services - who might act as departmental gatekeeper, others might have an information officer or press officer, some will have enquiry officers. How long will it take to get the answer? The relevant person may be at lunch, on leave or just not available. If departments reply by post, how long will the enquiry take? They may not be able to answer the enquiry - what happens then? The enquirer might be passed on to another department, or authority, or just give up. Many may get an answer - is it the right answer? Some departments may have information delivery systems for all departmental staff to use. It may then be easy to find the right answer or the relevant person to speak to. Many will not have such systems in place however, and the enquirer may be passed from person to person before the answer is found. Because each department (including Library) and other agencies will provide their own response it may consequently be more difficult to establish any corporate quality control mechanism or customer care policy.

Model 1 - authority with a one-stop shop
This model represents an authority with a one-stop shop. The enquirer has now a focus for his/her enquiry. It will be important that staff are well trained and so are aware of the structure of the authority. The enquiry thus can be dealt with in an efficient manner, and the enquiry passed on to the right person in the relevant department or other authority or agency. The enquiry may of course be answered directly by the one-stop shop staff, however it will be hoped that the one-stop shop has an information system to back-up to assist staff, at the very least staff will have established their own lists of sources. The result for the enquirer it is hoped, is the correct response. The result for the authority is an efficient response which will reflect well on the services provided by that authority.

In all the processes represented in the model the arrows show two-way feedback from firstly the enquirer to the one-stop shop - to establish what information is required, secondly dialogue between the one-stop shop and departments/Library (if the one-stop shop not based there) other agencies - to contact the right person, or obtain the information, thirdly feedback from the enquirer to departments or other agency, if put in direct contact by the one-stop shop, finally there is also an arrow to represent feedback from the enquirer to the one-stop shop, the enquirer might have another question, or want more information. It is hoped that throughout this process the one-stop shop will take responsibility for the enquiry to follow through to a satisfactory conclusion.

Model 2 - information flow within the one-stop shop
As Meadows\textsuperscript{12} has suggested it is important that the information centre be well organised. The model represents the enquiry process within the one-stop shop. Following on from the enquiry, the staff in the one-stop shop will exercise their judgement as to where to find out the correct answer. They may be able to answer directly - using information sources held in the unit. In many cases this could well be in form of an electronic database of authority information, a printed A-Z of services or other directories and information held. If the staff in the one-stop shop need to direct the enquirer on to departments or other authority/agency then they should be aware of the right contact. The information delivery system, whether electronic or printed will often contain lists of contacts. This can also act as a corporate quality check as it is to the benefit of departments and other authorities/agencies to keep this information up-to-date. If all departments also have access to this data then any errors may reflect badly on the contributors of the information. The one-stop shop staff can also provide feedback on the quality of information provided by departments. They will receive feedback from the enquirer and could be a useful source for any checks the authority might wish to make on the quality of information provided. The one-stop shop will also provide a useful point to initiate any customer care policy. In all processes represented by the model the enquirer can provide feedback, and may indeed want ask supplementary questions. It may be hoped that the one-stop shop will also take responsibility for checking that the enquiry has been answered satisfactorily, often within a stated time-period, and to chase-up sources where necessary.
Case study analysis

Summary

The preliminary survey has shown the extent of one-stop shop provision in England and Wales at the present time. There are many varied examples of one-stop shops which have developed in different ways to suit conditions within the many authorities. However there are certain criteria which need further investigation. It is proposed that some example authorities will be chosen to provide a more thorough view of these operating criteria within the field of local authority one-stop shops. It is hoped that the resulting analysis of the sample, with comparison to the original survey, may provide some useful guidelines to authorities developing such information centres.

The examples chosen will be analysed fully with regard to the development of one-stop shop provision within the structural, financial, political and geographical boundaries of the authorities chosen. If possible it is intended to show the historical development of the particular model, with reference to authority decision making and departmental structure. It will not be feasible in this study to probe in great detail the political machinations which might influence the decision-making process. However general principles will be covered with reference to current literature and authority minutes. All aspects of the one-stop shop will be analysed using the framework of the original survey.

Proposal

Visits to example authorities will take place over an eighteen month period. Managers and staff will be interviewed, using a set list of subjects (to aid later analysis). A short questionnaire will be designed to assess user perception of the one-stop shop. Some authorities, if not all will have produced statistics of use etc, reference will be made to
these when possible. It will be necessary, before undertaking any further analysis to gain support from the management of the individual authority for the work. It is not envisaged that any of the authorities chosen would not wish to take part in the survey, as all authorities are keen to be seen that they are communicating effectively with their users.

Methodology

1. Letter to the Chief Executive

A letter will be sent to the Chief Executive of the case-study authorities requesting approval for the research (Appendix 4). A copy of the proposal and this methodology plus the user questionnaire will be included. It is intended to follow this introductory letter, after a period of about two weeks, with a telephone call to confirm the survey. This will also provide an opportunity for the researcher to be introduced less formally.

2. Visits

The visits to the authorities will be carried out by the researcher. It must be borne in mind that the timing of the visits will be purely arbitrary, and thus may not be the "best" month for the authority to be visited - it may be particularly quiet or busy - this will be stated and will become apparent when comparing statistics of use. It is intended to make at least two visits, which when appropriate will include different one-stop shop locations throughout the authority so as to give as complete a view of provision as is possible within the constraints of the timetable. Visits to selected authorities will take place concurrently. Some time during the first visit will be devoted to establishing contact with the management and staff of the one-stop shop and setting the scene for the survey.

3. Statistics and background papers

It will be necessary to explore the management structure, financial position, political
division and geography of the authority in order to assess reasons for the establishment of
the one-stop shop. If possible collection of background papers will be undertaken. The
majority, if not all of the examples will produce statistics of use, have committee papers
and reports, job adverts and descriptions - these will aid later analysis and will be collected
where possible. Similar data will be collected with regard to the number of sites,
management and staff of the one-stop shop. Particular emphasis will be placed on the
scope of information provided, its delivery and up-dating systems.

4. Active canvassing of the management and staff

During the visits to the authority the researcher will interview both staff and
management of the one-stop shop. It will be necessary because of time restraints, to
organise these meetings, particularly with the management (who may not work in the one-
stop shop), well in advance. As Finch <13> elaborates

There will be shape to the interview: different phases
reached through changes in gear. Setting the scene in the
introduction, the research topic and some background
to it is outlined in general terms....the basic tactics or
skills required of the interviewer include: the asking
of simple open-ended questions, avoidance of prompting
or leading questions, but extensive use of probing ("tell
me more about that etc"), never assuming meaning but
seeking elaboration.

It will be impossible to interview all staff and it is intended to only interview the staff
present in the sites visited. Interview information will be gathered in support of, and in
addition to the background and statistical information provided. Questions will be based
very much on the questions asked in the preliminary survey with additional questions on
matters highlighted from the earlier results such as on training and up-dating functions.
(Appendix 5) Results will be manually recorded and results analysed proportionately to
aid later comparison.
5. Questionnaire

A user questionnaire will be distributed over the period of one month by the staff of the one-stop shop in each authority (Appendix 6). In authorities with multiple sites a representative sample will be invited to take part in the survey. As stated earlier, results will be analysed proportionately to aid later analysis with those authorities having fewer or more sites. Questions will be asked about the user, how far they have travelled, their age and occupation, the nature of the enquiry and if they were satisfied with the answer given. The user will also be asked if they found the staff helpful or not? - how many times they may have used the service, and where they found out about the one-stop shop.

6. Passive observation

During the visits to the authorities it is also intended that some passive observation of staff and users will be undertaken by the researcher. As Wilson <14> describes this involves placing an observer in a social setting to observe all activities defined as of interest to the research.

There will be a danger that by observing, the researcher may interfere with the normal running of the one-stop shop and so provide a false situation to record. However the researchers perception of the efficiency or otherwise of the one-stop shop will be useful supplementary material. Particular attention will be placed on the effectiveness of the one-stop shop - both in terms of staff and user response. A record will be kept of the number of visitor's to the one-stop shop and the length of time without users. In the time available it will be only possible to visit one site within an authority. Comparison of the researchers perception in the sample authorities, although only cursory, will provide additional evidence to support or contradict other findings.
7. Report, analysis and presentation of findings

Data collected from the sample authorities, using the model above will be compared and analysed to provide some useful pointers for other authorities having such one-stop shops or wishing to set up such centres. All results obtained from the survey will be analysed using the STAIRS information retrieval system as used for the preliminary questionnaire. It will be necessary to structure the results using a check list or thesaurus of terms for entry to this system, to aid later analysis. Once these protocols have been observed it will be possible to analyse the data in many different ways. It is intended that a final report of the findings from each sample authority be presented to that authority in recognition of the support received.

Selection of case-study authorities

The aim of this study is to judge how the one-stop shop is successful in the provision of local authority information. The first part of the study was to conduct a survey in England and Wales to assess the trends and organisational profile of one-stop shops. <chapter 4> This has been completed and the results analysed in the previous chapter. From the preliminary survey it has become apparent that there may be features of the one-stop shop which contribute to how successful the one-stop shop is in the dissemination of local authority information. For example,

a) if the one-stop shop has access to information technology.
b) which department manages the unit.
c) staff qualifications and training.
d) location of the one-stop shop.
e) the geographic area to be covered.
f) information coverage.
g) cost.
The case-study authorities have been chosen to represent the smallest number of authorities which cover all of these aspects. They may offer different approaches to the situation, but each may include several of the above features which might be worthy of comparison. The sample authorities were selected from respondents to Form A from the preliminary survey as these are authorities already operating a one-stop shop service. It would thus be possible to judge if the above criteria are success factors.

It seems that one of the major contributing factors to the success - or otherwise, of the one-stop shop in the provision of local authority information, may be due to the degree of information technology used. This can be used to help in updating the information provided or in its delivery, as will be seen from the results of the preliminary survey. Two responding authorities with contrasting approaches in the use of information technology are Hampshire County Council and Lancashire County Council. From the response to the preliminary survey it became clear that Hampshire has probably one of the largest local authority network systems in England - HANTSNET. This network is used extensively for the receipt and dissemination of information, and the Public Services Index (electronic A-Z) within HANTSNET has been specifically set-up for the county information centre to use. In contrast Lancashire does not have such a sophisticated network system and relies upon a "standalone" pc based system. The way that both authorities have approached the concept of providing service information to the public is also different. Hampshire has developed an information centre, supported by a number of information points which will be based in many locations throughout the area, offering primarily service information. In Lancashire the information centres are based on a multi-purpose concept, many are situated in bus stations, and they offer a much more diverse range of information, including an emphasis on information on transport and welfare benefits for example.

The management of the one-stop shop is also of interest, as this almost certainly will have a part to play in the successful operation of the one stop shop. As can be seen from the results of the survey in chapter 4 almost every local government department seems to be involved with the management of such units. Hampshire County Council and
Lancashire County Council both are managed by central departments. Hampshire by the County Secretary's Department, and Lancashire by the Chief Executive's Department. The London Borough of Enfield - which will feature as another of the case-studies, is conversely managed by the Borough Arts and Libraries Service, and the one-stop shops ("first-stop" in this case) are located in libraries throughout the Borough.

The final case-study will be West Sussex County Council which offers an opportunity to assess the merits of the "CDT (county, district, town) Contact Point". This Contact Point is hoping to offer a true one-stop shop service - and provides services the other case-study examples do not. For example, perhaps better access to all three tiers of local government in one location, as well as being situated adjacent to a library, and having other agency and interview rooms nearby. West Sussex also uses information technology systems in support of the Contact Point. All four case-study examples show differences to approach with regard to staff qualifications and training, and offer opportunities to assess some of the costs involved.

Finally, the survey of Hampshire County Council, as the first example, will be treated as a pilot study to give direction for the further case-studies. It may be necessary to make some minor changes to the research strategy, which will become apparent as the pilot study progresses.

Conclusion

It is hoped that the study will prove how the one-stop shop is successful in providing access to local government information. The conceptual models have shown this capability in hypothetical form. Further analysis of the case studies will endeavour to substantiate this hypothesis with examples showing information acquisition, and general organisational criteria within the authorities selected, as well as user surveys when possible. From all the evidence and detailed analysis, operational guidelines will be formulated in the concluding chapter.
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HAMPShIRE

Geography

Hampshire is a county of great variety, the largest non-metropolitan county in England, having an area of 372,927 hectares and with a population in excess of 1.5 million. Most of the population live in the southern part of the county around the cities of Southampton and Portsmouth. Much of Hampshire is devoted to agriculture, but the bulk of employment lies in the service sector, both private and public. The County Council itself is a major employer, employing over 36,000 people. The headquarters of the County Council are in Winchester, the historic county town, and services are provided via a network of 1,200 local offices.

Budget

Hampshire County Council will spend over £1.2 billion on services to the 1.5 million people of Hampshire during 1992/93. This is divided between the services as follows: Education - £693m(57%), Social Services - £122m(10%), Highways and Transportation - £92m(7%), Police - £144m(12%), Fire - £28m(2%), Libraries and Recreation - £31m(3%), Other Services - £115(9%).

Politics

At the time of writing the Council is made up of 102 councillors, 57 of whom are Conservative, 24 Liberal Democrat, 19 Labour, 1 Independent, and 1 non-aligned councillor. The Council works through a committee system, deciding policy and allocating resources. Altogether there are 7 committees involved in this process: Policy
The personnel sub-committee of the County Council approved the setting up of the Information Centre on 8 April 1991. Although chief officers and politicians had the idea of an Information Centre for a number of years. The Information Centre had indeed been mentioned in 1986 (see Appendix 7) at the Development Panel meeting and again in 1988 at the Budget meeting (see Appendix 8) when £18,000 was budgeted for "news and information centre - restructuring". However, in 1991 perhaps the time was right politically (because of local government reorganisation and the need for authorities to publicise their services) and consequently the necessary finance was made available. The Information Centre itself opened on the 20 July 1992, situated in the new Mottisfont Court offices in Winchester. Its prime function is to answer questions from the public about County Council services, but also to act as a main reception for departments based at the County Council headquarters in Winchester. In addition the Information Centre is a "display case" for the County Council, with a prominent window display, public noticeboards and space for departmental exhibitions. It "showcases" County Council activities by selling books, maps and prints published by the County and also goods bearing the corporate identity. The Information Centre was the first place to offer accessibility to a whole range of goods produced by the County Council. Voluntary bodies closely associated with the Council can also sell articles through the Information Centre.
The Mottisfont Court offices, which house the Information Centre is situated adjacent to the main County Council headquarters building and is at the edge of the main shopping area in Winchester, but opposite the Great Hall - one of the major tourist attractions of the city.

Opening hours

The Information Centre is open from 8.30am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday and from 9.30am - 1.00pm on Saturdays, making a total of 46 hours.

Management

The Information Centre is managed as part of the Public Relations Unit of the County Secretary's Department, coming under the management of the Head of Public Relations - who also manages the County's Marketing Unit, and the News and Information Unit. The Information Centre comes under the direct control of the 'Information Bureau Manager'.

Costs

The revenue cost for the Information Centre is estimated at £42,000 per year. It was difficult to arrive at this figure when only six months into the project but this was considered "about right" by the manager of the centre. All capital costs are covered under different budget headings as the centre is housed in a general office building used by other sections and departments.

Information held
The Information Centre has a small collection of reference books, yearbooks, maps, directories but relies a great deal on the support of the "public services index" which is stored on the County Council's computer network - HANTSNET.

HANTSNET

In the early 1980s Hampshire County Council abandoned its policy of maintaining a central IT budget and gave control to departments - allowing them to decide on their level of IT spending. In practice this did not lead to fragmentation as could have been expected but more a strong wish by departments to pursue corporate standards and a desire to create a powerful computer network which could be used by all departments. This network became known as HANTSNET. Basically HANTSNET is a series of lists or indexes. Each point on to further indexes until at the last level there is either a document or a call to an application system. In some cases the information is the index itself. (see Appendix 9-11) From any screen in HANTSNET the electronic mail service, based on IBM's PROFS system is only a single key-stroke away. For communications further afield gateways are available to give access to services such as FAX, Telex and BT Gold and databases such as Campus 2000. Nearly all the district councils in Hampshire have access to the Network. Links are also being established with health authorities in the county. Other links include local voluntary groups. The HANTSNET terminal is now seen as an essential piece of office equipment, giving members and officers all the information and computing power they need. As more departments contribute information to the network and the number of users grows, the value of the service increases to the benefit of everyone. HANTSNET is probably the largest local authority network in the country with some 8,500 users (in the County Council and other agencies). The "public services index" has been set up corporately from information supplied by departments to provide service information. Thus providing a very useful source of information with contact names when possible. This is the index which is used more than any other by the Information Centre staff. (see Appendix 12-13)
A new development will be "public access HANTSNET", this is a mirror version of HANTSNET which members of the public will be able to use. It is currently being developed and may be produced in co-operation with a commercial company who will provide "rugged" touch-screen terminals, in exchange for advertising space. Leicestershire County Council have recently signed a similar agreement.<3> These terminals have the possibility of being placed in many locations.

Staff

The Information Centre is staffed by four part-time Information Assistants, plus the Centre manager. Two of the telephone operators (the main switchboard is in the same building), act as back-up staff for the centre. All the staff wear uniform and name badges. Before the opening of the Information Centre the staff had intensive training in customer care, use of the computer network 'HANTSNET', and visited departments to gain knowledge and contacts. More than sixty staff from sixteen departments have spent some time in the centre, answering questions from the public and using the computer network. The departmental staff were generally surprised at the level and type of enquiry taken in the Information Centre - enquiries (as will be detailed later in the chapter) can be on any subject - not necessarily on the work of the County Council and may require a very detailed response. The Information Centre is also dealing directly with service users, and some staff from support departments, not used to directly dealing with the public found this area of work challenging (according to the Information Centre staff). This training entailed a short description and introduction by the Information Centre Manager to set the scene. Plus additional actual experience of answering enquiries using the public services index, which is stored on the County Council's computer network system - HANTSNET (see Appendix 12-13 for screen examples). The training had been organised with the aim of promoting corporate awareness of what the Information Centre is trying to achieve - and to further the corporate spirit within departments. Departmental staff usually only spent one day in the Information Centre - although follow-up sessions could be arranged if required.
Job Descriptions (see Appendix 14-15)

A) Information Bureau Manager

The Information Bureau Manager has the job of "supervising the operation of the County Information Bureau" which entails supervising the four part-time staff plus administration as necessary. She has to make sure "provision of basic signpost information" is available on services provided by the County Council. Chief officers had been particularly concerned that the Information Bureau staff did not get into too much detail when answering questions from users - but to refer to the appropriate department when necessary. In practice this is something which is difficult to achieve, departmental staff may not be readily available, and Information Bureau staff may be reluctant to pass on the enquiry "as a matter of pride". The manager thus has the difficult job of setting the right balance between giving the fullest answer possible in the Information Centre - but also overseeing that staff know when to refer enquiries on. When users have been passed to departments to obtain answers to their enquiries - it is the managers responsibility (item 2 on the job description) to monitor the "follow-up" arrangements - this will usually mean a telephone call to the relevant officer to see if they have been able to answer the enquiry. All responses are recorded (see Appendix 16 for form) and reported to departmental chief officers when necessary.

The manager also is responsible for maintaining the "public services index" on HANTSNET (see Appendix 12) which in practice means reporting on the use of the index, and it's successes and failures. She will report directly to the "owner" of the information (each screen of information has an identifiable editor (see Appendix 13). In this way the information is kept up-to date as each editor is easily contacted if any user (not only the Information Centre staff) wants to comment on the information displayed. The electronic mail facility "PROFS" is a useful way of monitoring responses to enquiries passed on to departmental staff, in that it can provide a way of contacting the relevant officer and storing the reply for future reference. The Information Centre also acts as a
central reception for the County Council Headquarters complex.

Display and sale facilities are also offered by the Information Centre for products produced by departments and for corporate gifts. The manager is responsible for this function in addition to her other duties - indeed some local politicians (according to the manager) consider this to be a very important service.

The manager has taken on an increasingly important role in customer care training throughout the authority. It is evident that the Information Centre and staff are seen as a "model" for other staff.

The telephonists also are supervised by the manager of the Information Centre.

Other duties involve the supervision of letting of halls etc. Increasingly this function has been delegated to other staff within the County Secretary's Department.

B) Part-time Information Assistant

The Information Assistants are responsible for "assisting the Information Bureau Manager" in the supply of information in response to enquiries. Basically the Information Assistants use the public services index on HANTSNET to help them - but also have a vast range of leaflets about services, which they can distribute. They also act as receptionists for the Council's headquarters offices.

Statistics

The Hampshire County Council's Information Centre has been operating for some six months and the number of requests handled has risen from 500 per week to over 1,100
per week since November 1992. (see Appendix 17)

Sale of goods

Goods sold from the Information Centre have amounted to £1,067.65 during the six months the centre has been open. Unfortunately the Information Centre did not keep a record of the type of goods sold during this period. However items offered for sale can encompass departmental publications, reproduction maps, and postcards. Departments have often provided the goods on a "sale or return" basis. The Information Centre also provides merchandise which bear the corporate coat of arms, such items as mugs, tea towels, spoons, glassware and other souvenirs.

Promoting the County Council

The Information Centre is also a "display case" for the authority, and has exhibition space for departments to advertise their various functions. The Surveyor's Department, for example has recently held a display on road safety which has provided an opportunity to promote the range of safety helmets available from the department.

The future

Reception desks across the County will become "badged local information points" in an attempt to extend the success of the Information Centre to the entire county. Existing staff in these local centres will use HANTSNET to offer information to the public about county council services. There may also be a "public access" version of HANTSNET (as described later in the chapter) The first local information points are to be at Gosport and Eastleigh libraries (in the south of the County), further points are planned at Waterlooville and Farnborough libraries. Portsmouth library will also have a local information point as well as housing an Information Centre. The information point will operate when the Information Centre is closed (the library opening hours will be longer than those of the
Information Centre). Relevant staff training in the use of HANTSNET will be arranged. Initially libraries and some social services area offices will be chosen as future sites.

The volume of enquiries from the main urban centres may be more than existing staff in libraries or other county council offices can handle. The intention is to continue the success of the Winchester one-stop shop by following it with similar facilities in the major centres of population. The next step proposed will be to open an Information Centre in Portsmouth based in the Central Library and to follow this as soon as possible by other sites, moving initially to Southampton and Basingstoke.

It is envisaged that the Information Centres at Portsmouth, Southampton and Basingstoke etc will cost somewhere in the region of £30,000 a year to operate, with additional set-up costs in the first year of £15,000 each. These costs exclude accommodation because it is hoped to use existing premises. HANTSNET terminals and telephone lines to turn present enquiry desks into local information points will cost £20,000 p.a.

Section 2 : Analysis

The opening of new offices in Winchester gave the opportunity to develop the Information Centre idea which had been mentioned as early as 1986 (see Appendix 7). Management of the Centre was always in effect under the control of the County Secretary's department. The County Secretary is one of the most senior chief officers in the management hierarchy. Although it had been considered that management of the centre was to come under that of the County Librarian as the report (Appendix 18) dated May 1990 shows, earlier minutes of the Chief Officers Management Group dated 27th February show this was never really endorsed(Appendix 19). The Management Group fully agreed the County Secretary's view that the Information Centre should be managed as part of a new Marketing and Public Relations Unit, encompassing the existing News and Information Unit and the Marketing Unit. The County Librarian's view that the new
Information Centre be placed alongside the Local Government Information Unit, so as to draw on the Unit's existing network of national and departmental information contacts as well expertise in information provision, was ignored.

Why was this?

The opportunity presented by the construction of the new office buildings provided the impetus to develop the Information Centre. Geographically the County Secretary's Department was based a lot closer to the new building, with the County Library Headquarters being someway from the existing council offices. A new County Secretary had been recently appointed - with new ideas and a desire to raise the identity of the County Council, as well as perhaps to raise the profile of his department. The County Secretary is second to the Chief Executive in the management hierarchy. All major decisions are made by "first-tier" chief officers, of which the County Secretary was one and the County Librarian was not. The County Secretary maybe saw the opportunity to develop and reorganise his department and to form a new Public Relations and Marketing Unit to provide information and in addition raise awareness of the County. Perhaps public awareness of the County Council was more important than information provision?

Has this worked?

There is no doubt that the Information Centre is a busy place(see Appendix 17 for statistics) and has an important reception and "shop window" function. Part of its success must be due to the calibre of staff appointed, who are all dedicated to providing an effective service. Departments have also been successfully co-ordinated through an inter-departmental group, namely the IT Strategy Group. This group is attended by senior managers from departments who have a particular interest in the dissemination of information. It is because the Information Centre has the support of these officers that departments have provided the necessary back-up when asked for information. This two-way flow of information is exactly as shown by the conceptual models earlier.
Departmental support has been crucial to the success of the centre as has the development of the Public Services Index on HANTSNET, which has given the information centre staff rapid access to departmental information and contacts.

The future expansion of the Information Centre network depends on the success or otherwise of the Local Information Point project, using existing "reception" staff in existing offices but as badged "Information Points" (see Appendix 20). The primary sites for this project have been mainly in libraries and social services offices, although further sites will possibly include sites in community schools, careers offices, citizens advice centres and parish council/town council offices. This could be to reflect the desire by the County Council to be seen to be more community based. It is interesting to note that the small team leading this project is under the management of the County Chief Executive's Department, and includes the Information Centre Manager, a Principal IT Consultant (from the IT Services Department), but more interestingly the manager of the project is the Local Government Librarian. It has finally been realised perhaps that the Libraries Department has an important contribution to make. It could be that the network of Information Points will become more valuable as a vehicle for dissemination of authority information than a network of costly specialised Information Centres. The earlier survey as described in chapter 4 put the costs of providing an Information Centre at £5,000 - £80,000 for county councils.

Reference to the earlier survey also found that over 76% of authority "one stop shops" were situated on authority property - although Hampshire follows this trend, the move towards Local Information Points, possibly situated in buildings belonging to other agencies is interesting. As "public access HANTSNET" develops the possibility of providing service information, using the Public Services Index at any suitable location is encouraging. It could be for example that HANTSNET will possibly be available in the local supermarket.

Staff
The staff were not employed because of their training in information work. All but one of the staff, as the later questionnaire shows had no experience whatsoever. (Appendix 21) They are however all mature employees who have a desire to provide the best service possible. As the earlier survey has shown the lack of information qualifications was not peculiar to Hampshire (see chapter 4). It should have been possible perhaps to utilise the expertise available from within the County Library, by at the very least having library personnel on the interview panel. The Information Centre Manager was as a point of interest, secretary to the Deputy County Surveyor before taking her present position. All Information Centre staff undertook a six-month training course before the opening of the centre. In comparison it is worth noting that existing library staff being trained for the Local Information Point project, receive only one-days training. There can be no doubt as to which is more cost-effective! In retrospect it may have been better to employ existing information staff?

The manager of the centre has an enormous workload - it does seem sensible that some of her duties could be better placed elsewhere (see job description Appendix 14). She has responsibility for the management of the telephonists - this is primarily because two of them act as back-up staff for the Information Centre. Also responsibility for lettings of the "Great Hall" and budgeting for "Queen Eleanor's Garden". These functions do not seem to fit in well to a job description for an information centre manager. Perhaps there is scope for a general administration officer within the Public Relations and Marketing Unit. This would release the Information Centre Manager to run the Information Centre. The part-time assistants (see Appendix 21) in replies to the questionnaire, as described in chapter 5 stated that they wished to know more about the administration of the Centre. Office procedures, including ordering and "cashing-up" could be delegated, as well as lettings of the "Great Hall" and work for "Queen Eleanor's Garden" (if an administration officer did not take on this role). The general feeling of the assistants was that they were perhaps "not trusted" to carry out these tasks. This may or may not be the case but it must be hoped that the suggestion for delegation might be considered, which would release the manager for more serious - information centre orientated business - whilst giving the
assistants more responsibility and making them feel trusted members of the team.

Statistics (Appendix 17)

It is interesting to note that the largest number of enquiries received in the Information Centre (if analysed by department), were for the Secretary's department, with 17.6% of the total. Of course the Information Centre is placed within the structure of this department, and also acts as the central reception for all the departments within the main administrative complex. Indeed some 32% of "enquiries" received over this period were of this nature. The second largest number of enquiries are for the Surveyor's department (16.8%), this is perhaps more significant, and will include enquiries on road maintenance and street lighting as well as waste and recycling.

Information provision

It is obvious that in practice not all questions may be answered with the same amount of accuracy - although by using the Public Services Index on HANTSNET some consistency of response from the Information Centre staff is assured. It must be essential that the staff provide correct information. From observing the staff the researcher is of the opinion that the majority of enquiries are at least partly answered by consulting the HANTSNET index. When an answer is not readily available it is possible to provide the contact name of the appropriate officer. Departments, particularly large information holders such as Libraries are very concerned that users may not be given the fullest response possible. The training of both Information Centre staff in the work of departments, and the training of departmental staff in the work of the Information Centre has been seen as going some way to keeping all staff aware of what information is corporately available. The researcher was particularly concerned however to overhear - during observation, a member of the Information Centre staff say that there were no military airfields in Hampshire. It would have been more appropriate to forward the enquirer to the local reference library, where there books are available on the subject.
There can be no doubt that the Public Services Index is a great help in answering questions about the County Council - but on more general topics it can be misleading. To give another example - when demonstrating the index on a recent training session the question asked was "where do you go to find the answer if someone asks about being a firefighter?" Obviously the answer can be with the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service - as pointed to by the Public Services Index, however no mention was made of the careers section in the local library or of the careers guidance service. It will be therefore important that careful consideration be given to analysing the answers given to users, and modifying the available information when necessary. HANTSNET offers considerable information - in many cases the complete answer - but more information may be available elsewhere. It is hoped that the exchange training sessions which have been recently organised will do something to improve the situation.

The Public Services Index is basically a keyword listing of information provided by departments (see Appendix 12-13). It is therefore only as good as the information provided - if departments do not wish to include their information then it will not appear. The Library department has loaded some information but it is impossible to list all information held in a library, only main subject areas. The Public Services Index was developed by the IT Services Department - with no Library input. As more staff use the Index the situation will improve. There are screens (see Appendix 22) where users can comment if they find information missing or wrong information - the message can be sent directly to the department concerned. As the Index develops and as more Local Information Points within libraries are opened it may become apparent that further work needs doing - cross referencing for example. It is the researchers view that as Libraries become more involved their expertise will be taken into account to improve the system.

The Survey

Visits to the Information Centre in Winchester took place on the 28th January and
the 3rd February 1993. The user questionnaire was distributed for four weeks starting on
the 18th January 1993. During the visits the researcher interviewed the Information
Centre manager as well as the staff on duty (all four full-time members of staff were
interviewed). The researcher also recorded the number of visitors to the Information
Centre over a given period, and the length of time when no enquiries took place. Passive
observation was also used by the researcher to gain a perception of the activities of the
Information Centre.

Results

Part 1

Interview with the manager of the Centre, conducted by the researcher using the set list of
questions as in chapter 5. (See Appendix 21 for results)

In the answer to the question (e) about plans for further centres it is perhaps interesting to
note that the manager mentioned the Local Information Point project and the prospect of
having a Local Information Centre in the shopping area in Southampton. This supports the
idea mentioned previously in the chapter of placing Information Points in non-authority
sites. The manager also stated in question (m) (when asked about information she would
like to provide in the future) that more business information was required, this follows the
trend of the earlier survey (see Chapter 4). When asked about new technology in question
(n) the manager mentioned the monitoring system being set up on HANTSNET (see
Appendix 23 for screen details). In practice this is a system whereby users can comment if
they find wrong or missing information, a message can be sent directly to the information
provider (identified at the top of each screen of information) and the HANTSNET
administrator. This is a very good system to enable users to instantly comment on
information. The user will also have a copy of his/her note containing the date when it
was sent. If no action is taken to improve the situation then the original note could be sent
on to a more senior person to effect action.
Interview with the staff of the Information Centre, conducted by the researcher using set list of questions as outlined in Chapter 5. There are four part-time members of staff, who for the purposes of this research will be called W, X, Y and Z. All interviews were carried out individually and in confidence. (See Appendix 21 for results)

It is noticeable that all of the staff identify Social Services as being the subject of the majority of enquiries in their answers to question (a). However when broken down by department, Social Services accounted for only 10.2% of the total enquiries. The reason for this discrepancy could be that, of the enquiries the Information Centre staff receive, the ones that they remember most are those from the homeless or other Social Services clients after hours, which they may find difficult to answer. Social Services enquiries usually require more detailed answers and may take more time. Consequently, although not in fact the major departmental enquiry, it may seem that way. In their answers to question (b) it is curious to note that one member of staff finds it difficult to find names and addresses of outside bodies, this is despite the six months of training. Staff member Z had "no problems" it would be easy to assume (correctly) that this staff member was library trained. (see question (g))

When asked why they found it difficult to supply information in question (c) the responses seem to point to the need for an improvement in the presentation of information on the HANTSNET Services Index. For example it is easy to identify details of a councillor if their name/address are known - but not so easy if an enquirer asks for the address of their nearest social services office or library. Although at present there is a gazetteer of Hampshire place names - and it is possible to find information about councillors by going through the relevant indexes, not all information is linked in this way. HANTSNET is constantly being added to - as the demand for additional information increases and as
additional users contribute to the system. It will never offer the complete answer but can always be improved. By listening to the views of users and making contributors responsible for their own information and its accuracy, the County Council's IT Services Department who manage HANTSNET, hope to improve the system. As the technology improves, it is possible (according to the IT Department) to add more and more information and present it in different ways. One member of staff however seemed to have no problems! In their response to the question (d) about improvements, the answers again point to some additional information which may be needed on HANTSNET (names and telephone numbers of local lecturers, more business information) plus a question-mark over the position of the enquiry desk, (staff unable to see side entrance and part of information centre - see plan Appendix 24) and added leaflet space. It may be found however that local lecturers will not be keen to have their telephone numbers available for public view.

