

Appendix 6

Stamford Customer Service Consultation – July 2020

Free text comments/queries received in response to Q7, Q8 and Q12

Q7. Please use the space below to tell us why you have chosen to respond in this way (to explain their position on the proposal)	Q8. The council wants to understand and be aware of any impacts closing the office in Stamford may have on you. Please use the space below to tell us about them.	Q12.If you have any questions or would like to comment on anything included in this survey, please use the space below:
<p>It is crucial that those people who do not have online access are able to visit the office in Stamford</p>	<p>Reliance on family to help</p>	<p>It seems somewhat underhand to be having a second survey on this same topic under the guise of Covid-19, given that the council office has had a protective screen in front of the staff for many years.</p>
<p>People want to be able to go somewhere where they can talk to someone and have everyone all in one place.</p>	<p>1. I do not feel confident in using a self- service kiosk. 2. There is no direct public transport between Stamford and Grantham if I have to travel there to see anyone and I do not drive.</p>	<p>Please would you inform me of the exact date in September when the decision will be taken? I work on a local newspaper that goes to 650 households and will provide notification of any changes in the next available issue after the decision is taken. Depending on the timing I will know in which issue to allocate space.</p>
<p>1. I do not own a computer and am relying on my son to complete this survey for me, so I am unable to use remote appointments. 2. I find using the office very convenient and the staff very helpful there and value face to face service.</p>	<p>No issue</p>	<p>Why not site access point in Citizens Advice nearby</p>
<p>It saves an office that is obviously being underused from being open and still provides a resource for residents</p>	<p>Art centre is further to walk for those who have mobility issues. The current office is central to the town</p>	<p>This is patently a cost cutting measure rustled in under the false guise of Covid-19. I wish we were part of Rutland once more, SKDC pay lip service to Stamford but don't understand the town at all. We actually have a community here, and the SKDC Office was an important part of it.</p>
<p>Speaking to someone is better than automated services at times</p>	<p>It won't have any impact on me.</p>	<p>Why does Stamford lose out no swimming pool no cinema and now council facilities</p>

<p>I was completely unaware that the Maiden Lane office existed. A presence in the Arts Centre would be more visible and could introduce more people to what the Centre has to offer.</p>	<p>Cannot collect parking permits/vouchers</p>	<p>i like the personnel service which if we don't say anything it will be lost</p>
<p>Art Centre is the wrong place to site this access point</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>A means of seeing all of what we have put in these Boxes would be helpful.</p>
<p>I managed to do it online but your website is out of date and needs to be made easier to use</p>	<p>Whenever I have had a query it is easily resolved in a conversation with the wonderful lady who worked in the Stamford Office. Problems with parking permits happened when dealing remotely and this was always sorted out by her. We need more human interaction, not less. It cannot be replicated by phones and Skype.</p>	<p>Please do not cut Stamford off. We are gradually losing our local facilities, the Saturday refuse collection in the cattle market has not returned yet and it is not possible (or environmentally friendly) for us to keep travelling to Bourne. I sincerely hope that the rubbish facility and our local office will return and that COVID 19 will not be seen as a convenient excuse to stop both these local services.</p>
<p>This totally removes face to face personal contact and is unacceptable.</p>	<p>As above. It's so much easier to have someone to talk to directly to help with queries. There are many people that cannot use technology for one reason or another (age, disability etc) which would cause undue stress/anxiety.</p>	<p>The closure of the museum. The proposed closure of council facilities. Doesn't exhibit much care for the cultural and social life of one of England's "finest stone towns", does it?</p>
<p>I normally find my answer on the website</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>I think it is important to have local services present in the town not remote.</p>
<p>Vulnerable people need direct access to services</p>	<p>Stamford increases in size but loose facilities to Grantham</p>	<p>Access to SKDC by phone is awful. The waiting time long with constant waiting for departments. Please reconsider these plans. We have less and less places in Stamford for people to go for help and information.</p>
<p>Stamford arts centre is busy enough. Without having to fight to get in to sort council related reasons. Also. It's much better for someone to be around to offer help support and advice. Some people are not good with</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Why should Stamford lose the office when we have an extremely poor public transfer network that would make it extremely hard to get to another office in Grantham.</p>

