

**Chief Executive's Office**

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Your Ref:

Our Ref: NMP/SAHC

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**To: All Members of Cabinet:**  
**RJ Phillips (Leader)**  
**LO Barnett**  
**AJM Blackshaw**  
**H Bramer**  
**JP French**  
**JA Hyde**  
**JG Jarvis**  
**DB Wilcox**

3rd October, 2007

Dear Councillor,

**MEETING OF CABINET**  
**THURSDAY, 11TH OCTOBER, 2007 AT 2.00 P.M.**  
**THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD**

**AGENDA (07/13)**

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 15 OF THE LOCAL  
 AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS((ACCESS TO INFORMATION) REGULATIONS  
 2000 (AS AMENDED)**

Notice is hereby given that the following reports contain key decisions. When the decisions have been made, Members of the relevant Scrutiny Committee will be sent a copy of the decision notices and given the opportunity to call-in the decisions.

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Portfolio Responsibility</b>	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	<b>Included in the Forward Plan Yes/No</b>
6	Modernisation of the Registration Service	Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources	Strategic Monitoring Committee	No
8	Adult Social Care Fairer Charging	Social Care Adults and Health	Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing	Yes
10	Proposed Purchase of Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford HR1 2LX	Economic Development and Community	Community Services	No



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			Services		
11	Affordable Development 2007/08	Housing Programme	Environment and Strategic Housing	Environment	Yes

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest by members in respect of items on this agenda.

**3. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STRATEGIC SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP**

To receive a report on the operations and performance of the Strategic Service Delivery Partnership between the Council, Herefordshire Jarvis Services Limited and Owen Williams Limited during the period April 2006 to August 2007. *(Pages 1 - 6)*

**4. HEREFORDSHIRE CONNECTS PROGRESS REPORT**

To note progress in respect of the Herefordshire Connects programme, approve the technology platform on which further progression will be based, and approve the extension of the existing interim agreement with Deloitte. *(Pages 7 - 20)*

**5. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT PRIORITY SETTING**

To note the process of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) “super-refresh” and endorse the preliminary list of key priorities in appendix 1. *(Pages 21 - 26)*

**6. MODERNISATION OF REGISTRATION SERVICE**

To approve the proposal to establish a single registration district for Herefordshire and the implementation of a new governance framework. *(Pages 27 - 36)*

**7. UPDATE ON THE FUTURE OF POST OFFICE SERVICES IN RURAL HEREFORDSHIRE**

To update Cabinet on the Government’s post office closure programme and the progress being made on an initiative to develop sustainable options for the delivery of post office services to rural communities in Herefordshire. *(Pages 37 - 88)*

**8. ADULT SOCIAL CARE FAIRER CHARGING**

To inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the recent public consultation on the Fairer Charging for



non-residential Social Services recommendations made by Cabinet in June 2007. The report also recommends revisions to the recommendations made in June following the consultation. (Pages 89 - 98)

## 9. HEREFORDSHIRE HOUSING POST TRANSFER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

To provide an update to Cabinet of the progress made in delivering improvements to housing stock transferred to Herefordshire Housing. (Pages 99 - 102)

### EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

In the opinion of the Proper Officer, the next two items will not be, or are likely not to be, open to the public and press at the time they are considered.

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act as indicated below.

## 10. PROPOSED PURCHASE OF BLUESCHOOL HOUSE, BLUESCHOOL STREET, HEREFORD, HR1 2LX

To seek approval for acquisition of the freehold property of Blueschool House, Blueschool Street, Hereford HR1 2LX. (Pages 103 - 106)

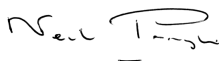
**This item discloses information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

## 11. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007/08

To see approval for the funding of the Affordable Housing Development Programme in Herefordshire for 2007/08. (Pages 107 - 114)

**This item discloses information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).**

Yours sincerely,



**N.M. PRINGLE**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Copies to: Chairman of the Council  
Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee  
Vice-Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee  
Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees  
Group Leaders  
Directors  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services





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# ANNUAL REPORT ON THE STRATEGIC SERVICE DELIVERY PARTNERSHIP

## PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

**CABINET**

**11TH OCTOBER, 2007**

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### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

To receive a report on the operations and performance of the Strategic Service Delivery Partnership between the Council, Herefordshire Jarvis Services Limited and Owen Williams Limited during the period April 2006 to August 2007.

### Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

### Recommendation

**THAT the report be noted.**

### Reasons

Work carried out for the Council through the Strategic Service Delivery Partnership represents a substantial commitment of corporate resources. Regular review of the salient features of the partnership arrangements provides Cabinet with an opportunity to maintain an overview of developments in this area.

### Considerations

1. In July 2005, Cabinet received a report on the operations of the Herefordshire Strategic Service Delivery Partnership (SSDP) to that time. It was agreed at the meeting on July 14 2005 that annual reports would in future be prepared to allow Cabinet to maintain an overview of these strategically important arrangements. For a range of operational and other reasons, no annual report was in fact produced during financial year 2006/07 and so the current report covers the period April 2006 to the end of August 2007.
2. The Herefordshire Strategic Service Delivery Partnership began on September 1 2003 with the award of initial ten-year contracts to Herefordshire Jarvis Services Limited and Owen Williams Limited. Herefordshire Jarvis Services Limited (HJS) is a joint venture between Herefordshire Council and Prismo Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Jarvis plc. The partnership arrangements have their origins in a decision in 2001 to review the operation of Herefordshire Commercial Services, the Council's in-house Direct Service Organisation, and to examine whether the private sector could offer a

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Dr Peter Cross, Environment Support Manager, on 01432 260099

better service.

3. The value of the Herefordshire Jarvis Services Limited contract is approximately £15 million per annum and the value of the Owen Williams Limited contract is approximately £2 million per annum although the respective contract minimum guaranteed amounts are significantly lower than these sums.
4. The overall objectives of the SSDP are enshrined in nine high level aims and objectives set out in the service delivery agreements. These aims and objectives have been kept under regular review by the Partnership Project Management Team to ensure that they remain pertinent and to ensure that the partnership continues to focus on them.
5. Detailed progress against the objectives is monitored by the Partnership Project Management Team through a suite of key performance indicators (KPIs). In total there were 80 KPIs reported for 2006/07. The position of each of these is assessed as either *satisfactory*, with the indicator exceeding target or within plus or minus 10% of target, or *unsatisfactory*, where the indicator is both below target and outside the 10% tolerance band.
6. The overall position at the end of 2006/07 was that 46 of the 80 indicators were satisfactory, 20 were unsatisfactory and 14 had no data for the period because of insufficient activity for a meaningful quantitative assessment. Overall, the picture was therefore a mixed one with encouraging performance in some areas but with scope for improvement in others.
7. Areas where performance has been positive are: satisfaction with the quality of work of the partnership; defects rating; jobs completed within planned cost, customer satisfaction on completed highways works; customer satisfaction on facilities management; safety; and predictability of design cost for highways works.
8. The principal areas of concern for the partnership as evidenced by the performance indicator information are those relating to time predictability and critical dates met (starting dates). Both of these indicator groups have consistently shown unsatisfactory performance in respect of highways works.
9. Financial year 2007/08 saw the launch of a new key performance indicator framework intended to remove some of the shortcomings of the previous systems. The new framework has indicator groups that focus on quality, cost, time, safety and environment, as these relate directly to the high-level strategic objectives of the partnership. In particular, the new indicator set uses measures that track the performance of the partnership, rather than that of individual partners, that allow for more frequent reporting (monthly rather than quarterly on key indicators) and that minimise duplication by using, wherever possible, information collection arrangements that are already in place for best value performance indicator reporting.
10. At the time of writing the information flows to allow complete reporting under the new performance indicator system are still being refined and the methodologies for the calculation of some individual indicators are being fine-tuned, but the latest position is broadly in line with that described in paras 7 and 8 above.
11. The foregoing comments relate to the overall performance of the partnership. The following paragraphs summarise the highlights of the reporting period for both HJS and Owen Williams Limited.