In their answers to the next series of questions (e-i) about their background and training it is apparent that all the staff have worked in the centre since it opened, and like the job - especially meeting people. Only one member of staff however had a library background. This does seem rather strange for an information type position, although as discovered earlier no information qualification was required from the applicants for the job. All the staff had six-months training which all felt had been successful. This training did not include any detailed work within the library department - which would have provided staff with training in handling enquiries. In practice a days visit to Library headquarters was all that was provided - to hear about the structure of the department. The staff all felt that they would like some training in the administrative procedures of the Information Centre - this would be very worthwhile and provide the opportunity to release the manager from much of her routine tasks.

Part 3
Passive Observation

The researcher visited the Information Centre on two occasions during January and February 1993 for a period of three hours on each visit. Visits were two weeks apart and included both a morning and afternoon session. The majority of this time was devoted to observing the Centre at work. During the visits particular emphasis was placed on recording the number of visitors to the Centre and the length of time without visitors. Interestingly the Information Centre at this time did not record the number of visitors - but only the number of enquiries received (this did not take into account the number of people browsing the information on display). The results were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Session A</th>
<th>Session B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of visitors -</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time without visitors -</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
<td>10 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During each session the researcher also noted his perception of the work of the Information Centre. During session A the researcher's perception was of a very busy Centre, where visitors were nearly always present. A lot of visitors were content with browsing the extensive leaflet display. The staff were seen to be efficient and courteous, always approaching a reticent visitor with "Can I help?". Session B was equally as busy, and during this period a meeting was being held in one of the offices in the building; the Information Centre doubles as a Central Reception for the County Council Headquarters and therefore a number of the visitors were attending that meeting and needed to be checked on a list of delegates, given badges and directed to the meeting room. The response of the staff was very impressive, and as before they were always courteous and efficient. The researcher was particularly impressed by the answer provided for a visitor who wanted to know the address of the Home Secretary - this was obviously not a question about the Authority but nevertheless was provided quickly and efficiently by the member of staff concerned. As in the earlier session a lot of visitors just browsed the
As some users identified in the User Questionnaire it is difficult to find the entrance as both door and windows look the same - indeed while the researcher was present a user did try to walk through one of the windows. Some improvement could be made to this situation. Also the position of the enquiry desk - which is against a wall (see Appendix 24) - makes it difficult for staff to monitor users entering from the disabled entrance. An island counter would perhaps have been the solution. The counter also has a bevelled shelf on the enquirer's side - this is at child height and might cause injury - some nasty sharp areas are apparent.

Part 4

User Questionnaire

The user questionnaire (see Appendix 6) was distributed over a period of four weeks by the Information Centre staff. Users were invited to complete a questionnaire and to place it in the box provided. Seventy-six forms were returned at the end of the period. This response rate was disappointing but can perhaps be explained by the fact that a) the distribution was not proactive, b) a lot of users of the Centre were in-fact visitors to the building (reception type enquiries) or c) obtained quick answers to their questions which staff did not feel merited completion of the questionnaire. The researcher did feel that an element of pre-selection may have taken place, whereby the staff of the centre only gave the questionnaire to those users who they felt would provide a positive, complimentary response. Particular attention will be placed on this element in future visits by the researcher to other one stop shops. However, it was not obvious that this was occurring during the visits by the researcher to Hampshire's Information Centre.

Responses
Question 1
Where do you live?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No of responses</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 1 mile</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 5 miles</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 miles</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Over 60% of users lived within five miles of the Centre. Winchester has many outlying villages and its catchment area is fairly large, it is also has many tourist attractions, which could explain the 39.5% visiting the Centre from over 10 miles away.

Question 2
What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No of responses</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significantly 25% of users were between the ages of 45-54, and 21.1% aged between 25-34. Very few users were below the age of 18(2.6%) or over 65(2.6%) years of age. Users in the 18-54 age range (82.9%) are maybe those who use most services provided by the authority. It could be expected that more children would use the Centre, as they may be undertaking school projects about authority services. Perhaps its rather remote location in relation to Winchester's main shopping and residential areas is not
helpful in this respect? Also the Information Centre has only been open for a year - perhaps the publicity has not reached them yet?

Question 3
What is your occupation?

A wide range of answers were provided to this question. Responses ranged from, farmer, local authority employee, director, social worker, teacher, to unemployed and retired. It would appear that a wide range of users visited the Centre. This is consistent with the replies to the question about customers of the one-stop shop in the preliminary survey where there was also a wide range of groups identified, "general public", "everyone", "residents", "locals" and "citizens" being the most popular replies.

Interestingly, 20% of the respondents to this question however were students - which could have been expected, as many were perhaps using the centre to complete project work. There are also two large colleges as well as several schools in the area. Students also visit the area to see the tourist attractions in Winchester, particularly King Alfred's round table which is housed in the Great Hall, opposite to the Information Centre.

Question 4
What is the nature of your enquiry?

Again a wide diversity of answers was given to this question including "visiting local office", "attending meeting", "census information", "project on local area", "resource materials", "general information", "looking at electoral register" to "trying to find circus elephant".

It could be expected that the Information Centre would receive a lot of directional type enquiries, as it acts as the central reception for the building complex. This was not generally so and the responses to this question were a reflection on the range of
information about services which the Information Centre provides.

Question 5
Were you satisfied with the answer you were given?

Responses to this question were provided on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the lower "not satisfied" end of the scale to 5 being "very satisfied". Some 72% of respondents stated that they were very satisfied with the answers provided (5 on the scale) and an additional 14.7% "very satisfied" (4 on the scale). Comments were also complimentary, for example, "lots of good information", "good range of leaflets", "very helpful". Only 13% of respondents felt the answers provided fell below the 3 (average) level and only 2 (2.9%) of the respondents were not satisfied (1 on the scale) with the answer given.

Question 6
Did you find the staff, not helpful - very helpful? - on a scale of 1-5.

Some 73% (5 on the scale) of respondents to this question felt that the staff had been very helpful, and over 92% responded between the upper 4-5 range. Only 5 (7%) of respondents answered that the staff were not helpful (under 3 on the scale). Comments were all favourable for example: "quick and efficient", "ladies very helpful" to "will call again".

Question 7
How many enquiries have you made of this service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no of responses</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is apparent from the response to this question that the majority of users (84.9%) have only visited the Information Centre 1-3 times. This can be explained when compared with the result from question 8, which asked users how they had found out about the Centre. The highest response to this question was 43.9% of users, the majority of whom were "just passing", never having visited the Centre before. From this response it can be seen that the majority of users make few visits to the Information Centre. It is thus important that they get the correct information - one-stop shop means just that.

Question 8
Where did you find out about this service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>No of Responses</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>local paper/magazine</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>friend</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council office</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>telephone directory</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other local authority</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local radio</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>posters</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bookmarks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doctors</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hospital</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest proportion of respondents to this question (43.9%) stated that they were "just passing" or "walking past". Although the Information Centre is not in the main shopping centre of Winchester it is very near to a large car park, and shoppers would need to pass the Centre on their way to the shops. It is also situated opposite The Great Hall (housing the "Round Table"), and on a route to the Railway Station. Thus a lot of use
could be "passing" trade. A significant number of users (29%) heard about the Centre from a "Council Office". This again is understandable considering that the Information Centre acts as the main reception for the County Council Offices, and that many staff will be attending meetings. From these results it does seem that publicity for the Information Centre could be improved.

Question 9
Have you any other general comments?

There were twenty-three responses to this question - some 30% of the responses to question 1. Most respondents were very positive, giving such responses as, "looks lovely", "very helpful", "very eager to help", "what a super place", "friendly and helpful". Some respondents however posed questions, "fire notice needs to be made more visible", "difficult to find entrance", "difficult to see which is door - too much like windows". Other respondents felt that the Information Centre was in a "poor position; need Information Centres around County", and that the Centre should "let people know" about the service it provides.

Conclusion

Hampshire County Council Information Centre is a successful dynamic example of the one-stop shop. It can be seen from the analysis of the user questionnaire that the users of the Centre were more than satisfied with the services provided. The manager and staff are committed and enthusiastic and it is evident that they are keen to provide information about the services undertaken by their employer - the County Council. The success of the Centre is also partly due to the supporting services index held on the County Council's computer network - HANTSNET - with each individual department playing an important role in up-dating this information and offering other back-up facilities. This indeed is a crucial element to the success of any one-stop shop. As the conceptual models have shown the one-stop shop can provide a focus for the dissemination of authority
information. In addition a channel to enable an information exchange between departments and other agencies. The Hampshire Information Centre is primarily concerned with providing information about the County Council, but does not shy away from providing information on other agencies, be they District Council, health or service authority. This again is important - for the users will not differentiate between providers of information, but will judge on response provided.

Some questions remain nevertheless - the high number of reception type enquiries identified in the statistics reveal that the Centre could be seen more as a reception than as an information centre. The sale of goods such as tea-towels, silver spoons and other county souvenirs also does little to improve this image. The total lack of involvement by the Library Department - the informational professionals within the authority, is quite extraordinary. For reasons of departmental politics, no consultation apart from at a very early stage, seems to have been held between Libraries and the Secretary's Department who manage the Centre. This is a serious oversight and has meant that the Centre has missed opportunities for training and co-operation. To a degree the situation is improving with the development of Local Information Points within libraries. However, this lack of involvement has meant that the public are in many cases in danger of not receiving the fullest possible information, as earlier examples have shown. The Information Centre staff are too reliant on the Public Services Index - which works very well - provided staff remember the other information sources available. Library trained staff will not have this problem - why list railway timetables on the Services Index when British Rail provide a hard copy - which is going to be more up-to-date?

HANTSNET and the Public Services Index have been developed by the central IT Services Department. To their credit they have involved all departments in its development and have worked especially closely with Information Centre staff. The Library Department however is not one of the largest departments and its influence has been insignificant. Consequently there is a danger that authority staff, including the staff of the Information Centre will not be aware of the information resources available from
libraries. The Information Centre staff do appear to have excellent customer care skills, but if the information provided to the customer is incomplete are they doing a good job?

Hampshire was also the "pilot" for the case-study methodology, which in general worked well. The staff interviews were particularly rewarding. Although some responses were received from the user survey, the response rate was disappointing. The management of the Information Centre were also concerned that the public would be confused with a planned authority-wide survey to test public perception of the changes suggested by the Local Government Commission. This part of the survey might be more difficult to accomplish in other case-study authorities, due to similar concerns.
REFERENCES


2. Hampshire County Council, County Review 1992


CHAPTER 7

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD

Geography

The London Borough of Enfield is located on the northern edge of Greater London, being twelve miles from the City. Over a quarter of the Borough is green belt land in use as country parks, open spaces and farming. Thus Enfield has the dual advantage of being close to London but having the feel of the country. There are five main shopping centres, including England's largest local authority built shopping centre at Edmonton Green.<1>

The Borough is well served with public transport, rail services both mainline and underground are available, as are major roads such as the M25, which runs across the northern part of the Borough. Enfield's population is 269,000 and in area the Borough is some 8,115 hectares.

Budget

Enfield has a budget of over £152 million to spend on services.
Politics

The Borough Council is made up of 66 councillors of whom 35 are Conservative, and 31 Labour. There are seven committees: Corporate Services, Education, Environment, Leisure Services, Policy and Social Services.

Strategy for the development of the "First-Stop Information Point"

Background

At the meeting of the Amenity Services Committee of 31st January 1990 approval was given to a funding package for the setting-up of One-Stop Information Shops in libraries. It was decided that the One-Stop Information Shops would offer a "local information service to all the people of Enfield, covering the whole spectrum of information". The committee however did not like the term "one-stop-shop" as this "perhaps promises more than it can deliver", their preference was for the term "First-Stop information Point". A pilot project was initiated in Palmers Green library before deciding to launch the service officially. The first of the Information Officers was appointed in October 1990 to staff this site. (Appendix 25)

Location

First-Stop Information Points are presently at four libraries: Palmers Green, Ridge Avenue, Edmonton Centre, and Ordnance Road. It is proposed that once these are
established the viability of extending the service to other libraries in the Borough can be evaluated. Apart from the Edmonton Centre, where the Information Point is situated in the foyer of the council office building (adjacent to the library) the other three Information Points use existing library enquiry desks - suitably signed in addition as "First-Stop Information Points". There is a separate reception point within the Borough Council's Office building at Enfield. This service is managed by the Corporate Services Department. It does seem that perhaps this service would be better managed as part of the First-Stop project. However Corporate Services are unlikely to want to give control of the reception area to the Library Department.

Opening hours

As the First-Stop Information Points are situated in or adjacent to libraries they operate the same opening times. Edmonton Green is open from 9-7 three days a week, 9-5.30 on Fridays and 9-5 on Saturdays, it is closed on Thursdays. Palmers Green is open 9-8 three days a week, 9-5.30 on Fridays and 9-5 on Saturdays, it is closed on Wednesday. Ordnance Road and Ridge Avenue libraries have the same opening hours. Giving an average opening of 48.75 hours, in the preliminary survey it was found that on average sites were open for over 40 hours a week.

Management and staff

The First-Stop service is managed as part of the Borough Arts and Library Service, under the management of the First-Stop Manager who reports to the Libraries Development Manager (Appendix 26). The First-Stop service is co-ordinated centrally from an office based in Enfield Central Library. The central office has a staff of three: the Manager, an Information Co-ordinator and an Information Assistant. Each First-Stop
Information Point is managed by a First-Stop Information Officer, who is responsible to the First-Stop Manager for operation of the Information Point, but in practice is responsible to the local Librarian for day to day management (see Appendix 27 for job description). The First-Stop in Edmonton Centre also has two part-time assistants provided by the Borough Corporate Services department. Only the two staff at Edmonton wear uniform. All staff receive training in customer care and have had specialised training in welfare benefits, as well as training with Borough Departments about the services provided by the authority. As all but the Edmonton First-Stop Points operate in libraries and may use library staff to answer First-Stop enquiries, it may be appropriate for these staff to receive the same level of training as the First-Stop staff? Indeed, this situation does seem a little odd. The First-Stop Manager takes an active part in an inter-departmental liaison team which looks at the supply of information in locations outside the Civic Centre. It is hoped that in this way the First-Stop team can have an influence on information provision throughout the authority as a whole.

Job Description (see Appendix 27)

First-Stop Information Officer

The First-Stop Information Officer in each of the four sites has the responsibility "to provide an effective and responsive direct service to customers". Section 2 of the job description also requires the post holder to only refer customers to other locations where essential, and further states in section 3 that appointments will be arranged for customers to visit other "appropriate organisations as required". As stated earlier in the chapter it had been realised that a first-stop service was being offered and that the Borough does not have the resources to offer a true one stop shop service. Section 5 of the job description requires the officer to "specialise in a particular field of information" the idea being that each First-Stop officer would specialise in a particular subject field. Would this however mean an extra level of referral - in that if customers are passed on to an information officer
they may very well need to be forwarded on again to obtain the answer to detailed enquiries - particularly of a financial nature? It will be especially difficult for First-Stop staff for example to keep abreast of all the detailed changes in Welfare benefits for example. The First-Stop officer is encouraged to participate in "library information events" (in Section 6) and liaison with other library staff. This is particularly valuable and involves the whole department in the running of the project and does not give the impression that the First-Stop team is the "elite". In practice however, as has been stated earlier, the First-Stop staff do receive specialised training - which does differentiate them from other library staff! The First-Stop team have organised a number of community information events where they advertise the First-Stop service and also find out the information needs of the local community. In section 8 the First-Stop officer is charged with production of hard copy material. In practice the First-Stop central office in Enfield has a Desk-top-publishing system. The First-Stop information officers have the opportunity to produce their own material. This works very well and means that the information can be as up-to-date as possible as there are no printing delays, and alterations can be carried out almost immediately with little expense. Each First-Stop officer has to maintain an "awareness of customer needs" (section 10) this can mean listening to users comments or actively seeking non-users and trying to solve their information needs. Section 15 of the job description requires the First-stop officer to "take charge of the library where the First-stop Information Point is based". This refers to the joint role of the First-stop staff who also are part of the local team.

The job description is very long and detailed, containing 19 sections. The First-Stop Information Officers have a major responsibility for running their First-Stop Point with the additional responsibility of being members of the local library team. The central office in Enfield is operationally someway away from each of the Points. Although the First-stop staff are responsible to the First-Stop Team Leader who is based at the central office, in practice direct supervision comes from the local branch librarian. This dual responsibility, although a good idea for the local branch - in that they are provided with an extra member of staff, may mean that the First-Stop Information service is not always seen as a priority.
at times of staff shortage, when the First-Stop officer may be required to work elsewhere. Having only one member of staff responsible for the First-Stop Information Point in every site except Edmonton, also may mean either closing the Point when that member of staff is absent - or by staffing it with library staff, who may not be as well trained, both in terms of the provision of information about services, but also in customer care. Thus the service provided may not be the service it was intended to be.

Costs

The estimated costs of the staffing for the First-Stop Information Service are expected to be in the region of £123,600. Costs for resources which includes the Borough Information System in Libraries is estimated to be £113,000. Making a total figure of £236,600 for provision of the service. As the First-Stop Information Points are situated in libraries - building costs are not included.

Information held

All the First-Stop Information Points will have access to major library information resources as all are situated in or adjacent to a library. However the First-Stop Points also have access to a lot of community information and information on services which has been built up primarily because of the First-Stop service. One of the key resources which was already available at all the Borough's libraries was the ELLIS database. This is Enfield Libraries' Local Information Service provided via the GEAC library management system, which contains over 5,000 items of local, council, and community information. One of the facilities this system offers is the ability to create mailshots automatically. The database is up-dated centrally at Enfield. It was noticeable that some of the entries were out-of-date, allowing local First-Stop staff to up-date entries may be the solution to this problem, and this should be a consideration. The decision was also made to subscribe to a Leisure
Viewdata service called Online, funding was available to install a terminal in every library location including the theatre and museum - creating a network of over 20 terminals. This system is very user-friendly and offers customers access to information on sports, leisure, the countryside and events across the region. In two locations the database is available 24 hours a day via through-the-glass terminals. Recently the First-Stop staff have produced packs of leaflets categorised under various subjects. These packs are available for reference and are prominently displayed in blue First-Stop folders at each point. Any customer can thus easily locate the information they require if it is in leaflet form and be provided with their own copy. The role of the First-Stop is to act as a focus for public information resources. The locally based information officers provide a service which can respond quickly and effectively to customer needs by tailoring information to individual requirements.

Statistics

Before the First-Stop service started operation a survey was undertaken by the in-house marketing unit to help assess the potential for such a service. The survey covered two four week periods when enquiries were logged by the research team, under subject categories. Analysis of the results suggested that the range of subjects varied tremendously between the two library sites chosen. In both libraries, 45% of all First-Stop enquiries were for recreation/leisure/sports/social information. Education/training/employment was also in demand, at around 16% in both libraries. Other popular subjects were social services/welfare, what's on/arts & entertainments, and legal. At the other end of the scale, there were no enquiries about the Planning department, and one each for Housing and Engineers. The time of day did not appear to be significant, and it appeared that 75%-80% of enquiries could be satisfied in 15 minutes or under, with the majority taking 5 minutes or less. The main conclusion from this early survey pointed to the need for comprehensive publicity. It seemed that where customers expected that libraries could provide information on a given subject - for example on
recreation and sports, then they would use the prospective First-Stop service readily. Where they had little expectation the enquiry level would be low.

Statistics are kept for all First-Stop sites. An analysis of the statistics for the period April 1992 - December 1992 revealed some interesting figures. During this period the four First-Stop Information Points received some 20,000 enquiries, Edmonton was the busiest site with over 14,478. Of course it must be remembered that Edmonton was the only site not in a library. The location in the foyer of a busy council office must be a factor to be considered, as a number of enquiries would be expected to be of a reception type. Many enquiries taken at the First-Stop sites within libraries may be difficult to identify as a "First-Stop" type enquiry and as such may be recorded with the general enquiry desk figures.

For statistical purposes the enquiries are broken down into various general subjects, reflecting primarily the council department concerned, the percentage of the total figure in brackets:

Information regarding Enfield Council/Council services in general(3.1%)
Housing(12.9%)
Social Services(7.2%)
Education(7.9%)
Finance(2.7%)
Corporate Services(0.8%)
Environmental Services(1.7%)
Property Services(0.8%)
Leisure Services(10%)
Health(2.9%)
Sport and Leisure(4.3%)
Community Information(6.3%)
Local Facilities(8.2%)
To some degree the subjects chosen reflect the work of the different departments of the Borough Council, however it may be difficult to differentiate between an enquiry about 'Leisure Services' and 'Sport and Leisure' for example, or between 'Finance' and 'Legal/Welfare/Money', likewise between 'Community Information' and 'Local Facilities'.

As the figures above show the greatest number of enquiries (12.9%) are about 'Housing', this is perhaps to be expected with the large number of homeless and similarly disadvantaged people in the area. 'Sport and Leisure' and 'Leisure Services' account for some 14% of enquiries when considered together (4.3% and 10% respectively). 'Local Facilities'(8.2%) and 'Community Information'(6.2%) taken jointly produce a similar figure. The number of enquiries received about 'Social Services' and 'Education' is remarkably similar, being some 7% of the total. Considering the emphasis placed on welfare benefit training for the staff - a question-mark must be placed on the need for this in view of the very low number of enquiries taken - some 2%.

When analysed by site the statistics show that 15% of enquiries (the largest number) taken at the Ridge First-Stop were about 'Transport and Travel', the next most popular category being 'Education' with some 12% of the total. At the busiest First-Stop - Edmonton, some 17% of enquiries were about 'Housing', followed by enquiries about 'Leisure Services'(10%) and 'Social Services'(9%). Palmers Green First-Stop in contrast took the greatest number of enquiries on 'Transport and Travel'(20%), followed by 'Education'(11%) and 'Voters List'(8%). The most popular questions at Ordnance Road First-Stop were 'Local Facilities'(14%) followed closely by 'Leisure Services'(13%) and 'Education'(12%). Although it can be seen by the above figures that every site has different information needs it is noticeable that enquiries were received consistently about transport,
education, and leisure services. (see Appendix 28)

Summary

Some of the questions asked reflect these statistics (in most cases), customers at Ordnance Road for example asked about part-time education, facilities for children, such as nurseries/toddler groups, there were lots of enquiries about the Council Tax and Voters List, plus many directional enquiries referring to community facilities. Customers at Palmers Green First-Stop were very interested in Leisure particularly about the local swimming pool but also generally "what to do" and "where to go". Play-schemes were also very popular - especially at half-term time! At Edmonton the most popular enquiries were Council Tax banding information, play-schemes/Nurseries, Community Groups, Housing and social services although "mainly directional" (Appendix 29) - this perhaps explains the high number of 'Housing' type enquiries received at this site.

The future

It is intended that more First-Stop sites will be opened in the Borough, and it is hoped that the site in the Civic Centre, currently managed by the Corporate Services Department will become a First-Stop Information Point and so part of the project.

The Survey

Visits to the First-Stop sites in Enfield took place on the 26th April 1993. The researcher visited two sites: Edmonton Centre and Palmers Green. The user questionnaire was distributed for four weeks starting on the 4th May 1993. During the visits interviews were conducted with the Team Manager, and the First-Stop Information Assistants. The
researcher also recorded the number of visitors to each site over a given period, and the length of time no enquiries took place. Passive observation was also used to gain a perception of the operation of the two sites.

Results

Part 1

Interview with the First-Stop Team Leader, conducted by the researcher using the set list of questions as described in chapter 5.

As well as re-enforcing known facts of finance, staffing levels and future plans, the Team Leader in his response to question (g) about the qualifications required by the staff, stated that the First-Stop Information Officers were required to be of Chartered Librarian or Information Scientist status, with some experience of information work and of library routines. The first stop staff were also required to work in "their" library and be able to answer general enquiries. The reply to question (m) about what information would be provided in the future is also quite interesting in that the Team Leader states that he would like to take the First-Stop Point to other sites "outside libraries". In the reply to question (n) about new technology, it is fascinating to learn that the Team Leader had been a DJ in a previous position, and therefore has no difficulty arranging radio interviews to publicise the First-Stop Information Points. (see Appendix 30 for full results)
Part 2

Interviews with the staff at two First-Stop Information Points, Edmonton and Palmers Green. The sites were chosen so as to give an example of a library situation as in Palmers Green and a non-library situation as at the Edmonton site which is in the Foyer of the council office building in the Edmonton shopping centre. The staff interviewed were both First-Stop Information Officers and will be called X and Y for the purposes of this research. Interviews were carried out by the researcher, individually and in confidence. Replies were manually recorded. The set list of questions used was as described earlier. (Appendix 30)

It is interesting that the main type of enquiry received, as perceived by the two staff members interviewed does differ for each site (question a). Edmonton was perceived as having more enquiries about housing and social services and, whilst Palmers Green was felt to have more enquiries about sport and leisure. This can be explained by the location of the sites, for example Edmonton appeared to be a very poor area where it could be expected that housing and social services enquiries would be apparent. The local housing office and social services office was also situated in the same building. Palmers Green alternatively seemed a much more prosperous area where it was evident that leisure activities had a greater importance. In their responses to question (b) about what information the staff found difficult to supply it is worth noting that each member of staff found it difficult to answer detailed enquiries about departments. It is reasonable to expect that staff could be expected to refer these type of questions on to the appropriate department. It cannot be expected that staff will be experts in all fields of information. However it will be possible to provide some contact names so that staff can answer such questions with confidence.

Why the difficulty? (c) Staff member X appears to want specialist training if available, whilst staff member Y has a more pragmatic approach and realises that there will be
occasions when it is necessary to refer detailed enquiries on to specialist staff. The point when staff realise that the enquiry needs specialised knowledge is critical. There is a danger that staff may want to answer all enquiries and might consider it a failure if they do not. This may be a particular problem with the one-stop shop situation. However it is important that users get the correct information, professional pride must be disregarded. On suggested improvements (d) Staff member X again would prefer to answer all enquiries and would like access to specialised databases. It could be suggested that perhaps this is not a good idea as specialised knowledge is often needed to interpret detailed information. For example it could be misleading to try to interpret welfare information without the detailed knowledge of a welfare benefits officer. The user could receive totally out-of-date and wrong information. Staff member Y would like to move the First-Stop Point to the foyer of the new library. It appears that perhaps having the Point situated on the normal library enquiry desk is not considered a perfect solution, as library users do not differentiate between a First-Stop enquiry and the general library enquiry. There is a danger that First-Stop staff act as general reference library staff and vice versa, when ideally all First-Stop service enquiries should be directed to the First-Stop staff and general library enquiries answered by the reference library staff. Of course it is difficult for the public to appreciate this problem! Publicity is also of great importance - users may not realise that information on all services may be found at a library based First-Stop Information Point for example.

Both staff members have been with the project since it started and are committed to its success. (e) They seemed to like the idea of the First-Stop Information Point in the sense that as staff member X put it - it was an "exciting concept". (f) Neither of the two staff had previous experience of information work in a library situation, although both had experience of public sector service departments. They were both relatively inexperienced and new to librarianship, this being their first professional post.(g) From these interviews it would seem that the staff receive no organised training programme, to systematically include information about the Authority and the services provided. This perhaps should be organised by the borough's Personnel Department (as in Hampshire - Chap 6) or by
Corporate Services, which could foster an improved working relationship between the
departments? It could be expected that the First-Stop staff would be given some time to
work in each department, so as to gain knowledge about the workings of the departments
and to make useful contacts. There also seems to be little evidence of customer care
training. Staff member Y's training in self-defence seems unusual for this type of job - but
nevertheless could be quite useful in some situations! (h) Both staff identify some training
needs - but because of the lack of finance more training is not organised. From answers to
other questions it would seem that there was a definite need for more training - surely the
resources already made available to the First-Stop project would make the investment
worthwhile. There is a danger that because the staff are not well trained the services
offered will not be as effective as they could be. (i) Although both the members of staff
feel that the service is successful, staff member Y feels there is a need for more publicity.
Perhaps the public are not aware that they can get information on all authority services
from a First-stop Information Point situated in a library? (j) Two interesting answers, to
the last question (k) about who the staff considered to be users of the service, staff
member X identifies his users as people who use the building, and primarily the users staff
member Y identifies are users of the library. Perhaps the publicity mentioned earlier is
needed to publicise the service to attract other users who clearly are not using the First-
Stop Information Point at these two sites? Staff member X seems satisfied that others are
not using the service, whilst staff member Y does recognise that "anyone" should be able
to visit.

Part 3

Passive Observation

The researcher visited each First-Stop Information Point for a period of two hours.
Visits took place on the same day. The majority of this time was devoted to observing the
First-Stop Information Point in operation. During the visits some emphasis was placed on recording the number of visitors to each Point and the length of time without visitors. The results were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Edmonton</th>
<th>Palmers Green</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of visitors -</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time without visitors-</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During each session the researcher also noted his perception of the work of the First-Stop Information Point.

Edmonton

As previously described the Edmonton First-Stop Point is situated in the foyer of a busy Council Office building. During the period the researcher was present it did not seem very busy, with only 12 visitors using the site. However the staff on duty thought this due to the bad weather, as it was raining and very dull. The First-Stop Point was staffed by two staff during the time of the observation, the First-Stop Information Assistant and a uniformed assistant (provided by the Customer Services Department). The security staff have a room close to the First-Stop Point and were standing nearby. The presence of a burly security guard did not in the researcher's opinion do much to welcome enquiries. It was noticeable however that users would in preference approach the male security guard with an enquiry rather than ask the female information assistant. The First-Stop staff were always eager to help, and the researcher was particularly impressed by the response given to a blind enquirer asking for directions to the Housing Department, he was escorted to the lift and taken to the relevant office. However during this time the telephone was left unattended and was ringing constantly. Another enquiry received during the period was
for addresses of foreign language translator's - which according to the First-Stop staff was quite a common request. The foyer was very busy and not very discreet for enquirers. Enquiries were easily overheard by others in the vicinity. As the period was not very busy the First-Stop Information Officer took the opportunity to provide the assistant with some training. This was most probably the only opportunity to offer such - but maybe would be more successful at a more suitable location off the enquiry desk. The staff were always helpful and friendly. The First-Stop Information Point was visible and clearly signed.

Palmers Green

Situated on the reference enquiry desk of Palmers Green Library. The enquiry desk was clearly marked as a First-Stop Information Point. The intention was that First-Stop enquiries would be received on the point of the enquiry desk underneath the sign. In practice however this did not seem to be the case, as users asked all types of question, not necessarily first-Stop type enquiries to the member of staff available - not necessarily the First-Stop Information Officer. There did not seem to be a First-Stop Information Sign in the library foyer or on the outside of the building. Disabled access was also very poor as the building was approached by a steep flight of steps - although there may have been disabled access at the rear of the building. The enquiry desk was very busy, with a queue for most of the period observed. The researcher noted that most of the enquiries were of a general nature. The enquiry desk was situated opposite the main library issue desk. The telephone was ringing constantly. When the member of staff was answering enquiries, the enquiry desk was left unstaffed. The collection of First-Stop Information Pointers - files of leaflets on various services was very visible and adjacent to the enquiry desk.

In the researchers opinion this First-Stop Information Point did not work very well. It did not offer a priority service, but was offered as part of the normal reference service provided by the library. All staff working on the desk acted as First-Stop staff, but without the specialised knowledge and training given to the First-Stop Information
Officer, the service offered was not as effective as it could have been. As the majority of First-Stop Information Points in Enfield were within libraries - perhaps specialised training should be available to all staff who might be required to work on the library enquiry desk. If the financial commitment already made to the project is not to be wasted then in the researchers view funding must be found for more training, for existing staff, and the additional reference staff. Perhaps this could be achieved in a more cost-effective way by training the First-Stop Information Officers adequately and then using them to train other staff.

Part 4

User Questionnaire

The user questionnaire (see Appendix 6) was distributed over a period of four weeks by the staff of the two centres. Users were invited to complete the questionnaire and to return it to the staff. Only Edmonton First-Stop made any significant return with some thirty-nine users returning completed questionnaires. Because of the position of the of the Palmers Green First-Stop which is located at the main enquiry desk of the library, staff felt unable to distribute the questionnaire to users, who may have only approached the desk to ask a general enquiry. However the responses from Edmonton were nevertheless very interesting.

Responses

Question 1
Where do you live?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>no of responses</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Within 1 mile</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within 5 miles  17  43.6%
Over 10 miles  -  -

From the above responses it is evident that the majority of users live very close to the centre. This is obviously due to the position of the First-Stop site, which is in council offices, within a shopping precinct and surrounded by high rise housing.

Question 2
What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>No of Responses</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the responses to this question it is evident that the majority of users were between the ages of 25-34 (35.9%). This figure is to be expected when compared with the results from question 3. It must also be remembered that the First-Stop site is in council offices where users may have come to make enquiries from other council services, notably housing and benefit enquiries. Indeed there is a housing office and welfare benefit office in the same building. This response when added to the number of respondents between the ages of 18-25, and the number of respondents between the ages of 35-44 (perhaps the expected age-grouping for this type of enquiry) make-up over 59% of the total responses to this question.
Question 3
What is your occupation?

The responses to this question were very varied. Some 33% of respondents stated that they were retired, whilst over 13% were students or nurses. 17% stated that they were unemployed. Other answers included "schoolmaster", "builder", "housewife" (10%), "carer" and "security officer". As can be seen from the results, although 33% of respondents stated that they were retired, the majority of users responding to this question were perhaps of a younger age-group (see responses to the previous question). It is also significant that a high proportion were unemployed, again this result could be expected due to the high incidence of unemployment in the area - and the situation of the First-Stop Information Point.