technology and this may cause undue stress/anxiety		
This is an ideal location in town, staff always so helpful and I hate having to use the telephone which is why I prefer the office to speak to a person face to face	because in time there will be no interaction with customers and a proper person to hand	I have not contacted the council services through the pandemic as I did not require any information. I have used the Stamford council office to get questions answered if I have had an issue and the service has always been excellent. I do know that elderly neighbours use the service regularly and would not choose to use email or even the phone as they much prefer to speak to someone in person.
Stamford always loses out with any council facilities	For the older generation, of which we are one, sorting out problems face to face is much easier and less daunting than attempting to use technology.	Keep Stamford open, we have little other council services here
Most things can be completed online	See above, plus, like many people my age, I am not good with modern technology and it is too far to go to Grantham with every query.	This decision will come down to money no matter what I say.
Before too long we will no longer have any contact with people it will all be machinery doing the job of a person no contact with human beings	I will miss chatting to the people in the office.	Social distancing isn't going to go on forever so making long term policy decisions based on it is ludicrous. It is a crying shame that the Maiden Lane Office has closed, showing once again how little SKDC really values Stamford other than the cachet of Burghley and the Georgian town tourist attraction. In every respect, SKDC takes little notice of our town council who work extremely hard with little support from you and having one member of SKDC staff in a small office is a drop in the SKDC coffers.
The planned alternatives are not customer friendly to the vast majority of people who are retired and trying to retain their independence in this lovely town. The older	Closing the customer services centre will isolate me from easy access to vital information about my local services but, perhaps more importantly, it will devalue the	It's all about saving money and not providing the right service for the residents of Stamford why is it that you want to close it and make people travel to Grantham for appointments

<p>generation prefer to speak directly to a person. Problems may not get reported if there is no office available.</p>	<p>Town of Stamford - a town regularly voted one of the best towns in England to live in, a fantastic resource to the county and historic jewel. Over recent years we have lost the Museum, the Arts Centre has been devalued and the roads and cobbled pedestrian precinct are in constant disrepair - all this lack of care I, frankly, find depressing and shameful.</p>	
<p>We have always been able to speak to someone in person at the Stamford office and they have always been most helpful. A phone line would be quite inadequate as it is always difficult to get through to Skdc and each time I have rung recently, having finally got through to the right department I have been informed that " I am not at my desk so please leave a message". Please let us have our office back.</p>	<p>We always use the office to deal with council matters and see no reason for us to have a lesser service than Bourne or Grantham.</p>	<p>Questions are put so council get the answers it wants not what the residents want</p>
<p>I have had to learn to do things online so this change is probably what every business will start to do going forward.</p>	<p>It will not personally have an impact on me. My concern is with other members of our expanding community</p>	<p>Please bring back the bin lorry on Saturday mornings !!!</p>
<p>I want to deal with a designated office and officers where I can have eye to eye contact, a friendly welcome in a space and with individuals I can get to know , understand and trust. Computers, internet, part-time spaces and people are not, cannot and should not replace a proper one to one, friendly, welcoming service.</p>	<p>The impact is all part of the erosion of human contact, to the detriment of the town. You should be ashamed to be even considering this paltry saving. Think beyond the money and look to serving the community properly.</p>	<p>Why has the council not considered a facility similar to Bourne Community Point and Library for Stamford and the Deepings? This is not obvious in the survey statement or questions.</p>
<p>There is no adequate replacement for a person in a service and information role. The satisfaction and understanding that you get from a personal encounter cannot be replicated by the</p>	<p>The phone line is complicated and slow</p>	

<p>impersonal means of the telephone let alone a computer. Council services are paid for by everybody and not everyone either has a computer, is computer literate, can hear clearly by phone or afford travel costs to get a service or an answer to a question. Is the council interested only in servicing the young, able and computer literate? If not, then the personal service is necessary.</p>		
<p>The proposal caters for most people although it is important to offer face to face appointments for those that are vulnerable or have additional needs</p>	<p>I use it to on an 'ad hoc' basis to purchase parking permits and obtain household bags, I see it as a useful service to a key town in the area.</p>	
<p>It is vital to provide a local personal service for the community particularly for the vulnerable and more elderly. Skype and Teams are not an adequate replacement. Our town is growing and so will the need for personal connect and quality service provision.</p>	<p>Many people do not have internet access. In doing this you will be disregarding the elderly and disadvantaged members of this town .</p>	
<p>Stamford has many people who, for various reasons, age, mobility and so on, prefer to talk to a real person and not a machine. It is part of the unique character of the town that we do have helpful and friendly people who talk and explain to us directly. This cannot be replaced by a machine and the value of this cannot be simply expressed in £sd. A busy and thriving community is strengthened by the presence of the Maiden Lane office.</p>	<p>Extra journey time. Trying to cope with a machine. Bus fare to Grantham or Bourne</p>	
<p>Because face to face is more satisfactory and I see no reason why Stamford should be singled out for this closure our rates are expensive</p>	<p>I would urge you to liaise with Citizen's advice, whose lease is coming up for renewal on St Pauls Street, to consider using this as a joins space. More and more, older and less-</p>	

