



POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 21ST APRIL 2009

SUBJECT: HOME OFFICE & PASSPORT SERVICE – FRONT OFFICE

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Scrutiny of a request made by the WLGA seeking partners for the delivery of front office services within local authorities.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 This report links to the council's stated objective of improving services and access to services to its citizens.

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 As part of the implementation of the National Identity Scheme the Home Office Identity and Passport Service (IPS) is now seeking partners for the delivery of front office services and has issued a prospectus to determine the level of interest across all sectors.
- 3.2 The front office services involved in the application and delivery of a new passport or identity card are described as follows:-
- Assisted Application – helping the customer to apply for an identity product in person.
 - Biometric Recording – recording the customer's facial image, fingerprints and signature.
 - Document Collection – an optional service for a customer to collect their identity documents, as an alternative to secure postal delivery.
 - Viewing Information – the facility for customers to check their personal information.
 - Maintenance of Information – a facility for customers to update their information, such as change of address.
- 3.3 The IPS is specifically interested in delivering all or some of these services through existing or planned local government front offices or Registration service establishments.
- 3.4 The potential benefits to local authorities, as identified in the prospectus are:-
- A new revenue stream
 - Increased footfall
 - Access to new customers
 - Association with a respected and trusted brand
 - Goodwill generated by providing a valuable public service

- 3.5 Both the Registrar and Customer First services have expressed an interest in this scheme.
- 3.6 Any participation in the IPS scheme should be a matter for each local authority to determine their potential participation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is a potential, and currently not quantified increase, in revenue.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Demand on resources is unknown at this time but given the budget challenges facing the council every effort will be made to provide a service utilising existing staff. Further discussions will need to be had to ensure we balance the desire to utilise existing staff with the increased demands that could potentially be placed on them.

6. CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 All comments from consultation have been incorporated into this report.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Scrutiny are asked to consider whether or not they would support participation in the delivery of these services.

8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 As discussed in paragraph 4.4.

9. STATUTORY POWER

- 9.1 Local Government Act 2000.

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Appendix:

A copy of the prospectus referred to in this report is available on request from Head of Performance & Policy