Question 4
What is the nature of your enquiry?

There was a wide range of responses to this question, including "trading standards", "transport", "rent", "housing", "old age club", "council tax", "council information", and "benefits". Again the responses reflect the situation of the First-Stop.

Question 5
Were you satisfied with the answer you were given?

Responses to this question were provided on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the lower "not satisfied" end of the scale, to 5 being "very satisfied".

Some 85% of respondents stated that they were very satisfied with the answer given, and an additional 13% answered that they were " very satisfied" (3-4 on the scale) making a
total of some 98% of respondents. This is a very good response but it must be remembered that the survey was only completed by a small number of users.

Question 6
Did you find the staff, not helpful - very helpful? - on a scale of 1-5.

Over 100% of respondents answered that they found the staff very helpful (between 4-5 on the scale). Like the earlier question, this is a credit to the local staff, despite the poor response rate.

Question 7
How many enquiries have you made of this service?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no. of responses</th>
<th>% of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>47.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the responses to this question that the majority of users visited the First-Stop between 1-5 times (97%). Some 47% of users had only visited on one occasion, in the researchers view they will return to make more enquiries!

Question 8
Where did you find out about this service?

| no. of responses | % of total | 144 |
Local paper/mag 1 4.8%
Friend 4 9.5%
Council office 6 28.6%
Telephone directory - -
Other Loc authority 1 4.8%
Local radio - -
Doctors - -
Hospital - -
Library 9 42.9%

It was perhaps to be expected that the most popular responses to this question were that respondents had found out about the First-Stop from the council office (28%) or the library (43%), as the First-Stop is situated in the Edmonton Council office building and is adjacent to the library. The lack of other significant responses does however highlight the need for publicity, to reach potential users who do not visit the library or council office complex.

Question 8
Have you any other general comments?

Other comments included "well done to this department", "staff very helpful", "please don't take away", "very friendly" and "very useful to have local office". Once again all good positive, supportive comments - it would seem that the users think the First-Stop to be worth keeping.

Conclusion

Although the Edmonton First-Stop Information Point, based in the reception area of
the council office complex was seen to be very successful and did provide a focus (as the conceptual models highlighted) for the dissemination of authority information. However the Palmers Green site was not judged by the researcher to be a very good example of a one-stop shop. The location of the First-Stop within the library premises which has worked in other situations, notably in Hampshire, did not work successfully in Enfield. Why was this? Primarily the reason was because the First-Stop was meant to be an isolated part of the general library reference desk. Because of lack of sufficient staff - the First-Stop Information Officer - was not available to staff the Information Point at all times, this meant that the First-Stop Information Point part of the reference desk was left unstaffed for long periods. In practice, users of the First-Stop were forced to ask questions of general library staff - who were staffing the adjacent desk - these staff are not trained as First-Stop staff and the subsequent answer given to the user may not have been as good as it should have been. Thus the First-Stop in this situation was not seen to be as efficient as it could have been (with regard to the conceptual model of the information flow within the one-stop shop - chapter 5) Staff at the Enfield First-Stops visited by the researcher, also tried to answer many enquiries, on welfare benefits for example, which in the researchers view should have been referred. In Hampshire, many libraries house Local Information Points, these are promoted as part of the normal library service, all staff are given training, and the information point is not a separate part of the reference desk(chap 6), staff also are encouraged to refer users on if the enquiry is complex - requiring specialised knowledge. If the First-Stop was intended to be a totally separate function from the library, then it should be provided with a location away from the general enquiry desk, and provided with sufficient staff to man the point, as in the West Sussex - East Grinstead model(chap 9).

Another general comment, apparent from the response to the user questionnaire - question 8 -(where users had found out about the service?), was that despite community liaison, and the employment of a member of staff to be proactive in promoting the First-Stop concept amongst the ethnic communities, the largest proportion of users found out about the service from the "council office" and the "library". It is to be hoped that the results
may have been different had the user questionnaire been distributed at Palmers Green. But nevertheless this does point to a need to more publicity for the First-Stops, and perhaps more guidance to the member of staff responsible for community liaison.
REFERENCES

CHAPTER 8

LANCASHIRE

Section 1: Description

Geography

The county includes the north-west coastal resorts of Morecambe, Blackpool, Fleetwood, and Lytham St Annes, and the historic centre of Lancaster and in the east the Forest of Bowland and Ribble Valley as well as the industrial areas of Blackburn, Burnley and Preston, the centre of administration. The county adjoins Cumbria to the north, West and North Yorkshire to the east, and Merseyside and Greater Manchester to the south. In area Lancashire is 306,951 and has a population of 1,408,000.<1>

Budget

Lancashire County Council will spend over £960 million on services during 1992/3. This expenditure can be divided by service as follows: Education - £692 million, Social Services - £167 million, Police - £132 million, Highways and Public Transport - £104 million, Fire Service - £31 million, Recreation and Tourism including Libraries - £20 million, Waste Disposal - £14 million, Planning - £4 million, Other Services - £47 million.
Politics

At present the Council is made up of 99 councillors, 50 of whom are Labour, 42 Conservative and 7 Liberal Democrat.

The Information Centre

Background

On the 12th March 1987 Lancashire County Council voted to improve the provision of public information by establishing a series of multi-purpose County Information Centres. Two previous Transport Information Centres were amalgamated into the scheme, those at Burnley and Nelson. The first centre to open was in Blackburn, a further sixteen centres were to follow, in Accrington, Blackpool, Burnley, Charnock Richard, Chorley, Clitheroe, Fleetwood, Lancaster, Leyland, Lytham, Morecambe, Nelson, Ormskirk, Preston, Rossendale and Skelmersdale. It is the County's plan that each district in Lancashire will have at least one Information Centre. In order to achieve maximum cost effectiveness and improve public service operation in some areas the County is offering the information service in partnership with districts. This varies from area to area but all districts were offered the option.

Situation

Six of the Information Centres are situated in Bus Stations, Accrington, Burnley, Lancaster, Nelson, Ormskirk and Preston. Three are within Tourist Information Centres, Charnock Richard, Morecambe and Rawtenstall. Eight are situated in high street locations, Blackburn, Blackpool, Chorley, Clitheroe, Fleetwood, Leyland, Lytham, and Skelmersdale.
Opening Hours

The centres are open from 8am - 5.30 six days per week a total of 57 hours per week.

Management

The centres are managed by the Public Relations Section of the Chief Executive/Clerk's Department. The Senior Administrative Officer has the responsibility within this Section for the daily supervision of the Information Centres, reporting to the County Public Relations Officer and Principal Assistant Public Relations Officer.

Costs

(See Appendix 33 for detailed costs of the centres). Total expenditure for the seventeen centres amounted to £884,400 for the year 1992/93, with an estimated figure of £856,000 for the year 1993/94. This figure includes premises related costs of £147,500 for 1992/93.

Information held

The centres provide information on County Council services, through a detailed A-Z of services, as well as comprehensive information about local attractions, accommodation and travel. Two centres provide welfare rights counselling services and welfare rights information is available at all centres. A twenty-four hour computer information system providing detailed information on services is also available. This
system is supplied by an outside agency from information provided by the County Council. It has a touch screen facility and is very user friendly. The Centres also have this information provided for use on a PC - it is up-dated centrally from information received from departments and disks sent to the centres on a regular basis to update their files.

Items offered for sale

The centres, in addition to offering information sell items which generally promote Lancashire County Council as well as bus and rail tickets. Such items as mugs, teacloths, ties and maps are included (see Appendix 34 for stock list).

Staff

Each centre is staffed by a full-time Supervisor on local authority Scale 3 and two part-time Assistants - Scale 1/2. As previously described the centres are managed by the Public Relations Department - the Senior Administrative Services Officer (Information Centres) having the responsibility of managing the Centres (SO1). The manager of the Centres is based at County Hall in Preston along with the central team of a Peripatetic Supervisor - Scale 3 and a Clerical Officer (Information Centres) on Scale 1/2.

Job Descriptions (see Appendix 35-39)

A) Senior Administration Services Officer (Information Centres)

The Senior Administrative Services Officer's post was a new one and she has had the responsibility of "establishment and daily management of the Information Centres across the County". She is also responsible for the training of staff as well as for general administrative procedures, including finance and stock control for each centre. Also
publicity and promotion and co-ordination of "literature provision" - additionally liaison with county council departments, district councils and other organisations.

B) Peripatetic Supervisor - Information Centres

The principal duties of this post are to provide relief supervisory cover at the various information centres. The duties are basically similar to those required of the Information Centre Supervisor with additional responsibility for "assisting the Senior Administrative Officer (Information Centres)" with such tasks as checking timesheets and controlling leave, dealing with enquiries, plus stock and budget control. "Minimum local government qualifications" are "desirable" for this post.

C) Clerical Officer (Information Centres)

The Clerical Officer is responsible for "checking staff timesheets and controlling leave" as well as dealing with invoices and telephone enquiries. She is also responsible for distributing publicity material and stock and budgetary control of "promotional teams". In addition she is required to work at Information Centres when required. Four 'O' levels or equivalent are "desirable" qualifications for this post.

D) Information Supervisor

The major duties of this post are "providing information to the public" and the supervision of staff and administration for the Centre. Other duties include booking of accommodation, sale of literature and bus, rail and other tickets. No formal qualifications are required.
E) Part-time Information Assistant

Again the main duties of this post are to provide information to the public, issuing leaflets and directing the public to services. As well as selling tickets and publications. The final part of the job description (5) also states that

it would be helpful if the postholder were available as and when necessary to work in other Information Centres.

Section 2: Analysis

As previously described the decision to set up a "series of multi-purpose Information Centres" was taken on the 12th March 1987 (Appendix 31). In February 1987 a report was submitted to the Public Transport Sub-Committee by the County Surveyor recommending the expansion of the Transport Information Centre network. The TIC's had been established as early as the 1970s and by 1985 nine centres were in operation. The original aim of the TIC's were to

provide information to the travelling public and encourage greater use of public transport

However it was noted that the Chief Executive/Clerk

wishes to draw particular attention to the opportunities that establishing TIC's would provide for achieving greater value for money through using such centres for the dissemination of other County Council publicity and information......TIC's could be recognised as the County Council's local information centres. (Appendix 40)

Obviously the Public Transport Committee had decided that TIC's would not be expanded but that they would establish a series of County Information Centres and in April 1987 a confidential report of the Chief Executive/Clerk's Department noted that the information
centres were to be set-up and that line management responsibility was to be vested in the Chief Executive/Clerk's Department. Management responsibility had in a period of two months consequently been transferred.

The Transport Information Centres had been operating successfully for sometime, but it was now evident that their role could be extended to include dissemination of general information on the County Council and not just travel information. This is just as demonstrated by the conceptual models, which have been described earlier. It had been recognised that the new Information Centres would provide a focus for authority information in general. It was therefore not surprising that management of the new service should be with the Chief Executive/Clerks Public Relations Section - the department which could co-ordinate, and require other departments to provide information. No mention is made of any involvement with the County Library. Again perhaps this was because of the relatively junior position of the County Librarian within the Chief Officer hierarchy?

Because the TICs were already established successfully information providers it was a comparatively simple task to provide additional information within the existing offices. Although the number of Information Centres was to double that of the number of TICs. Obviously this had training implications in that the existing TIC staff would need additional training, whilst training of new staff also had to be considered.

The Centres are placed in differing locations, as described earlier. It is evident that because Lancashire had a well established tradition of providing information in bus stations, this should be continued to include the establishment of centres in varying sites - from Tourist Information Centres to Motorway Service Areas and high street locations.
Staff

It is perhaps interesting to note the large number of people each of the Information Centre Posts are responsible to. The Senior Administrative Officer (the overall manager of the Centres) is responsible to the County Public Relations Officer and the Principal Assistant Public Relations Officer. The Peripatetic Supervisor - based at County Hall is responsible to these officers, in addition to her line manager - the Sen.Admin.Officer. However the Clerical Officer, based at County Hall is only responsible to her line manager - the Sen.Admin.Officer. At the Centres the situation is even more bizarre in that the Information Supervisor is responsible to the County Public Relations Officer, the Principal Assistant Public Relations Officer, the Senior Assistant Public Relations Officer and finally the Sen.Admin.Officer - the line manager. The Part-time Information Assistants are responsible to the Information Supervisor and in addition to the Principal Assistant Public Relations Officer and Senior Assistant Public Relations Officer. The situation does seem to have got rather complicated - it may be more realistic to create a top down approach, for example all part-time information centre staff to be responsible to their local Information Supervisor, who is responsible to the Senior Administrative Officer. The Senior Administrative Officer to be responsible to the Principal Assistant Public Relations Officer - who reports to the County Public Relations Officer. The present structure must present severe management problems!

It must also be noted that there is a general lack of information qualifications required of the staff, indeed no formal qualifications seem to be obligatory for any of the staff.

Apart from these observations the job descriptions are brief and succinct. (Appendix 35-39)
Statistics and Information Provision

For the year ended 30th June 1993 the total number of enquiries received in all of the information centres was 1,364,526. The busiest centres are at Preston with 240,000 enquiries, Accrington with 120,805 enquiries, Blackburn with 113,461 enquiries and Blackpool with 108,642 enquiries. Preston and Accrington information centres are both bus station sites. Of the enquiries taken at Accrington some 74% were public transport enquiries(to be expected), with tourist enquiries at 16%, general enquiries 8%, welfare 0.3%, social services 0.3% and education enquiries 0.2%. Unfortunately Preston Information Centre does not breakdown enquiries by type, this would seem a logical thing to do - but nevertheless a similar pattern could be expected - with a large number of travel enquiries predominating. Location is very important - and it could be expected that more travel enquiries should be received at a bus-station, as opposed to general enquiries.

Blackpool Information Centre - a high street location, records a different pattern of enquiries. 36% of enquiries were related to tourism, 25% public transport, 23% general enquiries, 14% welfare (there is a welfare benefits office in the same building), 0.7% education, and 0.7% social services. Location obviously is an important consideration when planning an information centre. Thus Morecambe, an obvious tourist location records a figure of 93% tourist related enquiries (also a tourist information centre).

(Appendix 41)

To assist in answering enquiries the centres use a printed A-Z of contacts within the County Council - which requires a detailed knowledge of the responsibilities of departments. It is not possible for example, to identify a departmental contact by subject - only by department - staff must know therefore which department provides which service. The reason for the missing subject listing - is perhaps due to a lack of experience in information work?

There is also a computer A-Z available to the public and a similar system provided for
staff. Information is collected centrally at county hall from departments and circulated in
disc form to update the PC based systems in each information centre. A twenty-four hour
touch screen system is also available provided by an outside agency from copy supplied by
the County Council. The responsibility for updating rests with the central office,
departments have to be continually chased, and some may place more importance to the
task than others. There will also inevitably be a time delay from when the information is
submitted, to when it appears on the pc system and touch screen system. Only limited
information is available, see Appendix 42 for example which provides only scant
information on how to apply for an "orange badge" - it would perhaps be better to
describe how to apply - even an electronic request form could be provided.

The STATUS survey

During 1992 Lancashire County Council commissioned STATUS(a marketing
consultancy) to conduct a Marketing Survey to assess users' perception of the information
and service available from the information centres. The objectives were to

a) Measure the level of satisfaction with the County Information Centre Service.
b) Assess public perception of the usefulness and quality of information available.
c) Assess users' knowledge of County Council services.

The results of this survey found that almost 40% were first time visitors, and that the vast
majority, some 83.5% of visitors discovered the centres by "just passing". According to
the survey some 50% of all visitors "call in to request leaflets, publications or other items
of literature" and almost 30% "request literature and also purchase items". Over 70% of
users were "very satisfied" with the standard of services, with a further 25% "fairly
satisfied". About 85% considered the variety of information provided "about right" and
some 70% also thought the layout and design "about right". Some centres were
considered "too small", Lancaster, Letland, Preston, Accrington, Clitheroe, Burnley,
Skelmersdale.

It is interesting that out of the top four which users thought "too small" three were
situated in bus stations - perhaps where space is at a premium? When asked if they would like to see additional facilities 20% of users felt they would like to see "certain improvements" with "more information on attractions outside Lancashire" being the most popular answer - for an information centre providing mainly information about the county council, this could be difficult to achieve. It is also interesting to note that over 67% of users of the centres "request information on public transport" not surprising in view of the information centres situated in bus stations. The conclusion to this report provides some interesting suggestions - more information for the disabled, targeted information for senior citizens and additional facilities for users including "public toilets, more seating and refreshment facilities" - some improvements will be easier to accomplish than others! Following the survey some additions and alterations to services were made.

The Survey

Visits to two Information Centres in Lancashire, Preston and Blackpool took place on 19th July 1993. The user questionnaire(Appendix 6) was distributed at both centres for a four week period. As in the previous case-studies the researcher interviewed the manager as we as the staff on duty. The researcher also recorded the number of visitors to the Information Centres over a given period, and the length of time when no enquiries took place. During the visits the researcher also recorded observations of the activities of the Centres.

Results

Part 1

Interview with the Peripatetic Supervisor (who was deputising for the Senior Administrative Officer - information Centres) at County Hall, Preston, using the set list of
questions described in Chapter 5.
(see Appendix 43 for individual results)

In her answer to question (e) about the future development of the information centres, she stated that the County had plans to have an information centre in each major town in Lancashire. With reference to the lack of formal qualifications required of the 47 staff employed in information centre work, as highlighted earlier in the chapter, it was interesting that an "ability to deal with the public" was the essential element required (g), along with "presentation" and "knowledge of area" - no reference to any information training or background! Obviously training is crucial - according to the managers' responses the staff are taken on tours of Lancashire, in order to familiarise them with the major tourist attractions, attend an emergency first aid course, spend some time in the Transport Section of the County Surveyors' Department finding out about bus routes, and finally attend a two-day customer care course. Again no mention of any information skills training - or any time with the County Library department. These skills it must be assumed are developed on site - or not at all? In her response to question (k) on how the information is kept - the situation seems far from satisfactory, although the information is considered "quite up-to-date" it is individual departments who send in information - obviously some are better than others. The manager would like the information to be sent to County Hall so that staff could update the PC based system. However some departments notify the individual centres direct - so it is possible that one information centre will have more up-to-date information than the others - not a very satisfactory or effective system?
Interview with the staff of the Information Centre Preston, conducted by the researcher using the set list of questions as outlined in Chapter 5. The supervisor and two part-time staff were interviewed. As on previous occasions interviews were carried out individually and in confidence. (See Appendix 43 for results)

It is not surprising that all the staff identified "bus enquiries" as the main type of enquiry received, as the information centre is situated in a bus station. Bus operation is deregulated and in addition to the County Information Centre, one of the bus operators also had a ticket/enquiry office in the bus station. With the large number of transport related enquiries which certainly were evident during the visit, perhaps it might be possible to provide additional staff financed by each bus company to handle that type of enquiry - which surely is not the responsibility of a county information service? Given the large number of "bus enquiries" taken, the responses to question (b) (about information considered difficult to supply) were quite surprising. Two out of the three staff interviewed stated that they found it difficult to provide information on bus routes, and travel information. The reasons for this are stated as "don't know the area" and "personal choice difficult" (meaning that it can be difficult to suggest areas to travel to - as everyone had their own ideas of what constituted a nice day out). One member of staff thought the reason and solution to this difficulty could be "lack of training" and "more training needed". (question (c) and (d) Appendix 43). The Preston site is very cramped and yet only one member of staff noted this as an improvement they would like to see. It must be noted that this particular member of staff had only worked in the centre for two years (e) whilst the other two staff had worked considerably longer - had they become disillusioned with the system, after asking for this before? Staff member X also stated that he would move the centre "away from the bus station"! All staff gave the reason for wanting to work in the centre as a desire to work with the public (f). It is interesting to note the
answers to question (h) about training, the supervisor stated that he had received a weeks induction course at county hall, and three days at a centre. The two part-time staff however stated that they had received no training. All answers differ from the reply given by the manager. Considering the need for training in view of the lack of formal qualifications, this does look to be a serious omission. The staff identify the elderly and public transport users as their main customers. Two members of staff thought the centre was successful, one member of staff "not entirely" (j).

Interview with the supervisor and part-time information assistant at the Information Centre Blackpool. The Information Centre is situated in a busy high street location.

Both members of staff stated that the main type of enquiry was of a welfare nature(a) - this could be related to the fact that a welfare advice unit has offices on the first floor of the same building. It was not open as many hours as the information centre - and was very busy when open. Thus it may be that clients wishing to use the advice centre use the information centre on other occasions. Like responses from the staff at Preston, one member of staff stated that he required more local knowledge to enable him to respond better to detailed questions about bus routes(b). Improvements suggested by staff to question (d) included "more room", and a "freephone". It seems curious that a "freephone" link had not indeed been installed, as many other authorities consider this to be essential. Both members of staff were experienced and had similar jobs before, it is of interest to note that one staff member stated that she had always wanted to work in tourism! Of course as seen earlier tourism enquiries form a large proportion of Blackpool's work.

Both staff gave similar responses to the staff from Preston to the question about training (h), stating that they had received very little training and most was "on the job". In their answers to question (i) about training needs neither staff stated that they required more training about services provided by the County Council - surely their prime need? They
identified their training needs as more "tourism courses", "hotel accommodation", and "welfare benefits". It is also interesting to note that both staff saw the information centre as being successful and listed the elderly/disabled/needy/desperate! as users of the service.

Part 3

Passive Observation

The researcher visited the information centres on one occasion for a period of two hours per visit. The visit to the Preston Centre took place in the morning and the visit to the information centre at Blackpool, the afternoon of 19th July 1993. During the visits a record was kept of the number of visitors to each centre, and the time elapsed without visitors, the results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Preston</th>
<th>Blackpool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of visitors</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time without visitors</td>
<td>3 mins</td>
<td>7 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During each session the researcher also noted his perception of the work of the information centres. Preston centre as stated earlier was situated in a busy bus station - the staff stated that it was the largest bus station in Europe. It certainly presented a very
busy view of an information centre at work. Enquiries seemed to be predominantly transport orientated which was evident from the statistics referred to earlier in the chapter. This supported the researchers opinion that a local authority information service should not be answering enquiries about bus tickets, timetables and routes. Preston information centre was also very cramped, for example there was no space to store boxes of newly arrived leaflets, which had to be stored in the public area. Although the staff looked very presentable in their uniform and in the majority of cases were courteous and efficient in their replies to users one incident was a cause for concern. A foreign gentleman was enquiring about a bus route, the member of staff dealing with him felt the need to raise her voice - in the researchers view this was not necessary and gave the impression of a patronising bureaucracy. If the staff were given more training, especially in customer care techniques, then this incident may be less likely to happen. Conversely an elderly lady who had recently fallen down, was provided with a seat and a cup of tea, whilst a member of staff enquired of her travel arrangements. After a rest she was assisted to the bus by a member of staff - customer care in action. It has to be hoped that the earlier incident was an isolated one. The merchandise offered for sale by the information centre was very much in evidence - indeed during the time the researcher was present several items including spoons, tea towels, and local maps were sold.

Blackpool information centre was based in a converted shop premises in a busy shopping street very close to the railway station and on the route to the town centre. It was spacious and welcoming. Several large signs were evident pointing to leaflets on "Trading Standards", "Social Services", "Education" and "Welfare Rights". The staff were very helpful and as in the Preston centre, looked very smart in their grey and blue uniform. One member of staff was particularly helpful and often offered to ring round to find the answer to the users' questions.

A lot of the enquiries were of a welfare rights nature - the researcher on occasions felt embarrassed to be able to overhear the details, other users could obviously overhear as well. In retrospect it may have been better to use the small interview room provided at the
rear of the office? The researcher also felt that the staff were trying to get into too much
detail - to provide the fullest answer possible. Welfare benefits are a complex issue - with
a Welfare office on the first floor it may have been more effective to suggest that the user
enquired there or asked a member of the welfare rights staff to come down to the centre.
The staff here showed the importance of local knowledge and were often to be heard
giving detailed directions to various locations in Blackpool and surrounding area.

Part 4

User Questionnaire

The user questionnaire (Appendix 6) was distributed at both the Preston and
Blackpool Information Centres for a period of four weeks by the information centre staff.
The response was very disappointing with only five forms being returned. Detailed
analysis of such a small sample is not worthwhile. However the five all lived within five
miles of the centre, four out of the five were over 45 years of age (the other a student
under 18), all except one required bus information, all were "very satisfied" with the
answer given and all found the staff "very helpful". Four of the users had visited the
centre before, two had used it on over ten occasions. Similarly four had found out about
the service from a friend whilst one had just been "passing". Additional comments
included "jolly useful service", pleasant helpful staff" and "long may it last"

The reason for the poor response was due in the researchers view to a breakdown of
communication between the Administrative Officer and Peripatetic Supervisor. All
arrangements had been made by the researcher with the Supervisor who at the time of the
visit was acting-up for the Administrative Officer who had been on sick-leave for a number of months. When the Administrative Officer returned, the Supervisor went off-sick. This was at the time the survey was to be distributed - obviously this was not top of the agenda at that time.

Conclusion

A major criticism would be that the staff in both centres visited by the researcher tried to go too far with their responses. The line between giving information and advice is very thin - staff need to be aware of their knowledge and realise that there are specialist departmental staff available to answer detailed enquiries. As the conceptual models described in chapter 5 show, the information flow between the one-stop shop and other departments and agencies must be a two-way process. There can be no doubt that the staff were eager to satisfy the enquiries, they obviously took pride in their work, and provided a focus for service enquiries as shown by the conceptual models. The danger of this is that they did not want to refer (in the researchers view) to more specialised staff, seeing this as something of a failure. The solution to this present position could be to train the staff more effectively so that they are aware of the limitations of the service. However, a long term aim should be to consult the Library Department.

It does seem a serious omission not to require the staff to have some background in information work before employing them in the Information Centre. This does however reflect the trend highlighted in the earlier survey (chapter 4). There is no doubt that the staff in Lancashire were providing a valuable service, but this service could perhaps have been even more effective if experienced information staff had been employed. At the very least once staff have been employed it may be possible to provide them with training in information work. There does not seem to be any consultation with the Library Department, to provide this background however. Why is this? As has been apparent in the Hampshire case-study, chief officers may tend to see their departments as the "expert"
in all functions - it can almost be a matter of pride not to refer to other departments. This is especially probable if the department running the information centre/one-stop shop is a large "important" department, with a high profile chief officer (as in Hampshire and Lancashire).
REFERENCES


2. County Information Centres Survey, STATUS, 1992
CHAPTER 9

WEST SUSSEX

Geography

West Sussex stretches along the channel coast from the Selsey peninsular to just west of Brighton with the towns of Crawley and Horsham in the North. It is a county of contrasts with the seaside resorts of Worthing and Bognor Regis sheltered by the rolling hills of the Sussex Downs. Behind the Downs there are many picturesque villages. Chichester is the main centre of the county and the administrative centre of the County Council. The population of the county is some 721,000 and the county covers 198,935 hectares.<1>

Budget

For the year 1993-94 West Sussex County Council will spend some £384 million. This is divided between the services as follows: Education £263m, Social Services £80m, Police £63m, Highways £36m, Fire £16m, Library & Archives £8m, Planning £2m, Countryside £1m, Waste Management £8m, Other Services £48m.
Politics

At the time of writing the council is made up of 71 councillors, and is 42.6% Liberal Democrat, 39.8% Conservative, and 15% Labour. The council operates a system of ten committees: Coast and Countryside, Education, Fire and Public Protection, General Purposes, Library and Archives, Planning, Policy and Resources, Highways, Social Services, and Selection.

The CDT Contact Point

Section 1: Background

On the 20th September 1991, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to establish a CDT (County District Town) Contact Point in the East Grinstead Library. (Appendix 44) The basic idea behind the project was to improve access to services provided by West Sussex County Council, Mid-Sussex District Council and East Grinstead Town Council, where appropriate, arrangements could be made to put enquirers in personal touch with staff in the County and District councils. The Pilot scheme at East Grinstead library opened on the 3rd April 1992. It was intended that there would be several centres based within a number of towns in West Sussex. A free telephone and Fax service was also provided.
Situation

East Grinstead Library is centrally placed, adjacent to principal shops and attracts a large number of users from a catchment population of 42,000. The CDT Contact Point is situated facing a common foyer and waiting area which also provides accommodation for the Citizens Advice Bureau and other public services. Each of these other services have an office facing the waiting area.

Opening Hours

An enquiry service was initially provided at the County Contact Point for 42 hours per week. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm. Tuesday and Thursday 9.30am - 6.30pm. Saturday 9.30am - 12.30pm.

Management

The CDT Contact Point is managed on a day-to-day basis by the County Librarian, although the Chief Fire Officer has recently been given responsibility for co-ordination of the countywide Contact Point project.

Costs

Total costs for the CDT Contact Point have been itemised as follows:-

2 x Full-time staff £35,000
Occasional support by library staff £2,500
Promotion and advertising £3,000
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PC and printer</td>
<td>£4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental of interview room</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total for year</strong></td>
<td><strong>£50,500</strong></td>
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This figure does not take into account any building costs, as the County Librarian has decided not to re-charge for the first year of operation - this decision may be reviewed. The telephone costs of £5,000 do seem to be very high.

Information held

The CDT Contact Point has access to the full-range of information provided at East Grinstead Library, this will include directories, maps, and other reference material. The CDT staff do in practice keep some information, including an A-Z of contacts, readily available.

"Surgeries"

The Contact Point has an interview room which is used by the Mid-Sussex Housing Association every Monday and Thursday, the County Trading Standards Department every Thursday afternoon, the Employment Services on Friday mornings and local councillors on the first and third Saturdays of each month. The idea behind this scheme is that each of the above will be available for consultation by the public, on the days advertised should they have a question to ask about services.
Feedback

The Contact Point does provide the enquirer with a letter to explain that their enquiry is being dealt with. (Appendix 45) All enquiries are recorded on the county mainframe computer and given a number for later identification. A printed form is also sent to the department concerned, and the staff are asked to respond within seven days. A reply slip is provided in addition which details the reply and date when it was supplied to the enquirer. This information is recorded by the Contact Point staff - for later reference and analysis. (Appendix 46)

Staff

The Contact point is staffed by a full-time Information Officer and two part-time Assistant Information Officers. The Information Officer is paid on Scale 5/6 of the local government salary scales (£12,374 - £14,984) this is a similar grading to other managers in the previous three case-studies. The two part-time Assistant Information officers are paid on Scale 4/5 (£5,346 - £6,737). This is significantly higher than similar positions in the other case-studies, who have generally been paid on Scale 2. Initially as the Contact Point is a pilot venture, all the posts are for a fixed period of one-year. The staff receive no specific training apart from that received from other members of staff, they are however included in any library based training. The Information Officer is expected to have had previous library experience, and be of senior library assistant grade.

Job Descriptions (see Appendix 47-48)

A) Contact Point Information Officer

The Information Officer has the "basic function" to
provide, develop and promote an effective information service on public services from the Council's One Stop Shop

and to

assist and advise on the establishment of similar services throughout West Sussex

Further "special responsibilities" include "establishing a database", and developing close links with county council departments and "other public services". More importantly to help members of the public to contact, and "communicate direct" with officers, and also monitor the "effectiveness of any approaches". Interestingly the job description further requires the post-holder to arrange "surgeries" at the one-stop-shop for county council members and chief officers. Additional responsibilities also include liaison with local organisations and in particular, the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Curiously the job description ends with a requirement to undertake duties "of a similar nature" if asked.

B) Assistant Contact Point Information Officer

The "basic function" of the Assistant Contact Point Information Officer is to

assist the Contact Point Information Officer in developing and promoting an effective information service on public services with special reference to West Sussex County Council (see Appendix 48)

Many duties are assisting the Information Officer. The assistants have additional individual responsibility to liaise directly with members and officers to arrange "surgeries", and also to liaise closely with other information providers and to record and monitor the enquiries received.
Statistics

In the first six-months of operation the CDT Contact Point received some 2,200 enquiries - an average of 85 per week. The cumulative total for the first year of operation is 7,022 enquiries received.

The Future

The CDT Contact Point also provides a focus for access to services in the locality very much reflecting the conceptual model of the one-stop shop described earlier. It has been well received by the community and supported by the local authorities involved. East Grinstead is situated at one of the furthest points from the county town of Chichester, and the CDT Contact Point has brought local government to the town in a comprehensive manner.

It is possible that the concept of the Contact Point could be extended, for example, in places such as Burgess Hill, Hassocks, and Hurstpierpoint. Local libraries would be used as locations with the public being able to contact the staff at East Grinstead via telephone links. The success of the East Grinstead site has also led to approaches from three District Councils suggesting some form of joint access. Two of the council's, Horsham and Arun already offer "one stop shop" facilities - these could easily become part of the Contact Point network with very few additional costs. Other sites throughout the county could be identified, although involvement with agencies, such as Town and Parish council's might mean a change of name for the project. Some £55,000 has indeed been itemised for extension of the contact points and a further £55,000 for networking communications.
Section 2: Analysis

The reason behind setting up the Contact Point was to counter the suggestion that the County Council was remote.

this false perception can persist if access to these service points is not made as easy as possible or if our customers are not kept sufficiently well informed to make the best use of them (Appendix 44)

Several initiatives had been developed to improve performance in relation to service delivery, but it was decided that it would be an improvement if residents had a single point of contact within their area. Thus the idea of the Contact Point was suggested. The County took the decision at this early stage to co-operate with other agencies including district and town council's. It is this close co-operation that makes this system unique. As has been stated previously, many users do not know which tier of local government actually provides the service they are interested in. It would therefore seem eminently sensible to develop a Contact Point which would provide access to all services, and not just information on services provided by one authority. All of the other one stop shops/information centres quoted in the case studies do provide information and contacts with other local councils - but the system in West Sussex is unique in that discussions took place at a very early stage and that the development of the network may include sites on District Council property.