	<p>advantaged people are becoming isolated and this would be an ideal opportunity for SKDC to turn back the tide of the digital effects on communities and bring a positive and accessible space back to life.</p>	
<p>Stamford population is growing, more housing and as such a full range of customer focused services are required. Also, there is a section of the population who need that face to face service such as residents who do not have PCs etc.</p>	<p>Inconvenience and lack of expert face to face knowledge that would no longer be available to the people of Stamford.</p>	
<p>such a backwards step. There are many elderly and disabled people who will find his very difficult</p>	<p>This proposal discriminates against anyone (including the elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community) who is not comfortable with or able to use digital/telephone technology, and/or has no/limited access to transport (or unable to afford transport) to travel to another office. It also negatively impacts people who want to deal with a person face to face, and with the growing epidemic of loneliness and disconnection in society, this is another example of a personal connection being lost. In fact, unless you have launched this survey using other formats, e.g. paper, then you are going to get responses from people who can use and have access to, a computer and the internet.</p>	
<p>Stamford has many old people who want and often need REAL face to face contact where they can feel at ease and not get confused by a machine. Also it is faceless and your only possible reason is as a cost cutting exercise. Those</p>	<p>When phoning offices at Grantham I often feel "distanced" and like the staff are unfamiliar with Stamford. Losing that local knowledge and contact with local citizens (particularly those disadvantaged) feels like a</p>	

<p>of us who are disabled need a person too who understands. Machines don't</p>	<p>step backwards and a risk to our local population</p>	
<p>The demographics of Stamford show an older resident and having an actual site serves two purposes. It makes it much easier for those without IT facilities, or those with mobility issues, to access council services. Secondly, it offers a community space where people, some of who will not have much personal contact in any event, can speak to somebody face to face. This is invaluable.</p>	<p>I am a person who believes it is vital to deal with other people face to face, and who feels compromised by and extremely uncomfortable with mechanical interface. It should be part of the council's role to bring people together, rather than alienate and marginalise them.</p>	
<p>The proposal assumes that everyone has access to a computer, which is not the case</p>	<p>A self-service machine is not the answer to dealing with people's enquiries and many people will not have access to computers. One thing that we have learned through the recent pandemic is the need to ensure we can support our communities and offering a face to face service for vulnerable and elderly people is essential. Why is the decision to close Stamford and not Bourne or Grantham? Why is an office justified there but not in our town? Stamford generates a lot of income for SKDC so please ensure the community continues to receive the support it needs from the council by leaving the Stamford council office open.</p>	
<p>I live in centre of town and want to have the convenience of the council office in centre of town and having face to face contact with any query I might have.</p>	<p>The elderly and vulnerable are more likely to have difficulty dealing with the council by telephone or through the internet. By planning to close the office in Maiden Lane, the council is ignoring their needs. The council should reconsider and find a way of keeping the office open, if only for a couple of days each week, perhaps by sharing the premises with an</p>	

	<p>organisation such as Citizens Advice. After all, the elderly and vulnerable have the same rights as any other council taxpayer, yet arguably a greater need.</p>	
<p>This proposal discriminates against anyone (including the elderly, disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community) who is not comfortable with or able to use digital/telephone technology, and/or has no/limited access to transport (or unable to afford transport) to travel to another office. It also negatively impacts people who want to deal with a person face to face, and with the growing epidemic of loneliness and disconnection in society, this is another example of a personal connection being lost. In fact, unless you have launched this survey using other formats, e.g. paper, then you are going to get responses from people who can use and have access to, a computer and the internet.</p>	<p>Personally, relocating the service provision will not affect me in any way but I would not want to see removed completely</p>	
<p>This is not an inclusive policy. The section of the population without access to the appropriate technologies and skills are excluded.</p>	<p>Not so much to me personally but Stamford has a very high population of over 70s who will not be able to use or understand stand the new proposals</p>	
<p>Convenience.</p>	<p>This is likely to result in a reduced quality and availability of service.</p>	
<p>Stamford is a main hub within SKDC and has a lot of disadvantaged and immobile residents that need local access to services/staff</p>	<p>I will be very disappointed to have to travel to Grantham or even access a machine in the Arts Centre. Vulnerable & elderly people of Stamford will be confused & upset. STAMFORD NEEDS THE CUSTOMER CARE OFFICE TO REMAIN OPEN FOR ALL TO ACCESS.</p>	

