



Overview and Scrutiny Board

24 May 2004

Post Office Closures

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To present the background to proposals from the Post Office to close four branches in Middlesbrough and to seek the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Board ahead of consideration of the proposals by the Executive.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Post Office has been undertaking a comprehensive review of the network of post office branches in order to stabilise the provision of service to customers and are reducing the number of branches to ensure future viability.

- 2.2 A letter from the Post Office dated 21 April 2004 informed the Council of proposals to close four post office branches in Middlesbrough:

- Acklam Road branch at 51 Acklam Road
- Eastbourne Road branch at 3 Palladium Buildings, Eastbourne Road
- Newport branch at 48 West Lane
- Shelton Court branch at 23 Shelton Court

- 2.3 The issue of the proposed closures was raised at the Council meeting on 12 May when it was indicated that non-executive Councillors should scrutinise the proposals.

3.0 THE PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The Post Office points out that the four branches have each suffered a substantial decline in business in recent years. As a result of falling customer numbers, in both the post offices and associated retail outlets, the profitability of these branches has reduced and their future viability is threatened.
- 3.2 Each of the branches proposed for closure has an alternative branch with 0.6 of a mile and the Post Office considers transport links to be good. The Post Office anticipates being able to invest in these alternative branches.
- 3.3 The Post Office acknowledges that the Newport and Shelton Court branches are located within wards regarded as deprived, but points out that a large number of residential properties around the Newport branch have been vacated and that the development of the Morrisons shopping complex at Berwick Hills has resulted in a change of shopping patterns that has adversely affected the Shelton Court branch.
- 3.4 Representatives from the Post Office have been invited to attend the meeting to present the rationale for the proposals.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Executive will be considering the proposals at its meeting on 25 May and the Board is invited to indicate whether it wishes the Executive to take any comments in to account.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Letter from the Post Office dated 21 April 2004

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