## HJS

12. At the start of the current reporting period, Herefordshire Jarvis Services was positioned within one of the then three core business streams – Rail, Roads and Plant – within Jarvis plc. During the reporting period, a significant reorganisation of the Jarvis business led to the sale in December 2006 of Prismo Road Markings Limited, the vehicle for Jarvis's ownership position in HJS, and the consequent transfer of HJS to the Accommodation Services Group within the parent company. This re-positioning, together with the refocus on just the rail and plant business streams, clearly signalled that the HJS operation was no longer to be seen as a priority for the parent company.
13. Prior to the start of the current reporting period, HJS had prepared a business plan for 2006/07 in consultation with the Council, in line with the requirements of the Shareholders Agreement. This plan envisaged a total turnover of £17.8 million with an operating profit of £1.05 million. This represented a significant improvement in financial performance compared with 2005/06, to be achieved through a range of measures including: merging of business areas within the highways business segment, merging of the cleaning and catering businesses under a single management, reductions in senior management, reductions in administration and other support staff, and further withdrawals from catering.
14. In the event, the turnover for 2006/07 was c£18.2 million, a decrease of £350,000 on 2005/06 but an increase on budget of £400,000. The principal reason for the improvement on budgeted turnover was an increase in spend on highways maintenance.
15. Working with Proudfoot Consulting, an international consultant specialising in improving business processes, the HJS business has achieved significant productivity improvements in a number of business areas, most notably programmed highways work and building cleaning.
16. The decision to withdraw from schools catering during 2006/07, whilst disappointing, resulted in a significant improvement in profitability.
17. The change from SGS to Lloyds as accreditation body for the quality, health and safety, and environment systems proved time-consuming but has resulted in improvements in operations and customer service.
18. The Accident Frequency Rate (an industry standard for measuring health and safety performance) was high at the start of the reporting period, at 1.36. Through training and a variety of other measures the rate has been reduced to 0.26.
19. Without doubt the biggest single challenge for HJS during the reporting period has been the payment of creditors. The local management team has struggled to maintain service delivery with the limited cash allocations it has received from the Jarvis Group Treasury to pay creditors.
20. The 2007/08 HJS business plan envisages that the business will build on the dramatic improvements in financial performance achieved in 2006/07 with key objectives identified as: delivery of final cost reduction targets arising from the consultant review of operations, integration of the highways and building maintenance workstreams, and continuing to build on relationship development activities launched during 2006/07. At the time of writing, progress against the 2007/08 business plan objectives is largely on track.
21. In summary, the partnership with HJS has continued to provide the Council with a very wide range of services during the period under review and has delivered many

thousands of individual jobs to a total value of £24.1million during the period. Whilst there have been issues in some areas of the business, this is only to be expected with such a wide spectrum of activity and with such a large group of staff involved in both the client and partner organisations. The most significant issues have been those occasioned by the cash management policy of HJS's parent.

