

REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE		Subject: POST OFFICE - PROPOSALS TO CLOSE POST OFFICES WITHIN THE COUNCIL'S AREA
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 19 October 2004	Ref: CA/GP/MS/MT	

1. **Purpose of Report**

To advise Members of correspondence received from Post Office setting out proposals for branches of the Post Office they are putting forward as potential closures.

2. **Background**

Previous reports to this Committee and the many articles in the Press, refer to the changes happening in the postal market. Such changes include opening the Postal Market to competition, increased postal costs, the changes to the mail delivery schedules and the closure of Post Offices.

3. **Proposals**

3.1. Airdrie and Shotts

There are currently 21 Post Office branches in the Airdrie and Shotts Constituency. The review only considers those branches in the Urban Network, of which there are 9 in this area. The remaining 12 are classified as rural. As a result of the review, and in agreement with the Sub-Postmasters concerned, they are now proposing the closure of two branches. The specific branches included in these proposals are:-

Clarkston Branch, 95c Forest Street, Airdrie, and  
West Crindledyke Branch, 1 Tiree Crescent, Newmains, Wishaw.

Post Office advise that these two branches have a relatively low customer base and are in direct competition for business with other nearby branches. These branches have little or no potential for growth and current standards are poor due to the inability to generate sufficient profit for reinvestment. There is a good public transport system in the area, with a concessionary fare scheme, providing links to other Post Office branches.

Post Office refer to the notice given by Morrisons Supermarkets plc that they no longer wish to operate a Post Office branch from their store at Broomfield, as noted in the previous report.

3.2. Coatbridge and Chryston

There are currently 16 Post Office branches in the Coatbridge and Chryston Constituency. The review only considers those branches in the Urban Network, of which there are 9 in this area. The remaining 7 are classified as rural. As a result of the review, and in agreement with Sub-Postmasters concerned, they are now

proposing the closure of two branches. The specific branches included in these proposals are:-

Kirkshaws Branch, 178 Woodhall Avenue, Coatbridge and  
Sikeside Branch, 49 Sikeside Street, Coatbridge.

Post Office advise that these two branches have limited retail offers, with little or no potential for growth. The relatively low customer base fails to generate sufficient profit to allow for reinvestment and standards are beginning to fall. If these closures proceed, the neighbouring branches will receive a much needed boost to their business levels, helping to improve their profitability and support the improvements planned by the Sub-Postmasters. There is a good public transport system in the area, with a concessionary fare scheme in operation.

### 3.3. Cumbernauld and Kilsyth

There are currently 12 Post Office branches in the Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Constituency. The review only considers those branches in the Urban Network, of which there are 4 in this area. The remaining 8 are classified as rural. As a result of the review and in agreement with the Sub-Postmaster concerned, they are now proposing the closure of 1 branch. The specific branch included in the proposal is:-

Greenfaulds Branch, 58 Lochinver Road, Cumbernauld.

Post Office advise that Greenfaulds Branch, has a very low customer base which cannot support the associated retail business. The branch is unable to generate sufficient profit to allow for reinvestment and, as a result, current standards are poor.

The retail centre in Cumbernauld already attracts residents from the Greenfaulds area and customers are choosing more and more to use the Post Office branches located there. The journey into the centre of Cumbernauld is relatively easy on foot, due to the purpose built walkways and underpasses. For customers who are less mobile, there is a good public transport link into the retail centre, with concessionary fares available.

### 3.4. Hamilton North and Bellshill

Post Office indicate that they have already made changes to their network in the area with the closure of Whitehill Branch, which closed on 17 January 2004.

There are currently 14 Post Office branches in the Hamilton North and Bellshill Constituency. The review only considers those branches in the Urban Network, of which there are 14 in this area. As a result of the review, and in agreement with the Sub-Postmasters concerned, they are now proposing the closure of a further two branches. The specific branches included in the proposals are:-

Holytown Branch, 42 Main Street, Holytown, Motherwell and  
Viewpark Branch, 259 New Edinburgh Road, Uddingston.

Post Office advise that Holytown and Viewpark Branches have seen a reduction in customer numbers in recent years and, with little or no potential for growth, they are now struggling with profitability. There are a number of alternative branches within easy travelling distance, where they have gained agreement to make significant improvements as a result of the anticipated increase in business. There is a good public transport system operating within the area, with a free service to concessionary pass holders. The closure of these two branches will help improve the

viability of the remaining network and maintain Post Office services in the surrounding area.

### 3.5. Motherwell and Wishaw

There are currently 17 Post Office branches in the Motherwell and Wishaw Constituency. The review only considers those branches in the Urban Network of which there are 16 in this area. As a result of the review, and in agreement with the Sub-Postmasters concerned, they are now proposing the closure of 2 branches. The specific branches included in the proposal are:-

Carfin Branch, 9 Motherwell Road, Carfin, Motherwell and  
Merry Street Branch, 254 Merry Street, Motherwell.

Both these branches have a relatively low customer base and are in direct competition for business with other nearby branches. These branches have no potential for growth and current standards are poor due to the inability to generate sufficient profit for reinvestment. There is a good public transport system, with a concessionary fare scheme, providing links to other Post Office branches. As a direct result of these proposals, they have agreed a number of service improvements at the nominated receiving branches. The additional business generated at the receiving branches will support the improvements being made and improve their long term viability.

## 4. Considerations

- 4.1. Post Office are confident that the remaining post office branches in these areas have the capacity to cope with the increase in customers expected to migrate from the branches they are proposing to close.
- 4.2. Public Consultation began on Thursday, 7 October 2004 and ends on Wednesday, 17 November 2004. After this period of public consultation Post Office will carefully consider all of the feedback received before making any decisions about whether the individual branches should remain open or close. If the decision is taken to proceed with the closure of any of the branches Post Office anticipate these will commence during January 2005. Post Office will write to the Council again, shortly after the end of the consultation period, informing of the feedback received and the decisions taken in respect of the above mentioned proposals.
- 4.3. Post Office have consulted with the Council and copies of the relevant proposals have been circulated to the Elected Member concerned, and also, to those Community Councils that have been re-established following the quadrennial election exercise.

## 5. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee consider the foregoing proposals.

  
Director of Administration

Members seeking further information are asked to contact Margaret Shankland on Extension 2726.