

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: BELLSHILL AND DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE		Subject: NETWORK CHANGE PROGRAMME FOR THE PROVISION OF THE POST OFFICE NETWORK
From: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES		
Date: 12 August 2008	Ref: TG/MR	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. At the Corporate Services Committee on 30 August 2007 consideration was given to a report on the initiation by the Post Office Limited (POL) of a Network Change Programme which would determine the future provision of the Post Office Network in the United Kingdom.
- 1.2. The review of the Branch Network has been ongoing for some considerable time and previously this was reported to the Council in October 2004 and in January 2005.

2. Background

- 2.1. The initial review by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) issued proposals for the modernisation and re-shaping of the Post Office Network to include:-
 - the proposed closure of up to 2,500 branches;
 - the introduction of a "minimum access criteria" in respect of remaining branches;
 - the provision of Government funding for the Branch Network, and
 - the establishment of approximately 500 "outreach" branches in those communities where an Area Plan highlighted the need to provide a form of service but where a full-time branch could not be justified.
- 2.2. The minimum access criteria referred to above foresee:-
 - 99% of the UK population being within three miles and 90% of the population being within one mile of the nearest branch;
 - 99% of the total population in deprived urban areas, which in Scotland comprises the lowest at 15% of data zones, being within one mile of their nearest branch;
 - 95% of the total urban population across the UK being within one mile of their nearest branch;
 - 95% of the total rural population across the UK being within three miles of their nearest branch, and
 - for each individual post code district, 95% of the population of that post code district to be within six miles of their nearest branch.

- 2.3. Consequently, and against the foregoing criteria, POL were instructed to implement the necessary Branch Network changes over an 18 months period through a series of Local Area Plans through which a consultation would be developed until implementation.
- 2.4. For this purpose, North Lanarkshire Council was grouped in an area comprising the three Ayrshire Councils, East Dunbartonshire Council and the three Renfrewshire Councils.
- 2.5. Arising from the submission of the report to Committee on 20 July and following consultation with appropriate Officers of the Council, an initial submission for North Lanarkshire was submitted in January this year.

3. Proposals

- 3.1. In the Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire Council areas it is proposed to close a total of 44 Post Office branches of which 13 are in North Lanarkshire, representing approximately 30% of the total branches to be closed for this Area Plan area and respectively for our neighbouring Councils in the Area Plan area the proposed closures are as follows:-

South Lanarkshire Council – 9 closures
 Renfrewshire Council – 4 closures
 North Ayrshire Council – 6 closures
 East Dunbartonshire Council – 2 closures
 East Ayrshire Council – 1 closure
 Inverclyde Council – 4 closures
 South Ayrshire Council – 5 closures.

It should be noted that in South Ayrshire there are also proposals for outreach services to be provided for seven areas.

- 3.2. The Post Office Limited have recently written to this Council with details of their proposed Network Change Programme for this area and in particular have advised of the branch Post Offices they intend to close, these being as undernoted:-

Thorndean Branch Post Office, 205 Motherwell Road, Bellshill
 Mossend Branch Post Office, 3 Hope Street, Bellshill
 West Cross Branch Post Office, 339 Main Street, Wishaw
 Waterloo Branch Post Office, 103 Overtown Road, Waterloo, Wishaw
 Eastfield Branch Post Office, 9 Old Eastfield Street, Harthill
 Cambusnethan Branch Post Office, 100 Cambusnethan Street, Wishaw
 Whinhall Branch Post Office, 21 Whinhall Road, Airdrie
 Plains Branch Post Office, 115 Main Street, Plains
 Sunnyside Branch Post Office, 1-4 Russell Colt Street, Coatbridge
 Blairhill Branch Post Office, 154 Bank Street, Coatbridge
 Kildrum Branch Post Office, Afton Road, Cumbernauld
 Banton Branch Post Office, 96 Main Street, Banton
 Queenzieburn Branch Post Office, Meadows Road, Queenzieburn, Kilsyth.

- 3.3. Two of the thirteen proposed closures are in Bellshill and District and there are no proposals by POL to provide an outreach service for any of the proposed closure areas in North Lanarkshire.

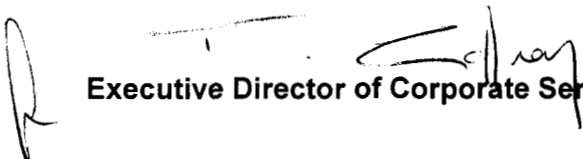
- 3.4. Upon receipt of the POL proposals details were sent to Elected Members with an invitation to comment for incorporation as part of this report or for submission direct to POL and also to all Community Councils in North Lanarkshire in order that they might respond to the consultation direct.
- 3.5. POL have sought comments on their proposals by 1 September 2008 and accordingly the Area Committee is invited to consider the formulation of a response on the proposals.

4. **Corporate Considerations**

There are likely to be a number of considerations for Council services should the Branch Network rationalisation proposals as referred to above be implemented.

5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1. That the receipt of the Post Office Limited Network Change Programme be noted, and
- 5.2. That any comments on the proposed closure of Mossend and Thorndean Branch Post Offices be forwarded to the Executive Director of Corporate Services for incorporation into a response to the consultation paper.



Executive Director of Corporate Services

Should any Member require further information please contact Tom Gaffney on extension 2342.