

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

COUNCIL – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

QUESTION A

Councillor Mrs Allanach to ask the Communities, Homes, Digital and Communications Portfolio Holder, Councillor Mrs Crane:

“On 12 July the Prime Minister announced that the harms caused by the pandemic had declined to the point where it was no longer necessary to maintain most of the legal sanctions against people meeting. Warwickshire County Council have found ways of allowing visitors to Shire Hall whilst meeting the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. What plans does the portfolio holder have to provide users of our “One Stop” service the option to discuss their issues with the Council face-to-face?”

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council (in the absence of Councillor Mrs Crane, Communities, Homes, Digital and Communications Portfolio Holder), to reply as follows:

“We currently operate an open-door policy and have done so since the government's announcement of removing the majority of restrictions.

In line with other Warwickshire local authorities, we have a phone line in the foyer providing direct access to our Customer Service team who will either contact the related Service Area or deal with the query themselves. If this requires a member of staff to deal with the person face to face, then they will also provide this service.

With the recent increase in cases in the Borough and in the interests of staff and customer safety, we have decided not to open the full reception service at this stage, and we continue to monitor the need for this service. We are constantly looking at more effective ways of working, one of which is improving the digital access channels available to the residents of the Borough to allow more efficient services for staff and residents and enabling access to services without having to travel to the Town Hall.

However, we are also extremely mindful of digital exclusion within the Borough and will continue to provide non digital services for those who need them whilst at the same time doing what we can to bridge the digital gap that exists.”