

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: POSTWATCH SCOTLAND	
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION			
Date: 13 May 2004	Ref: CA/GP/MS/MT		

1. Introduction

- 1.1. To advise Members that correspondence has been received from Postwatch Scotland regarding the changes to the consultation process in relation to the closure of urban post offices.

2. Background

- 2.1. Members will recall, at its meeting held on 29 October 2003, this Committee noted a report by Postwatch Scotland which indicated that Post Office Limited would advise the Council of dates in which the consultation to close post offices in its area would take place.
- 2.2. Following criticism from MPs, MSPs, local authorities and Postwatch Scotland, regarding the way in which Post Office Limited were conducting the exercise to close urban post offices, the Communications Minister asked that Postwatch, in consultation with Post Office Limited, review the consultation arrangements.
- 2.3. Postwatch have now completed this review and Post Office Limited have agreed to implement a number of changes to its procedures with immediate effect. Postwatch draw to the attention of the Council, the following points that they believe will help Post Office Limited's thinking about particular areas before the plan is finalised.
 - By now Post Office Limited will have notified MPs, MSPs, local authorities of when consultation about plans for their areas should commence;
 - Post Office Limited will invite local authorities to provide information on local issues and regeneration projects. Information such as the current infrastructure in the closure area, any major retail proposals and any housing proposals (especially new social housing) will assist the decision making of Post Office Limited;
 - Post Office Limited will extend public consultation periods to take account of public holidays that occur during that period, and
 - Post Office Limited will take account of, and respond to, all the views expressed by key stakeholders in making its decision.

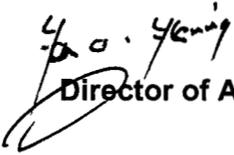
3. Considerations

- 3.1. Postwatch have suggested that from the current timetable, plans for the Council's area will be released at the end of September 2004, although no indication of this timetable has been received from Post Office Limited.

3.2. Postwatch have also suggested that when the plans have been published they would be happy to discuss with the Council the needs of its area and whether the proposals by Post Office Limited leave its customers with suitable nearby alternatives.

4. Recommendations

4.1. Members are asked to note the changes in the consultation process by Post Office Limited regarding the closure of urban post offices.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Fleming', is written over a circular stamp or seal.

Director of Administration

Members seeking further information on this report are asked to contact Mr. J. Fleming, Head of Central Services on extension 2228.