

# North Lanarkshire Council Report

## Housing Committee

Does this report require to be approved?  Yes  No

Ref SL/MK

Date 06/11/24

## First Stop Shop Review and Redesign Cumbernauld First Stop Shop Update

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### Executive Summary

At Housing Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024, members requested a report be submitted setting out the costs associated with re-introducing cash payments at the Cumbernauld First Stop Shop.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that Housing Committee:

- (1) Acknowledge the content of the report.

### The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Improve economic opportunities and outcomes
Ambition statement	(2) Refocus our town centres and communities to be multi-functional connected places which maximise social, economic, and environmental opportunities
Programme of Work	Statutory / corporate / service requirement

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 At Housing Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2024 members requested a report setting out costs to re-instate cash facilities at the Bron Way First Stop Shop.
- 1.2 It was also agreed that a consultation exercise would take place with regards to the proposals outlined in the First Stop Shop Service Review and Redesign report presented to Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> August.
- 1.3 There are currently ten First Stop Shops (FSS's) situated across each of the Local Housing Market Areas in North Lanarkshire. The FSS's have historically provided a first point of face-to-face contact for customer enquiries primarily for payment

transactions and enquiries relating to housing services, council tax and benefits, the Scottish Welfare Fund and environmental services.

- 1.4 Five of the ten offices; Airdrie, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Motherwell and Wishaw operate standard office hours, across Monday to Friday with a lunch time closure. The five smaller offices located in Kilsyth, Moodiesburn, Shotts, Bellshill and Viewpark are currently operating reduced opening hours.
- 1.5 The FSS service operates in close tandem with the locality housing offices, being co-located in most instances within the same premises as the local housing offices. This provides housing support for FSS staff for escalation of enquiries and to provide additional staff capacity to cover the FSS 'front counter' as required, ensuring a consistent high-level of customer service. North Lanarkshire Council is the largest local authority landlord in Scotland, with over 36,000 council homes. For this reason, the council has a high level of approaches for housing related advice, information and assistance.
- 1.6 The service has seen significant change in levels of customer demand and preferences over recent years, particularly over the past five years. This has in part been driven by the council's ambitious Digital NL programme which has seen a new improved range of customer contact options developed, offering improved choice over contact methods for customers. The Covid-19 pandemic has also had a significant impact on customer contact preferences, increasing the rate of adoption of digital technologies, which have been sustained and are projected to continue in the longer term. These factors alongside the closure of the Municipal Bank in 2022 have reduced the number of face-to-face enquiries significantly, with payment transactions no longer accounting for a large proportion of enquiries.
- 1.7 Given the reduction in demand and the changing nature of enquiries, a Short Life Working Group (SLWG) was established to carry out a review of the FSS service to explore ways to drive efficiency and ensure that the functions of the service continue to align with changing customer needs and preferences, whilst aligning with the overarching objectives and priorities for the council. The working group members comprised both FSS and housing employees.
- 1.8 Analysis of customer demand, operating procedures and current delivery model was undertaken as part of the service review and work of the SLWG. This analysis showed a sharp decline in the number of FSS enquiries across all offices, with an average reduction in enquiries across all offices of 86.1% over the past four years. For Cumbernauld the reduction is as follows.

**Table 1: Cumbernauld First Stop Shop Service Enquiries 2019/20 – 2023/24**

<i>FSS Office</i>	<i>FSS All Service Enquiries 2019/20</i>	<i>FSS All Service Enquiries 2023/24</i>	<i>% Reduction in Enquiries</i>
Cumbernauld	22,068	4,376	80.2

- 1.9 A significant shift in the nature of enquiries is also evident from analysis of payment transactions, with a reduction of 54% in the number of payment transactions and 51% in the transactional amount processed over the 2019/20 - 2023/24 period. For Cumbernauld the reduction is as follows.

**Table 2: Cumbernauld First Stop Shop Service Payment Transactions 2019/20 – 2023/24**

<i>Office</i>	<i>2019/20 Number of Payment Transactions</i>	<i>2019/20 Amount £</i>	<i>2023/24 Number of Payment Transactions</i>	<i>2023/24 Amount £</i>	<i>% Reduction in number of Transactions</i>
Cumbernauld	18,026	1,772,510	5,765	770,243	68

## **2. Report**

- 2.1 As part of the Council's Asset Rationalisation and One Service model a decision was taken to close a number of Council buildings including Fleming House. The Cumbernauld First Stop Shop and Housing office was located on the ground floor of the building and for the last 18 months has been the only part of the building in operation.
- 2.2 As Fleming House is due for demolition, alternative premises were being sought, however no premises became available that could fully accommodate the current service needs. Various properties were looked at however it was necessary to move the First Stop Shop and Housing Office to Bron Way on a semi-permanent basis and at the same time alternative accommodation was being searched for.
- 2.3 The Council owned premises were not fully suitable as the facilities could not be designed or modified within the timescale to meet the specification required for security purposes for the collection of cash handling. The First Stop Shop relocation to Bron Way therefore resulted in a Test of Change pilot adopted for a cashless financial transaction approach.
- 2.4 Officers continue to review properties that are available that could meet the service needs however there are no current properties available that meet the current requirements.
- 2.5 The cost to modify Bron Way is estimated to be in excess of £105,000.00. There is no allocated provision within the Council's capital programmes for these works in the 2024/25 financial year. In the event that the works would be required, the service would liaise with the Council's Strategic Capital Delivery Group to identify an appropriate funding source.
- 2.6 The consultation into the proposals contained within the First Stop Shop Review and Redesign report dated 28<sup>th</sup> August will officially launch at the Annual Tenant and Resident Conference to be held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at the Riverbank Community Hub in Coatbridge.

## **3. Measures of success**

- 3.1 Continuation of tenant and resident satisfaction levels with the overall service and quality of service being delivered.

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## **4. Supporting documentation**

There are no supporting documents with this report.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'S. Lewellyn', is positioned above the typed name.

**Stephen Lewellyn**  
**Chief Officer (Housing)**

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## 5. Impacts

<p><b>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? <a href="https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments">https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5.2 Financial impact</b> Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.3 HR policy impact</b> Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.4 Legal impact</b> Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p><b>5.5 Data protection impact</b> Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to <a href="mailto:dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk">dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk</a> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p><b>5.6 Technology / Digital impact</b> Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes  No

**5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact**

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

**5.8 Communications impact**

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

**5.9 Risk impact**

Is there a risk impact?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

**5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty**

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

**5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact**

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

Yes  No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes  No