#### *Owen Williams*

22. Owen Williams Limited was acquired by Amey plc in February 2006, just prior to the start of the current reporting period. Other than some minor changes to quality management systems, the acquisition has been largely seamless although wider access to key skills and resources in the Amey group has supported the Herefordshire contract and will become more evident with projects such as the Transportation Asset Management Plan (TAMP).
23. During the 2006/07 financial year, Owen Williams undertook approximately £2.4million worth of work for Herefordshire Council, supporting mainly the Environment, Adult and Community Services, and Resources Directorates. This is well in excess of the guaranteed minimum contract amount under the service delivery agreement. Most of the Property portfolio was delivered from Owen Williams Development Team in Lewes with the exception of certain projects with a 'highways' nature such as the Livestock Market being delivered from Hereford.
24. The main highlights of the year for the Owen Williams element of the SSDP have been the success of the Project Delivery Teams for Victoria Footbridge and City Centre Refurbishments. Victoria Footbridge has won a number of awards to date and is still short listed for the British Construction Industry Awards to be announced in October. The City Centre Refurbishment saw the completion of Eign Gate which achieved Highly Commended by Local Government News and the commencement and completion of High Town which won a bronze award for Considerate Constructor and is currently awaiting Local Government News and BCSC Town Centre Environmental awards.
25. Due to funding issues affecting the Rotherwas Relief Road and the Ross Flood Alleviation Scheme, Owen Williams had to adopt an extremely flexible approach to providing staff resources during the reporting period. Initially, progress on these projects was delayed but was then followed by an intense period of activity once funding was secured. Owen Williams' ability to react to the changing JUP and the support it has given to the client teams with seconded staff has been another highlight for the year although the changing priorities on project delivery have resulted in some projects being delayed.
26. The Rotherwas Relief Road was successfully tendered and commenced on site. The partnership has reacted positively in responding to the recent unforeseen Rotherwas Ribbon ensuring that the essential procedures were followed and providing excellent communication throughout to all parties and press. The Ross Flood Alleviation Scheme has also been progressed with retendering of the contract and completion of the CPO process.

#### *Concluding comment*

27. As this report goes to press, there has been a Stock Exchange announcement (3 September 2007) that Jarvis plc has sold its controlling interest in Herefordshire Jarvis Services Limited to Amey plc. The successor company to HJS is named Amey Wye Valley Limited. This transaction, almost on the fourth anniversary of the inception of the original partnership agreements, clearly offers every possibility of a fresh start for the partnership and should allow the best aspects of what has been achieved in the

first four years to be built upon whilst removing the source of a number of the major issues. With Amey Wye Valley Limited and Owen Williams under a common ownership there are clearly a number of possibilities for closer integration with attendant potential enhancements to service delivery and value for money, and these will be actively explored in the coming months.

## **Financial Implications**

None identified.

## **Risk Management**

The risks associated with the operation of the Strategic Service Delivery Partnership are managed through the Council's corporate risk register and the Environment Directorate risk register. Formal processes operate for maintaining these registers up-to-date and regularly reviewed.

## **Alternative Options**

There are no Alternative Options.

## **Consultees**

Partnership Project Management Team

## **Appendices**

None

## **Background Papers**

None identified



# HEREFORDSHIRE CONNECTS PROGRAMME UPDATE

## PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

11TH OCTOBER, 2007

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### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

To note progress in respect of the Herefordshire Connects programme, approve the technology platform on which further progression will be based, and approve the extension of the existing interim agreement with Deloitte.

### Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

### Recommendation(s)

- THAT (a) Cabinet notes the current position in respect of programme implementation;**
- (b) Cabinet approves the retention of SAP as the technology base; and**
- (c) Cabinet approves the extension of an interim agreement with Deloitte until such time as a decision on the master agreement can be taken.**

### Reasons

To note progress with this phase of the Herefordshire Connects Programme, approve the technology platform for future programme development and approve the extension of the existing interim agreement with Deloitte.

### Considerations

1. Further to the Cabinet Paper of 7 June 2007, this report provides an update to Cabinet on progress in the programme.
2. Phase 3 of the programme was Programme Definition. All objectives for this phase have now been achieved with the exception of the completion of the contractual agreements.
3. *Costs and Benefits Review*. In order to ensure that the Council can indeed deliver on savings, each benefit line was investigated and challenged to ensure that the figures are robust and 'bankable'. Over several weeks, the Herefordshire Connects Core Team and Deloitte ran a number of workshops to complete this. This work was then

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Jane Jones, Director of Corporate & Customer Services on (01432) 260042

presented to the Head of Financial Services and the Strategic Procurement & Efficiency Review Manager, and the figures have now been accepted as valid. Independent advice throughout this process has been provided by CAPITA plc. A similar approach was adopted towards the Programme Costs.

