

Appendix 2 –

Customer consultation feedback and resulting recommendations

We consulted with our customers between 12 September 2016 and 7 October 2016 during which a total of 276 replies were received. This represents 8.1% of the customers seen at these sites over the period of consultation. A further 35 people accessed the online survey but left no opinion.

Customers were provided with information explaining why changes to opening times were felt necessary and a set of frequently asked questions covering the main issues we expected this would raise. Paper consultation forms were provided at each affected Customer Service Point and opinion was also sought via the online portal with appropriate publicity articles including via social media. Town Councils were invited to participate as were welfare reform partner organisations such as Housing Associations and voluntary sector organisations.

Because face to face Customer Services staff frequently help those with more complex needs, staff were instructed to actively engage with all customers using the service during the consultation period. The information provided by the customer survey and FAQ's was used to inform of the proposals.

The results of the consultation is provided below on an office by office basis.

Bridgnorth Customer Service Point

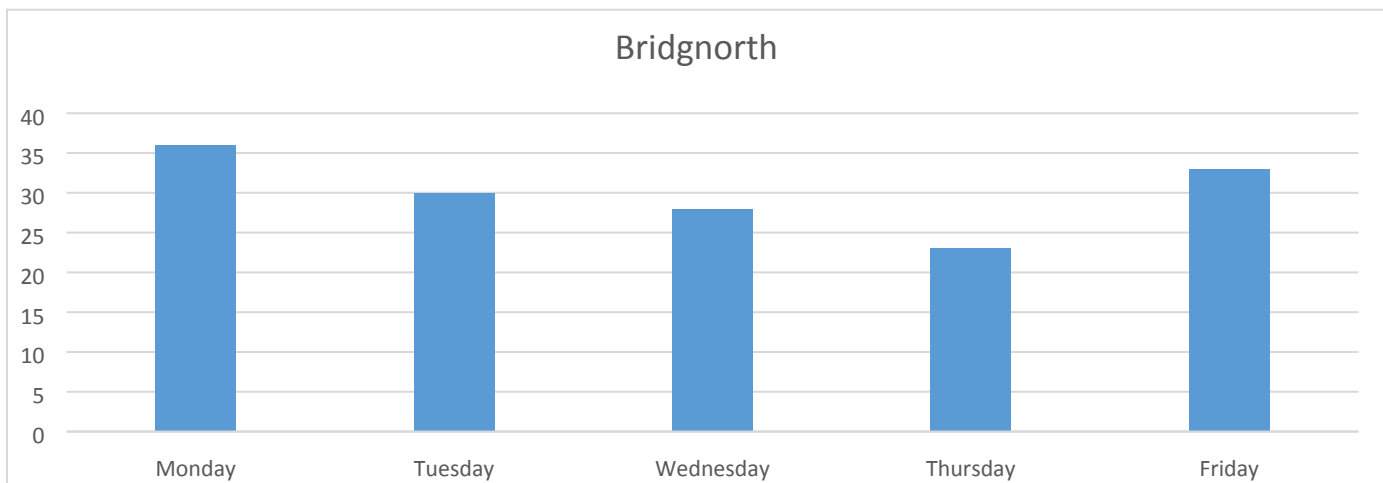
Customers primarily use Bridgnorth office for Benefits and money issues, handing in required documents, parking, revenues, ST&R Housing and reporting issues to services. Current concessionary travel renewals are expected to significantly reduce. Over the last 5 years footfall at Bridgnorth Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of August	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Customer numbers	1762	1301	818	571	785

This represents a 55% drop in customers using the office.

