

HARROW COUNCIL

Meeting:	Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee
Date:	14 October 2004
Subject:	Post Office Closure Programme – Final Response
Key decision:	No
Responsible Chief Officer:	Director of Organisational Performance
Relevant Portfolio Holder:	N/A
Status:	Part I
Ward:	N/A
Enclosures:	Appendix A – Covering Letter Appendix B – Final Response Appendix C – Legal Opinion

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The Council has consulted the local community and incorporated the findings into a written response. The response encourages Post Office Ltd to give further consideration to the proposals in light of the effects on the local community. This report and its enclosures update the Sub-Committee on activities undertaken since the last meeting. The closing date for submission of responses was 13 October.

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

3. **Consultation with Ward Councillors**

- 3.1 Ward Councillors were given the opportunity to respond and to contribute information on behalf of their constituents for incorporation into the Council's response.

4. **Policy Context (including Relevant Previous Decisions)**

- 4.1 Having learned that Post Office Ltd would be consulting the Council on closure proposals for the Harrow East and Harrow West constituencies, the Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee decided to conduct a scrutiny review of the Post Office closure programme. The Sub-Committee recommended that the Council should consult the community and produce a written response. In August the Deputy Leader on behalf of the Leader agreed to the proposed arrangements for responding to Post Office Ltd's consultation.

- 4.2 Relevant Previous Decisions:
Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee (15 October 2003, Minute 73; 2 February 2004, Minute 89; 13 July 2004, Minute 115)
Record of Decision Taken by the Deputy Leader, Taken in the Absence of the Leader, Ref: PHD 021/04 (Consultation by Post Office Ltd on proposed closures in Harrow)

5. **Relevance to Corporate Priorities**

- 5.1 “We will strengthen Harrow’s local communities by promoting social inclusion amongst all Harrow residents both young and old, by seeking to eradicate poverty and by reducing the fear of crime.”

6. **Background Information and options considered**

- 6.1 The Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee considered alternative options to consulting the public on the proposals and incorporating the findings into a written response. These included not producing a response or producing a written response without conducting wider consultation with the public.
- 6.2 Following consultation with the public, the written response includes the Council’s view on the likely effects of Post Office Ltd’s proposals. Reference is made to the possible effects on specific groups such as disabled, chronically sick or older people, low-income groups.

7. **Consultation**

- 7.1 A public meeting was held on 23 September 2004. Representatives of Post Office Ltd and Postwatch attended, as well as around fifty members of the public. Letters were also sent to 1500 local voluntary organisations and to the Harrow Strategic Partnership board members inviting responses. Ward councillors have also been invited to respond on behalf of their constituents.
- 7.2 In relation to the final response, Party Group Leaders have been consulted on behalf of their groups and have agreed to the content of the response.

8. **Finance Observations**

- 8.1 Not sought as the report is not seeking additional financial resources.

9. **Legal Observations**

- 9.1 Attached as Appendix C.

10. **Conclusion**

- 10.1 The Sub-Committee is requested to note the report.

11. **Background Papers**

- 11.1 Strengthening Communities Scrutiny Sub-Committee, Interim Findings: Scrutiny Review of Post Office Reconfiguration
Letters from Drew McBride, Head of Area, Post Office Ltd, dated 1 September 2004
(Post Office Area Plan for Harrow East and Post Office Area Plan for Harrow West)

12. **Author**

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