In the researchers view the decision to place the pilot scheme under the management of the County Librarian was not taken because library staff were already trained in information work, but rather because the East Grinstead library offered a suitable site! Although the County Librarian does in fact retain day-to-day responsibility for the service, overall management has recently been the responsibility of the Chief Fire Officer. This decision seems to have been taken because in the division of responsibilities, leading up to the Review of the County Council by the Local Government Commission, the Chief Fire Officer has been given this task of promoting the County Council. This seems a curious
decision, but it has enabled the Contact Point staff to make use of the Fire Brigade's 24 hour emergency telephone system to record enquiries taken when the library is closed.

In October 1992 the County Council further considered the success of the project and decided that they would develop it further. It was also decided that access to local government information could be made available, through further Contact Points (by this time "CDT" Contact Points) to reflect the County/District/Town co-operation.

The success of the Contact Point at East Grinstead is due partly to the availability of adjacent offices, which can be used by county Council officers and other agencies for confidential meetings with the public. These offices are also used by local councillors to conduct monthly "surgeries". Primarily the location is a good one, careful consideration must be given to identifying additional sites.

Staff

When appointing staff for the Contact Point, the basic qualifications required were that they had "a good background knowledge of local government and other government services". (Appendix 44) It later transpired, in discussion with the Information Officer that the candidate for her post was specified to be of senior library assistant grade, or above. It is encouraging to find evidence of this, as two of the previous case studies, Hampshire and Lancashire have not placed any value on this requirement. (chap 6 and 8) However, similar qualifications were not specified for the two part-time assistants. They were however required to have a "background in information" (discussion with Information Officer). In the researchers view it would have been far better to have stated "previous library experience". This is even more crucial when reference is made to the job description (Appendix 48). The first item requires that the assistant assists in the "formation and maintenance of an efficient information service to the public" - surely a candidate with previous library experience could achieve this more effectively than a person who had previously worked in a
"reception" type position? There is a further item listed in the job specification which is perhaps more worrying. Item 9 requires the incumbent to deputise for the Information Officer (who is required to have a library background). It could be assumed that this oversight would be remedied by subsequent training, but as can be seen by responses to the staff questionnaire, only very basic training is provided. It is also interesting to note that the Information Officer is "responsible to" the County Librarian, but "reports to" the Chief Executive". This surely could create a difficult management situation? The County Librarian should be responsible for reporting back to the Chief Executive, and is part of the management team responsible for the Contact Point.

Statistics

Statistics for the first six-months of operation show a weekly average of 85. Of these enquiries the largest number received were for employment related topics, followed closely by enquiries on planning. Other significant subjects include enquiries about community charge, public transport, footway maintenance, electoral registration, leisure and recreation and social services. The high enquiry rate for employment related topics, which is unique when compared to the other case-studies, is most probably due to the use of one of the adjacent offices by the careers section for regular advice sessions. When the number enquiries are compared by authority it is interesting to note that although 54.5% were about West Sussex County Council services, some 24.5% were for Mid-Sussex District Council. It is also worth recording that when the number of enquiries dealt with by other agencies are analysed the highest proportion were referred to the Citizen's Advice Bureau, but significantly a large number of enquiries were referred to Surrey and East Sussex County Council's. This is due to the geographical position of East Grinstead. However this also shows how the one-stop can act as a focus for the dissemination of information about for other authorities and agencies as the conceptual models demonstrate. Some 84% of enquiries were also answered on the same day the enquiry was taken. (Appendix 49)
Information provision

The Contact Point can use the full resources of the adjacent library if necessary, and the staff have built-up their own collections of directories and local contact lists. However, unlike the other case-studies no electronic data-base of contacts is generally available at present - although a PC based system is currently being established. Some discussion recently took place between West Sussex and Hampshire County Council's as to the extension of Hampshire's HANTSNET network into West Sussex.(chap 6) Had this venture been successful, West Sussex would have been able to develop the electronic A-Z for their own use, and have a ready-made electronic-mail network, without the costs of developing their own system. There is also an enquiry monitoring system available, consequently there would have been benefits to both counties. However, this dialogue did not come to any conclusion.

Considerable emphasis seems to be placed on recording the enquiries and monitoring response rates, and West Sussex has developed a sophisticated electronic system, which is held on the mainframe computer based in Chichester. All enquiries are entered on to this system, noting topic, as well as other details including the name of the officer the request was forwarded to. The Contact Point staff consider that they "own" all enquiries received, and subsequently follow-up, chasing staff as necessary. The enquirer is kept informed throughout. Although this system (Appendix 50 for sample forms) is to be commended, it does seem a little curious to develop this before establishing information delivery systems. A lot of staff time is involved in entering the enquiry information - which could perhaps be put to better use answering enquiries.

Compared to the other case-study authorities, the number of enquiries taken does not appear to be very high. Hampshire's Information Centre for example is recording some 1000 enquiries per week. It would seem that the comprehensive monitoring system does in fact keep the staff busy during the many quiet periods.
The Survey

The researcher visited the East Grinstead Contact Point on the 27th October 1993. During the visit the researcher interviewed the Information Officer and one of the two part-time Information Assistants. Sometime was also spent in recording the number of visitors to the Contact Point over a given period, and the length of time when no enquiries took place. Passive observation was also used to gain a perception of the work of the contact point.

Unfortunately it was not possible to undertake the user questionnaire. West Sussex County Council, and indeed the whole local government community in England is under the scrutiny of the Local Government Commission which is attempting to review the organisation of local government. The authority felt that it would be confusing to the local people if a specialised survey were undertaken at this time. Other authorities were likely to have responded in a similar way. However all recorded comments from users, when identified in committee papers, will be noted.

Results

Part 1

Interview with the Information Officer, conducted by the researcher using the set list of questions as described in chapter 5. (See Appendix 51 for results)

When asked about the training provided for staff, the Information Officer stated that she
had received ten weeks training which included training in departments and sometime learning about the work of the Town Council. She had also taken part in the Library Department's training, which included an element of customer care training. Most of the training however was expected to be "learning on the job". She did consider that the training given had been a "very good introduction" and "very necessary". When asked about what information it was most important to provide (j) the reply given "anything provided by the County, District or Town Council was to be expected. The Contact Point however refers all tourist enquiries to the library - which seem curious. The information is kept up-to-date by departments, although a PC based system is being developed by a departmental working party - updates are by disk. It is hoped that this system will soon be accessed via a modem, which will mean that the information available at the Contact Point will have the potential to be as current as possible. Development of the Contact Point is seen to be part of the corporate customer care strategy, this perhaps partly explains the major emphasis on development of the enquiry monitoring system, in advance of a comprehensive information delivery system. The Information Officer's reply to question (q) about users is interesting in that she considers them to be the "over 40s" and "unemployed" - she goes on to say that there "is not much for teenagers". Although, from the statistics it can be seen that employment related enquiries form a major part of the total number of enquiries taken, the Information Officer is confusing the unemployed as the main user as opposed to who should use the Contact Point. Surely the public, whether they be unemployed or teenagers should be using the Contact Point? If they are not - then perhaps some proactive promotion is necessary.

Part 2

Interview with a part-time Information Assistant, conducted by the researcher using the set-list of questions as outlined in chapter 5. There are two part-time Information
Assistants employed to work in the Contact Point, however because of time constraints it was only possible to interview one of them. (See Appendix 51 for full results)

The Information Assistant stated that the type of enquiry received was seasonal, for example enquiries relating to grass cutting is a favourite subject in the summer. (a) It is significant that this member of staff thought that an A-Z would be an improvement she would like to see (d). This, in the researchers view must be a pre-requisite of any information centre - and it is surprising that the Contact Point has only just started to work on a comprehensive listing. When asked about previous work experience (g) the Information Assistant said that she had experience in youth work and information, as well as being a receptionist. She stated that the majority of training received had been "on the job" which she considered "the best kind for this type of work", also she had taken part in the Library Department's induction training course, which did include an element of customer care training. (h) However when asked about training needs, she considered that some visits to other departments would be worthwhile. (i) Contrasting with the response received from the Information Officer, the assistant replied that she considered "anyone and everyone" to be users. (k)

Part 3

Passive Observation

The researcher observed the operation of the Contact Point for a period of two hours on the 27th October 1993. During this time some emphasis was placed on recording the number of visitors to the Contact Point and the length of time without
visitors. The results were as follows:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of visitors</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time without visitors</td>
<td>20 mins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It must be noted that many of the visitors were browsing the noticeboards and leaflets and not making enquiries. During the session the researcher noted his perception of the work of the Contact Point. The Contact Point operated in a leisurely way, the staff were always courteous and helpful, but the researcher did feel that they could have been busier. Indeed the length of time without visitors (20 minutes) did seem exceptionally long - this compares to a 7 minute period without visitors in the Hampshire case-study. The Contact Point is very easy to find, and access was good using a short flight of steps. A disabled person would have needed to ask for assistance to use the rear entrance. The adjacent foyer had a number of large notice boards containing many colour coded address and contact cards. This display looked very attractive and contacts were easy to find. Another display showed a very useful map of the West Sussex with contact details of local councillors for each ward. A public photocopier and telephone was also available in the foyer. A public toilet was also available but Contact Point staff had to be asked for the key - this could be off-putting when staff were dealing with an enquiry. Several members of the public also needed assistance with the photocopier, which meant that the Contact Point was left unstaffed for several minutes. Each member of the Contact Point staff had their own name plate to identify and "personalise" them to users - the researcher thought this to be a useful idea other one-stop shops could offer. There was a lot of "through traffic" as people passed the Contact Point on their way to the Library - and many people mistook the Contact Point for the Library enquiry desk, asking such questions as "can I join the library?" or "is this for enquiries?". Contact Point staff also enquired if several passing library customers had "enjoyed the book".
User reaction - a Survey of Library Users (Appendix 49)

The reaction to the CDT initiative has been overwhelmingly supportive. Feedback to the staff has "generally welcomed the establishment of the facility". Customers seemed to be pleased by the way the Contact Point informed them of the progress or otherwise of their enquiry. They also welcomed the way using the Contact Point saved them time and energy by contacting relevant departments, without the need to be passed from officer to officer.

One resident said that the CDT has resolved in one week a matter which she had been pursuing for 4 years.

Users also clearly liked to talk to Contact Point staff personally, even if they subsequently had to speak to an officer on the telephone. However, some 28% of library users responding to the survey were not aware of the service offered by the Contact Point, even though it was sited in the building they were visiting.

This demonstrates that there is still work to be done in promoting the facility before it can maximise its usefulness to the community.

Conclusion

The three staff did not seem overstretched, and compared with the other case-studies, it would appear that they could easily have tackled many more enquiries. It would seem evident from the results of the library users survey, that a promotional campaign was needed. This need can be further underlined by the Information Officer's reply to the question about users. If she considered the unemployed to be the main users - who were the other potential users? All County, District and Town services need to be involved. As the conceptual models have shown the two-way information process with other agencies is
important, to enable provision of as much information on services as possible. This may only be realistically achieved if the Contact Point idea was expanded to include other locations. They would then be the friendly local access point for everyone. As the Review of Local Government gathers pace, and all authorities wish to promote their services and develop local access - this seems the probable way forward for West Sussex.
REFERENCES

CHAPTER 10

Conclusion and success factors

As has been seen from the preliminary survey (chapter 4) and the case-study examples (chapters 6-9) there are many differences in approach to the one-stop shop. Some are more successful than others in disseminating information about services to the public. It is necessary to consider however what makes the one-stop shop successful in providing local authority information on services. The conceptual models described in chapter 5 have shown that in theory having a one-stop shop might improve the delivery of service information to the public. In addition the preliminary survey showed that there was certain organisational criteria which would influence the operation of the one-stop shop. The case-study authorities have provided an opportunity to illustrate these criteria, for example, access to information technology, management, staff qualifications and training, location, geographical area, information covered, and cost. These success factors and subsequent analysis may also be useful as guidelines to authorities wishing to set-up a one-stop service.

Establishing the one-stop shop

Politics

It will be necessary to convince the authority's politicians before the one-stop shop can be established. As the case studies have shown this can be a lengthy process, for example Hampshire County Council took the decision to set up its Information Centre in April 1991, but the idea had first been discussed some five years earlier (chapter 6). This support is necessary as in most authorities it is the politicians who can authorise the necessary finance and require the appropriate department to manage the initiative.
However getting the backing of the elected members is a crucial because

The work of the elected members is to sort out between various competing claims for financial priorities those which they themselves deem to be the most important - the job or each officer in each department is to put in what he considers to be reasonable bids for his department and on the political side the councillors determine these priorities <1>

The degree of influence that the Chief Officer has with politicians is a complex one, but may be assisted by that chief officers position in the hierarchy of the authority, as the case-studies have suggested. Freeman in his study 'Becoming a councillor' found that probably the most important factor is a member's ability to influence the work of the council is his relationship with the officers <2>

This relationship is influenced however by "political pressures, power balances, personal agendas, prestige of the officer" <3> to put it simply some Chief Officer/member partnerships are more effective than others. Usherwood states that

In three of the 12 authorities studied there had been a serious breakdown in the relationship between the elected members and the library officers <4>

The building-up of a good working partnership between officers and members can thus be seen to be important in the development of the one-stop shop, and once the one-stop shop has been set-up local politicians will be interested to be kept informed of progress and may request reports to be presented to them. Examples of such are available from Hampshire (Appendix 17) and West Sussex (Appendix 49). Once this reporting mechanism has been established it may prove valuable by keeping the one-stop shop on the political agenda. Local politicians may use the one-stop shop, and indeed as has been shown by the preliminary survey, many authorities (28%) felt that they were important users of the service. (chapter 4)
Corporate backing

The earlier surveys have shown the importance of receiving the backing of all departments at this point, and also that the development of the one-stop shop must not be taken in isolation but as part of an authority wide desire to provide information to the public about services, coupled with a customer care policy. Indeed some 75% of respondents to the preliminary survey stated that the establishment of their one-stop shop formed part of a corporate strategy of some kind. A clear strategy will be needed. It is interesting to note that in Enfield the Amenity Services Committee (31/1/90) gave approval for the setting-up of the one-stop shop service offering to provide an information service to "all the people of Enfield, covering the whole spectrum of information" (Appendix 25), of course this is an objective that only authorities with sites on libraries may want to publicise. It is at this stage that the authority needs to ask itself why it is establishing the one-stop shop? Is it because it has a genuine wish to provide information on services or to be seen to be doing so? If it is the former, then regard will need to be taken to the most effective means of providing and delivering the information, if the latter then a high profile launch of a token service may be all that is needed. Obviously the establishment of a one-stop shop or a network of such could provide the public with the information they require, if it is managed correctly, and provide the high profile image required by the authority. It could also be a waste of resources, if managed incorrectly.

The models mentioned earlier demonstrate the need for open channels of communication between all departments of an authority, it is clear from the case studies that the development of the one-stop shop has increased this co-operation, for example by encouraging the public to use libraries for very specific service information, as in West Sussex and Enfield. (chapters 7 & 9)
The case for Library involvement

Once the decision to set-up the one-stop shop has been made, the next step will be to establish who will manage the project. Will it be corporately run - with the Chief Executive's department taking the lead - or should the initiative be handled by a Public Relations Department? The preliminary survey has shown that all functions of an authority were represented and that there was perhaps no clear picture emerging. However the later case-study analysis has shown the importance of linking the development of the one-stop shop with the Information and Library services provided by an authority. For instance the expansion of the Hampshire Local Information Point project has been possible because of the co-operation of the libraries department (chapter 6). Although many authorities do not at first consider it necessary to involve the Library department (as in Lancashire) in the management of their one/first-stop shop it is slowly being realised that Libraries are also in the information business - and have a lot to contribute. However not all Chief Executives would respond that they thought:

The Libraries are turning into the hub of the wheel......which is bringing our libraries into the shopping centres, and putting all the rest of council services into the Library......So in terms of the way the organisation's moving forward about local places for information, council services, and all the rest of it, then the libraries are actually central to it <5>

Library Departments are well used to answering questions from the public on all manner of subjects and have staff trained in information provision. The conceptual model has shown that if the one-stop was not situated in the Library Department then reference would need to be made to the library, as the traditional source of reference for non-service related enquiries. There is a danger that this might not happen however as the case-studies have shown.
Departmental management

It is interesting to look at the alternative management structures of the case-study examples. Hampshire County Council's information centre is managed by the Press and Public Relations Unit, which is part of the County Secretary's Department. Lancashire County Council's information centres have a similar management structure being managed by the County Chief Executive's Department. The London Borough of Enfield and West Sussex in contrast are managed by the Library Department. In local government terms the County Chief Executive's Department and County Secretary's Department's are both central departments by definition, the Library Department might not be said to be so centrally placed. Indeed in the case of Hampshire, the County Librarian is a "second tier" Chief Officer and so does not attend the corporate management team meetings. Many decisions may thus be made without any form of consultation with him. As far as gaining authority wide agreement to the concept of the one-stop shop, then having an important central department behind it certainly seems to prove its value to other departments. Both Hampshire and Lancashire for example have developed rapidly, whilst West Sussex and Enfield have limited sites in libraries. It may be easier for the central department for example to obtain the necessary finance, without the operational constraints of a direct service department.

Whatever department manages the one-stop shop there is a danger that it could be developed to reflect that departments image. For example the Lancashire site at Preston was originally run by the Transport and Highways department - could this be a reason it is located in the bus station and provides transport information? (chap 8) Maybe no one department is fit to manage the centre alone? It is equally important that the one-stop shop is seen to be a corporate initiative as the one-stop shop(s) will provide answers about all authority services. The conceptual model has illustrated that the two-way information process, between the one-stop shop and departments is an important factor. It might thus be worth considering having a joint management structure - (although this can lead to divided responsibilities) to take into account the expertise of different authority
departments? In this way no one department is seen to be taking the lead on what will most probably be a high profile/high reward project but rather that the development of the one-stop shop is seen to be an authority-wide initiative involving all departments and using all available specialist skills.

Location

The location of the one-stop shop, both geographically within an area and the situation within a given area is a major consideration. Is the authority going to go for one prime site location or a number of sites? The preliminary survey has shown that the majority of authorities established their one-stop shop within existing authority-owned property (Chap 4). The London Borough of Brent for example has situated its one-stop shop in the Town Hall. <6> This has obvious financial benefits and in the majority of cases the one-stop shop will be near the central administration, making it easier for specialist staff to be consulted. However the authority administrative centre may not be the ideal location in terms of the user. Nottinghamshire's 'County Contact' information service for example has a shopping centre location. <7> Therefore it will be worth considering if the location is more important than cost? In the majority of cases quoted earlier it is unfortunate - but possibly a reflection of present-day local government finances, that cost obviously is a inhibiting factor in the choice of location for the one-stop shop. The Chief Executive and Clerk of Lancashire for example felt that it was "greater value for money" to use the existing Transport Information Centres for the "dissemination of other County Council publicity and information" (chapter 8). Because authorities wish to set-up information offices in many locations - at little cost - a number are now extending their one/first stop network by providing Local Information Points in other offices, as described earlier in the chapter. Such authorities include Cheshire County Council <8>, Gloucestershire County Council <9>, Kent County Council <10>, Cambridgeshire County Council <11>, and Essex County Council <12>, who have all located information points within their libraries. These information points, which are predominantly placed in
libraries offer a cost effective location. Using existing staff and premises, plus the established information resources of the library, and in most cases drawing on the experience and information collected by a central one-stop shop or information centre, they can be seen to be a successful cheaper alternative. This trend also reflects the organisational information flow illustrated in the conceptual models (chapter 5), and the need for co-operation between all departments/agencies to provide the one-stop shop with support and information.

Put in basic terms the location can be convenient for the authority, or for the public served. What the authority must aim for is perhaps a balance between the two. Realistically, it may be very costly to set up a one/first-stop shop in a shopping centre, a very convenient location for the user, but a compromise could be to locate the centre within the main shopping area, but in a side street, thus not taking up prime retail premises. Having more than one site could again be costly and obviously more difficult to manage - a compromise situation such as is happening in Hampshire (chapter 6) with its mixture of Information Centres and Local Information Points, using existing premises and staff could be the answer to this.

**Market research**

Before any decision is made about the location of the one-stop shop it may be worth undertaking some sort of market research to find out the needs of both service user and non-users in the area. Most of the authorities quoted in the case-study analysis have indeed done this and have based their services, on the results of that research. Surrey County Council, along with many others have commissioned MORI to undertake surveys, and Surrey opened three new information centres on the strength of the results. <13> Questions as to who will use the one-stop shop, information needs, and location should be apparent following such research. It may also be worthwhile to conduct a consumer survey once the service is operational. Bedfordshire have recently undertaken such a
survey of two of their 'Action Points'. Often however, surveys commissioned by an authority will only strengthen the views already held. For example, the STATUS survey carried out in Lancashire (chapter 8) stated that over 85% of users thought the information "about right"). They can be flattering to the authority, and are rarely controversial, as the market research company will want to get return business. It may be better and less costly to conduct an "in-house" survey - at least then the authority will know if it is being honest or not.

Finance

It is critical that the financial base of the one-stop shop project be established from the outset. The budget will be difficult to estimate if this is a new a venture for an authority, however the earlier surveys have shown that development of such a system can be very costly. The first survey showed for example, that setting-up costs could be between £1000 - £300,000 depending on the size of operation planned. Running costs were shown to be somewhere between £700 - £4 million, again dependent on how many "centres" (chapter 4). The case studies have shown for example, that in Lancashire estimated costs for running the seventeen centres was in the region of £856,000 for the year 1993/94 (chapter 8). Similar costings in Enfield amounted to a figure of £236,000 (chapter 7). Of course there are the hidden costs to the authority of implementing an authority wide customer-care policy which will further add to any cost estimate. Some suggested items which will need to be costed are:

Building:  
rent/purchase
heating
lighting
decoration  - corporate colour?
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<th>Equipment</th>
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<td>furniture</td>
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<td>- enquiry desks/counter.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- chairs.</td>
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<td>- shelving.</td>
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<td>- filing cabinets.</td>
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<td>- cupboards and storage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>telephones</td>
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<td>- line installed?</td>
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<td>- minicom.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- &quot;freephone&quot;, local call rate?</td>
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<tr>
<td>photocopier</td>
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<td>- electrics?</td>
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<tr>
<td>fax machine</td>
<td></td>
<td>- line and electrics?</td>
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<td>computers</td>
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<td>- printer.</td>
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<td>Stationery</td>
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<td>Staff</td>
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<td>- how many?</td>
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<td>training</td>
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<td>- courses(outside agency or &quot;in-house&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Information</td>
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<td>A-Z?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>directories</td>
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<tr>
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<td>maps</td>
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<td>timetables</td>
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Publicity/ promotion: market research?
        design work (logo)
        - badges for staff,
          stationery, signing.
        display material - leaflets,
        posters.
        media - photographs, press
        advertising.
        items for sale?

Of course many of the items shown above will have associated recurring costs such as telephone rentals and charges, line rentals and charges for the fax and computers, electrical costs, heating, plus any lease or rental charges associated with the building. (for an example of detailed costings see Appendix 33)

Value for money?

It is interesting to look at the costs per enquiry of the one-stop shops mentioned in the case-studies. The London Borough of Enfield's service costs £8.87 (which includes costs for Borough Information System in Libraries, but no building related costs), West Sussex £7.19 (no building related costs), Hampshire £3.18 (based on revenue costs only) and Lancashire 54p per enquiry (no "premises related costs"). All figures are based on the year 92/93. (chapters 6-9) These compare with the cost per enquiry figure for a Library Authority in the south of England (they preferred to remain anonymous) of £1.83, this figure does not contain any building related costs.

In basic terms, apart from Lancashire whose cost per enquiry is fairly low, the others do
seem very costly especially with regard to "value for money" in the economic sense, and all (apart from Lancashire) are higher than the cost per enquiry for the Library Authority. However the one-stop shop does act as a focus for the dissemination of corporate information and does, as the conceptual model represents, encourage co-operation between authority departments and other information providers, thus promoting more efficient and effective information provision. The benefit it terms of raising the profile of the authority is difficult to assess. This may be something the politicians are willing to pay for if it means that their authority will survive. As one councillor put it:

Finance should not be top of the list........it must never be the primary function <15>

Information

The comprehensiveness of the information provided by the one-stop shop will unfortunately be primarily dependent on the budget available, but may reflect political emphasis or departmental policy, as well as geographical location and user need. Lancashire's information centres for example include detailed travel and tourist information, because of their "holiday" location. Should the one-stop shop have access to an A-Z of services? There is no doubt that a listing of services, presented in whatever form, with contact names and telephone numbers will be required by the one-stop shop regardless of the scope of provision. This is also an element of the conceptual model which will encourage two-way information flow between the one-stop and other information providers. Cheshire County Council, who recently produced an A-Z of council services, took the unusual step of distributing this to all private and business addresses in the county. <16> All of the authorities investigated in the case-studies indeed do provide some form of A-Z of services. Access to authority(and perhaps neighbouring authority) committee minutes and policy documents will also be required. Electoral registers will be needed, certainly for the immediate catchment area. It will also be necessary to stock some local maps including a street guide to the area, as well as having
access to travel timetables. Some one-stop shops have tourist information, some provide
detailed welfare benefit information, and for those one-stop shops located within libraries
access to general as well as specific information is taken for granted (another strong
argument for placing the one-stop shop under Library management?) Obviously the
information needs of customers will become apparent in the early weeks of operation and
thus the stock may be added to accordingly. The earlier survey described in Chapter 4
provides a useful listing of the information held by a number of one-stop shops. Of course
there is no end to the information that could be required, for example tourist information
on adjacent area. Conversely it is also possible that the information that is easily provided,
such as council minutes, might not be used. Keeping the information centre(s) supplied
with authority leaflets and literature could be a hidden cost which may not be considered
by service departments. Once a regular supply is established, and if the number of centres
increases this could be a burden on departmental budgets. It is crucial to keep the supply
going and it may be that extra resources will need to be provided, from a central budget.

Technology

In the majority of authorities the use of technology, in the form of computers - from
the standalone PC to the large integrated network, forms a vital part of information
provision within the information centre/one stop shop. In chapter 6, HANTSNET the
Hampshire County Council's computer network was described. This is used by the
County's Information Centre and the many Local Information Points to provide an
electronic A-Z, the Public Services Index. Although Hampshire is developing a public
version of HANTSNET it is used at present solely by council staff. Enfield (chapter 7)
and Lancashire (chapter 8) both have public access systems which are available twenty-
four hours a day. There can be no doubt that such information should be made generally
available to the public, and such a system should be a pre-requisite of any one/first stop
shop. The user may often prefer to use a system directly, as this can afford some degree of
privacy, they may not feel that they can involve a member of staff - so the electronic
information delivery system has some advantages. They can also be located in different sites, such as schools or recreation centres - and provide access for groups who may not be the "traditional" users of local authority information services. Conversely, because staff are not involved, the user may take longer, or not find the information they require - the staff may thus not be aware of any problem, as they would have been if asked direct. It might be wise to install electronic comment screens so that users can record their comments should they be dissatisfied - or satisfied with the service.

The argument between viewdata and computer display will go on for many years - but it does seem that more authorities are progressing viewdata for public information systems. Berkshire County Council, for instance has been operating a successful viewdata system for many years, and now has the biggest and most widely used system in the country.<17> Nottinghamshire County Council has a sophisticated "touch screen" information delivery system provided by Applied Interactive Technology <18>, which can display information about local councillors including a photographic image, audio is also possible. It is the researchers opinion however that a mixture of both systems offers more advantages. Viewdata can be slow and screens can contain little information, however it may be easier to use for the computer illiterate. Normal computer screen display however can contain a lot of information, and many authorities already have databases stored on large mainframe machines. It would be very costly to transfer to other technology. Why not use the best of both? It does seem eminently sensible to use viewdata entry screens to enable the user to access existing computer databases, such has successfully been used by Oxfordshire County Council in their OXCIS project <19>, this system has been designed by a company called MRSC Ltd, who have also recently signed a contract to provide a similar system for Leicestershire County Council.<20> It also is important to provide a good quality printer, which coupled to the computer/viewdata system can provide prints for the user to take away.

With reference to the earlier survey described in chapter 4, it was noted that although 46% of respondents stated that they had or planned to have a computer system in their one-
stop shop, only 5% said that they intended to use such a system to keep information up-to-date. This trend is supported by three of the systems described in the case-studies, Enfield, Lancashire and West Sussex who all rely primarily on manual systems for updating their service information. Hampshire, has developed a well defined support role for departments. All information on HANTSNET is provided by departments and every screen has an "owner" (see Appendix 10). Thus up-dating is the responsibility of every department - and the culprit can be readily identified should the information be found to be out-of-date. In the researchers view such a system is both necessary and advisable for the one/first-stop shop. Updating information can be a dire task - if reliance is placed on manual systems, or on selected staff to up-date computer data - there is also a danger that the information could be transcribed wrongly. If departmental support is forthcoming - not forgetting that the one /first stop concept must be a corporate one to succeed, then this task is shared - with expert staff entering their own information - any errors are then their responsibility. Keeping information up-to-date however is not just a problem for computer systems. Indeed more effective dissemination of quality information can be made easier for all staff within the organisation by the use of information technology.

In the United States several community networks are operating successfully, this is when a number of communities have joined together to provide affordable access to information and services within the areas served, by providing links into their databases. With large networks such as Internet hosts can be geographically separated but be linked to others with a similar interest - or to users who may require specific information. All types of information can be provided, they can provide electronic mail for local groups - local business, and local authorities. Also bus timetables, local events and addresses, indeed very much the sort of information needed in a one/first stop shop. <21> This could be a future development for information provision in this country. Indeed many information providers are already providing access into their systems. HANTSNET, Hampshire's network has links to other databases - such as the local health authority, and can display hospital consultant's waiting list periods for example - or provide access to TRAMIS - the Local Government Management Board's database - other links are always under
consideration. (chap 6) In this way much of the effort of providing, and up-dating information is shared, and information can be disseminated to the user in a much more effective way, utilising the channels of communication as shown by the conceptual models.

Telephones are another consideration, several authorities have opted for the "freephone" option, whereby users are encouraged to use the telephone, at no charge to themselves, to contact officers. Hampshire uses the "freephones" which are located in some of their Local Information Points to access the main Information Centre - if the point is busy or direct contact with an officer is required (chapter 6). Some authorities have a telephone enquiry line - utilising the "local" call rate facility - a user can then telephone from anywhere in the authority and only be charged for a local call. This is a particularly valuable service in large shire counties. Many authorities offer an "answerphone" facility for out of hours enquiries, and West Sussex uses the Fire Brigade switchboard to forward enquiries during the time when the Contact Point is closed - thus the enquirer always gets the "personal touch" whatever hour they may telephone (chapter 9).

Facsimile machines are also a very useful addition to the one/first stop shop, most authorities do indeed include these machines along with the ubiquitous photocopier. Hertfordshire County Council <22>, and East Sussex County Council <23>, infact have based their network of information points on unmanned units supported by telephone and fax facilities.

Opening hours

The first survey showed that opening hours varied a great deal, but that over 56% were open for over 37 hours a week. Location of the one/first stop shop obviously is an important factor governing opening hours. If located in an office complex or other authority building then the usual opening times of that building will dictate what hours the one/first stop shop is required to open. Likewise if located within library premises the
one/first stop will reflect the usual library opening hours. The London Borough of Enfield has an average opening of 48.6 hours per week (chapter 7) whilst Lancashire's average is some 57 hours per week (chapter 8). Generally it can be seen that by having a one-stop shop the authority is providing greater access to information about services.

Usage does not seem to be influenced by the time of day as this "does not appear significant" according to a report from Enfield, (Appendix 25). It was noted however, that the number of people visiting the Information Centre in Hampshire did differ between the morning and afternoon period during the time the researcher was present (chapter 6).

Staff

The majority of respondents to the first survey stated that their one-stop shop had two or more staff. This was reflected in the case-studies. West Sussex's Information centre in East Grinstead has for example, one full-time member of staff, plus two part-timers (chapter 9); and Hampshire's Information Centre has four part-time members of staff, plus the centre manager (chapter 6). It was perhaps worrying to note that the first survey showed no desire by authorities to recruit professional information staff to manage their one/first-stop shops, indeed only Enfield, out of the four case-studies (chap 7) did ask for "a recognised librarianship or information studies qualification" <24>, when recruiting managers for their First-Stop Information Service. Norwich City Council in it's advertisement for the Advice Arcade Manager, required the post holder to

"hold a degree or equivalent and will need to demonstrate a commitment to excellence in advice provision and an awareness of social policy issues" <25>

and the London Borough of Tower Hamlets required their new Bethnal Green one-stop shop manager to be a "dynamic, experienced and successful manager with exceptional communication skills". <26>
When recruiting staff for their one/first-stop shop most authorities would not specifically ask for any qualification. This view is supported by responses to the question in the first survey, where some 37% of respondents stated that they would ask for "no specific" qualifications.<sup>27</sup> Although the First-Stop Information Officers in Enfield are required to be Chartered Librarians or Information Scientists (chapter 7), staff in Hampshire (chapter 6) and Lancashire (chapter 8) were not required to have such qualifications. It is perhaps worth considering the need for customer care skills as opposed to formal library skills - ideally staff should have both. However it is essential that the right calibre of staff are employed and equipped with the information support they require.