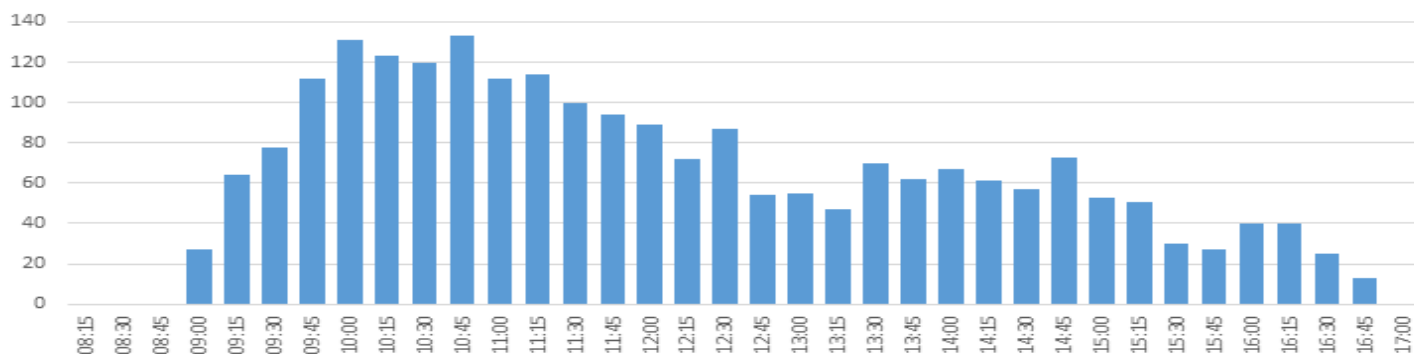
The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below (both measures taken over the first 3 months of 2016).

Busiest days



Busiest times

Bridgnorth



The following opening hours were suggested in public consultation documents. **This suggestion takes account of the busiest periods, the attendance of other partner provider services and the need to provide access to crisis provision for customers in need.**

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Tues	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Wed	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Thurs	9.00-5.00	9.30 – 4.30
Fri	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 3.30
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	40	30

Note that there is a proposal for Bridgnorth library to close on Thursdays however this has not been implemented pending the outcome of this Customer Service consultation.

Public consultation replies:

There were 137 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening out of 749 customers who used the customer service point during the consultation period, a response rate of 18%.

23 said that they agreed with the proposals whilst 114 said they did not agree.

A further 8 customers accessed the online survey but left no opinion.

Comments made by customers are mainly clustered around the following issues:

- Opening times need to accommodate those who are working and bringing in information or making payment to ST&R Housing.
- This is perceived as an erosion of local services.
- Helpful staff have specialist and wide knowledge and people fear losing this

Recommendation to Cabinet

Although the majority of customers did not engage in the consultation and made no comment, those who did reply were particularly concerned over being able to access services around work times, there is sufficient evidence therefore to keep one later opening day pending the development of an IT solution to address this need. The recommendation to Cabinet is therefore revised opening times as below. Thursday closure is not recommended due to partner commitments.

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	9.00-5.00	09.30 – 5.00
Tues	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Wed	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Thurs	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Fri	9.00-5.00	09.30 – 5.00
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	40	33

