



Ryedale District Council

REPORT TO: Policy and Resources Committee

DATE: 6 December 2007

REPORTING OFFICERS: Corporate Director
Marie-Ann Jackson

SUBJECT: **POST OFFICE NETWORK CHANGE PROGRAMME - CONSULTATION**

WARDS AFFECTED: Ampleforth (Wass); Derwent (Huttons Ambo); Helmsley (Hawnby); Hovingham (Slingsby, Terrington); Norton (Norton); Rillington (West Heslerton); Sherburn (Sherburn); Sinnington (Nunnington); Thornton Dale (Allerston); Wolds (Foxholes, Weaverthorpe)

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise Members in regard to the Post Office Network Change Programme and seek approval of this Council's response to the consultation process.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:

- (a) This council responds directly to the consultation outlining a strong case for the retention of rural post offices in this district;
- (b) Continues to work with the County Council in relation to the development of pilot projects for alternative provision in the event that post office services are withdrawn.

3.0 REASONS SUPPORTING DECISION

3.1 To add the Council's views and support to the consultation process in order to seek to influence the proposed reductions to post office services in Ryedale.

4.0 BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

4.1 In May 2007 the government announced a range of measures to "modernise and reshape" the post office network. The announcement regarding how this would effect Ryedale was made on 27 November and a consultation paper was issued: Post Office Ltd. Network Change Programme – Area Plan Proposal for North Yorkshire with Yorkshire East and Keighley. A copy of the full proposal is including a further report containing individual branch access reports is available from the following website: <http://www.postoffice.co.uk/portal/po/home> under the section Network Change (Current Public Consultations). Copies also available in the Members Room.

5.0 REPORT

5.1 The Plan proposes the closure of 54 branches across the region. Of these, 12 are in Ryedale.

- 5.2 The plan introduces new “outreach services” to continue to provide services in some areas where the existing branch is proposed for closure. The plan states that “the outreach service would be located within the same community as an existing Post Office branch and provide Post Office services for a designated number of hours per week. Possible types of outreach service... could include a mobile service visiting small communities at set times, a hosted service operated within third party premises for restricted hours each week or a partner service within the premises of a local business (such as a pub landlord).”
- 5.3 The Plan proposes a total of 31 branches to be closed completely with no outreach services. 2 of which are in Ryedale:
- Church Street, Norton
 - Wass.
- 5.4 The plan proposes a total of a further 23 branches to be closed but replaced with “outreach services”. 10 of these are in Ryedale:
- Allerston
 - Sherburn
 - Hawnby
 - Weaverthorpe
 - West Heslerton
 - Huttons Ambo
 - Nunnington
 - Slingsby
 - Terrington
 - Foxholes
- 5.5 Ryedale currently has 27 post offices; if the plan is implemented Ryedale would be served by 15 branches plus 10 outreach services.
- 5.6 The plan makes reference to consultation having taken place with some stakeholders however in Ryedale’s case, which has been targeted for the largest number of closures, there is no reference to the relationship between these changes and other plans such as the Local Development Framework.
- 5.7 Members may have seen that campaigns are being launched through bcal media and local council’s associations in the region opposing the closures.
- 5.8 The plan seeks views on the proposed changes stating:
“We welcome your views and comments regarding access to future Post Office services in this area. In particular we ask for your views on accessibility to the nearest Post Office branch.”
- 5.9 In relation to the Outreach provision the plan invites views as to which of the current Outreach models they think would be appropriate and would welcome any suggestions regarding suitable locations within the community.
- 5.10 The consultation period is for 7 weeks and closes on 17 January 2008.
- 6.0 CONCLUSION**
- 6.1 Rural Post Offices are an important factor in the sustainability of village communities. A seminar, jointly convened by the LGA Urban and Rural Commissions was held in October 2007 to debate the proposed closures. A report by the Chairman of Council outlining the outcomes of the seminar are appended to this report at Annex B.

- 6.2 The Council has an opportunity to make its views known as part of the consultation and it is suggested that this takes place as a matter of urgency. It is also suggested that the Council continues to work with local partners including the County Council to develop alternative provisions in order to be prepared for any closures resulting from the Network Change Programme.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Post Office Ltd. Network Change Programme – Area Plan Proposal for North Yorkshire with Yorkshire East and Keighley

Minutes Policy & Resources Committee – 4 October 2007

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