The annual salary of staff does not vary a great deal - for example the case-studies have shown that in Lancashire each information centre is managed by a supervisor who earns between £10,080 - £10,803 (Scale 3), and staffed by assistants earning £5,307 - £9,894 (Scale 1/2). The manager in overall charge earns between £15,903 - £16,962 (Scale S01). In Hampshire, the information centre manager is also paid on S01, and the information assistants receive £9,432 - £9,894 (Scale 2).

In view of the lack of formal qualifications - training is obviously an important factor to consider, indeed Hampshire County Council thought training to be sufficiently important to allow six months training time for newly appointed staff before their information centre opened (chapter 6). This is perhaps easier to organise, if as in Hampshire, the "one/first-stop shop is not in operation during the training period. Other authorities appointing staff to existing centres will not have this luxury. However as the case studies have shown "on the job" training does not appear to work. It is the researchers view that all newly appointed staff should attend an induction course, which would encompass background information and familiarisation with the work of the authority; some time in the major departments - to gain valuable experience of the nature of enquiries asked, and to make useful contacts; and customer care training - telephone manner, dealing with difficult users, presentation etc. Cambridgeshire County Council in 1991 took the unusual step of
appointing a customer care consultant to help staff deal with the public "in a positive and personal manner". This option is of course available to all authorities - and many authorities do have large in-house personnel departments capable of undertaking such work, but it might be decided that an outside agency could offer an alternative. It may also be beneficial if this training takes place before the member of staff works in the "one/first stop shop". Once the newly appointed member starts work in the centre, it is useful to have a period of "training", when he/she can learn from the experience of others in a real situation. It is perhaps necessary during this period that the member of staff can be identified by users as "training" - a suitable badge can be provided. Thus if this newly appointed staff member is not confident in answering enquiries, then this is not taken to be a reflection of the usual service provided by the centre.

Appointing staff is a sensitive issue, in a way the skills required of staff in the "one/first stop shop" fall someway between a librarian, a social worker, and a PR person. Generally though, the low level of qualifications (and salary) is worrying.

Publicity and Promotion

One of the first decisions to be taken - and one which may involve much discussion at the committee and planning stage - is whether the staff will be required to wear uniform. In three out of the four case-studies, Hampshire, Lancashire, and West Sussex this was indeed required. The authority provides the uniforms - but the staff are responsible for laundry needs. If not providing a uniform most authorities consider a badge necessary. The advantages of providing uniforms is that the staff convey a corporate "business-like" image, reflecting the trend set by the banks, building societies and major stores. In the researchers view - this image is important. Of course it may be impossible to provide uniforms for staff if the one/first stop is situated in a library for example, and as part of the normal library service. It is then that clear signing for the service be provided - if there are several points throughout an authority, then this signing
needs to be easily recognisable and "corporate" - and used at all sites. It may also be possible to provide leaflets, letter headings and other stationery to promote image (Appendix 52). And thus promote a more effective information service for the authority.

The general ambience of the one/first-stop shop is also something to be considered, Enfield LBC for example has provided "First-Shop" signing for their information points. Hampshire County Council has taken particular care to create a suitable environment for its information centre in Winchester. Indeed the advice of the County Architect was sort to provide signing, furniture, and general décor. The result is a very pleasing environment which reflects the corporate image.

Many authorities seem to be organising high profile launches of their one/first-stop shops. This is partly because of the current investigation of local government by the Local Government Commission, and the wish by authorities to be seen to be acting positively to empower their citizens. Interestingly, Enfield (chapter 7) conducted an "in-house" survey to assess the potential for the one-stop service, it found that where users expected that libraries could provide information on a given subject - for example on recreation and sports, then they would use the service readily, where there was little expectation - enquiry level would be low. This does illustrate another reason for publicity, to inform the public that the one-stop shop can provide access to information on all services, to reflect the model described in chapter 5. Practically, opening a centre can be a costly and time-consuming business to organise. It may consist of arranging for a local dignitary to officially launch the service, as was recently the case in Nottinghamshire when the chairman of the County Council was invited to launch the first of nine new 'Contact Points', this requires co-ordination of diaries to enable all chief officers and senior members of staff to attend. Also a press release may need to be issued - and the local press encouraged to attend. In practice this may mean arranging for a photographer to attend, and submitting the resulting photograph, plus text of the release to the press to assure inclusion in the latest issue! Will other agencies, such as the local Citizen's Advice Bureau, Welfare Agencies, local MP(assuming he/she is not opening the centre) be
invited? (reinforcing the essential information channels). If so invitations will need to be printed and sent out - well in advance of the date. Are the public invited? Timing is often crucial in determining this - for example if the centre is to be "officially" opened in the evening then a more formal occasion is possible - and the public would not normally attend. If however, the centre is launched as part of a normal working day, then users may obviously be present. It might also be decided to have the "official" launch before the one/first-stop shop opens to the public - in the first hour for example. Depending on the type of opening ceremony required - it is usually customary to provide refreshments for guests. Some authorities are promoting their service, and stressing the "openness" of the authority by having the chief executive, or council leader available to answer user enquiries. The Chief Executive of the London Borough of Croydon for example, was recently to be seen answering user's enquiries at the council's information desk. <31> It may also be possible to encourage the local media including, local radio and television to include a special feature on the work of the one/first-stop shop. If this can be organised it is perhaps prudent to arrange for a leading politician to be present to give the definitive answer to any awkward questions raised.

The Users

The initial survey of one-stop shop provision (chapter 4) showed that there was a great diversity of user identified. However 53% of responses to the question regarding customers in the survey included the term “general public”, “everyone”, “residents” “locals” or “citizens”. Some 28% felt that “members/councillors” were also significant. users, others thought “officers/departments” and “tourists/visitors” to be important. It will be beneficial to attempt to establish who are the users (and potential users) of the one-stop shop, and to try to reach them. For example, the users may be seen to be people visiting the major authority complex - then perhaps a one-stop shop on this site maybe all that is required. In a tourist area it will be important to site information centres near major coastal resorts, attractions and travel locations - very much as in Lancashire (chapter 8).
Obviously the information held, the presentation of the information and staff training is also likely to be connected to the category of users visiting the centre. For example, in a tourist area detailed travel information will be required, this may not be the case with a one-stop shop situated in a large county town, which may require different information. Also in a busy bus station, open for long periods - information will need to be available when the centre is closed through touch-screen systems or similar. In areas of high unemployment emphasis needs to be placed on housing and welfare benefit information and training for staff (as in Enfield - chapter 7). It could be argued that the one-stop shop should not be required to answer tourist or travel enquiries, these are better left to the tourist information centre and travel offices? In most cases however, although one category of user may predominate (high proportion of retired people and unemployed in Enfield - chapter 7), a wide diversity of user will be present, and basic information will need to be available where specialised enquiries are likely to occur.

Users views

From the responses to user questionnaires the majority were very happy with the service and the information provided. With comments such as "very helpful" (Hampshire - chapter 6), "very satisfied" (Enfield - chapter 7), "about right" (STATUS survey Lancashire - chapter 8) and "generally welcomed" (West Sussex - chapter 9). They seemed generally "very satisfied" with the information received, some 72% reporting this fact in the Hampshire user questionnaire (chapter 6). Thus the one-stop shop is evidently providing quality service information to the public, and establishing its role as a first point of call for service information. The users also recorded that they found the staff "very helpful" (Enfield - chapter 7), indeed some 100% responded in this way.

Local politicians will also be anxious to see that the one-stop shop is proving a success, and it will be desirable to establish a regular reporting procedure as has been mentioned earlier. Indeed the case-studies have shown that the politicians are keen to be kept aware
of the progress of their centres. In each case statistics of use are reported to the relevant committees (chapters 6-9). There is no evidence that any centres have closed, but this could occur and members will be more inclined to support a project if they are kept well informed.

It will be important to listen to users views and to design and modify the one-stop shop to take their needs into account.

**Summary and conclusions**

The review of the structure of local government has had a profound impact on the development of the one/first-stop concept. Whilst it was the interest in providing quality services and "value for money", coupled with the desire for improved customer care and local accountability which most probably caused many local authorities to establish or plan such centres, the review has accelerated this process dramatically. Large shire counties, for example Cambridgeshire, Cheshire and many others mentioned earlier in the chapter are attempting to establish centres in many locations within their areas. Cynically this could be seen to be just an attempt to increase awareness, and to save themselves from being abolished by central government. However

there is the beginning of a realisation that the management system is there to get the job done for you and me...the shift from instructing the applicant to providing a service has been difficult...but it is beginning to show. Excellence in public services should become not merely a matter of luck but a reasonable expectation for everyone.<32>

As users become to expect a quality service - they are also becoming more discerning and may wish to find out about alternatives and other options on offer. Thus the need for information centres one/first stop shops, whatever the name, will increase as the review progresses. After the review is over....an informed guess suggests that there will be more local authorities, as many of the old City Boroughs are re-established; it is more than likely
that these areas will want to establish one-stop shops of their own. It is therefore possible
that after the accelerated growth of the information centre/point - one/first-stop in the
period leading up to the review, followed maybe by a slowing down and consolidation as
the results of the review are published for each area, that their will be a re-emergence of
interest in the concept. It is also possible that the truly "one-stop-shop" concept will be
the favoured option, as the new authorities try to re-establish public credibility and be
locally accountable. Local offices could be then established with specialist staff available
to answer users - very much like the neighbourhood office idea of many of the inner
London Boroughs. This is true empowerment, and after all that is said about local
government

A friendly face to the customer is a lesson many parts of the
private sector have still to learn.<33>

How is the one-stop shop successful?

It is apparent that the one-stop shop, as conceptualised earlier in chapter 5 does
provide a focus through which authority service information can be effectively distributed.
Indeed from the preliminary survey results and the case-study analysis it has become clear
that the establishment of the one-stop shop has facilitated a move to a more effective
corporate service information system. Many of the authorities, including all the case-
study authorities had developed an A-Z of services, published in hard-copy, and in many
examples, electronic form. This sort of guide must improve the public's access to service
information. The one-stop shop has also helped develop communication channels between
the public and service providers, as the models in chapter 5 show. With a one-stop shop it
is important that information is available and up-to-date. Through good publicity the one-
stop shop will soon establish itself as a source of service information in the public's
perception. The image of the authority may also be improved. The one-stop shop can
also provide a control on the quality of the information disseminated from the authority.
The staff will be in direct contact with the enquirer and will receive comment on the
information provided if it is wrong or misleading. This detail can then be directed back to
the supplying department concerned. Communication is thus two-way, as depicted in the model. The establishment of a computer information system to support the one-stop shop has also greatly assisted the information flow within the authority. All the case-study authorities had developed such systems.

The West Sussex example has in addition shown the value of gaining support from all tiers of local government. The work of the Local Government Commission has made this even more necessary as traditional authority boundaries disappear. However the public will still need to have access to service information and may be more confused than ever before. It would seem sensible then that all service information providers co-operate, the one-stop can be the focus for this. This is indeed the situation in many of the authorities who responded to the preliminary survey, few saw themselves as just providing information about their own authority (chapter 4).

The one-stop shop has also highlighted the need for better customer care. All the staff interviewed in the case-studies took pride in their jobs, and had required training on specific areas of their authority's work. It should be possible for this training to be offered to other staff which must be beneficial to the authority as a whole. All staff will then be more encouraged to think corporately.

In conclusion, the one-stop shop has proved successful in disseminating service information by providing a focus for the authority, and by promoting the development of communication channels between information providers. This has been assisted through the establishment of electronic information systems, which in turn has helped achieve a better information flow, increased coverage, and aided reporting and quality checks. Which when coupled with the consequent improved training and customer care skills of the staff has thus helped promote a better public image for the authority, and provide the public with better information about authority services.
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Dear Chief Executive,

SURVEY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY "ONE STOP SHOPS" or PUBLIC INFORMATION BUREAUX/CENTRES.

I am undertaking a survey of local authority "one stop shops" or public information bureaux/centres and would be grateful if you could complete one of the enclosed forms. Please use Form A if your authority does have a "one stop shop" or Form B if your authority does not at present have such an information centre. I would be grateful if you could pass on to an appropriate officer if more applicable.

The survey is part of a comprehensive study designed to assess the extent and nature of local authority "one stop shop" provision in England and Wales, which I hope to complete for a Doctorate at Loughborough University.

I am sure you agree that the results of the survey will be of great interest to the local government community, and I hope of value to those authorities considering such a venture.

Please contact me on 0962 846114 if you have any questions about the survey, or would like to discuss the project further.

All information received as a result of this survey will be made available to the Local Government Management Board Information Service, in recognition of their help and assistance with the distribution of the survey.

In order that I can keep the survey to a reasonable timetable I would be most grateful if you could respond by 15th May 1992.

Thankyou for your assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Brian Dawson.
APPENDIX 2

EY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY "ONE STOP SHOPS" or PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRES

This Form if your authority does have a "one stop shop" or public information bureau/centre and Form B if your authority does not have an information centre.

Your answer in the space provided or use a separate sheet if necessary.

If literature is available (leaflets, statistics, reports) please enclose with your response.

Name/telephone no

When was the first "one stop shop" established?

How many "one stop shops" does your authority have?

Where are they situated? eg. Town Hall

What are their opening hours?

How many staff do they employ?

What qualifications did you ask for? eg. Chartered Librarian

Which department manages the centre? eg. Library Dept.

What are the costs of the "one stop shop" eg. setting up and running costs?

What standard information is currently provided? eg. Service Charters, A-Z of services.

continued over
What information will be provided in the future? eg. Health Authority Information.

What information will not be provided? eg. Tourist Information, Information about other authorities.

How is the information kept up-to-date and correct?

What information delivery mechanisms does your authority employ? eg. Local Area Network, Viewdata.

Who do you see as the customers of the "one stop shop"? eg. users of services, officers/councillors.

How does the establishment of your "one stop shop" form part of a general corporate strategy?

What market research if any, did you undertake before the establishment of your "one stop shop"?

Please tick box if you do not wish the information from the questionnaire to be made generally available.

Thank you for your assistance.

Return form to: Brian Dawson
Local Government Unit,
81, North Walls,
Winchester,
SO23 8BY
Questionnaire forms part of an independent survey designed to assess the extent and nature of "one stop shop" provision in England and Wales. The results from this research will form the basis of a more detailed study of individual information centres.

Use this Form if your authority does not have a "one stop shop" provision.

Answer in the space provided or use a separate sheet if necessary.

If no relevant literature is available (reports etc) please enclose with your response.

Name and address of organisation

Contact name/telephone no

Does your authority intend to establish a "one stop shop" provision? If not why not?

only continue if your authority intends to establish a "one stop shop" provision.
What standard information will be provided? eg. Service Charters, A-Z of services

What information will not be provided? eg. Health Authority information, information about neighbouring authorities, consumer information, Tourist information.

Information delivery mechanisms will your authority employ? eg. Local Area Network, Viewdata

What are the estimated costs of setting up and running the "one stop shop"?

Is the establishment of your "one stop shop" form part of a general corporate strategy - if so how?

Do you see as customers of the "one stop shop"? eg. users of services, officers/councillors

Will you, or will you be undertaking any market research before establishment of your "one stop shop"?

Please tick box if you do not wish the information from the questionnaire to be made generally available

Thank you for your assistance.

Return form to: - Brian Dawson
Local Government Unit,
81, North Walls,
Winchester.
SO23 8BY
Dear

Survey of "one stop shop's", "first stop shop's" or authority information centres.

I am undertaking research into local authority "one stop shop's" (or whatever you wish to call them) as part of my studies for a doctorate at Loughborough University. You may remember an earlier survey you kindly completed in relation to this, during May last year.

I wonder if you would be prepared to take part in a smaller more detailed analysis of your "one stop shop"? The further study would include interviews, by myself of the management and staff of your centre, plus collection of any supporting literature, such as job descriptions and statistics of use. Also I would hope to observe both staff and users, particularly in the use of any information delivery systems you may have. In addition, I have produced a short questionnaire which I hope could be distributed to users over the period of a month.

Initially I intend to visit on one or two occasions to undertake interviews and observation.

Obviously, the above would involve some commitment on your behalf, but I would hope that the resulting evaluation could be of benefit to your authority. I would undertake to provide you with a separate report, based on my findings for your use.

Please find enclosed a copy of the user questionnaire.

I will telephone you shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Brian Dawson.
APPENDIX 5

The Manager

a) Which department manages the "one stop shop"?
b) What is the budget?
c) How many sites?
d) Where are they?
e) Do you have plans for any more?
f) How many staff do you have working solely in the "one stop shop"?
g) When recruiting staff did you ask for any qualifications?
h) What training do you provide for your staff?
i) Do you think this is necessary?
j) What information do you consider it most important to provide?
k) How is this information kept up-to-date?
l) What information don't you provide?
m) What information would you like to provide in the future?
n) Do you use or intend to use new technology - if so what, and for what functions?
o) Does the establishment of your "one stop shop" form part of a corporate strategy?
p) Did you undertake any market research before establishing the "one stop shop"?
q) Who do you see as users of the "one stop shop"?

The staff

a) What is the main type of enquiry you receive?
b) What information do you find it difficult to supply?
c) Why is this?
d) What improvements would you like to see?
e) How long have you worked in the "one stop shop"?
f) What made you want to work in the "one stop shop"?
g) Where did you work before?
h) Have you had any training - if so what - and was it successful?
i) What do you see as your training needs?
j) Do you think the "one stop shop" is successful?
k) Who do you see as the users of the "one stop shop"?
ONE STOP SHOP*/INFORMATION CENTRE USER SURVEY

The information gathered from this study will, it is hoped enable a set of guidelines to be produced which will assist Local Authorities in the management of such centres. All information received will be treated in confidence. Please place your completed questionnaire in the provided. Thank you for your assistance.

**Question 1**
Where do you live?
- within 1 mile
- within 5 miles
- over 10 miles

**Question 2**
What is your age?
- under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- over 65

**Question 3**
What is your occupation?

**Question 4**
What is the nature of your enquiry?

**Question 5**
Are you satisfied with the answer you were given?

Not satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 Very satisfied (please circle)

Any further comments on your response?

**Question 6**
Did you find the staff (please circle)

Not helpful? 1 2 3 4 5 Very helpful?

Any further comments?

Please see over

233
Question 7
How many enquiries have you made of this service?

- 1-3
- 4-6
- 7-9
- 10+

Question 8
Where did you find out about this service?

- Local paper/magazine
- Friend
- Council Office
- Telephone Directory
- Other Local Authority
- Local radio
- Posters
- Bookmarks
- Doctors
- Hospital
- Library
- Other (please specify)

Question 9
Have you any other general comments?
"ONE STOP SHOP"/INFORMATION CENTRE USER SURVEY

This questionnaire forms part of a larger national research study into Local Authority "one stop shops"/information centres. The information gathered from this study will, it is hoped enable a set of guidelines to be produced which will assist Local Authorities in the management of such centres. All information received will be treated in confidence. Please place your completed questionnaire in the box provided. Thankyou for your assistance.

Question 1
Where do you live?

within 1 mile □
within 5 miles □
over 10 miles □

Question 2
What is your age?

under 18 □ 35-44 □ over 65 □

18-24 □ 45-54 □

25-34 □ 55-64 □

Question 3
What is your occupation?

Question 4
What is the nature of your enquiry?

Question 5
Were you satisfied with the answer you were given?

not satisfied 1 2 3 4 5 very satisfied (please circle)

Any further comments on your response?

Question 6
Did you find the staff (please circle)

not helpful? 1 2 3 4 5 very helpful?

Any further comments?

Please see over
Question 7
How many enquiries have you made of this service?

1   
2-5  
6-9  
10+  

Question 8
Where did you find out about this service?

Local paper/magazine  
Friend  
Council Office  
Telephone Directory  
Other Local Authority  
Local radio  
Doctors  
Hospital  
Library  

Other (please specify) .................................................................

Question 9
Have you any other general comments?

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APPENDIX 7

Note of a Meeting between members of the Development Panel and representatives of Winchester City Council to discuss the Staple Gardens Site, Winchester, held at The Castle, Winchester, on Tuesday, 8th March, 1986.

SENT:

Shire County Council

Winchester City Council

Councillor M.J. Andrews

Councillor Mrs. P. Edwards

(The Chair)

Councillor Mrs. S.M. Bartlet

Councillor P. Davies

Councillor B.G. Harris

Councillor Wing Cmdr. J.L. Nunn

Councillor D.A. Keep

Councillor R. Robins

Mrs. S. Leyland - County Secretary

Councillor Mrs. A.E. Thomas

J.B. Thompson - Director of Planning

A. Coales - County Estates Officer

C. Cunningham - Deputy Director of Planning

K. Morris - Directing Officer, County Architects Department

A. Turner - Assistant County Planning Officer

Councillor Andrews expressed disappointment that the opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment of the whole Staple Gardens site appeared to have been lost. Now that Winchester Land plc had decided to proceed with limited development proposals on their parcel of land, the County Council were exploring options for developing the 0.38 acres in their own ownership which included the visually important corner site. He referred to the various planning policies and other restraints on development, which resulted in there being little financial incentive for the County Council to undertake a small-scale project.

Councillor Mrs. Edwards said the City Council were anxious to see the Staple Gardens area brought back to life and become more a part of the Town Centre. They had seen no County Council proposals for the area other than the ill-fated comprehensive scheme. She doubted that Winchester Land were as positive in their development proposals as the County representatives believed and pointed out that they had yet to finalise the Section 52 Agreement which was the only technical impediment to getting started.

Mr. Thompson, City Director of Planning, reported that the Inspector’s Report on the Winchester Area Plan had been received but had not been formally considered by the City Council. Significantly, the report proposed an embargo on large office developments in the City but was not against commercial/shopping or residential development or car parking.

With regard to the Staple Gardens site, Mr. Thompson also believed it worthwhile to have further discussions with the other land owners to try and achieve a comprehensive development scheme although, in the end, this was not pursued. He saw the corner opposite Westgate as most important and hoped a very good building could be erected there. He suggested that a possible use for the ground floor of such a building could be as an Information Centre for the County Council acting, in effect, as
its front door. The rest of the site presented a more difficult problem as it was very narrow and dominated by Elizabeth II Court. Residential development would be in keeping with other schemes on nearby sites but the other factors made this use less attractive. Possibly shops and services (e.g. estate agents) might be suitable. There was a need for additional public car parking facilities on the periphery of the town centre and ideally these could be linked to the town centre by footpaths. The City Council would, of course, bear the cost of public car parking.

In response to a question by Councillor Mrs. Thomas, it was stated that archaeological investigations being undertaken at the site were nearly completed.

Mr. Coales, County Estates Officer, explained the economics of developing the land in County Council ownership. It was a relatively small site and a number of factors had to be weighed against its land value. There were the costs of providing a low level building of high architectural quality, relocating the existing public conveniences, landscaping, the relocation of the staff car park, and commuted payments in respect of car parking provision for possible commercial development. These could amount to some 296,000.

The County Estates Officer believed the only way in which the site could show a positive land value was by its development as offices. This could amount to about 18,000 square feet, providing 15,000 square feet net of useable floor space. With regard to possible residential development, Mr. Coales said his calculations showed the site to have a minus-value on this basis, a conclusion which some City representatives found surprising.

Councillors Andrews believed the Land Sub-Committee would be unwilling to support housing proposals for the site and without a financial incentive for the County Council, the site could remain undeveloped for a considerable period of time.

Several Members felt that officer-level discussions were needed to explore possible acceptable uses for the site and wondered if the County Council might relocate offices from other sites to Staple Gardens. The release of a site elsewhere (e.g. North Hill Close) might help the City Council in their assessment of the options.

Mr. Leyland, County Secretary, sought clarification on the strength of the embargo on offices, pointing out that if the policy was flexible the County Council might be able to put forward an acceptable proposal.

Mr. Thompson quoted from the Inspectors’ Report which suggested that an office proposal could, in certain circumstances, be considered on its merits. He also referred to delays by Government Departments in releasing Peninsula Barracks, which had prevented progress towards the possible use of buildings there as County Council offices. In view of this he wondered if, despite his earlier reservations, the Staple Gardens Site might be considered for offices as, perhaps, the first phase of a relocation plan. For the public to accept such an idea as the best use, a superb building design would be required.
Councillor Mrs. Edwards shared this view and agreed that the demonstration of environmental gain (e.g. the release of sites elsewhere in the City) would help the case. Councillor Davies believed it would be a difficult task, in the light of the Inspector's report, to convince the public that office development was acceptable.

No difficulties were anticipated with regard to the relocation of the public conveniences. The City Council hoped that some public car parking space might be provided as 50 additional spaces were needed at this end of the town and asked that the officers, when they met, should consider this possibility. They hoped considerations would also include the Cross Street site and the provision of walkways through to Jewry Street.

It was agreed that the Land Sub-Committee would be informed that, following today's discussion, both parties could see merit in a development on the Staple Gardens site including a prestige-design building which would accommodate County Council staff relocated from a site elsewhere in Winchester. (The site or sites so vacated would be released from County Council office use). To this end, officers of the City and County Councils would work closely together to produce a scheme taking into account the ideas discussed today.

Members agreed to meet together again to review progress at the end of June.
MINUTES.

The Minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on the 17th December 1987 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS BROUGHT BEFORE THE COUNCIL IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 5(B).

New Years Honours List.

The Chairman of the Council congratulated the following Member and Officers of the County Council whose services had been recognised by the Award of Honours in the New Years Honours List.

- Councillor P.D. Merridale - CBE
- Mr J. Cambal, Assistant Education Officer (Careers Division) - MBE
- Mr M.N. Woodford, Principal Assistant Solicitor, County Secretary's Department - MBE
- Mr John Hoddinott, Deputy Chief Constable - QPM

Appointment of Deputy Lieutenant.

The Chairman was pleased to announce the appointment of the Leader of the Council Councillor F.A.J. Emery-Wallis as a Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire.

Mrs F.M. Graham-Taylor, OBE.

The Chairman announced the death on the 23rd of February of Mrs F.M. Graham-Taylor who had been a member of the County Council until May 1988 and had served the previous County Council since 1956 - during the later years as a County Olderman. A distinguished member of the County Council Mrs Graham-Taylor had served on both District and County Council's and her services to local government had been recognised by the award of the OBE. Although ceasing to be a member of the Council in May 1981 Mrs Graham-Taylor continued to have an active interest in local affairs.

Members from each of the political groups on the Council also spoke in a tribute to the services to the community rendered by Mrs Graham-Taylor. The Council stood in silence as a mark as respect.

3. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEE.

Ordered that, subject to such alteration as may from time to time be made by the Council, Councillor T.C.W. Henderson be appointed to serve on the Police Authority to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Councillor J. Marshall.

4. REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The report and recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee was presented.
IC IT AND RESOURCES.

Probation Committee
- guardian ad litem 4
- expansion programme 18

Magistrates’ Courts
- Justices’ training etc. 34
- additional staffing 18
- staff savings from turnover etc. -50

County Council centenary celebrations 45

Links with Europe 10

Disabled and Information Centre - restructuring 18

Disabled people employment project 3

Grants Panel
- additional resources 66

Contribution to Probation Committee’s expansion proposals 9

TOTAL AS PER APPENDIX B4 IN P & R COMMITTEE REPORT 175

RELIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE.

Fire
- Development of communications system 21
- Fire prevention - casual car user allowances 4
- Welephant fire safety campaign 10
- Subscription to FINDS 6
- Replacement of fire fighting kit - first phase 32

Trading Standards
- Additional enforcement costs from new legislation 28
- Registration
  - Increase in staffing levels 6
  - Scientific Service
    - Net cost of replacing asbestos monitoring pumps 1

Fire
- Replacement of fire fighting kit - completion 150

Trading Standards
- Balance of enforcement costs 147

TOTAL AS PER APPENDIX B5 IN P & R COMMITTEE REPORT 407

RECREATION COMMITTEE.

Archives - purchase of equipment 1
Libraries - additional appointments 50
Recreation - appointment of Dual Use Officer 12
Museums - additional computing usage 4
Archives - appointment of additional archivist 10
Recreation - contribution for Basingstoke Canal manager 13

TOTAL AS PER APPENDIX B6 IN P & R COMMITTEE REPORT 90
Previous entry: Welcome to Hampshire County Council's Information Network

Editor for this Index is: Andy Holdup (HNETEDIT)

Index title: HNETMAIN IPRIME01 (P) Dated: 31/03/94

**Contacts**

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HANTSNET

Version 3.2.

ious entry: Hampshire County Council Addresses and Contacts

Editor for this Index is: Andy Holdup (HNETEDIT)

en title: HNETMAIN I25 (P) Dated: 03/11/93

/About HCC addresses ???

proved Contractors: Architect's Reg.

ths, Deaths & Marriages Reg.

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us Contacts

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ty Councillors

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Estimations

Foreign Language Speakers

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Museums

Post Codes for Headquarters

Probation Service

ROFS - Distribution Lists

Staff Directory

INDEX - find an address by keyword
(excludes establishments,
HCC staff and contractors)

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Previous entry: Business

Editor for this Index is: Andy Holdup (HNEDIT)

Team title: HNETMAIN 1374 (E) Dated: 11/02/94

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- Education Business Partnership (HEBP)
- Employment Statistics
- European Employment
- Guidance and Careers
- Hampshire Small Firms Network
- Planning Publications on Employment
- Trading Standards
- Unemployment Statistics
- Vacancies

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seen title: SSPIHN I38  Dated: 20/07/92

Social Services Department

ORANGE BADGE SCHEME

AT IS THE ORANGE BADGE SCHEME?

It is a scheme run by the department of transport and gives street parking concessions. Details of where and for how long you may park are given in the leaflet that you get when your orange badge is issued. Badges are issued to disabled drivers or passengers, and an able-bodied driving an orange badge holder is covered by their badge. Driving badges can be issued to an individual or to an organisation which transports disabled people.

WHAT QUALIFIES FOR AN ORANGE BADGE?
en title: SSPIHN I38  Dated: 20/07/92

People who are blind.  
People who have a permanent disability that makes walking impossible or very difficult.  
People who receive: a mobility allowance; or a war pensioners' mobility supplement; or the higher rate of the mobility component of the disability living allowance; or a grant towards their own vehicle.  
People who use a vehicle supplied by a government department.  
Drivers whose disability means that they are unable to turn a steering wheel by hand.  

Children under two years of age do not qualify for a badge because they would not normally be expected to walk independently.
Here a charge?

An orange badge currently costs £2 for three years. After three years the badge holder's situation is reassessed. The minimum penalty for incorrect use of a badge is £400.

Do I get an orange badge?

Contact the duty social worker at your local area centre. You will be asked for proof that you need an orange badge and for recent passport size photographs of yourself.

Social services area centre addresses
Information Bureau Manager

Grade : Scale 6/S01 (£14106 - £16710)

Responsible to : Head of Public Relations and Marketing

Responsible for : Supervising the operation of the County Information Bureau (which provides a "one-stop" information service for the public on Council services and resources, and central reception for the Council's headquarters offices) and the provision of administrative support for the Public Relations and Marketing Unit.

Main Duties : 1) To supervise the provision of an efficient and effective public information service on the Council's services and resources. (This will involve supervising staff answering both face to face and telephone enquiries, and supplying a range of information leaflets and general publications to help improve public awareness of the Council's activities. When necessary to participate directly in responding to enquiries).

2) To ensure the provision of basic "signpost" information on other public services, local tourism, local transport etc.

3) To monitor the follow-up arrangements provided by Council Departments after they have taken over from the Bureau enquiries relating to a specific department or service. (This is to ensure that a proper response is given in a reasonable time scale).

4) To maintain computer based information systems and reference collections available to the Bureau.

5) To supervise the provision of a central reception for the public visiting the Council's headquarters in Winchester, liaising closely with individual Departments' reception staff.

6) To administer the display resources of the Bureau in liaison with the Marketing Manager.

7) To administer the sale of selected Council merchandise, including stock control, the handling of cash receipts and the maintenance of accounts.

8) To be responsible for the day to day management of the Bureau staff to set standards of presentation and performance and to ensure that staff are fully trained in the skills required to undertake their role.

9) To oversee the work of the telephonists, whose primary duties are to operate the headquarters telephone exchange, and to co-ordinate their deployment to cover Bureau staff (including sickness, leave and busy periods).
10) To manage the work of the administrative group, which provides support for the Public Relations and Marketing Unit.

11) To monitor accounts/budgets etc. of the Public Relations and Marketing Unit and maintain financial systems in accordance with the requirements of the Department.

12) To administer the Council's policy on the letting of the Great Hall and hire of furniture and equipment, including the issue of instructions on staffing, security and emergency arrangements and issue of invoices.

13) To prepare budgets and monitor accounts for the Great Hall and its environs (including Queen Eleanor's Garden).

14) To oversee the maintenance of the Great Hall and its environs, including monitoring contractors' performance in relation to building cleaning, grounds maintenance and development, and maintenance of the dove-cots.

15) To carry out such other duties commensurate with the post as may be required.
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE: Part-time Information Assistant

GRADE: Scale 2 Pro-rata

RESPONSIBLE TO: Information Bureau Manager

RESPONSIBLE FOR: Assisting the Information Bureau Manager with the operation of the County Information Bureau (which provides a "one-stop" information service for the public on Council services and resources, and central reception for the Council's headquarters offices).

MAIN DUTIES:

1. To supply information in response to personal and telephone enquiries from the public, Council Members and staff drawing on computer based information systems and reference collections, and supplying a range of leaflets and general publications to help improve public awareness of the Council's activities.

2. To supply basic "signpost" information on other public services, local tourism, local transport, etc.

3. To act as receptionist for the Council's headquarters offices in Winchester, liaising closely with individual Departments' reception staff.