Ludlow Customer Service Point

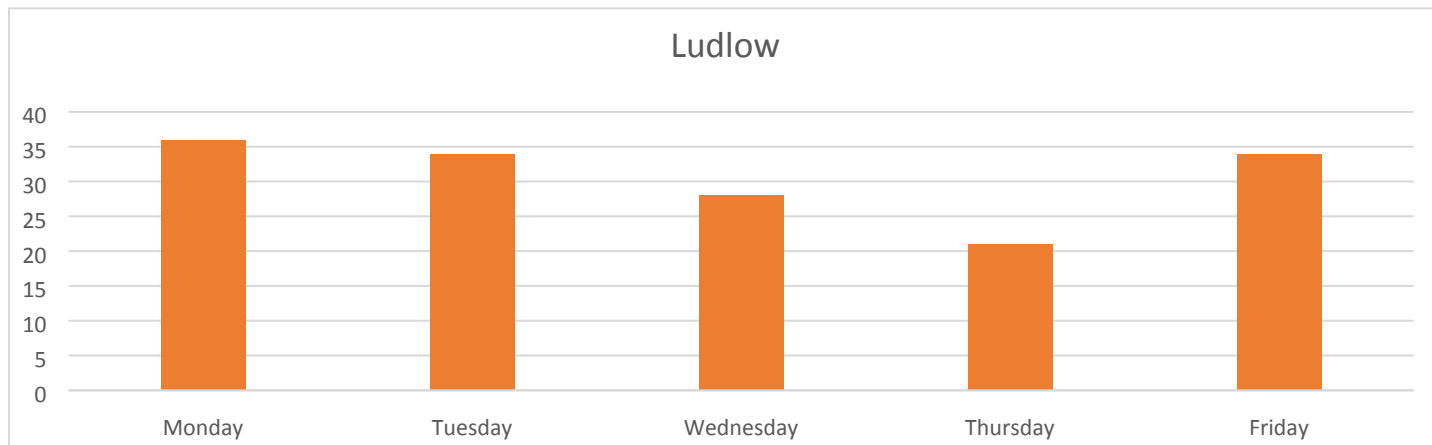
Customers primarily use Ludlow office for Benefits and money issues, handing in required documents, revenues, parking payments and reporting issues to services. Current concessionary travel renewals are expected to significantly reduce. Over the last 5 years footfall at Ludlow Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of August	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Customer Numbers	1603	1390	1413	630	766

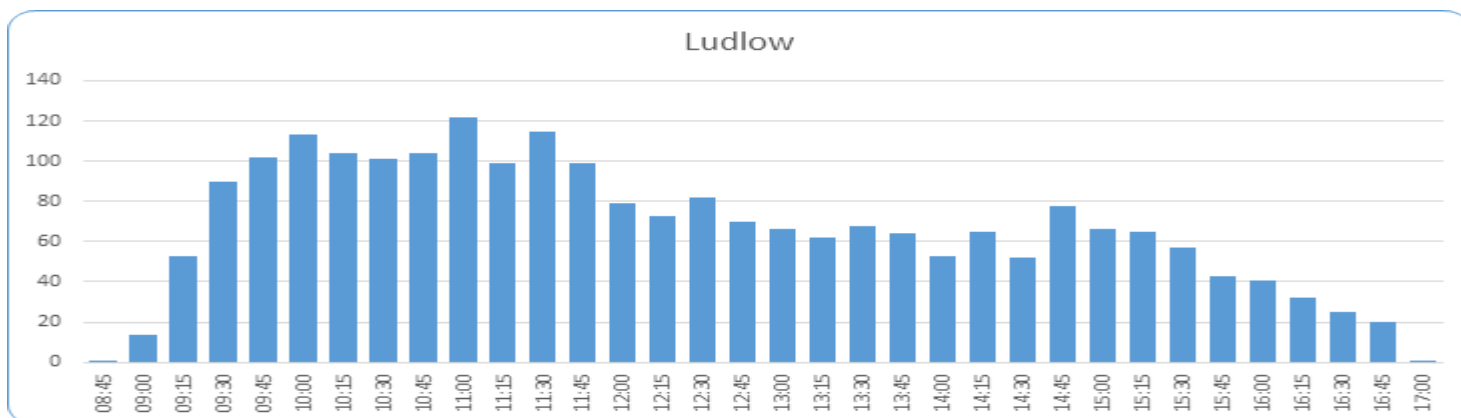
This represents a 52% drop in customers using the office.

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below (both measures taken from the first 3 months of 2016).

Busiest days



Busiest times



The following opening hours were suggested in public consultation documents. **This suggestion takes account of the busiest periods, the attendance of other partner provider services and the need to provide access to crisis provision for customers in need.**

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Tues	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Wed	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 4.00
Thurs	9.00-5.00	9.30 – 4.00
Fri	9.00-5.00	10.00 – 3.30
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	40	30

Public consultation replies:

There were 52 replies from customers (this includes Ludlow Town Council’s reply) regarding the proposals for revised opening out of 653 who would have used the service during the consultation period. A response rate of 8%.

15 said that they agreed with the proposals whilst 37 said they did not agree.

A further 10 people accessed the online survey but left no opinion.

