

REPORT

To: CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: NETWORK CHANGE PROGRAMME FOR THE PROVISION OF THE POST OFFICE NETWORK
From: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES		
Date: 20 July 2007	Ref: TG/MT	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Correspondence has been received from the Post Office Ltd. advising of the initiation of a Network Change programme which will determine the future provision of the Post Office network in the United Kingdom.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to bring these proposals to the attention of the Committee and to consider appropriate action.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Post Office have over a period of time undertaken a review of its branch network, amongst other service related matters, and the progress and status of this review was previously reported to the Council in October 2004 and January 2005.
- 2.2. As a result of the ongoing review the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) issued proposals for the modernisation and re-shaping of the Post Office network including:-
 - 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.
- 2.3. As part of this ongoing process, Post Office Ltd seek the comments of Councils, amongst others, on proposals to implement the network change programme, further details of which are provided below.

3. Proposals

- 3.1. One feature of the network change programme, as referred to at paragraph 2.2 above, will be the introduction of a number of "minimum access criteria" in relation to the national network. Details of these are provided below:-
 - 99% of the UK population to be within the 3 miles and 90% of the population to be within 1 mile of their nearest branch;
 - 99% of the total population in deprived urban areas, which in Scotland comprises the lowest 15% of datazones, to be within 1 mile of their nearest branch;

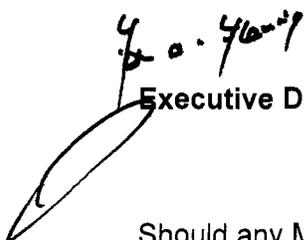
- 95% of the total urban population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest branch;
 - 95% of the total rural population across the UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest branch, and
 - for each individual postcode district, 95% of the population of that postcode district to be within 6 miles of their nearest branch.
- 3.2. Post Office Limited have advised that in coming to a view on service provision they will take into account physical and other matters, specifically referring to the availability of public transport, access to key services, local demographics and the impact on local economies.
- 3.3. The Post Office have been instructed by the DTI to implement the necessary branch network changes over an 18 month period and to progress this they have established a programme which divides the United Kingdom into approximately 50 distinct areas. These comprise a number of parliamentary constituencies, and for each area a Local Plan will be prepared which will inform the decision making process and through which future network proposals will be developed for public consultation.
- 3.4. The development of each Local Area Plan will be the subject of detailed consultation through which network proposals will be developed until implementation. For this purpose North Lanarkshire Council has been grouped in an area comprising Ayrshire, Inverclyde, Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire in a Local Area Plan area. Preparation of the Plan will commence in April 2008 with a public consultation exercise commencing in June 2008 and this will run for a period of six weeks.
- 3.5. The Post Office have emphasised that the purpose of the consultation exercise is not to review the change policy that has been already agreed. The rationale behind this exercise is to identify the most effective way to implement the network change programme.
- 3.6. At this stage the Post Office are seeking from Councils and others, for incorporation into the Local Area Plan, information which may be pertinent to the future pattern of Post Office Branch Network provision, examples of which may be:-
- regeneration and development plans
 - proposed new settlements
 - major road schemes likely to have a material impact on accessibility between communities
 - significant public transport changes including enhancements, new provisions and the likely withdrawal of key services
- 3.7. The Post Office have emphasised that prior to the final determination of any proposals affecting the Local Plan area they will contact the appropriate local authority affected and will invite further representations.
- 

4. **Corporate Considerations**

There are likely to be a number of considerations on Council services should the branch network rationalisation proposals impact on North Lanarkshire.

5. **Recommendations**

- 5.1. That the receipt of correspondence from the Post Office regarding the review of its branch network be noted, and
- 5.2. That the Executive Director of Corporate Services, in consultation with appropriate Officers, prepare a submission for the Local Area Plan for this area..



Tom Gaffney

Executive Director of Corporate Services

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

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: LOCAL PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 2008 FOR FACTORIES AND BUSINESSES	
From: HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES			
Date: 15 August 2007	Ref: JAF/AC		

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to have the Committee consider and determine the local public holidays for factories and businesses in North Lanarkshire for the year 2008.

2. Background

2.1 On previous occasions, the General Purposes Committee considered annually the dates to be set for local public holidays for factories and businesses. The General Purposes Committee, at its meeting on 7th August, 1996, agreed, in principle, that the local public holidays should generally follow the patterns which had been adopted by the constituent authorities to North Lanarkshire and that has been the continuing situation in the past years.

3. Considerations

3.1 By adopting these patterns of local public holidays, the local public holidays in North Lanarkshire in the calendar year 2008 would be as follows -

- Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 January 2008
- Monday 24 March 2008
- Monday 5 and Monday 26 May 2008
- Monday 21 July 2008
- Monday 29 September 2008
- Thursday 25 and Friday 26 December 2008

3.2 This year, however, the Committee is reminded of the approval by the Scottish Parliament of the St. Andrew's Day Bank Holiday (Scotland) Act 2006. The legislation does not change the arrangements for setting the dates of local 'public' holidays, nor does it change the law as far as the observance of bank or local holidays are concerned. Nevertheless, the intention of the Scottish Parliament was to signal its wish to see greater celebration of St. Andrew's Day, including the possibility that it be combined with a holiday. The Council was encouraged to include discussions about St. Andrew's Day as part of the consultations with local business interests when setting future dates for holidays. To that end, the Council sought the views of North Lanarkshire Trades Union Council and the Lanarkshire Chamber of Commerce. There was no view expressed by the Trades Union Council and, while the Chamber of Commerce encouraged and supported national celebrations of St. Andrew's Day, there was no support for a new Bank holiday or for replacement of an existing public holiday with a November holiday – although it was indicated that, were the Council minded to do so, the holiday to be replaced should be one of the May holidays.

3.3 The determination of staff holidays is separately dealt with in accordance with an established pattern.

[Handwritten signature]