4. To help maintain displays of posters, leaflets, other materials, videos and electronic information systems held in the Bureau.

5. To sell selected Council merchandise, which will involve handling cash receipts.

6. To undertake clerical duties in respect of the maintenance of statistics, including the number and nature of enquiries, retail sales, and "general" enquiries covering a wide variety of topics from tourism to welfare benefits.
7. To carry out such other duties commensurate with the post as may be required.

NOTE: 1. Before the Bureau opens to the public (this is expected to take place in March/April, 1992) the post holder will receive appropriate training and will help to prepare the premises, together with administrative and clerical systems. Notwithstanding the hours of work for which the post holder is employed, he/she will be required to attend training sessions held any time during normal office hours (8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

2. When the Bureau opens the hours of opening will be:

   Monday to Friday - 8.30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

   Saturdays - 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

These might need to change and/or be extended in the light of operational experience.

The Bureau will at all times be staffed by at least two persons. The hours of work for part-time staff (Monday to Friday) will be:

   EITHER: 8.30 a.m. to 2 p.m. with a half hour break (25 hours/week)

   OR: 12 noon to 6 p.m. with a half hour break (27.5 hours/week)

All part-time staff will also be required to work alternate Saturdays between the hours of 9.30 a.m. and 1 p.m.
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<td>Britain</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Staff query</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>T/V</td>
<td>How Many</td>
<td>FSP Details</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Where From</td>
<td>Result</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>P. Replacing Trees</td>
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<td>Shirley</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Staff Cover</td>
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<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>S. Museum display</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Visits to Info Centres</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>E'raison</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Protecting Land</td>
<td>cc/P</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. New Building</td>
<td>SE. P'niobh</td>
<td>P'niobh</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Home Improvement</td>
<td>DC</td>
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<td>T</td>
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<td>P. Street Party</td>
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<td>P'niobh</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Shingles / Repair</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Win</td>
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<td>F. Staff Query</td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Historic Building Court</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>NK</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Electric Bill</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Totton</td>
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<tr>
<td>0945</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>S. Tec No. Visit/Enforced</td>
<td>ICC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Consumer Licence</td>
<td>TS</td>
<td>NK</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>P. Directions</td>
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<td>V</td>
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<td>P. Resurse</td>
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<td>P. Directions</td>
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<td>P. TV/E</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Town Map</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Cardif</td>
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<td></td>
<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>P. Env Health</td>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Cardif</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

254
NOTE TO: ALISON CAWLEY
FROM: SHIRLEY THORNE
DATE: 1 FEBRUARY 1993

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - REPORT ON THE FIRST SIX MONTHS

Work in the Information Centre has grown significantly during the above period. The numbers of visitors and telephone calls have risen from 5-600 per week in the first few weeks to over 1,000 during November and have averaged that weekly figure since.

The enquiries can be split as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>14,054</td>
<td>67.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone calls</td>
<td>6,854</td>
<td>32.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECEPTION (inc. servicing meetings rooms and radio studios, visitors to Mottisfont Court and to The Castle generally)</td>
<td>6,700</td>
<td>32.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COUNTY COUNCIL QUESTIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General questions</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>3.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departmental questions (see attached sheet)</td>
<td>6,138</td>
<td>29.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;STROLLERS&quot; (visitors browsing leaflets, asking directions - including tourist enqs.)</td>
<td>2,887</td>
<td>13.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTRICTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winchester City Council</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>1.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other districts, mainly in Hampshire</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>2.73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTHER ORGANISATIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(health, benefits, parishes, CABx etc)</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISCELLANEOUS DUTIES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(deliveries, collections, security - contractors working in building etc, administrative tasks)</td>
<td>2,571</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TURNOVER - GOODS PRODUCED BY DEPARTMENTS AND SOLD IN THE CENTRE

Goods sold from the Information Centre amounted to £1,067.65 (including V.A.T.) for the above period. See attached sheet for details.
## INFORMATION CENTRE — FIRST SIX MONTHS

20 July 1992 to 19 January 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Questions (%)</th>
<th>Number of Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Architects</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archivists</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Executive's</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CPU)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(376)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Services</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside and Community</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Planning</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estates</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire and Rescue Service</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museums</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific Service</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary's</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>1077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(inc Information Centre, PR General)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Services</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveyor's</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>1030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trading Standards</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer's</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Student Grants)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(232)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11 January 1993

INFORMATION CENTRE SHOP

We have reached the end of the second quarter in the Information Centre and therefore report on turnover for the period 1 October - 31 December 1992 as follows:

- Goods sold amounted to £657.17, averaging £50.55 per week. This is an improvement on our first quarter (£363.68).

- Of this sum, departments of the County Council have been reimbursed £384.07, the Whitchurch Silk Mill has received £44.00 and £194.71 has been paid into the Information Centre account. (These sums are exclusive of VAT which we pay direct into the County Council's VAT account.)

The variety of publications offered for sale has grown considerably - we now have 40 books, 18 reproduction maps and 12 prints, some of which are offered as a framed item. Recent additions include the Eastleigh book, the Three Castles Path and the Alton map dated 1666.

During December we stocked Christmas cards on behalf of the Hillier Gardens and Arboretum and The Hampshire Sculpture Trust.

New goods bearing the corporate identity include two designs of silver-plated spoons and will shortly include a choice of black or dark green mugs with the full coat of arms in gold.

More unusual goods include the new country parks "unlimited admission" card/carparks pass and wholemeal flour which is stone-milled at the Bursledon Windmill.

The new Road Safety window display has brought considerable interest and although we do not sell the headgear or conspicuity items, we have been able to take orders and pass them on to County Surveyors Department.

There is also a great deal of interest in the silk and other souvenir goods from the Whitchurch Silk Mill and we hope to stock giftware from the Victory shop and the Gosport Submarine Museum in the spring.
CENTRAL RECEPTION AND COUNTY INFORMATION BUREAU

Report of the County Librarian

BACKGROUND

Provision has been made in the Tower Street Office Development for a Central Reception and County Information Bureau. The Bureau would provide a focal point for all County Council enquiries, and be the central/corporate reception point. One of the principal objectives of the Bureau would be the establishment of a public information service covering all County Council services. Display facilities would also be available, through which departments may promote the services they offer. Adjacent to the Bureau will be a "shop" where departmental merchandise may be offered for sale to the public. The County Trading Standards Officer wishes to open a local consumer advice service from an area within this "shop" facility.

All the following comments are based upon the assumption that the "shop" will be financed separately, and thus any cost estimates do not include this facility.

As there are no plans for any sales mechanism within the Bureau, it will be essential that a direct link between the two areas be considered.

1. AREA AVAILABLE

1.1 The accommodation will be approximately 1200 sq.ft., access from both High St and Tower St.

1.2 Adjacent accommodation for the shop facility will be approximately 700 sq.ft. with a separate access from the High St.

1.3 Further investigation is needed into the feasibility of an inter-connecting doorway between the Bureau and shop. There are bound to be a number of enquiries received at the Bureau from members of the public who may wish to purchase publications.

1.4 Storage space for publicity material may need to be made available.

1.5 The facilities for staff of the Bureau needs further consideration, eg. might it be possible for Bureau staff to use staff accommodation on the first floor?

2. SCOPE OF SERVICES

2.1 County Reception to be provided, reception staff will direct visitors to the appropriate department.

2.2 Enquiries about the County Council and services will be answered, either immediately, or by reference to the appropriate department.
This to include a telephone enquiry service, possibly provided at local rates.

2.3 Although enquiries are expected to be predominately about the County Council, it will be important to maintain a basic reference stock, such as current directories, timetables, telephone directories, and local maps/guides.

2.4 Access to databases such as Acompline, and Profile, and especially a link to HANTSNET will be imperative, with appropriate B.T. links.

2.5 The bureau will need to be open Mon-Sat, possibly 8.30am – 5.30pm, with at least one late evening (7pm), and occasional exceptional opening ie County Council elections.

2.6 Further work will be necessary, in conjunction with other current initiatives, to exploit the possibility of setting up public access points in offices throughout the County ie libraries, social services offices.

2.7 In order to provide the above information service about County Council services, it will be important to strengthen existing departmental information contacts (Local Government and Information Forum members); this may require a commitment from departments to raise the profile of their information providers.

2.8 The Bureau will need to develop close links with District Councils and other agencies ie Tourist Information Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau, French signatories to the Normandy Accord.

2.9 Close links also to be maintained with the existing County Library Local Government Information Unit, currently based at County Library HQ. The services will complement each other, using the information network already set up by the Local Government Unit, and so provide the complete public information service about the County Council, and an information service for County Council members, and officers.

2.10 It will be necessary that planning for the Bureau starts at an early stage, and that links between interested departments are formed, as well as liaison with other County Councils who may be undertaking a similar exercise.

2.11 The development of a County Information handbook would be a useful first step.

3. MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

3.1 It is suggested that the Bureau be managed jointly by County Secretary/County Librarian, with a management steering group comprising County Recreation Officer, County Trading Standards Officer, County Education Officer, Director of Social Services, County Surveyor and the Chief Constable.
3.2 Bureau staff

1x Information Officer S01/2 £16,502
2x Assistant Information Officers Sc3/6 £11,646
6x Receptionists/Information Assistants (3 FTE's) Sc2 £8,942

The Bureau's overall management to be the responsibility of the Local Government Librarian, current salary of PO1 (£18,322), to be raised to PO2 (£19,398). Half of this to be charged to the Bureau (£9,699).

Total cost (including standard on-costs but with no allowance for weekend or evening work) £76,319.

Cost of Saturday work for all six of the staff estimated at £2,720 p.a., based on alternate Saturday working - in practice this might be higher.

Cost of one evening (until 7pm) per week estimated at £260 p.a.

3.3 What sort of staff?

Senior Manager (Local Government Librarian)
(as above)

Information Officer
Needs to be qualified Librarian or equivalent, important that he/she has extensive experience in a busy information unit, is used to dealing with a demanding clientele, has experience of staff management, is proactive, enthusiastic, dynamic. Has on-line, and other computer knowledge, and perhaps knowledge of a foreign language.

Assistant Information Officers
Qualified Librarian or equivalent. Some experience of reference/information work, and used to working with the public. Experienced with computer equipment, enthusiastic and proactive. Some knowledge of a foreign language may be needed, plus staff management experience.

Reception/Information Staff
Used to working with the public, experience of information/reception work. Computer/word processing skills, good telephone manner.

3.4 As staff will be front line agents of the County Council, manner image, and presentation will be of the utmost importance. They will need training and perhaps secondment to other agencies before commencing duties ie business community (a M + S type training, Bank, etc), CAB, Tourist Information Centre, other County Council Departments, as well as the County Library.

3.5 It will be necessary that staff are employed at least a month prior to opening, the Information Officer before then to facilitate he/she taking an active role in the selection/training of staff,
and setting up the Bureau.

3.6 Daily management of both the Bureau and shop staff may be better placed with the Information Officer. Shop staff, although the responsibility of County Recreation, and Trading Standards could be seconded to the County Library to make this possible.

3.7 The activities of both the Bureau and shop will need extensive marketing and publicity, this to be placed with the Marketing Officer, County Recreation Department. No estimates for the costs of this have been included.

4. FURNISHINGS AND FITTINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated costs</th>
<th>Initial outlay</th>
<th>Annual Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Reference Stock</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Data-bases (to inc p.c./software, plus printer)</td>
<td>2250</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HANTSNET (leased terminal)</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose furniture (desks, chairs etc)</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.T. equipment</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display equipment</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelving</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>15,650</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,650</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes

1. No allowance made in the above figures for 'premises costs' eg. heating, lighting, cleaning, rent, rates etc.

2. It has been assumed that carpeting, and reception desk/counter are included in the capital provision for the whole scheme.
Discussion took place concerning a report of the County Secretary on proposals to accommodate a Central Reception and County Information Bureau on the ground floor of the Tower Street Office Development, Winchester (Appendix V in the Minute Book). In addition to reception and information facilities, proposals included shop window and internal displays, consumer advice and merchandise sales, but the scope for this would be dictated by space and the need for integration of policy with other County Council outlets.

Although concern was expressed over access provision for disabled persons, there was general agreement to the proposed allocation of accommodation.

Similarly there was a general acceptance of the principles for the establishment and management of the Central Reception and County Information Bureau; and of the moves towards integrating the Central Marketing Unit with the new organisation.

The proposals for staffing and detailed management for the organisation of the Bureau would be discussed with Departments and staff concerned, and a further report submitted to the Group in May.
CHIEF OFFICERS' MANAGEMENT GROUP

27TH FEBRUARY, 1990

TOWER STREET OFFICE DEVELOPMENT, WINCHESTER
CENTRAL RECEPTION AND COUNTY INFORMATION BUREAU

REPORT OF THE COUNTY SECRETARY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Provision has been made in the Tower Street Office Development for a Central Reception and County Information Bureau. The accommodation will comprise approximately 1200 ft.sq. (113 m.sq.) of net usable space located at ground floor level with access from both the High Street and Tower Street. Adjacent to this accommodation will be an additional 700 ft.sq. (65 m.sq.) of shop space, with separate access from the High Street. A floor plan is attached which shows the intended configuration of the two pieces of accommodation.

1.2 The aim of this report is:

   to agree the allocation of accommodation for the Central Reception and County Information Bureau and to establish principles for determining the scope of services/facilities to be provided and their management.

2. SCOPE OF SERVICES/FACILITIES

2.1 Central Reception - this would provide a focal point for all headquarters enquiries, replacing the existing unsatisfactory arrangements in Elizabeth II Court. A central/corporate reception area is intended to augment, not replace, departmental enquiry/reception facilities. It would not be the only point of contact. Its position at the junction of High Street/Tower Street would give essential prominence and ease of access.

2.2 County Information Bureau - the objective would be to establish a public information service covering all County Council services. Trained staff with access to all necessary information bases would be on hand to deal with enquiries. Direct public access to basic, straightforward information would be an aim. Information staff could also be used to provide a telephone enquiry service - this would extend access to the Bureau's service to anyone telephoning (perhaps at local call rate) from anywhere in the County.

2.3 Display Facilities (Shop Window and internal display) - this would enable the County Council and individual service departments to promote the services they offer.

2.4 Sales of Merchandise - the selling of gifts, books, photographs could effectively be carried out from this location. The scope for this will be dictated by space and...
the need for integration of policy with other County Council outlets.

2.5 Consumer Advice - the County Trading Standards Officer wishes to open a local consumer advice shop in Winchester to provide the same service already available at Basingstoke, Southampton and Portsmouth, where they are an integral part of the Divisional Offices.

It is proposed that this should be achieved by allocating a part of the separate "shop" facility fronting the High Street for this purpose.

3. MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

3.1 Management - As an ultimate aim the creation of a new Central Information Unit could best be achieved by bringing together the News and Information and Central Marketing Units, both of which undertake overlapping functions in the public relations field. These units are already destined to be accommodated in the Tower Street Offices at first floor level in a position close to the new Central Reception and County Information Bureau (Ground Floor), and their organisational integration has been discussed in the Economic Strategy Sub-Committee. The timing and precise nature of any formal coming together of these units must be a matter for discussion with all interested parties - there has been no opportunity for such discussions so far. What can be achieved at this stage, however, is the allocation of accommodation to allow those with similar objectives the benefits of close proximity.

It is suggested that line management responsibility for the new Unit (Central Reception staff and County Information Bureau) be vested in the County Secretary, through the Senior News and Information Officer. The Unit would be expected to develop existing links with other complementary services such as the Local Government Library and Information and Graphics Design Units and, as stated above, it is intended to locate the Central Marketing Unit in close proximity with a mind to creating the opportunity for integration of the two functions.

3.2 Staffing - the details need to be worked up and there is time for this. Initial consideration suggests that in order to provide the Reception and Information Services on Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 5.30 pm and Saturdays, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm (all inclusive of lunch hours), and one late evening per week - to 7.00 pm, the following additional staff would be required (estimated cost £60,000):

1 x Information Officer (P01)
2 x Assistant Information Officers (Scale 4-5)
4 x P/T Receptionist (2 FTE's) (Scale 2)

4. TIMETABLE

4.1 The success of this new corporate initiative will largely depend on adequate resourcing. With accommodation already
earmarked and management responsibilities settled, close examination of the staffing and other requirements can be undertaken. A sensible timetable would seem to be -

(a) **This Meeting** - agree accommodation allocation; principles of management; principle of co-locating of News and Information and Central Marketing Units;

(b) **March/April. 1990** - consultations with departments regarding links with the County Information Bureau and the possibility of eventually linking the News and Information and Central Marketing Units;

(c) **May. 1990** - Final proposals for the Central Reception and County Information Bureau with a worked up budget and detailed staffing to COMG;

(d) **June/July. 1990** - work up any revisions as a result of COMG discussion. Possible final report to COMG;

(e) **September. 1990** - bid for the Central Reception and County Information Bureau included in budgetary process.

5. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the allocation of accommodation as proposed be approved.

2. That the principles for the establishment and management of the Central Reception and County Information Bureau be accepted.

3. That proposals for staffing and detailed arrangements for the organisation of the Bureau be discussed with departments and staff concerned, with a view to a further report to COMG in accordance with the timetable set out in this report.
INTRODUCTION

The Personnel Sub-Committees of 21 January and 8 April 1991 approved the setting up of the Public Relations Unit and the staffing establishment of the Information Centre. The Personnel Sub-Committee, on 18 January this year, considered the development of HANTSNET. HANTSNET and the Information Centre are providing a powerful mechanism for bringing information about County Council services closer to the public. This report deals with the development of HANTSNET and local information points in County Council offices for the benefit of the public. "Being local" does not imply opening new local offices. The County Council has many outlets. "Being local" is to do with management style and having networks in place to enable local reception staff to inform and respond.

THE INFORMATION CENTRE

The Information Centre opened on 20 July 1992 in the new Mottisfont Court offices. The Centre is open from 8.30am-6.00pm Monday to Friday and from 9.30am-1.00pm on Saturdays. It fulfils several functions.

2.1 The prime function is answering questions from the public about County Council services. The staff use the Public Services Index within HANTSNET as their main source of reference, but the Centre is also equipped with more than 300 leaflets providing information about County Council and other public services.

2.2 The Centre acts as a main reception for the departments based at The Castle.
2.3 It is a "display case" for the County Council, with a prominent window display, public noticeboards and space for departmental exhibitions.

2.4 It "showcases" County Council activities by selling books, maps and prints published by the County Council and goods bearing the corporate identity; turnover until 31 December amounted to 1,021.
The Information Centre was the first place to offer accessibility to the whole range of goods produced by the County Council. In addition voluntary bodies closely associated with the Council can sell articles through the Information Centre.

2.5 The Centre is staffed by four part-time Information Assistants. Enquiries are averaging 1,000 per week. 30% of calls are from people attending meetings or visiting The Castle complex. The remainder comprise telephone calls and visitors enquiring about the various services of the County Council, with roughly an equal split between telephone and personal enquiries. The staff are able to resolve most queries; less than 10% of questions are referred to departments. Around 9% of enquiries concern district councils or other organisations. The staff are able to answer some of these queries, and in all cases can give contact details of the relevant body.

THE PUBLIC SERVICES INDEX IN HANTSNET

3 The Public Services Index has been developed with and for the staff of the Information Centre. It allows customers' questions about all County Council services and many other public services to be answered quickly and effectively. (A demonstration has been arranged to take place at the meeting). The Public Services Index is now available for use by any staff to help customers get information about the County Council. The long-term aim is that all reception staff will feel confident to give information to any member of the public about any County Council service. In the short term, however, staff training in the use of the Public Services Index will concentrate on a network of local information points.

LOCAL INFORMATION POINTS

4 The County Council's Information and Technology Board is arranging for reception desks across the county to become badged local information points for customers of the County Council to find out about all County Council services. Existing staff in these local offices will use HANTSNET to offer information to the public about any County Council service. The first local information points are expected to be at Gosport and Eastleigh.
Libraries; relevant staff training in the use of HANTSNET has now been arranged. Initially Libraries and some Social Services Area Offices having HANTSNET will offer full information about the County Council. Provision needs to be made in the Policy and Resources Committee budget for new telephone lines for the information points and for cabling and HANTSNET terminals.

INFORMATION CENTRES FOR THE MAIN URBAN CENTRES

5 The volume of enquiries from the main urban centres will be more than existing staff in libraries or other County Council offices can handle. The intention is to continue the success of the Winchester one stop information shop by following it with similar facilities in the major centres of population. The next step proposed is to open an Information Centre in Portsmouth based in the Central Library and to follow this as soon as possible by other facilities, as part of a programme moving initially to Southampton and Basingstoke. These will be staffed and managed by the Public Relations Unit.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6 The Information Centres in Portsmouth, Southampton, Basingstoke etc., will cost about 30,000 a year each to operate with additional set up costs in the first year of 15,000 each. Set-up costs for the first centre will be met from 1992/93 budget as far as possible. These costs exclude accommodation because it is hoped to use existing premises.

7 HANTSNET terminals and telephone lines to turn existing enquiry desks into local information points will cost 20,000 p.a. in total.

RECOMMENDATION:

1 That the strategy for development of HANTSNET, information centres and local information points set out in this report be approved.

2 That the Policy and Resources Committee considers the financial implications set out in paragraphs 6 & 7 when setting the budget for 1993/94.

5mR4193

--- END OF PRINT REQUEST ---
Staff questionnaire - Hampshire

The Manager

a) The County Secretary's Department
b) £42,000 p.a.
c) One
d) Winchester
e) Three more information centres at Portsmouth, Basingstoke, and Southampton - the information centre at Portsmouth to be sited in the foyer of the Central Library - this will be the first of the other centres. Ten more information points are planned - pilot versions to be in Eastleigh and Gosport libraries. The difference between the "information centre" and the "information point" is that the former is exactly the same as the initial centre at Winchester, being a fully staffed separate unit, while the latter will use existing staff and reception/enquiry desks in public offices throughout the County. The Chief Executive's aim is eventually to have all County public offices acting as information points in the future.
f) Four part-time and two back-up staff, who also act as telephone receptionists.
g) Good general education, local government experience preferable.
h) Six months of training prior to opening of the information centre, which included an introduction to the work of the departments of the County Council plus courses on the use of Hantsnet and customer care.
i) Absolutely necessary.
j) Information about the County Council and services.
k) The services index on Hantsnet is kept up-to-date by the departments who provide that particular service. Each screen on Hantsnet has an "owner" who is named, and the date when the information was last updated is also shown. The information is as up-to-date as possible - it will be a reflection on the named editor and department concerned if this is not so.
l) Detailed information about district council's.
m) More business information.
n) The information centre already uses Hantsnet for communication via electronic mail facilities, and for the "public services index", an index of services provided by County Council departments. Apart from the public services index Hantsnet contains a vast amount of information. Work is at present also being carried out to offer a public access version. Consideration is also being given to developing question analysis/response monitoring systems. At present all questions and responses are manually recorded. Free-phone links are also being considered.

o) Yes - there is a strategy to make every public office an information point, and to establish further information centres.

p) Very limited in-house survey.

q) Everybody.

The staff

a) w - Social Services
   x - Social Services
   y - Social Services
   z - Social Services

b) w - Addresses and telephone numbers of outside bodies.
   x - Information on grants, charities and politics of councillors.
   y - Opening times of offices.
   z - No problems, a challenge.

c) w - Not readily available.
   x - Presentation of the information is not user friendly.
   y - Lack of information on Hantsnet.
   z - No problems.

d) w - More space for displaying leaflets.
   x - Information could be more user-friendly.
   y - Would like to see University telephone numbers, plus list of
County Councillors by Ward.
z - Could improve desk position. The existing desk is not visible from Tower Street entrance.

e) w - Six months, since information centre opened.
x - Since information centre opened.
y - since beginning.
z - Since beginning.

f) w - Interesting
x - Like people, wanted to do something interesting.
y - Like dealing with the public, broader view of the County Council.
z - Interesting new venture, constant learning situation.

g) w - International school in the United Arab Emirates.
x - Teacher
y - Library
z - School

h) w - Have had training for several weeks before the information centre opened, in customer care and workings of departments, and also in Hantsnet - it was successful.
x - Training in the use of Hantsnet, departmental services and customer care - yes it was successful.
y - Yes training was successful, we had training on departmental services, customer care and Hantsnet.
z - Training on customer care, departmental services and Hantsnet - it was successful.

i) w - Social services problems after hours and counselling.
x - Ongoing, achieve greater depth of knowledge.
y - Administration of information centre, including more knowledge of the manager's job.
z - Word-processing, knowledge of administration of the information centre including cashing-up.
j)  w - Yes
    x - Yes
    y - Yes
    z - Yes

k)  w - Everyone, business
    x - Everyone
    y - Everyone
    z - Everyone, general public.
HTSNET Forms Application

Please direct queries to PROFS Id ITS5AH quoting HNCOMM

Pent form for HANTSNET indexes and textfiles

Pent: ____________________________________________________________

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______________________________________________________________

Name: __________________________________________________________

Phone: _________________________________________________________

This form will be addressed automatically to the relevant updater and editor

1 Top  PP5 PROFS  PF7 Submit  PP9 Help  PF10 Down  PF11 Up  PF12 End
Editor for this Index is: Andy Holdup (HNETEDIT)
Current title: HNETSERV 110 (N) PUBLIC    Dated: 16/03/93

******** Services to the Public ********
Other Agencies' Services
Services to the Public by Department

******** Index Quality Control ********
correct Information report form
suggestion / missing information report form
Problems / Incorrect Information monitoring index
Missing Information - suggestions received
Empty Indexes / Out of date information

Alt F2 Next F3 Prev F4 Main F5 PROFS F8 Prt F9 Help F10 Down F11 Up F12 END
MUNICIPAL YEAR 1989/90 - REPORT NO.

Committee
Amenity Services - 21.3.90
Report of:
Borough Librarian

AGENDA - PART I

SUBJECT:

STRATEGY FOR ONE-STOP SHOPS IN LIBRARIES

1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out the proposed strategy for the implementation of One-Stop Information Shops in libraries, including an outline schedule, and details of proposals for recruitment. It also informs members of the preliminary results of the survey currently taking place in two libraries in Eastern Enfield.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that the proposed strategy be approved, subject to further more detailed reports during Phases II and III of the library service restructuring.

3. Background

3.1 At the meetings of the Amenity Services Committee on 31st January 1990 and 6th February 1990, and at Corporate Services Committee on 8th February 1990, approval was given for the funding package for the setting-up of One-Stop Information Shops in libraries - also referred to in the Issues and Choices list as "Borough Information Points".

3.2 These One-Stop Information Shops will offer a local information service to all the people of Enfield, covering the whole spectrum of information needs. They will both complement and supplement the work of the One-Stop Service at the Civic Centre (now becoming known as the "Customer Services Area"). They will complement the Civic Centre service by offering a similar range of information about Council services, at locations that are more readily accessible to the majority of Enfield residents. They will supplement it, by being able to draw on the wealth of resources and information retrieval expertise available within the library service.

4. Proposed Name for the Service in Libraries

4.1 The term "One-Stop Shop" has been used, both in Enfield and in other local authorities, to describe the concept of providing one place for people to go, where all their needs for services or information can be met.

4.2 While market research (here and elsewhere) has been conducted into the need for such a service, and the use that customers might make of it, it is not known whether the term itself has been tested anywhere for customer recognition, identification and so on.

4.3 Until now, we have been using the name "One-Stop Information Shops" within the library service. This is understood by staff, and describes our vision accurately, if not concisely or elegantly. But we need something
better for our customers, so that they recognise the concept immediately, and identify with the service as being relevant to them and their needs.

4.4 The term "One-Stop" perhaps promises more than it can deliver. It describes a vision rather than reality, and could lead to customer frustration. Without the term "information" somewhere in the name, it is unlikely to be obvious to customers what exactly we are offering. Experience suggests that the word "Shop" is potentially confusing and should therefore not be used.

4.5 The term "Borough Information Point" has been suggested. We do not favour this because it implies that we only offer borough information - information about the borough, the Council and its services - whereas in fact the range of information we offer in libraries is potentially limitless.

4.6 Our preference is for the name "First-Stop Information Point", with the shortened version "First-Stop Information" used wherever possible. This describes the service accurately, and encapsulates the idea that libraries are the first place to go to find any information on any topic.

5. Location of First-Stop Information Points

5.1 Phase 11 of the library service restructuring identifies five large branches throughout the borough as the centres of the five proposed groups (see accompanying report for full details). These group centres are:

Cecil Road Library (Enfield Town), Ordnance Road, Fore Street/Edmonton Green, Ridge Avenue, and Palmers Green.

5.2 It is proposed that First-Stop Information Points be set up initially only in these five libraries. Once these are established, the viability of extending the full service to all locations can be evaluated. (A database of local information is already available at all libraries through the Geac Local Information network.)

6. Staffing - Location

6.1 The funding provides for 8 specialist staff to provide and develop the First-Stop service, under the direction of the Principal Librarian (Reference and Information). It is proposed that 5 of these be based in the front-line, at the 5 main group libraries (see para 5.1), to deliver the service to the customers. The remaining 3 posts will develop, co-ordinate and support the direct service to customers. (See also para 7).

6.2 Much of the work of these three posts will be carried out over the telephone. It is therefore not crucial that they be based at any given location. While staff space at most libraries is at a premium, Southgate Circus could accommodate this team of 3 staff with the minimum of disruption, and has the advantage that it is shortly to be linked to the Civic Centre's voice and data network. It is therefore proposed that the First-Stop development team be based at Southgate Circus Library, with administrative back-up being provided by the Senior Library Assistant there.

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3. **Staffing - Personnel Requirements**

7.1 Of the 3 developmental and support posts, one will take on the role of team leader and liaison officer, making and maintaining contacts with other departments and other relevant organisations, whether statutory, voluntary or commercial. The proposed job title is First-Stop Team Leader, and the likely grade will be around Scale 6.

7.2 It is proposed that the second post takes over responsibility for the management of the local information databases located within the library service. These are the Geac Local Information System, and within the next few months, the Online Leisure database (see also para 10.3). This post will also be available to provide support for the direct service to customers during periods of leave or sickness. The proposed job title is First-Stop Information Manager and the likely grade is Scale 6.

7.4 The third support post will be a clerical assistant, undertaking routine updating of the databases, ordering and distribution of hardcopy material and basic correspondence. The proposed job title is First-Stop Information Assistant and the likely grade is Scale 3.

7.5 The five front-line posts will be information officers, providing the service to customers. They will also be required to specialise in a field or related fields of information, so that they can contribute specialist knowledge and expertise borough-wide. While this proposed specialisation is not yet fully worked out (it will depend to some degree on the background of the staff recruited), some initial ideas are set out here:

- Cecil Road: Employment, Training, Careers, Education
- Ordnance Road: Disability, Social Services, Customers with special needs
- Edmonton Green: Business, Legal
- Ridge Avenue: Leisure, Recreation, Sports, Social, Arts and Entertainments, What's On
- Palmers Green: Parents and children, Under-Fives

_N.B. This is not a comprehensive list of subject areas to be covered._

The proposed job title is First-Stop Information Officer, and the likely grade is Scale 6.

8. **Staffing - Recruitment Strategy**

8.1 The First-Stop Team Leader should be in post as soon as possible, to work with the Principal Librarian (Reference and Information Services) to flesh out this outline strategy and get implementation under way. The Principal Librarian (Reference and Information Services) will be released from some or her current responsibilities for as long as necessary to facilitate this (see also para 13).
6.2 Also needed at an early stage is the Assistant, who would initially assist existing staff with the task of routine updating of the Local Information database.

6.3 The Information Manager would be recruited slightly later, to allow the Team Leader to become established initially.

6.4 We would hope to have the first two in post by 15.90, and the third by early June.

6.5 Bearing in mind the schedule for piloting the front-line service (see para 11), the first of the First-Stop Information Officers posts should be in post by mid-August, and any delay in recruiting to any of these posts should permit the appointment of a second Information Officer before the end of the 90/91 financial year.

9. Inter-Departmental Liaison Team

9.1 The existing Accommodation Review Working Party has been concerned with One-Stop Shops to some degree, but largely in relation to accommodation needs at the Civic Centre. Their work has not had much relevance to addressing the issue of how best to supply information from the various departments to meet customers' information needs in libraries.

9.2 It is proposed that a new inter-departmental liaison team be set up to address the issue of information provision rather than accommodation, and in particular, how best to supply information at locations outside the Civic Centre. The Assistant Borough Secretary (Admin) has begun to survey all the departments to assess how their customers' information needs can be met at the Civic Centre, and it is proposed that the Principal Librarian (Reference and Information Services) and the new First-Stop Team Leader set up the proposed team in liaison with her, and work with her to extend this fact-gathering exercise and develop it for use for the First-Stop Information Points in libraries.

10. Online Leisure Information

10.1 A complete First-Stop Information Point will take time to develop and equip, and the end result will in any case depend on customer needs and preferences as these are discovered. However, it seems clear (see para 16.3) that two of the major areas of customer interest are the fields of Recreation/Leisure/Sports, and What's On/Arts and Entertainments.

10.2 It is therefore proposed to move ahead quickly with our existing plans to install the Online Leisure Viewdata service. All libraries will be visited to ascertain the optimum configuration of terminals (24-hour through-the-glass; public access within the library; staff access) and Online will be asked to proceed with installation as soon as possible.

10.3 One of the first tasks of the three First-Stop development staff will be to update our existing local information and pass it to Online for incorporation into their database.
I.4 Discussions will continue with other authorities (particularly Hillingdon and Sutton) already involved in the Public Library Development Incentive Scheme to explore the possibilities of a direct link between the library's Eees computer system, and the Online Leisure viewdata system.