Ludlow customers were forthright in their views and expressed concerns mainly clustered around the following issues:

- Perceived loss of service or lessening of service.
- The need to cater for those in work.
- The value they placed on the knowledge, skills and approachability of customer services staff.

Recommendation to Cabinet

The response rate from customers was low but emerging trends in the replies were around keeping a service for working people and maintaining services. By observing the library closing day on a Thursday which already has the lowest customer numbers, earlier and later opening times can be retained on the remaining days of the week. Thursday closure would have minimal impact on other services and delivery partners. It is likely that an IT solution will be developed which will cater for working customers.

The recommendation to Cabinet is therefore revised opening times as detailed below.

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	9.00-5.00	09.30 – 5.00
Tues	9.00-5.00	09.30 – 5.00
Wed	9.00-5.00	09.30 – 5.00
Thurs	9.00-5.00	Closed
Fri	9.00-5.00	09.30 – 5.00
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	40	30

Oswestry Customer Service Point

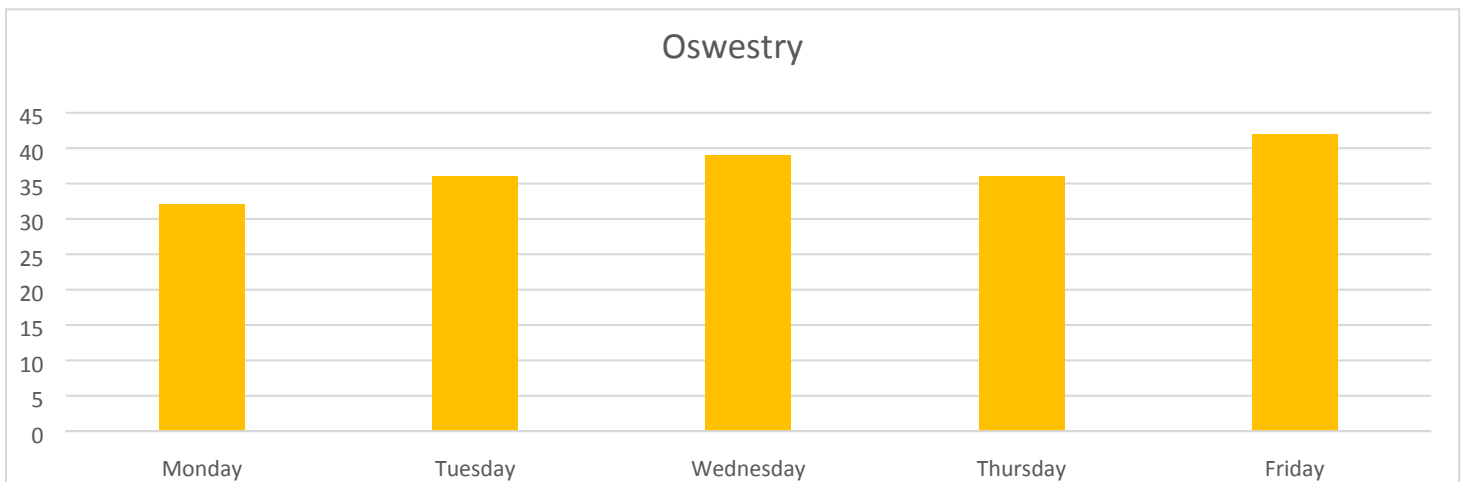
Customers primarily use Oswestry office for benefits and money issues, handing in required documents, revenues, ST&R housing, and reporting issues to services. Current concessionary travel renewals are expected to significantly reduce. Over the last 5 years footfall at Oswestry Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of August	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Customer numbers	2662	1314	1276	847	812

