

POST OFFICE CLOSURES

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Recommendation: that the Committee makes the Council's response to Post Office Ltd on its proposal to close 8 Post Offices in Copeland as part of its network change programme.

BACKGROUND

Post Office Ltd has published consultation proposals on the future of the Post Office network in Cumbria. These proposals are part of the Post Office's Network Change Programme following measures announced by the Government in May 2007 to change the overall size and shape of the network of Post Office branches in response to changes in the way services are delivered.

PROPOSALS

The Network Change Programme proposes the compulsory closure of up to 2,500 branches nationwide and the introduction of service points ("Outreaches") in approximately 500 locations.

The Area Plan Proposal for Cumbria envisages closure of 35 branches and retention of the remaining 226. The proposed closures in Copeland are at the following locations:

Beckermest
Bigrigg
Gosforth
Holborn Hill
Lowca
Moor Row
Parton
Tangier Street

The Committee will recall that the full consultation document was an appendix to the report to the last meeting on 7 April 2008 along with the Branch Access reports which give demographic, access, local transport and other information for each of the branches in Copeland proposed for closure.

Members of the committee are asked to bring this along with them to these meetings particularly the Branch Access reports which will be considered in detail

at the Saturday meeting. If you require another copy of these reports please let the Scrutiny Officer know.

CONSULTATION

Council at its meeting on 15 April 2008 agreed that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Economic Development and Enterprise be delegated authority to respond to the consultation proposals on the Post Office Closures on the Council's behalf (C 208).

It is proposed that the two committee meetings will draw up the recommendations following a number of witness sessions to look at all the issues involved. A final running order is at Appendix "A" (Final confirmation is still awaited from some of the Parish Councils).

At Appendix "B" is a set of initial questions that have been sent to the potential witnesses.

The consultation period set by Post Office Ltd runs until 27 May 2008. It is anticipated that there will be limited time at the end of the witness sessions on the Saturday to fully draw up the recommendations and that this will mean that the Committee may need to meet again at the end of the week starting 19 May to finalise the recommendations in time to meet the consultation deadline.

List of Appendices

Appendix "A" – Final running order

Appendix "B" – Initial witness questions

Appendix "C" – Age Concern Northwest Cumbria Stamped out? Campaign – local survey

Appendix "D" – Letter from Older Persons Forum (West Cumbria)

Appendix "E" – Letter from Postwatch Northern England

Appendix "F" – Letter regarding Tangier Street closure

Appendix "G" – Letter regarding Moor Row & Bigrigg closures

Appendix "H" – Letter regarding Bigrigg closure

Appendix "I" – Letters regarding Gosforth closure

List of Background Documents:

None