<p>SKDC is about people – the people who work for the council, and the people it serves. Stamford is a major town that is fast expanding in the region administered by SKDC, and as such, SKDC needs an appropriately substantial HUMAN presence in that town. Machines will never be a satisfactory replacement for the valuable interface between people. The Maiden Lane office is an extremely valuable asset to the town. It is the only point of contact between SKDC and the public, and the quality of this contact will be severely diminished by closure of the office and installation of machines. There are many old and disadvantaged people who cannot or will not use digital/mechanical interfaces. For these people, face to face contact is vital and withdrawing this valuable resource (the SKDC office and staff) will compromise and marginalise them further. This has become particularly evident during the Covid-19 pandemic, when we have seen just how important physical human interaction is in maintaining the mental and emotional health of communities. Furthermore, why is Stamford’s office being closed, when Grantham and Bourne’s offices are being kept open? The savings being made are a false economy at Stamford’s expense and will be to the town’s detriment. By closing the office SKDC will be compromising their duty of public service.</p>	<p>People are more likely to use the service if they have the option of a human in person contact and will feel more satisfied with the result.</p>	
<p>I believe this service is vital for the locals’ community. There</p>	<p>Will affect my family as daughter lives in council</p>	

<p>are elderly and vulnerable people whose only access to council services and advice is through this office. Stamford is a growing town with more and more housing developments and an increasing population. We need the physical presence of a council service evident for our people.</p>	<p>accommodation and has a fear of technology</p>	
<p>As a long standing adviser with Citizens Advice; every week I saw clients who had found it impossible to access the help and support they need over the telephone or through the internet, and so come to Citizens Advice for a face-to-face consultation with an adviser. A self-service kiosk that can accept payments together with a PC with access to the internet plus a dedicated phone line to SKDC will not help elderly and vulnerable residents who struggle with computers or find it difficult to explain themselves over the telephone.</p>	<p>I struggle with phone anxiety (as I know many people do)... I would be less likely to call the phone lines for help and could possibly go without the service for a long time</p>	
<p>I believe it is important to the people of Stamford to always retain a presence within the town this in itself stops people feeling isolated and ignored also whilst I am perfectly fit and able many are not and I'm sure they appreciate contact as required.</p>	<p>my parents have used the office in Stamford for years they use it to pay rent and it's the only way they know how to do it without asking anyone for help with the process of paying it. I.e. they are not good at using computers or working the telephone</p>	
<p>Lot of elderly people will have no access to computers etc and will be totally confused with new proposals!</p>	<p>Excellent staff in current premises, face to face contact essential, no queues or "on hold" or being transferred between departments. Unable to travel to Grantham for same service.</p>	
<p>Face to face contact is important for a number of reasons.</p>	<p>I do drop in occasionally but will have to use internet</p>	
<p>It may work, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.</p>	<p>What happens when there is no seasonal face to face</p>	

	person there, can't drive to Grantham, can't use phone	
Stamford office is vital to everybody in Stamford. We all have to go in at some point, whether to make a payment, produce evidence or merely to talk to face to face about a personal or council matter.	The impact will be great for our elderly population	
I think you need to provide a human face at The Arts Centre to reduce frustration and make it more personal. Some people find it hard to express themselves fully on the phone.	I no longer reside in Stamford , although I spent a good chunk of life in the town.	
A substantial amount of people still need face to face contact. Not myself, but the elderly, vulnerable etc. What about The Volunteer Bureau sharing the space? Maybe in another generation it could be taken away, but not yet.	I don't drive nor do I particularly want to use public transport during the present situation. I am not a fan of self-service facilities.	
Face to face in Stamford office the personal touch is always the best	None, the relocation is very nearby	
Many people much prefer a face to face interaction. Elderly/vulnerable may not have access or knowledge on how to use the new systems. The current office is also accessible to everyone. The arts centre is sometimes hard to navigate round and can be overwhelming (even as a young confident person, I personally don't like going in there)	Older people who rely on council services will suffer once again	
Because the art centre is already full of other products/business and I feel it would not be appropriate for people to go there for their council things	Good idea	
Don't like using IT or phones, like to speak face to face with an actual person	Elder users are much less likely to engage with SKDC via the mechanisms suggested, thus depriving many of those to whom council services are essential.	