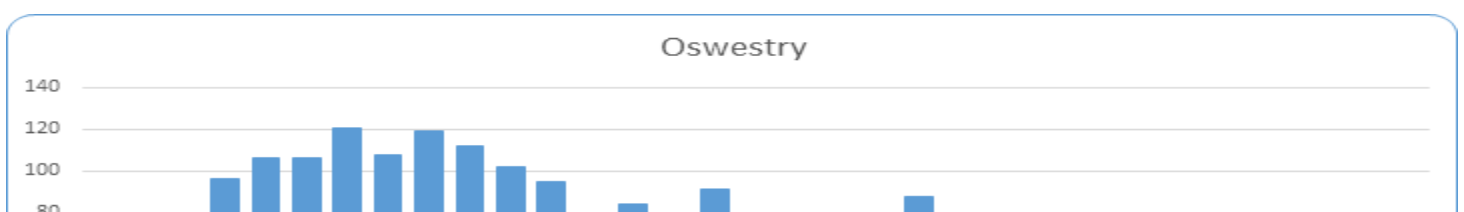
This represents a 70% drop in customers using the office.

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below (both measures taken from the first 3 months of 2016).

Busiest days



Busiest times



The following opening hours were suggested in public consultation documents. **This suggestion takes account of the busiest periods, the attendance of other partner provider services and the need to provide access to crisis provision for customers in need.**

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	9.00-5.00	9.30 – 4.30
Tues	9.00-5.00	9.30 – 4.30
Wed	9.00-5.00	9.30 – 4.30
Thurs	9.00-5.00	9.30 – 4.30
Fri	9.00-5.00	9.30 – 4.30
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	40	35

Public consultation replies:

There were 15 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening out of 684 customers who would have used the customer service point during the period of consultation, a response rate of 2.2%.

5 said that they agreed with the proposals whilst 10 said they did not agree.

A further 3 people accessed the online survey but left no opinion.

Customer comments were made around:

- a perceived erosion of services
- early opening times are better suited to older people
- one customer commented that new arrangements do not meet the needs of working people

Recommendation to Cabinet

Statistically this was a very low return from customers most of whom although approached by staff gave no opinion on the changes.

Given this very low return the recommendation to cabinet is to adopt the changes recommended in the consultation.

Market Drayton Customer Service Point

Customers primarily use Market Drayton office for benefits issues, handing in required documents and reporting issues to services. Current concessionary travel renewals are expected to significantly

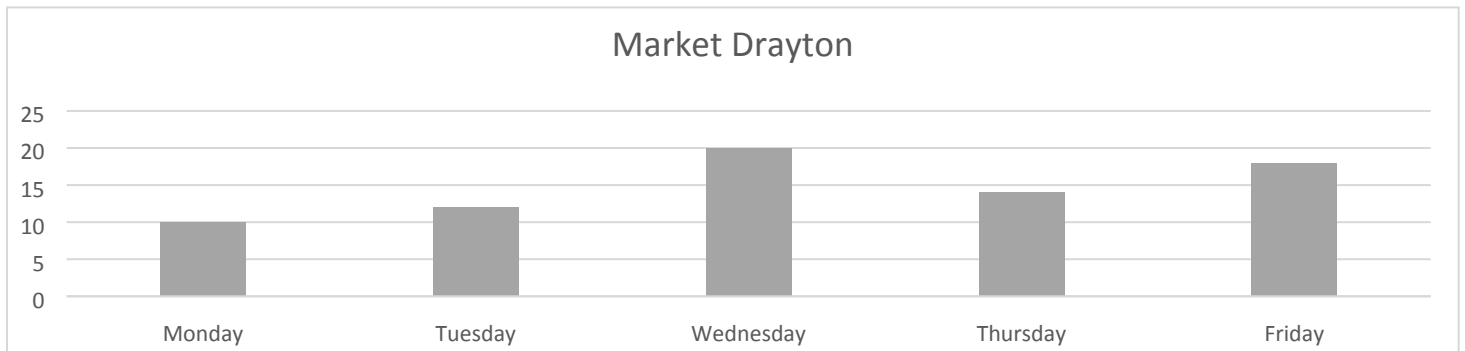
reduce. Over the last 5 years footfall at Market Drayton Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of August	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Customer numbers	1002	812	534	346	354