II. First-Stop Information Pilot

II.1 It is essential that customer needs and preferences are built into the development of this service. It is therefore proposed to set up a pilot First-Stop Information Point at Palmers Green Library, which would enable us to accurately assess customers' information needs, space, equipment and furniture requirements, staff training needs and so on, before proceeding with an expensive programme of installation and recruitment and training in the other libraries.

II.2 This pilot should operate from 1.10.90.

II. Edmonton Green

II.1 The service at Edmonton Green will be the first fully-fledged First-Stop Information Point to operate, commencing in April 1991 when the new building opens. The Principal Librarian (Reference and Information Services) will continue to liaise with the Assistant Borough Secretary (Admin) to develop this service.

III. Outline Schedule - Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month/Year</th>
<th>Task Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February/March 1990</td>
<td>Outline strategy drawn up. Job descriptions prepared. Committee approval sought.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February/May 1990</td>
<td>Online Leisure viewdata system planning and installation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March/April 1990</td>
<td>Recruitment of First-Stop development team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1990</td>
<td>Inter-departmental Liaison Team set up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May/June 1990</td>
<td>First-Stop team start work. Updating information for Online top priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July/August 1990</td>
<td>Online service up and running. Recruitment of front-line information officer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1990</td>
<td>Pilot at Palmers Green commences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1990/April 1991</td>
<td>Work on Edmonton Green and planning for other First-Stop Information Points proceeds, utilising experience gained at Palmers Green.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
April 1991

Launch of Edmonton Green service.

May 1991 onwards

Setting up and launch of other First-Stop Information Points.

14. Personnel Implications

14.1 New posts to be filled in the first year (90/91) are the First-Stop Development Team, comprising the First-Stop Team Leader, the First-Stop Information Manager, and the First-Stop Information Assistant.

14.2 Also to be recruited in 90/91 are one or possibly two First-Stop Information Officers, to deliver the front-line service.

14.3 The three remaining First-Stop Information Officers will be recruited in 91/92.

15. Financial Implications

15.1 The estimated costs of the staffing proposal detailed in this report are scheduled below, subject to confirmation by DPMS of the grades to apply to each post.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th>1990/91</th>
<th>1991/92</th>
<th>Full year effect (mid point of grade)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Stop Team Leader (SO2)</td>
<td>16,700</td>
<td>18,700</td>
<td>18,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Stop Information Manager (Sc 6)</td>
<td>12,600</td>
<td>15,600</td>
<td>15,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Stop Information Assistant (Sc 3)</td>
<td>10,100</td>
<td>11,200</td>
<td>11,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Stop Information Officers (Sc 6)</td>
<td>10,100</td>
<td>69,800</td>
<td>78,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49,500</td>
<td>115,300</td>
<td>123,600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.2 Financial provision has been included in the Committee's 'Issues and Choices', as approved by Policy Committee on 27th February 1990, for these proposals as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>1990/91</th>
<th>1991/92</th>
<th>Full Year effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Borough Information Systems at Libraries</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edmonton Green Library</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>13,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>113,000</td>
<td>113,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15.3 The above figures indicate that the estimated costs of the service are within budget provision for 1990/91 but an additional cost of £10,600 is projected in a full year (i.e. £123,600 less £113,000). This revised full year cost will be included in the review of the 3 year plan later this year at which time it may be necessary for the Committee to identify the extra funding from within its existing Plan provisions.

16. Survey Results

16.1 A survey into the potential market for this service is currently under way at two libraries in Eastern Enfield, Ordnance Road and Enfield Highway. The survey covers two four-week periods, the first without publicity, and the second with publicity. We are at present one week into the second period, and sufficient data is not yet available to reliably assess the effect of the publicity.
a) the type of enquiry made

First-Stop enquiries were assigned to one of the following categories:

- Business
- Careers
- Council/Civic
- Education/Training/Employment
- Engineers [roads, bins etc.]
- Housing
- Legal
- Planning
- Recreation/Leisure/Sports/Social
- Social Services/Welfare
- What's On/Arts and Entertainments

b) the time of day enquiries are made

c) the length of time each enquiry took to answer.

16.3 Analysis of the results of the first period shows that the rate of enquiries varies tremendously across this range of subjects. In both libraries, 19% of all First-Stop enquiries were for Recreation/Leisure/Sports/Social Information. Education/Training/Employment was also in demand, at around 16% in both libraries, and other popular subjects were Social Services/Welfare, What's On/Arts and Entertainments, and Legal.

16.4 At the other end of the scale, Planning received no enquiries at all, and Housing and Engineers received just one each. This contrasts with the finding of the Mori Poll, which suggested that customers would be particularly likely to use a One-Stop Shop for information about their local environment.

16.5 Any conclusions at this stage must be tentative, but it should be borne in mind that the customers surveyed by Mori had the concept of One-Stop Shops explained to them before they made their response. This suggests that the majority of customers are not aware of the range of information about council services which is currently available in all libraries, and which will be even more comprehensive once First-Stop Information is up and running. The Mori Poll also confirms that a large proportion of customers are not aware that libraries are run by the local authority, which could suggest why some categories of local authority information are not currently in heavy demand in libraries.

16.6 The time of day does not appear to be significant, and it seems that 75% to 80% of all enquiries can be satisfied in 15 minutes or under, with the majority taking 5 minutes or less.

16.7 The main conclusion from the first period of this survey must be the need for excellent and comprehensive publicity for the new service. It seems that where customers expect libraries to be able to provide information on a given subject (such as Recreation and Sports), they will use the service very readily. Where they have no such expectation, the enquiry level is low. This conclusion can be tested once the results of the second (publicised) period are available.
17. **Conclusion**

17.1 The strategy outlined above sets out a realistic and achievable schedule for the implementation of First-Stop Information Points in libraries.

17.2 The proposed pilot at Palmers Green offers the opportunity to incorporate first-hand experience of customer needs and preferences into the service, its presentation and marketing.

Background papers: Nil
LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD
BOROUGH LIBRARIAN'S DEPARTMENT

DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: First-Stop Information Officer

Responsible to: First-Stop Team Leader

Liaison with: Group Librarian

Grade: Sc 6

As this is a new post, relating to a new service, this job description should be regarded as a working document only, and may be subject to revision as determined by the Borough Librarian.

Job Purpose
To provide an effective and responsive direct service to customers at the Borough's First-Stop Information Points.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. To staff the First-Stop Information Point as required by the First-Stop Team Leader in consultation with the Group Librarian.

2. To answer all enquiries (personal, telephone and postal) as promptly and comprehensively as possible, only referring customers to another location where essential.

3. To make appointments for customers to see Council officers and the staff of other appropriate organisations as required.

4. To liaise with the staff of the Customer Services Areas at the Civic Centre and elsewhere in order to meet or anticipate customers' needs.

5. To specialise in a particular field of information, liaising with appropriate Council officers and other organisations, and maintaining an awareness of local and national issues and developments. To ensure that this knowledge is utilized for the benefit of all customers.

6. To initiate and participate in library information events, within the group and Borough-wide, particularly relating to the specialisation, liaising as necessary with other library staff.
7. To liaise with other library staff within the group, and Borough-wide, especially the Reference team, to contribute to the development of information services at all departmental locations, particularly relating to the specialisation.

8. To produce and assist with the publication of hard-copy material (leaflets, lists, directories) relating to the specialisation, where such material is not available or does not meet customers' needs.

9. To ensure that the First-Stop Information Point is adequately stocked with hard-copy material, particularly give-away items, to meet customers' needs. To liaise with the Reference team to ensure that the available bookstock is adequate.

10. To maintain an awareness of customer needs, taking part in market research activities as appropriate, and sharing this information in order to contribute to the development of the service.

11. To maintain an awareness of the local community within the catchment area of the group, and to pass on relevant information to other members of staff.

12. To assist with the promotion of the First-Stop Information service, particularly within the catchment area of the group.

13. To assist with training all library staff working on the First-Stop Information Points.

14. To maintain and submit appropriate statistics on the work of the First-Stop Information Point.

15. To take charge of the library where the First-Stop Information Point is based, as necessary in the absence of other staff. To be familiar with all appropriate routines, including those for circulation of library materials, security of premises and property and so on.

16. To be capable of directing the work of the library assistants of the library in the absence of other staff.

17. To attend meetings of the First-Stop team and the group staff as required.

18. To ensure that the Principal Library Assistant or other appropriate officer is promptly notified of any defects in the equipment of the First-Stop Information Point.

19. Any other duties appropriate to the post.

8 March 1991
PERSNEL/FIRSTSTOP.JD/jb
W = Miscellaneous
V1 = Vorles List
E.T = Employment Training
LWM = Legal Welfare Money
T.T = Transport & Travel
L.F = Local Facilities
C.I = Community Information
S.L = Sport & Leisure
H = Health
L.S = Leisure Services
P.S = Property Services
Env = Environmental Services
C.S = Corporate Services
Fin = Finance
Edu = Education
S.S = Social Services
Hou = Housing
Cov = Information Regarding Council/Council Services in General
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Palmer's Green 1st Stop

Gary S. Fein

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Order Supplement
Ordnance Road
Most popular subject areas:

Education - P/T courses locally and some national
Facilities for children - Nurseries / Toddler groups / Leisure generally. Info - Pointers are very popular.
Lots of Council Tax enquiries
Voting list is always popular
Directional enquiries - local facilities and community information.
Health Leaflets are very popular.

Palmers Green
Most popular subject areas:

Leisure in General, not just local swimming pools but where to go what to do for children & Adults
Community information - clubs, societies
New voters list coming out today, will generate enquiries.
Playschemes are always very popular especially at moment because half term.
Housing repairs - private - cheap, free via local council

Edmonton Green - 70 queries & upwards a day
Customers made up of people passing through into building & public passing by outside

Most popular subject areas:

Council Tax banding information
Playschemes/ Nurseries always attracts enquiries
Community Groups - Particularly "Age Concern" - just moved into portacabins
CAB's - particularly debt counselling & Income support
Health Travel enquiries re DSS
Lots of people come in for the Job vacancy list
Leisure centre - opening times and facilities
Lots of social services/housing enquiries. Mainly directional - sometimes help in filling out Housing Benefit forms.
Voting checks
Lots of MP's surgery times queries and additionals
Fair amount of councillor queries
Staff questionnaire - Enfield

Interview with the First-Stop Team Leader.

a) The Arts and Libraries Department, which is part of the Leisure Directorate.

b) £14,500 per year for publications, corporate information leaflets. £137,783 per year for staffing, furniture and equipment. £15,000 was spent on the launch of the Points, for signs, publicity which included badges, bags and leaflets.

c) Four sites at present.

d) Edmonton Centre, Palmers Green Library, Ridge Library and Ordnance Road Library.

e) Yes - at the Central Library in Enfield. It is perhaps also possible that the Civic Centre reception desk, currently managed by the Corporate Services Department will become a First-Stop Information Point.

f) There are four First-Stop Information Officers, plus two part-time assistants provided by the Corporate Services Department at Edmonton. Also the Information Co-ordinator and Information Assistant in the central team office. Also a Community Officer provided by Section 11 funding (Government funding for work with minority groups) whose job entails making contact with the various minority groups in the area and promoting the information resources available.

g) Yes - the First-Stop Information Officers are required to be of Chartered Librarian or Information Scientist status, with some
experience of information work and of library routines. The First-Stop staff are also required to work in "their" library and be able to answer general enquiries.

h) The staff are included in the general Library Induction Training programme, and the Corporate Induction Course, which takes 2/3 days. Also specialised training in Welfare Benefits, a half day course provided by an agency of the Department of Social Security. Ongoing training is provided by the Team Manager - on such subjects as Total Quality Management. Unfortunately financial restraints need to be considered when organising training.

i) Yes, for all sorts of reasons, involvement, political reasons, knowledge. Staff are a valuable resource and need to be well trained if the project is going to be a success.

j) Council information - what services are available. Community information - local clubs and societies. Statutory Agencies - Department of Social Security, health, police, doctors, dentists.

k) Mainly through use of the ELLIS computer network - which is capable of producing mailshots to send to contacts for up-dating purposes. Also one of the First-Stop Information staff is a member of EASE(Enfield Advisory Service Exchange) and thus has contact with local advice giving agencies. The First-Stop Staff are encouraged to up-date their own information for local use - and will gather this information from local contacts.

l) We are an information service - advice is not our primary service - we try to act as facilitators.

m) Perhaps to run the Civic Centre reception - to take the First-Stop Points into additional sites outside libraries. To become more involved with the community and so provide more detailed information. Also to provide more information on other agencies within the Borough.
n) We use ELLIS our information network to help us provide information. Also we use desk-top-publishing in the form of PAGEMAKER software to provide our own leaflets and information sheets. This very much speeds up the process and means that we can produce and up-date very specialised information packages very quickly at low cost. Also the Borough subscribes to the ONLINE Leisure viewdata system which provides 24 hour touch-screen leisure information for the area and beyond - this is available in five sites in the Borough. The Library is fortunate in having its own IT Section. Not new technology - but the Team Manager is a retired DJ and has given some radio interviews on the work of the First-Stop Information Points.

o) It does form part of a corporate strategy, the money for the First-Stop Project was provided from corporate funds. Information is seen as a valuable resource and its provision forms part of the Borough Customer Care strategy. It is also part of the Borough's response to the Audit Commission's performance indicators initiative.

p) Yes - MORI polls, and in-house provided by the Borough Marketing Unit, proved that there was a lot of potential for the First-Stop Information Points.

q) Members of the public, residents and people who work in the Borough of Enfield. Library staff, council staff, members of local clubs and societies, councillors, MP's, MEP's and other authorities.

Interviews with the staff at two First-Stop Information Points, Edmonton and Palmers Green. The sites were chosen so as to give an example of a library situation as in Palmers Green and a non-library situation as at the Edmonton site which is in the Foyer of the council office building in the Edmonton shopping centre. The staff interviewed were both First-Stop Information Officers and will be called X and Y for the purposes of
this research.

a) Staff member X - Housing and Social Services.
Y - Sport and Leisure, Clubs and Societies.

b) Staff member X - Detailed enquiries about other services such as
the community care policy of the Social Services Department.
Y - Detailed council information - for example
Council Tax bandings - or enquiries referring to
council minutes.

c) Staff member X - Training not available for specialist
information.
Y - The Civic Centre has this detailed information,
it is easier for them to supply.

d) Staff member X - The "one stop" concept is much better, access to
specialised databases would help.
Y - First-Stop signs nearer the "point", increase
publicity and promotion, siting of First-Stop
Information Point perhaps better in the foyer of the
new library when built.

e) Staff member X - Since October 1990.
Y - Since October 1990 - the first of the First-Stop
Information Officers to be appointed.

f) Staff member X - Exciting concept - always liked dealing with the
public.
Y - Liked the idea of bringing services together.

g) Staff member X - In a Community Charge Section of a local
authority, previous experience as a Library Assistant.
Y - Housing sector executive, and University
h) **Staff member X** - Not specifically, but reference training, and courses on welfare rights and finance, in particular the Council Tax. Regular team meetings.

**Staff member Y** - Welfare rights course, desk-top-publishing, non-aggressive self-defence, visits to council departments (four afternoons in the Housing Dept.), joint information group - health authority and social services. All successful except self-defence course. No specific training on customer care.

i) **Staff member X** - Considered adequately trained for work at present, perhaps more training on housing benefit.

**Staff member Y** - More training on council services, display work, and publications. Lack of money a problem.

j) **Staff member X** - Yes, successful - generally 90% of users get the information they want. We are friendly people who do our best to help.

**Staff member Y** - Yes, good service, information to a high standard, but people don't know about the service. More publicity needed, such as advice days, leaflets, and information clinics.

k) **Staff member X** - Primarily people who use the building, clients of the Housing Department, Social Services, Careers, and users of the library. If not any of these fairly rare for others to use the service.

**Staff member Y** - Library users, non-library users tend to use the telephone. Anyone should be able to use us.
COUNTY INFORMATION CENTRES

On 12 March 1987 Lancashire County Council voted to improve the provision of public information by establishing a series of multi-purpose County Information Centres. It is now the most advanced and comprehensive network of its type in the country - taking service information into local communities. The first multi-purpose Centre opened in Blackburn and since then 15 more Centres have opened. Latest figures show more than 5,286,000 people have been helped.

Two Centres provide a valuable Welfare Rights Counselling Service as well as first-stop information on all other County Council services. Drop in facilities for Welfare Rights enquiries are available at three other Centres.

User figures are high between 1,000 and 2,000 per week per centre but that is not particularly unexpected. The Chief Executive's Department - which is responsible for running the Centres - based its original bid for multi-purpose Centres on national research carried out by MORI. This clearly indicated that the single improvement in local government service provision most sought by UK adults was a local office where they could talk to someone about their services. More recent research carried out by Kent County Council showed much the same result i.e. that people felt the Council did not tell them enough about their services.

The last of the sixteen Centres came on stream in 1991. Lancashire's provision for providing public information is the best in the County and every District in the County will have at least one Information Centre. A number of other Authorities throughout the UK have visited the County and are emulating Lancashire's lead.

The estimated full year costs for running all 16 Centres and including on-costs and central establishment charges will be in the region of £800,000. This figure, however, compares most favourably - about half the cost - with the original concept of providing separate Information Centres for Tourism, Transport and Welfare Benefits. The cost of Transport Information Centres alone was estimated at £300,000 (at 1987 prices) without central establishment charges.
Staffing of course constitutes a major cost element. The Personnel Sub-Committee agreed staffing levels of up to three people at any one Centre - one full-time supervisor and up to two part-time assistants.

In order to achieve maximum cost effectiveness and improve public service operation in some areas the County is offering the information service in partnership with districts. This varies from area to area but all districts were offered this option. The public has the added benefit of ease of accessibility with a high street presence, which, from the point of view of public service orientation, is highly desirable. There has also been a spin-off saving in timetable production. People are given information first hand, reducing the print runs on timetables.

From the point of view of 'customer care' the concept of a single Centre where people can gain total information about County - and in certain instances District information - without being sent from pillar to post is vastly superior.

In addition to the high quality of information provision for the indigenous population the Centres also cater for tourists and visitors. The Tourism market is the fastest growing job creation industry in the country creating almost 1,000 new jobs each week. The network of Centres provides comprehensive information about local attractions and accommodation and is a vital part of the County’s Tourism Strategy, encouraging visitors and tourists to stay and spend in the County, creating jobs and wealth.

As well as carrying the most comprehensive range of County tourist and visitor information in the UK, the Centres sell promotional items, bus tickets and other saleable goods generating revenue. Ticket sales at Burnley raise revenue of around £4,000 a week of which the County earns at six per cent commission. This amounts to income of around £12,480 a year to the County Council from this Centre and ticket sales have now been introduced at all other established County Information Centres on a similar basis. This is exclusive of income recorded from other sales of promotional items such as local maps, publications, souvenirs etc.

A 24-hour computer information system providing detailed information on tourism and public transport - another national first is being introduced across the network.
COUNTY INFORMATION CENTRES

APPENDIX 32

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
15/17 Railway Road,
BLACKBURN.

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
96/98 Talbot Road,
BLACKPOOL.

Lancashire County Council,
Tourist Information Centre,
M6 Motorway Service Area,
Charnock Richard,
CHORLEY.

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
55/57 Union Street,
CHORLEY.

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
The Bus Station,
LANCASTER.

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
116/118 Towngate,
LEYLAND.

Lancashire County Council,
Tourist Information Centre,
Marine Road Central,
MORECAMBE.

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
The Bus Station,
BROADWAY,
NELSON.

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
The Bus Station,
PRESTON.

Lancashire County Council,
Tourist Information Centre,
Kay Street,
RAWTENSTALL.

Lancashire County Council,
County Information Centre,
12/16 Market Place,
CLITHEROE.
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### Personnel Sub-Committee

County Information Centres/Training Agency Schemes

#### 1991/92 Actual Vote Number

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#### Training & Enterprise Council Schemes

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- Some items are not allocated.
- Prices are in £.
- The last item is a marine hall show ticket.
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LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL JOB OUTLINE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE/CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

JOB OUTLINE INFORMATION

Department/Section: PUBLIC RELATIONS

Job Title: Senior Administrative Services (Information Centres) | Grade: SO1 | Post Number: COO130 - 3404

Staff Responsible for:
- staff of the network of Information Centres which is to be established throughout Lancashire

Responsible to:
- County PRO
- Principal Asst PRO

Qualifications Required:

Applicants should normally hold a final qualification

Date of Issue:
- May 1990

Resume of Main Duties (i.e. activities constituting more than 10% of total workload):

Approximate % total workload

- Co-ordinating the establishment and daily management of the network of Information Centres across the County, including in particular:
  - The day-to-day management of the staff of the centres, their training and the co-ordination of the staff resources.
  - The overall financial management and stock control for each centre.
  - The organisation of publicity and promotional programmes for Centres.
  - The co-ordination of literature provision.
  - Liaison with other County Council Departments, District Councils and other organisations.

- In addition, other duties at the same responsibilities level may be interchanged with/added to this list at any time.
Job Title: PERIPATETIC SUPERVISOR — INFORMATION CENTRES

Grade: Scale 3

Responsible to: COUNTY PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER
PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (INFORMATION CENTRES)
as necessary

Qualifications Required: MINIMUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT QUALIFICATIONS DESIRABLE

Duties:

The principal duties are:-

1. To provide relief supervisory cover at the County Information Centres located throughout Lancashire involving:-
   a.) Supervision of the staffing and administration at the Centres.
   b.) Providing information to the public on;
      i) Public Transport facilities and timetables.
      ii) Tourist facilities, features and accommodation in the County.
   c.) To issue leaflets about and where necessary direct the public to County Council services.
   d.) The booking of accommodation, sale of literature and promotional material and bus and rail tickets including responsibility for stock control, banking and accounting for cash.

2.) Assisting the Senior Administrative Officer (Information Centres) with matters relating to the administration of the Information Centres network, including:-
   a.) Checking timesheets and controlling leave arrangements.
   b.) Dealing with telephone enquiries.
   c.) Stock and budgetary control.
1.) Any other duties at the same responsibility level as required.

Five day working week including Saturday.

(Note: The post is based in the Public Relations Section at County Hall, Preston.)
# LANCASTER COUNTY COUNCIL JOB OUTLINE

## JOB OUTLINE INFORMATION

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**STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- Responsible to: Senior Administrative Officer (Information Centres)

**QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED:**

- 4 'O' levels or equivalent desirable

**DATE OF ISSUE:**

- September, 1989

**RESUME OF MAIN DUTIES (I.E. ACTIVITIES CONSTITUTING MORE THAN 10% OF TOTAL WORKLOAD):**

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<tr>
<td>2. Dealing with invoices and telephone enquiries.</td>
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<td>3. Distributing publicity material.</td>
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<td>4. Stock and budgetary control of promotional items.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Working at County Information Centres as required to cover for staff absences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Recording expenditure relating to Information Centres.</td>
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<td>7. Additional clerical support for the Public Relations Section.</td>
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**NOTE** - IN ADDITION, OTHER DUTIES AT THE SAME RESPONSIBILITIES LEVEL MAY BE INTERCHANGED WITH /ADDED TO THIS LIST AT ANY TIME.
LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL JOB OUTLINE

JOE OUTLINE INFORMATION

Department/Section: CHIEF EXECUTIVE/CLERK'S/PUBLIC RELATIONS SECTION

Job Title: INFORMATION SUPERVISOR

Grade: SCALE 3

Post Number: (ALL SUPERVISOR POSTS)

Staff Responsible for:

- County Public Relations Officer
- Prin.Ast.Public Relations Officer
- Sr.Ast.Public Relations Officer as necessary
- Senior Admin Officer(Info.Centres)

INFORMATION ASSISTANTS

Qualifications Required:

Date of Issue:

2/7/90

Summary of Main Duties (i.e. activities constituting more than 10% of total workload):

- be based at and to be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Information Centre including in particular:

  Providing information to the public on:

  a) public transport facilities and timetables; and
  b) tourist facilities, features and accommodation in the County.

  To issue leaflets about and where necessary direct the public to County Council services.

  The supervision of the staffing and administration of the Centre.

  The booking of accommodation, the sale of literature and promotional material and bus, rail and other tickets.

  The responsibility for stock control, banking and accounting for cash.

  To provide cover at other Information Centres as and when necessary.

  In addition, other duties at the same responsibilities level may be interchanged with/added to this list at any time.

5 day working week including Saturday
CHIEF EXECUTIVE/CLERK'S DEPARTMENT

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL JOB OUTLINE

JOB OUTLINE INFORMATION

**Department/Section:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE/CLERK'S/PUBLIC RELATION

**Job Title:** PART TIME INFORMATION ASSISTANT | **Grade:** Scale 1/2 | **Post Number:**

**Staff Responsible for:** N/A

**Responsible to:**
- SUPERVISOR
- SENIOR ASST. PRO
- PRINCIPAL ASST. PRO
- COUNTY PRO
- as necessary

**Qualifications Required:** N/A

**Date of Issue:**

**Summary of Main Duties (i.e. activities constituting more than 10% of total workload):**

To be based in the Information Centre and to deal with enquiries from members of the public including in particular:

1. Providing Information about public transport services from leaflets and timetables and recording complaints about public transport services.

2. Issuing information about tourist facilities in the County.

3. Issuing leaflets about County Council services and directing the public to those services as necessary.

4. Selling tickets, publications etc.

5. It would also be helpful if the postholder were available as and when necessary to work at other Information Centres and/or work hours in addition to the normal working week.

*In addition, other duties at the same responsibilities level may be interchanged with/added to this list at any time.*
MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

The provision of Transport Information Centres (TICS) in each District of Lancashire, the services to be offered, the management control of TICS, their location and the financial implications.

INFORMATION

Background

TICs have been a recent innovation in Lancashire. Although in the 1970s municipal bus undertakings may have had a very simple passenger enquiry service on offer at the Inspector's Office on a bus station, it was not until the 1980s when Lancashire County Council offered financial assistance, advice and literature that TICs were established with the objective of providing information for the travelling public and encouraging greater use of public transport.

By 1985 modern TICs were operating in nine Districts of Lancashire, seven being located at bus stations. The services offered generally included timetable information on local services, sale of county-wide and local rambler tickets, sometimes the issue of OAP passes and in one or two cases a left luggage service. The Centres were operated by the municipal bus undertakings of District Councils.

Prior to deregulation the two major shortcomings in these arrangements were that each TIC generally only provided bus information on local services and not a county-wide information service; secondly, there were no TICs in those Districts which did not run municipal bus undertakings although Ribble operated a combined travel agent and information service at Chorley, Garstang, Ormskirk and Clitheroe.

The need for TICs in a Deregulated Environment

With the introduction of bus deregulation there is an even greater need to provide transport information for the travelling public. In the new competitive environment each commercial operator will promote his own bus services making it virtually impossible for the travelling public to have an easy understanding of all the local services provided by all operators. Moreover the existing TICs have either been relinquished by the District Councils or have been handed over to the independent bus companies who will provide limited information on timetables.

The County Council is the only organisation in a position to provide a satisfactory and comprehensive information service on all bus and train services to the travelling public. Indeed the 1985 Transport Act specifically gives County Councils the power to promote the availability of both commercial and non-commercial bus services. It was against this background and the lack of any consensus of approach amongst the District Councils that the Highways and Transportation Committee at its meeting on the 17th September resolved:-
By the summer of 1987 the pattern of local bus services may be better known and the travelling public may be familiarising themselves with the timings of the various services. It could be anticipated, therefore, that the demand for timetable information might decline. Although this might suggest the opening hours should then be reviewed, there will nevertheless be a steady requirement for other TIC services such as off-bus ticket sales and reporting of complaints. Once the system has settled down it is suggested a review of opening hours should be undertaken in the light of operational experience.

Manpower Requirements

The most appropriate way of manning TICs covering an opening period of 55½ hours per week would be the employment of three part-time staff x 20 hours (average) per TIC. This level of manning would provide flexibility to cover for sickness and annual leave. In some Centres the demand at certain times may justify two staff on duty which could be achieved under this flexible manning arrangement.

The duties of the TIC staff would be:-

(i) Distribution of local and county-wide timetable information for both road and rail;

(ii) Answering queries on bus and rail services;

(iii) Distribution of public transport promotional leaflets;

(iv) Sale of pre-paid tickets (bus and rail), issue of passes and sale of ancillary products and associated cash handling functions.

(v) Receive and record complaints on services;

(vi) Maintain TIC publicity displays and where TIC is located on a bus station, day-to-day maintenance of the County Council's publicity/timetable displays.

(vii) Other duties including other publicity and information services as may be required.

It is suggested the appropriate scale of salary grade for the above duties would be Scale 1/2. The Sub-Committee may also feel it prudent to recommend the appointment of staff on a temporary basis for up to 12 months with reviews being undertaken of the operation of each TIC in the light of experience gained.

Training

It will be necessary for TIC staff to receive appropriate training to undertake the above duties involving instruction in time-table reading, customer relations, cash-handling and the handling of complaints, both across the counter and on the telephone. The Central Training Unit and the Public Relations Section of the Chief Executive/Clerk's Department in liaison with the County Surveyor and County Treasurer will plan an introductory training course to be supplemented, as necessary, by refresher courses.

Complaints System

The recording of complaints lodged by the travelling public will be a major function of TICs and the public will be encouraged to use the local TIC as a
have to be provided through the Central Telephone Enquiry system, it can be anticipated that a continuing use for the service will be needed at least for 1987/88 while the TICs are being established. There are two other advantages to continuing the Central Telephone Service; firstly it provides a useful back-up service when TICs are closed in the evenings and on Sundays/Bank Holidays, secondly it will reduce the telephone enquiries to TICs where currently the staff are busy dealing with personal callers.

It is proposed that the continuation of the Central Telephone Service be considered along with other proposals for uncommitted growth during the budget process.

Financial Implications

The Highways and Transportation Committee were informed at their meeting in September that the estimated full year running costs for TICs throughout the county would be in the region of £200,000-£300,000. If the Sub-Committee were to approve the establishment of the 14 Centres, plus 3 supplementary centres, identified in this report, it is considered the full year running cost would be about £340,000, based on a cost per TIC of £20,000, made up of £15,000 staffing and £5,000 for rent, heat, light etc. In 1986/87 it is unlikely that more than £45,000 will be spent.

The revenue cost of continuing the Central Telephone Enquiry Service for 12 months in 1987/88 is estimated to be £27,000 for staffing and £26,000 for Freephone.

Regarding capital expenditure it is not possible to estimate costs for the provision of up to 17 TICs until negotiations have been pursued with bus companies and District Councils as well as an assessment being undertaken of any refurbishments that might be required at existing TICs. Nevertheless it is considered there would be sufficient provision within the Capital Programme for public transport infrastructure in 1987/88.

Other County Council Publicity and Information Services

The Chief Executive/Clerk wishes to draw particular attention to the opportunities that establishing TICs would provide for achieving greater value for money through using such centres for the dissemination of other County Council publicity and information to the public and as local reference points in such service areas as tourism, consumer protection and welfare rights. From time to time there are likely to be initiatives in most of the major services of the County Council which require wide publicity and distribution of information leaflets. TICs could become recognised as the County Council's local information centres.

Such a wider use in the longer term would give increased importance to the appropriate training being provided for staff in the TICs and the recruitment of staff of the right calibre. This wider use would also possibly have an impact on the location and size of premises required for TICs in particular instances.

It is therefore important that the Policy and Resources Committee should have the opportunity at their February meeting of considering the possibility of the Centres being developed to cover the wider spectrum of services. In the meantime it would be prudent for the Sub-Committee to agree to the proposed locations for TICs only on a temporary basis at this stage.
Comments on Existing and Proposed TICs including, where relevant, the views expressed by the Public Transport Special Sub-Committee on their site visits on the 8th and 15th August.

The table below summarises where existing TICs are located. Since January 1986 County Officers have been discussing with operators/district councils the possible arrangements for TICs and progress to date is summarised below.

1. **Existing TICs** all controlled by bus operators with the exception of Burnley and Nelson.

   - **Existing TICs at Bus Stations**
     - Lancaster
     - Blackpool
     - Preston
     - Burnley (controlled by the County Council)
     - Nelson (controlled by the County Council)
     - Rawtenstall

   - **Other Existing TICs**
     - Blackburn (Ainsworth Street)
     - St Annes
     - Morecambe
     - Accrington (mobile bus)
     - Burnley Queensgate Depot

2. **Existing TICs but empty**

   - Darwen Bus Station
   - Blackburn Boulevard

**Lancaster**

Existing TIC situated on Lancaster Bus Station. Preliminary discussions have been held with Lancaster City in respect of provision of a new TIC as existing TIC is integral to the bus company's operations.

**Morecambe**

Existing TIC is located in the City Transport Offices and is integral to the bus company's operations. Additionally the location is not ideally situated for either tourists or the town centre.

A Tourist Information Centre is located on the Sea Front which offers limited transport information. The Centre only opens during the summer season but scope exists for adaptations to convert part of the Centre to other uses.
The arrangements would be monitored before giving further consideration to a separate TIC.

**St Annes**

The TIC is ideally situated in close proximity to the centre of St Annes convenient for both tourists and local residents. The premises are shared with the Tourist Information Office, and the TIC is rented to Fylde Transport Ltd.

It is suggested similar shared facilities as offered by Preston Transport be pursued at St Annes.

**Blackpool**

The TIC is located on Talbot Road Station ideally situated for both tourists and local residents.

The TIC has been handed over to Blackpool Transport Company.

The same approach as suggested for Preston and Fylde could be pursued at Blackpool.

**Blackburn Boulevard**

A TIC is available for rent to the County Council on the Boulevard Bus Station ideally situated for the Railway Station and town centre.