Elderly people prefer to have face to face contact not everyone is computer savvy and would struggle with remote contact	Dealing with the same person in the Maiden Lane Office was great. She knew everyone and was brilliant at sorting out your enquiries.	
Stamford's older population will suffer	Those wishing to pay bills at your counter won't be able to.	
Elderly people like to visit the council offices	I don't think it is necessarily progress to replace people with equipment.	
Because services for Stamford are being taken away and no consideration for the people of the town that use it. Not everyone is a tech geek and you would be isolating mainly the elderly from accessing services	We need a face to face service for the elderly and vulnerable	
I'm deaf so can't use phone or video, can't use computer as lost functionality in hands	Online contact can take days to be responded to and the phones are neither user friendly or always answered quickly. Not everyone has access to a computer. A large percentage of people prefer the human interaction face to face, not over a computer screen. You are proposing to remove choice and are not providing similar offers at all of your market towns, again Stamford, the jewel in your crown, becomes the poor relation!	
I have a lot of friends that either don't have a computer or smart phone and also are not happy phoning	The town loses its identity very easily	
As I myself get older, I realise that keeping up with modern devices can be a challenge. For reasons of finance, as well as health, many vulnerable people would not be able to access the services without a physical point of contact.	As above	
There is nothing as effective as real human contact especially when things are not straightforward, and sometimes they need dealing	Needed for those that cannot do the services online.	

with quickly. I already telephone Grantham if it is routine. I visit the office in Stamford for tricky things.		
I am concerned at the lack of locality which would follow its implementation.	No impact. Services are provided at Bourne.	
Some people do not have access to the internet	I would be less likely to use it when I desperately need to as I may be embarrassed	
Not everyone in Stamford wants to use self service facilities especially vulnerable or older people. The idea that in order to speak to someone directly you have to travel to Bourne or Grantham is impractical because not everyone drives and not everyone wants to travel there by public transport!	Not everyone has access to pcs internet and technology. Covid has also reminded us about the need to interact with people. Some Stamford people are very vulnerable when they are requiring help. It is critical that these people who probably can't see this survey are looked after properly	
Need to retain provision in Stamford	It severely impacts on those without transport.	
This sounds similar to the service already provided so I am not clear what has changed for me personally.	Will taxi drivers have the same service provision at Stamford Arts Centre	
I feel that whatever is said will not be taken any notice of.	None	
Erosion of face to face services such as these are the thin end of the wedge of austerity. People deserve the same level of service in Stamford as they receive in Grantham.	Obtaining visitor parking permits and advice	
Great idea	I'm lucky in the position where I drive and have access to use online services. As above this will affect the elderly and the vulnerable, those who are going to use these services the most.	
Because there's no point in me saying I disagree with your decision to close the office, therefore this is better than nothing	It is important for the council to have a face-to-face presence in the town	
Important to keep a face to face presence in Stamford as not everyone has internet access or can easily	It will cost me the price of a 2nd class stamp every month	

communicate on phone, particularly more elderly residents		
I have regularly used the Stamford centre have evidence scanned/ photocopied and sent up to the offices at Grantham.		
I have lived in Stamford all my life the council office is vital to me as I'm a taxi driver and do all my paperwork there also it is vital for the elderly who want to speak to a friendly helpful human Angela and Daniel are very good and very friendly be a shame for them to lose their jobs and for the residents of Stamford to lose a vital service		
You are assuming people want to contact you by phone or online yet again, you have not listened to what your customers want at all.		
Face to Face is better than trying to phone with lots of options and hanging on for hours to speak to a human		
Because it's total cr** for vulnerable and elderly.		
I think that Stamford needs face to face contact with local residents, taxi drivers from Peterborough, parking permits and visitor vouchers.		
What is the evidence that Stamford Arts Centre has the space to accommodate the extra facilities without compromising the existing space that is dedicated to current use. PC access requires some privacy. Is this not provided at Stamford Library?		
The arts centre is a busy area, I am unhappy at people being able to overhear any issues I have on my personal situation		
I think it important that Stamford people have face to		

face access to Council services in the town centre		
Many of the elderly struggle to access e mail and phone services		
Fulfils the needs of residents and reduces costs to SKDC		
Much better use of public funds		
Many residents rely on the excellent staff and personal contact		
Of course, people are going to contact customer services in a different way during a pandemic as we have been told to stay in. How can you say this is the new normal when we have only recently started to see lockdown lifted, this is far too early to make an informed decision? This is going to affect the elderly and vulnerable the most, some of who don't have or struggle to use technology and without good public transport links can't easily get to Bourne or Grantham.		
Arts Centre should just be for the arts		
SKDC changes are never for the better		