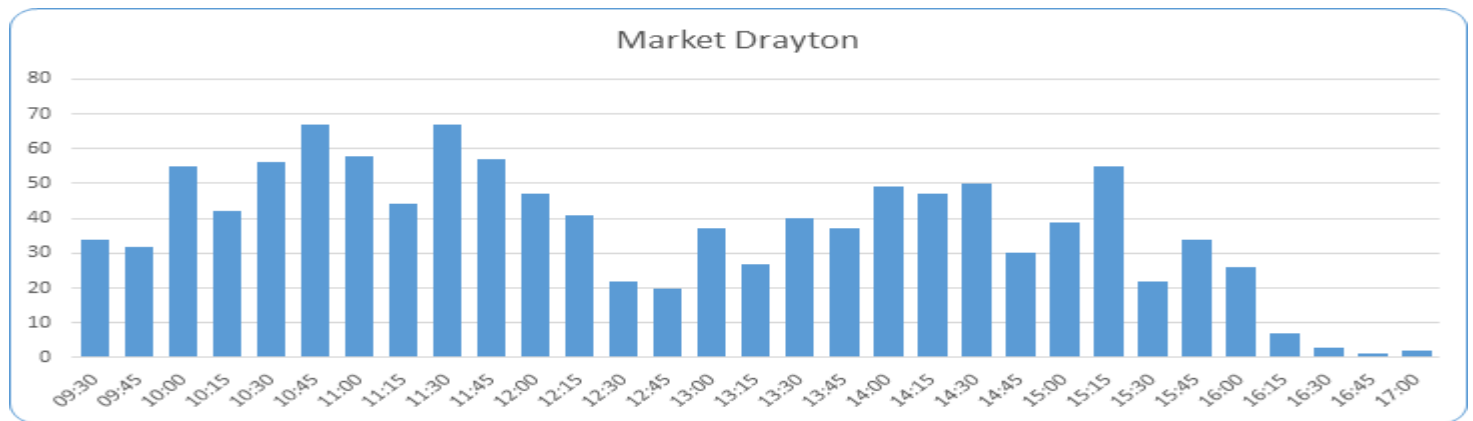
This represents a 65% drop in customers using the office.

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below (both measures taken from the first 3 months of 2016).

Busiest days



Busiest times



The following opening hours were suggested in public consultation documents. **This suggestion takes account of the busiest periods, the attendance of other partner provider services and the need to provide access to crisis provision for customers in need.**

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	9.30-4.00	10.30 – 3.30
Tues	9.30-4.00	10.00 – 4.00

Wed	9.30-4.00	10.00 – 3.30
Thurs	9.30-4.00	10.30 – 3.30
Fri	9.30-4.00	10.30 – 3.00
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	32.5	26.00

Public consultation replies:

There were 26 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening out of 369 who used the customer service point during the period of consultation, a response rate of 7%.

6 said that they agreed with the proposals whilst 20 said they did not agree.

A further person accessed the online survey but left no opinion.

Customer comments were made around:

- a need for consistent hours for simplicity
- opening hours need to suit those in work
- perceived loss of a valued service that worked above other methods

Recommendation to Cabinet

There are issues around lone working and staff safety in the current office location which might be addressed as the future for delivery of local services develops.

The comments over consistency of hours make a valid point and the recommendation to Cabinet therefore is that the hours recommended in the consultation are amended to those shown below.

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	9.30-4.00	10.00 – 3.00
Tues	9.30-4.00	10.00 – 3.00
Wed	9.30-4.00	10.00 – 4.00
Thurs	9.30-4.00	10.00 – 4.00
Fri	9.30-4.00	10.00 – 4.00
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	32.5	28.00