**Blackburn Ainsworth Street**

The TIC is located opposite Blackburn's main shopping centre.

The TIC is to continue, under the control of Blackburn Transport Company. It is considered the TIC on the Boulevard would be acceptable for a permanent TIC for Countywide purposes.

**Darwen**

Location not approved by the Sub-Committee in January 1986 although the Special Sub-Committee authorised the County Surveyor to take over TIC when advised Blackburn Transport were to close the Centre. However, the one member of staff at the TIC declined the offer of temporary employment. The premises are now empty and available to the County Council.

**Accrington**

Work has yet to start on the TIC planned for Accrington Bus Station. (A full report will be made to a future meeting of the Public Transport Sub-Committee on the situation in Hyndburn.)
Preliminary discussions have been held with the Borough Council with the objective of providing a joint TIC/Tourist Information Office.

Other sites may be identified for TICs in the future.
PUBLIC TRANSPORT SUB-COMMITTEE
8TH JANUARY 1987

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED LOCATIONS FOR TICs

APPENDIX 'F'

It is suggested the County Council pursue the provision of permanent TICs as outlined above, at

1) Location of one TIC within each District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Free Standing</th>
<th>Shared with County Council</th>
<th>Shared with Bus Company</th>
<th>Shared with District Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Annes</td>
<td>Town Centre</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn Boulevard</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrington</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnley</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawtenstall</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorley</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ormskirk</td>
<td>Bus Station</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleetwood</td>
<td>to be researched</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clitheroe</td>
<td>to be researched</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyland</td>
<td>to be researched</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Other locations that might justify a supplementary TIC

<p>| Morecambe       | Shopping Concourse | *                          |                         |                             |
| Skelmersdale    | Bus Station        | *                          | *                       |                             |
| Harwen          | *                          |                         |                         |                             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public Transport</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Social Services</th>
<th>Welfare</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lancaster</td>
<td>41,623</td>
<td>7,585</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>681</td>
<td>8138</td>
<td>59,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleetwood</td>
<td>17,347</td>
<td>14,786</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>3187</td>
<td>1270</td>
<td>15,025</td>
<td>51,784</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clitheroe</td>
<td>10,860</td>
<td>25,685</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>13,622</td>
<td>51,664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackpool</td>
<td>26,906</td>
<td>39,349</td>
<td>765</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>15,859</td>
<td>25,019</td>
<td>108,642</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lytham</td>
<td>13,424</td>
<td>23,705</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>950</td>
<td>9,502</td>
<td>48,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>270,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leyland</td>
<td>2,995</td>
<td>5,662</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>4650</td>
<td>4069</td>
<td>17,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ormskirk</td>
<td>27,129</td>
<td>5603</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>6181</td>
<td>39,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorley</td>
<td>10,873</td>
<td>20,729</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>505</td>
<td>8346</td>
<td>41,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackburn</td>
<td>35,025</td>
<td>31,684</td>
<td>3,938</td>
<td>5,019</td>
<td>7020</td>
<td>30,775</td>
<td>113,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accrington</td>
<td>90,250</td>
<td>19,168</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>347</td>
<td>10,506</td>
<td>120,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnley</td>
<td>101,098</td>
<td>28,472</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>104,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>61,258</td>
<td>5664</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>4810</td>
<td>72,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rossendale</td>
<td>13,673</td>
<td>32,760</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31,151</td>
<td>77,710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charnock Richard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>57,346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morecambe</td>
<td>6095</td>
<td>85,256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>91,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skelmersdale</td>
<td>13,810</td>
<td>9,489</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>12,624</td>
<td>38,466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,364,526</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IMMO ORANGE BADGE SCHEME IMMIMI;

IMM IMM CAR BADGES FOR DISABLED IMMIMI;

Administered by the Social Services Department. Enquiries to your local Social Services Office. See SOCIAL SERVICES.

Lancashire County Council
County Information System
Date: 19 Jul 1993 Time: 13:43
Produced By: Software Logic
Tel: 061 775 0731
Interview with the Peripatetic Supervisor - Lancashire

a) Public Relations.
b) Already stated.
c) 17.
d) Already stated.
e) One in each major town.
f) 47 staff in total.
g) Ability to deal with the public, presentation, knowledge of area.
h) Familiarisation tours of area, emergency first-aid, two-day customer care course, training with Transport/Surveyors, bus routes.
i) Yes, very necessary and useful service.
j) Information on Lancashire County Council, be there for the ratepayer of Lancashire and provide the information they require.
k) Depend on other departments - quite up-to-date, would like information to be sent in centrally - some information is sent direct to the centres to up-date.
l) All information provided.
m) More information about Lancashire - tourist information.
n) Network system, A-Z etc.
o) Yes - getting closer to the public.
p) Yes.
q) Customers.

Interviews with the staff from Preston Information Centre

a) Staff member X Public transport
Y Bus enquiries, local transport
Z Bus enquiries

b) Staff member X Bus routes south of Preston
Y Travel information - users with time to spare
Z First stop - not enough information
c) Staff member X Don't know the area
   Y Personal choice difficult
   Z Training

d) Staff member X Tourist information, more professional set-up, away from the bus station/high street
   Y More space, restricted stock
   Z More training - bus routes - different departments to get contacts, basic French

e) Staff member X Five and a half years
   Y Two years
   Z Seven years

f) Staff member X The public/variety
   Y Always worked with the public
   Z Like working with the public, interesting and varied

g) Staff member X Tax office with the public
   Y Computer department
   Z County Hall - management services

h) Staff member X A weeks induction course at County Hall, three days training at the centre
   Y No training given
   Z No - on the job

i) Staff member X Not telling staff
   Y Go on all bus routes - be aware of routes
   Z Previous answer

j) Staff member X Yes very successful
   Y Yes
   Z Not entirely

k) Staff member X Majority of people, young and old, public transport users
   Y Elderly
   Z Bus passengers

Interviews with the staff of the Blackpool Information Centre

a) Staff member X Bus, welfare rights
   Y Depending on what day of the week, welfare, tourist

b) Staff member X Education, student grants
   Y Local knowledge, bus routes

c) Staff member X Education Department likes to keep information
   Y No strong local knowledge
d) Staff member X More room - more publicity  
Y Direct line to council departments - "freephone"

e) Staff member X Six years  
Y Two and a half years

f) Staff member X Job always wanted to do - tourism  
Y Similar to previous

g) Staff member X Tourism  
Y Underground

h) Staff member X On the job, not successful  
Y Yes - not much - on the job mostly

i) Staff member X Tourism courses, hotel accommodation  
Y More training with welfare benefits

j) Staff member X Very much so  
Y Very successful

k) Staff member X General public, needy, desperate  
Y Tourists, elderly, disabled
APPENDIX 44

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

20th SEPTEMBER 1991

COUNTY CONTACT POINTS

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. Introduction

1.1 West Sussex County Council has some 730 service points distributed throughout the county and the 85% of its staff who provide direct service delivery are mainly based in these devolved units. This is clear evidence to counter the allegation that the County Council is remote, but nevertheless, this false perception can persist if access to these service points is not made as easy as possible or if our customers are not kept sufficiently well-informed to make the best use of them.

1.2 Several initiatives are being developed which should improve our performance in these important aspects of service delivery, but the task would be much easier if it were possible for West Sussex residents who wanted to know about any of our services to have a single point of contact within their area. The services would not need to be provided there, and obviously would not replace schools, social services offices or other service points, but callers could be put into direct contact with the right person in the right department, wherever in the County that person might be based.

1.3 This report outlines the sort of arrangements which could be made for a pilot County Contact Point - a name which reflects the aims of the facility more accurately than the catchy but misleading "one stop shop".

2. The Service Provided

2.1 By their very nature, some of the expert, specialist staff employed by the County Council are only available in one location at a time. These range from individual posts such as a credit specialist in the Trading Standards Department, or student grant specialists in the Education Department, through to whole departments or sections such as the County Archives. Even if members of the public know
that these facilities are available, access to them may be difficult if they are based on the other side of the county and enquirers may become involved in wasted telephone calls or visits and protracted correspondence. A contact point would ensure that enquirers avoid these pitfalls and frustrations, because trained members of staff would know who to approach to make direct contact.

2.2 Many departments, such as social services and education, have area and divisional structures which provide enquiry and reception facilities throughout the county, including access to specialist local staff. It is very important that the introduction of county contact points makes that direct access easier and does not in any way detract from it. They would need to achieve the right balance between, on the one hand, providing a direct service, such as distributing leaflets, application forms or providing details of local county council services, and, on the other hand, being an easily usable channel of communications between the public and locally based departmental staff.

2.3 All Chief Officers are identifying the sort of departmental issues with which contact points could deal without reference to departments after basic training, and are producing staff directories which contact point staff could use to trace appropriate staff in other cases. To assist the contact points in gaining a reputation for providing quick, easy and effective access to all County Council services, all Chief Officers have welcomed the opportunity to set published targets for dealing with cases passing through a county contact point. For example, the Director of Social Services has committed himself to providing a dedicated telephone in area offices which would be manned Monday to Friday, 9 to 5, for calls from contact points, and would also guarantee to see anyone referred to the area office on the same day, subject to normal working hours. Other Chief Officers are prepared to promise that if attempts to contact specified staff fail, then that member of staff will contact the enquirer by the end of the next working day. Similar commitments are available in respect of correspondence.

2.4 There is a further service which contact points could usefully provide and that is as a local centre for the dissemination of general information about the County Council and for encouraging publicity and media contact in conjunction with the County Press and Information Service.
2.5 Finally, a contact point manned by well-trained staff could do much to redress the criticism which is often levelled at public authorities, that the public are passed from one to another as a result of confusion about responsibilities. It should be possible to seek cooperation from other agencies, including surrounding county councils, central government agencies and especially local district councils, so that enquirers could be put in touch with the appropriate agency without being turned away. There is no question of the contact point taking on board the work of those other bodies, any more than it would take on the work of one of the County Council departmental services, but with a good staff directory of how these other agencies are organised and who does what within them, it should be possible for the contact point to put an enquirer immediately into touch with the right person to answer the query being raised, no matter what public body actually employs that person. Collaboration with district councils might even extend to fax and computer links so that the full service provided by the contact point was indistinguishable, so far as the enquirer was concerned, between county and district services. Such a development would obviously require detailed discussions.

3. Obtaining the Service

3.1 There is little point in service departments seeking ways of achieving these service criteria if the contact points do not successfully make themselves available to customers and this will depend on their having the right location, opening hours, staff, information and level of commitment from all departments. They must also be advertised and promoted effectively. Contact point staff cannot expect to be, nor should they be, substitutes for specialist departmental staff, but they must be able to get information across to callers clearly and have a good background knowledge of local government and other government services.

3.2 Specialist departmental staff will not, of course, always be available by telephone, but nor would they be if a casual caller were to visit their working base, and this is where the commitment by Chief Officers to achieve specified response criteria is vital. Callers will be told about the sort of commitments referred to in paragraph 2.3, so they will know exactly how their query will be handled. Enquiries will be recorded on a personal computer, using a standard complaints handling programme which automatically enables the contact point to monitor progress of the enquiry and generates for the caller an acknowledgment slip which can be returned to the
contact point, confirming that the matter has been dealt with satisfactorily. It is very important that Chief Officers and the Chief Executive are able to see if departments deliver the promises which they make.

3.3 Even if county contact points were to be established in several local towns, there would still be a need to ease access to county council services throughout the rest of the county. Steps are already in hand to produce maps and information boards which identify service outlets in each of our major centres. These will be prominently displayed to encourage members of the public to contact local offices, but will nevertheless also show a central telephone number which will use the Fire Brigade communications network so that a call can be taken 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The same number could be used in conjunction with county contact point services, as necessary, but would not give access to specialised staff, simply a manned service which can receive messages, pass them to service departments the next working day and provide a means of monitoring responses.

3.4 These initiatives to improve access to information might also extend to presentations of service plans in different parts of the county in conjunction with budget proposals each year and possibly involve elected members.

4. The Pilot Scheme

4.1 It is suggested that a pilot scheme should be run in East Grinstead, which is fairly typical in that it has the benefit of local delivery points for social services, education and careers, a registrar's office, fire station and a library, but not a base for the County Surveyor, Trading Standards or other services.

4.2 It would be possible to provide a contact point in the building currently occupied by the library, registrar, careers, CABX and social services sub-area office. The library is currently open for 56 hours a week, over 6 days, but the other services provide a more limited service, ranging from 32½ hours access to the careers service to attendance by appointment only at the social services interview room. There is, of course, a full service available at the Social Services Area Office in East Grinstead. A county contact point could be operated through any convenient period within the opening hours of the library, and use could be made of a small
office in the building, both for confidential telephone conversations between the public and county council staff, and as a surgery by those departments, including trading standards, who might be prepared to offer a regular visiting service to East Grinstead residents.

4.3 It is impossible to gauge the demand which would be faced by the contact point, so a pilot scheme based on an existing service might give us some flexibility in staff arrangements if demand were to exceed or fail to meet capacity. It would also be possible to use existing fax facilities and computer links, so as to avoid unnecessary initial costs.

5. Resource Implications

5.1 A pilot scheme along the lines outlined in paragraph 4 would minimise start-up costs and help to determine whether it would be viable to establish contact points in other centres. There would, of course, still be resource implications including staff costs, the provision of office facilities and creating the sort of information packs and staff directories referred to earlier. The latter need will, however, arise whether or not contact points are established, because if the County Council is to respond positively to the Citizens’ Charter, we will inevitably need to improve our arrangements for referring clients and for disseminating service information. The costs have been included in the following estimate of expenditure during the first year.

2 x FTE, including on-costs (maximum of grades) £35,000.00

Occasional support by library staff £ 2,500.00
Promotional and advertising £ 3,000.00
Telephone - installation and calls £ 5,000.00
Personal computer and printer £ 4,000.00
Rental of interview room (100 sq. ft.) £ 1,000.00
TOTAL FOR YEAR £49,000.00
5.2 The County Librarian is content that no re-charge for use of other facilities would be made during the first year, but this and any charge for telephone contact with the Fire Control Centre will need to be reviewed in due course.

5.3 It is proposed that the pilot scheme should commence on 1st April 1992, so start-up costs, including staff salaries, will be incurred during 1991/2.

5.4 It is also proposed to review the scheme after 6 months and if it has proved to be successful, this could lead to the opening of more contact points with subsequent budget implications for 1992/3 and beyond.

5.5 All expenditure for 1991/2 can be funded from the approved pump-priming contingency, and additional costs in future years could be dealt with by bids against any equivalent fund.

6. Management Responsibility

Without any commitment whatsoever to how county contact points might be managed in the future if this proposed pilot scheme is successful, it seems sensible to place day-to-day responsibility for development and management of this pilot scheme under the control of the County Librarian. He will, of course, need to work closely with other departments and especially with the Press and Information Office, which would benefit from having a local focus for county council contact.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Provision be made during the current financial year from the approved pump-priming contingency monies to fund start-up costs for a pilot County Contact Point in East Crinstead to operate from 1st April 1992;

2. Similar contingent provision be made in the Revenue Budget 1992/3 to fund the pilot County Contact Point and any expenditure approved after the review of that scheme;
3. A detailed report on the staffing issues be submitted to Personnel and Finance Sub-Committee for approval;

4. Management responsibility for the pilot scheme be given to the County Librarian;

5. That discussions take place with Mid Sussex District Council and other appropriate public bodies to discuss how their services can best be sought from a county contact point;

6. The service be reviewed after 6 months and a further report submitted to Policy and Resources Committee.

Background Papers
None.

Contact - P.B. Green, ext. 7940
If calling please quote contact number 619

12 October 1993

Dear Mrs Jordan

Thank you for your recent enquiry. I confirm that the matter is receiving attention and that I have today contacted the Surveyors Department of the West Sussex County Council.

Enquiry details:

Contact Date: 27 January 1993

At the junction of Ship Street and West Street East Grinstead, there are a few potholes. Can they be repaired please?

The department will be in touch with you shortly.

Yours sincerely

CDT CONTACT POINT INFORMATION OFFICER
EAST GRINSTEAD

Mrs B Jordan
35 Durkins Road
East Grinstead
West Sussex
RH19 2ER
CDT Contact Point  
Public Library  
West Street  
East Grinstead RH19 4SR  

CDT CONTACT POINT ENQUIRY:

Contact No: 619  
Contact Date: 27 January 1993  

Description:

At the junction of Ship Street and West Street East Grinstead, there are a few potholes. Can they be repaired please?

Enquiry received from: Mrs B Jordan  
Address: 35 Durkins Road  
East Grinstead  
West Sussex  
RH19 2ER  
Tel No: Home: 0342 328788  
Work: 0342 300780  

Please could you deal with this enquiry as soon as possible and return the reply slip to the CDT Contact Point within the next seven days.

The enquiry has already been discussed with in your department.

CDT CONTACT POINT ENQUIRY: Acknowledgement and Reply Slip

TO: CDT Contact Point, Public Library, West Street, East Grinstead RH19 4SR  
TEL: 0342 300780  
FAX: 0342 317544  

Contact No: 619  
From: Surveyors FAX: 0403 258292  
Area Highways Engineer (Horsham)  

The enquiry is being dealt with by Name: .........................  
Tel No: .........................  

The enquiry will be resolved on or by ......................... and the enquirer will be informed.

The information required was sent to the enquirer on .........................

The enquiry cannot be dealt with by this department and has been sent to ......................... in the ......................... department.

Area Highways Engineer (Horsham)  
Surveyors  
e  
Roadbridge Heath  
Horsham  
82 3LZ  

Please return to Contact Point by 19 October 1993
**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Post Title:** Information Officer

**Location:** Public Library, East Grinstead

**Date of Job Description:** February, 1993

**Reports to:** Chief Executive

**Responsible to:** County Librarian

**Responsible for:** Assistant Information Officers

**Basic Function:**

1. To provide, develop and promote an effective information service on public services from the Council's One Stop Shop.

2. To assist and advise on the establishment of similar services throughout West Sussex.

**Special Responsibilities:**

1. To be responsible for the formation and maintenance of an efficient information service to the public.

2. To assist in establishing a database of information and to advise on further development, extension and improvement.

3. To establish and develop close links with the appropriate representatives of County Council departments and other public services and to provide an effective response to enquiries.

4. In conjunction with the County Information Officer, to present and disseminate information concerning the County Council to the media and members of the public.

5. To assist members of the public to communicate direct with officers of the County Council and other public services and to monitor the effectiveness of any approaches.

6. To liaise with members of the County Council in arranging and advertising surgeries at the Council's One Stop Shop and to make similar arrangements for Chief Officers.

7. To liaise closely with local organisations involved with providing information to the public with special reference to the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

8. To monitor and record all enquiries received and to make regular reports on the action taken.

9. To undertake other duties of a similar nature which may be required.

WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

LIBRARY SERVICE

LIJOB/1001/JT
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Assistant Contact Point Information Officer

Location: Public Library East Grinstead

Date of Job Description: November 1991

Reports to: County Contact Point Information Officer

Basic Function:
To assist the Contact Point Information Officer in developing and promoting an effective information service on public services with special reference to the West Sussex County Council.

Special Responsibilities:

1. To assist in the formation and maintenance of an efficient information service to the public.

2. To assist in establishing a database of information and to advise on further development, extension and improvement.

3. To establish and develop close links with the appropriate representatives of County Council departments and other public services and to provide an effective response to enquiries.

4. To assist in the presentation and dissemination of information concerning the County Council to the media and members of the public.

5. To assist members of the public to communicate direct with officers of the County Council and other public services and to monitor the effectiveness of any approaches.

6. To liaise with members of the County Council in arranging and advertising surgeries at the County Contact Point and to make similar arrangements for Chief Officers.

7. To liaise closely with local organisations involved with providing information to the public with special reference to the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

8. To monitor and record all enquiries received and to make regular reports on the action taken.

9. To deputise for the Contact Point Information Officer as required.

10. To undertake other duties of a similar nature which may be required.
INTRODUCTION

1. On 20th September 1991, the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to establish a CDT (County District Town) Contact Point in the East Grinstead Library to give local people easier access to the services provided by the County Council, Mid-Sussex District Council and East Grinstead Town Council. This pilot scheme, which opened on 3rd April 1992, is thought to be the first in the country to provide access to, and contact with, all three tiers of local government, and by offering facilities for elected members, was intended to become the focal point for local government in the area.

2. This report reviews the first six months of the operation of the CDT contact point and draws conclusions about the future provision of the service. The review is based on statistics about the number of visitors but also on the views of the partners involved in the project and of the wider community.

USE OF THE CONTACT POINT

3. In the first 6 months of operation of the CDT Contact Point almost 2,200 enquiries were made - an average of 85 per week. A detailed statistical profile of the enquiries made and of the response that customers received is given in the attached Appendix.

4. One striking feature of the statistics is the very broad range of topics on which enquiries have been made - over 120 in this analysis. This fact demonstrates the very real benefit of having a single local point from which access to all local authority services can be gained and of having well trained staff able to deal competently with such a range of questions.

5. Even when dealing with other agencies, the CDT staff have been trained and equipped to ensure that the customer is not simply turned away. Some 107 enquiries have been redirected to the CAB which is situated in the same building. A further 150 have been directed to specific contacts in neighbouring local authorities. This service helps to leave enquirers with a favourable impression of local government in the widest sense. The CDT is providing access to services regardless of the tier of government and even helping to overcome the barriers that authority boundaries can represent.

6. Another encouraging feature of the statistics is the very good response times. The project could have proved counter-productive if people making enquiries at the Contact Point were then denied a
if people making enquiries at the Contact Point were then denied a proper and timely response. The statistics show nearly 85% of queries were answered the same day while less than 4% took more than 7 days to finalise. These results demonstrate the commitment of all three partner Councils to the success of the project and are reflected in the very favourable response to the pilot from the people of East Grinstead.

Public Reaction

7. The reaction to the CDT initiative in East Grinstead has been overwhelmingly supportive. Feedback to the staff at the Contact Point from customers has generally welcomed the establishment of the facility and has been appreciative of the response to their particular enquiry.

8. A survey of library users undertaken during August found a similarly encouraging reaction. One notable result of the survey was a level of appreciation for the Contact Point even amongst those who had not yet used the facility. The most common praise related to the way in which the CDT kept enquirers informed of progress, the avoidance of being passed from department to department, and the speed of action. One resident said that the CDT has resolved in one week a matter which she had been pursuing for 4 years! It is also clear that enquirers were pleased to be able to talk to somebody locally face to face even if it was subsequently necessary to speak by telephone to an officer better able to help.

9. One slightly negative feature from the survey was that 28% of respondents were not aware of the service offered by the CDT Contact Point even though it is sited in the building they were visiting. This demonstrates that there is still work to be done in promoting the facility before it can maximise its usefulness to the community.

The County Council's Perspective

10. The support given to the CDT Contact Point from all Council Departments has been very good. The excellent response times shown in the Appendix are an indication of the level of commitment to the project.

11. An important side-effect of the success of the Contact Point has been an increase in staff morale in some areas. That the authorities have been seen to be "doing something" coupled with the positive reaction from the people of East Grinstead has meant that the initiative has been received very favourably by the Councils' own staff.

12. Many Departments have taken the opportunity offered by the Contact Point to demonstrate the range and quality of the services they provide. Work generated from enquiries has been seen as a chance to perform well in the eyes of the public. The complimentary responses from satisfied customers shows that the chance has been taken. There is little doubt that departments have taken a pride in meeting the response times which were published
at the CDT and have allocated this the necessary priority. Many of
the queries might have reached the services without the opening of
the CDT and been satisfactorily resolved but not without incurring a
series of telephone call, letters and/or visits.

13. Regular exhibitions have been held in the display area at the CDT
to show various aspects of County Council work.

Views of the District and Town Councils

14. All the Mid-Sussex District Council's services have supported the
concept of the CDT contact point in exactly the same way as
County Council services, and have been equally anxious to meet the
published response times. No particular service delivery problems
have been identified and the District Council has welcomed the
opportunity to make its services more easily available to the people
of East Grinstead. The District Council has, however, suggested a
review of the way in which enquiries concerning that authority's
services are passed on and subsequently monitored because it is
understandably anxious to avoid unnecessary paperwork. That
review is now underway and will include the possibility of giving
the District Council direct access to computer information at East
Grinstead.

15. The view of East Grinstead Town Council has not changed since the
opening of the CDT. They believe that it meets a real local need
and provides a quicker and better response to the problems of the
local people.

16. The Town Council did comment that their own workload has not
reduced since April. This reinforces the view that the CDT should
not divert people from direct access to services where that is
possible and appropriate but that it is complementary to other
service points in the area.

17. Whilst not a partner in the CDT, close contact has been maintained
with the Citizen's Advice Bureau which is based in the same
building. The bureau manager has expressed very severe concern
about the extra pressure placed on accommodation in the library
complex as a result of the CDT, but has not found a reduction in
the number of enquiries relating to local government matters.
Again, this suggest that the CDT is tapping a new source of
enquiries, and it is not surprising that people continue to approach
the CAB when they want to enlist an outside "champion" rather
than pursue an initial query.

The Future of East Grinstead CDT and Further Developments

18. The evidence suggests that the CDT Contact Point has succeeded in
providing a focus for access to local authority services in the area.
The initiative has been well received by the community and well
supported by the local authorities involved.

19. The project has undoubtedly been good for the image of local
government generally in East Grinstead. As well as meeting an
existing need for more information and support for the community,
it has raised local expectations and created more demand for all three tiers of local government. As one respondent to the library users survey notes:

"I hope it stays in East Grinstead. We are very remote from the County and District Councils. CDT's helpful staff make them seem less remote and make them easier to approach."

20. One of the great intangible benefits of the CDT at East Grinstead, situated as it is at one of the furthest points in the county from Chichester and in the District from Haywards Heath, is that it brings local government to the people of the town in a comprehensive manner. East Grinstead Town Council has stressed the particular value of the facility in communities which do not have local offices for the service departments, and this makes the need in these areas quite different from that in Chichester, Worthing, Crawley or Horsham where there may be some uncertainty about which office to contact, but where most services are locally represented.

**Future Developments**

21. An assessment of their current work load suggests that the two FTE staff at East Grinstead could tackle twice as many enquiries, but clearly the existing level of manning is necessary in order to cover the 42 hours of opening each week. Initial enquiries suggest that at very little extra cost it would be possible to provide additional access to the staff's skills, knowledge, and computerised monitoring systems via "satellite" CDTs in other communities in Mid-Sussex. For example, people in Burgess Hill, Hassocks, and Hurstpierpoint might be able to visit their local branch library, and via the existing enquiry staff speak to the East Grinstead CDT staff on internal telephone lines, thus providing a friendly, helpful and personal reception, linked to a professional, well-backed CDT. The County Librarian is satisfied that the additional workload on these three libraries could be contained, yet for the cost of telephone calls and subsequent response action, it is likely that another 5,000 or so enquirers in three more communities could have easy access to all Council services. Providing they have this local personal access, it should not matter to them that the subsequent follow-up action and monitoring is taking place some 20 or 30 miles away. Any such extensions would have to be the subject of discussions with the Town and Parish Councils, but experience in East Grinstead suggests that resource impact on them would be minimal.

22. The success of the East Grinstead CDT has led to approaches from three other District Councils suggesting some form of joint access facilities tailored to the needs of their particular area. Various forms might be considered and the report to Policy and Resources Committee on 20th September 1991 referred to the possibility of CDT Contact Points being sited on either district or local council premises. By carefully examining existing fixed and mobile facilities and their staffing, it should be possible to replicate the East Grinstead/Mid Sussex facilities with the least possible increase in public expenditure.

23. For example two District Councils already operate one-stop-shops primarily for their own departments but they inevitably receive queries about the services provided by the County Council and
other public bodies. These offices at Bognor Regis and Storrington might well form part of a CDT facility in these areas and initial discussions with Horsham and Arun District Councils have been encouraging.

24. At Bognor Bogis the District Council provides within the Town Hall a separate reception facility for each of its directorates and might be able to give similar access to County Council services. The County Council in turn might wish to reciprocate by providing access to District and County Council services at the Town Hall via mobile phones on mobile libraries visiting villages in the area. This sort of joint arrangement would thus make better use of existing County and District facilities to the benefit of both authorities and their charge payers.

25. A different partnership might be required in the Horsham area where most County Council and District Council services are represented in Horsham but where there is no single enquiry point in that town. The District Council has, however, opened a one-stop-shop for County and District services at Storrington and hopes to provide additional access points in other villages.

26. Yet another combination of County, District and local council facilities might be appropriate in other areas. For example in Adur the District Council has excellent reception facilities in the Civic Centre where a combined contact point might be established with additional access from district council cash offices, libraries or local council offices in communities like Lancing and Southwick.

27. All these possibilities would have to be the subject of detailed discussions with the District Council and with the Town and Parish Councils in the areas concerned. It seems inevitable that the development of contact points outside larger towns will mean finding a different name for the service so as to reflect the extension to rural areas and the involvement of Parish Councils who are unlikely to find the reference to "Town Council" acceptable in the name "CDT Contact Point".

28. There are a number of advantages in pursuing these different initiatives concurrently, including the possibility of networking information and monitoring systems, joint training, co-ordinated publicity and the consistency of response times. Whilst this suggests the need for an agreed approach and strategy, the timing of any developments and the way in which any networked service might be moulded to a particular community are all matters for more discussion. Nevertheless, it does seem sensible to build upon the success of East Grinstead and explore how different options might be pursued in other areas. Improved access to services and increased information to charge payers are key elements of the Citizens Charter, so any developments would form a vital element in the County Charter which is to be launched on 19th January 1993.

29. The revenue budget for 1992/3 already includes a sum of £55,000 for extending the contact points and £50,000 for networking communications and these provisions would be sufficient to make considerable progress in the developments described in this section of the report. Any developments beyond this will rely upon budgetary provisions in 1993/4.
Recommendations

That within the existing budgetary provision:-

a) The CDT based at East Grinstead library continue and that the staff be offered permanent posts.

b) Discussions with Mid-Sussex District Council and local councils take place to provide access to the CDT from libraries in the Mid-Sussex area.

c) Discussions with other district councils and local councils take place in order to extend the CDT philosophy into their areas.

B Fieldhouse
Chief Executive

Background Papers

"County Contact Points" - Report to Policy and Resources Committee, 20th September 1991.

Contact: Peter Green Ext 7940 or 7330
1. Total number of enquiries at 30.09.92 - 2196

2. Reminders
   Total number first reminders - 28 (2%)
   Total number second reminders - 5 (0.3%)

3. Total enquiries by Council
   WSCC 54.5%
   MSDC 24.5%
   East Grinstead Town Council 5%
   Other agencies 16%

4. Response times
   Answered same day 84.8%
   by 7 days 11.6%
   by 14 days 2.6%
   over 14 days 1%

5. Topics
   The number of topics on which questions have been asked is over 120.
   Examples:
   Community Charge 42  Electoral Registration 24
   Footway Maintenance 25  Housing 12
   Planning 54  Recycling 12
   Environmental Health 14  Social Services 22
   Public Transport 25  Students Grants 11
   Employment Services 58  Leisure & Recreation 24

6. Enquiries dealt with by other agencies
   Examples:
   CAB 107
   Police 8
   WRVS 4
   Mid Sussex Water 10
   East Sussex CC 46
   Surrey CC 57
   Kent CC 12
   Tandridge District Council 23
   Wealden District Council 15
I have Spanish and French as other languages and would like to know if it is possible to be a support teacher?

RESOLVED 06/01/93 Enquirer spoke to Teacher Recruitment on office phone.

There is a large pothole on Selsfield Road, West Hoathly, between the junction with Towels Lane and West Hoathly Village, caused damage to my car when I ran into it last night. I should like to make a claim for the damage caused.

RESOLVED 12/01/93 Enquirer informed that must claim in writing to Area 3. Rejected.

I was given a 6ft - 7ft high flowering cherry tree for Christmas. I do not have room to put it in my garden. Would the council like to plant it, possibly on the verge outside my house?

RESOLVED 11/01/93 Enquirer has already given tree away!

I have Spanish and French as other languages and would like to know if it is possible to be a support teacher?

RESOLVED 06/01/93 Enquirer spoke to Teacher Recruitment on office phone.
Interview with the Information Officer - West Sussex

a) Library Department
b) £50,000
c) Stated earlier
d) Stated earlier
e) Stated earlier
f) Two full-time equivalents
g) None in particular
h) Ten week training period, in departments, computer training, Library Department customer care course and induction course
i) Very good induction - very necessary, yes
j) Anything provided by the County, District, or Town Council, Health Authority, Tourist
k) Provided by departments - system being devised - pc linked to a modem, at present up-dated by disk
l) Inland Revenue, Social Security, - just give contacts
m) Nothing specifically - no A-Z
n) IBM mainframe
o) Yes - customer care
p) Not sure
q) Over 40s and unemployed

Interview with a part-time information assistant

a) Varied, time of year - bus pass renewal, grass cutting
b) None - none in particular
c) Not sure
d) A-Z
e) Six months
f) Helping people - working with the public
g) Variety - youth work and information, receptionist

h) On the job - best kind for this type of work, Library induction course

i) Visiting other departments - greater experience

j) Yes - figures are up - feedback

k) Anyone and everyone
To: Brian Dawson  
Local Government Unit  
County Library Headquarters  
81 North Walls  
Winchester

Dear Brian,

Enclosed are two early reports. One specifically relates to First Stop and the other details the re-organisation of the Library service that took place at the same time. I also enclose some recent statistics and commentary, plus an article that went into the November 1991 "LA Record". I look forward to meeting you on the 26th April at 9.30 am at the above address.

Mike Roberts  
First Stop Information Manager