Shrewsbury Customer Service Point

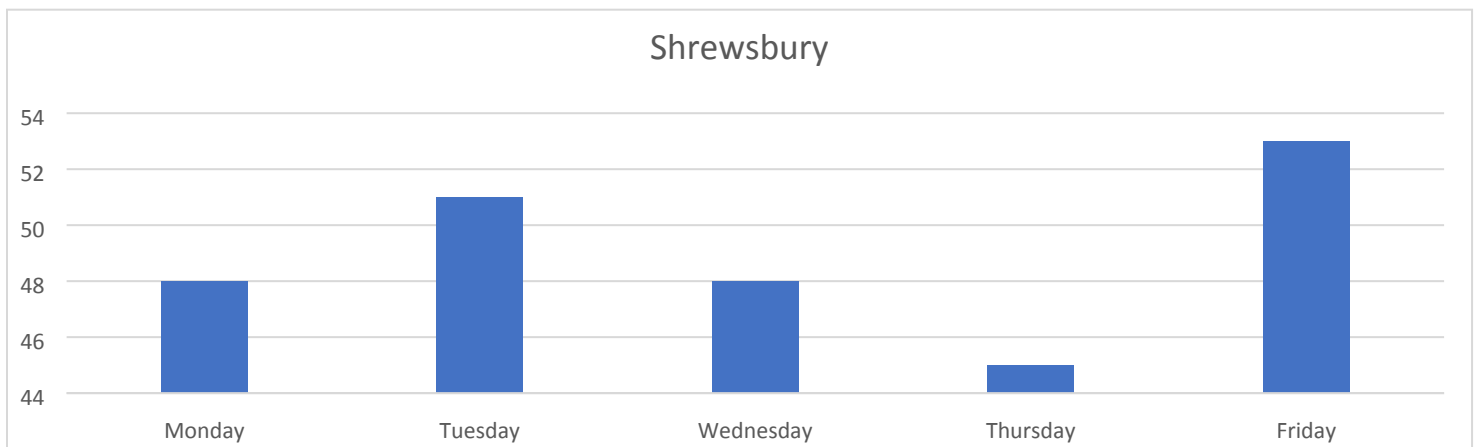
Customers primarily use Shrewsbury office for benefits and money issues, handing in required documents, revenues and reporting issues to services. Current concessionary travel renewals are expected to significantly reduce. Over the last 5 years footfall at Shrewsbury Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of August	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Customer numbers	2365	1029	1101	675	932

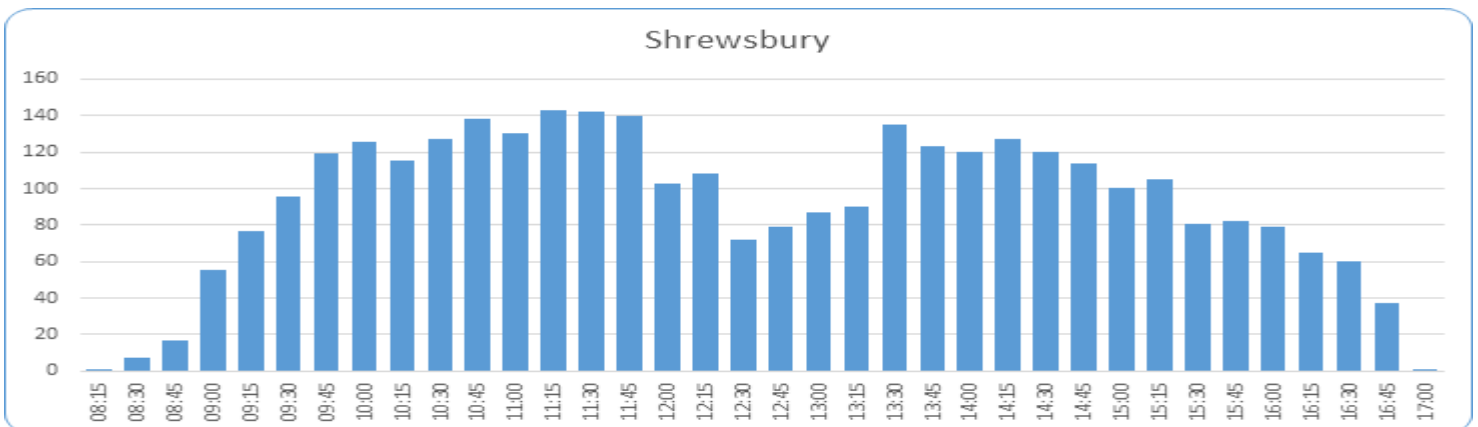
This represents a 61% drop in customers using the office.

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below (both measures taken from the first 3 months of 2016).

Busiest days



Busiest times



The following opening hours were suggested in public consultation documents. **This suggestion takes account of the busiest periods, the attendance of other partner provider services and the need to provide access to crisis provision for customers in need.**

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	8.30-5.00	9.00 - 5.00
Tues	8.30-5.00	9.00 – 4.00
Wed	8.30-5.00	9.00 – 4.00
Thurs	8.30-5.00	9.00 – 4.00
Fri	8.30-5.00	9.00 – 5.00
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	42.5	37

Public consultation replies:

There were 33 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening times out of 1040 who would have used the customer service point during the period of consultation, a response rate of 3%.

9 said that they agreed with the proposals whilst 24 said they did not agree.

A further 7 people accessed the online survey but left no opinion.

Customer comments were made around:

- the need for a service that fitted with working or university hours
- the value placed on the knowledge and helpfulness of the staff
- perceived loss or lessening of service that worked above other contact methods

Recommendation to Cabinet

Although again the response rate was low the office is used by many customers bringing in requested information to fit around their work hours however the two longer days already incorporated within the proposal should make this possible. The reduction in hours is minimal given the reduction in customer numbers and at the same time will allow maximum efficiency in the use of our staff resource.

The recommendation to Cabinet is that the hours proposed in the consultation are implemented.

Whitchurch Customer Service Point

At the time of consultation Whitchurch Customer Service point was in a different position to other offices with an agreement in principle for Whitchurch Town Council to provide front of house services supported by input from Customer Service staff on two agreed days of the week, Thursdays and Fridays, a change from the normal 5 days per week.

Shropshire Council staff have been working towards this new arrangement but the service has not yet transferred and is part of ongoing discussions with Whitchurch Town Council.

The opportunity was taken to consult with the public on the changes to the service even though opening hours would remain the same.

Customers primarily use Whitchurch Civic Centre for visitor information (handled by Whitchurch Town Council staff) handing in paperwork and reporting issues to services. Current concessionary travel renewals are expected to significantly reduce. Over the last 5 years footfall at Whitchurch Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of August	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Customer numbers	359	346	353	279	176

This represents a 51% drop in customers using the office.

The following opening hours were suggested in public consultation documents. **This suggestion takes account of the busiest periods, the attendance of other partner provider services and the need to provide access to crisis provision for customers in need.**

Day	Current hours	Proposed hours
Mon	10.00-4.00	Same but provided by Whitchurch Town
Tues	10.00-4.00	Same but provided by Whitchurch Town Council
Wed	10.00-4.00	Same but provided by Whitchurch Town Council
Thurs	10.00-4.00	10.00 – 4.00
Fri	10.00-4.00	10.00 – 4.00
Sat	10.00-1.00* *Service provided by Whitchurch Town council	Same – run by Whitchurch Town Council
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	33	33

Public consultation replies:

There were 13 responses from customers regarding proposals for the change in the service out of 230 that would have used the customer service point during the period, a return of 5.6%.

All respondents disagreed with the proposal.

A further 6 people accessed the online survey but left no opinion.

Customer comments were made around:

- perceived loss or lessening of service that worked above other contact methods
- the value placed on the knowledge and helpfulness of the staff

Recommendation to Cabinet

The response rate was again very low with the majority of customers approached opting to make no comment on the proposal.

Customer numbers at this site are low by comparison and there is agreement in principle from Whitchurch Town Council Elected Members to jointly manage the service with further agreement on the busiest days for which Shropshire Council staff will support the Town Council staff.

The recommendation to Cabinet therefore is to agree the proposal for Whitchurch Customer Service Point as above.