4. The resulting financial appraisal was presented to the Leader, Cabinet Member, Corporate & Customer services and Human Resources and Cabinet Member, Resources at a meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> July, and considered in the context of the Medium Term Financial Management Strategy (MTFMS)
5. At that meeting, the Leader and two Cabinet Members agreed that the reports demonstrated that the Herefordshire Connects Programme was fundable and therefore should be continued; that an interim agreement be signed with Deloitte; and that the Programme Team continued to consider opportunities to improve benefits and reduce costs as outlined in the report. What lay behind that conclusion was that two key assumptions had been made:
  - the Social Care solution would not be provided by SAP, but for the purposes of developing the profile, the highest cost alternative had been used;
  - SAP had been costed as providing the technical platform. The potential for using existing systems such as Cedar as an alternative were to be explored. Whilst it was accepted that would produce some cost savings, the Programme Manager would also undertake an assessment of technical functionality together with an assessment of the level at which benefits would be realised if the alternative platform was to be used. It was further noted that a decision as to which option was finally adopted must be based on a technical, rather than a solely financial assessment.
6. Pending completion of the appraisal and a decision on the technology platform a decision was taken to put part of the programme in abeyance. This scaling down of the programme impacted most significantly on the integrated support service (ISS) stream of activity, but enabled the social care platform to continue to progress. The technical appraisal has now been completed and externally validated by CAPITA and is attached at Appendix 1.
7. From recent reports to Corporate Management Board it is clear that, based on the most recent budget forecasts and the impact of expenditure on flooding, the MTFMS is likely to see a deteriorating rather than improving financial picture and it is understood that there may be a preference to await the financial settlement and the revision of the Medium Term Financial Strategy before taking a decision in relation to the Programme.
8. However, whilst Deloitte have been able to accommodate the scaling down of the Programme for a limited period, this cannot be sustained without the risk of losing key staff resource allocated to the programme. There is the option of continuing under an interim agreement until a decision can be taken in light of a revised MTFMS, but work cannot be progressed whilst there is uncertainty regarding the technology platform upon which the programme is to be progressed.
9. It is recognised by officers and members alike that the overall impact of Herefordshire Connects is key to the longer term financial stability of the organisation. The technology appraisal assesses the SAP technology platform as providing longer term returns. It recognises the adoption of a Cedar platform would contribute to the closing of the gap in 2008/09 but that this would be at the expense of a significant reduction in returns in later years.



10. Deloitte have indicated that they would be prepared to work with either platform but have two principal concerns in relation to the use of the Cedar suite of applications as opposed to SAP:-
- (i) As the technology report indicates, Cedar is seen as a strong financial system in particular around budget planning and control. It can provide the majority of the functionality of SAP. Deloitte do, however, have specific concerns about the inability of Cedar to provide a local government customer that has implemented their complete ERP suite. There would appear to be an inconsistency between the Council taking the decision not to accept the risks associated with being an early adopter of the SAP social care solution and yet to take a contrary decision in relation to the main operating platform. There is a secondary concern about the inability to establish why there is a lack of take up amongst Councils of their payroll and HR modules.
  - (ii) Deloitte would be prepared to support a Cedar based platform as part of the Herefordshire Connects Programme but would want to be clear that in their view it would have a material impact on the nature of the Programme. They do believe that although untried, it should be capable of providing a platform for the Council. They do believe however that it will change the nature of the Programme and move it away from a catalyst for a programme of transformation to the installation of an effective operating platform for the Council. It will be seen from the technology appraisal that that view is also expressed by Capita. That would raise questions as to how the Council resourced the Programme.
11. Whilst the costs of the interim agreement are within the previously agreed financial envelope for the programme, it is recognised that continuing with an interim arrangement does present a risk in terms of the investment if the Council does not finally proceed.

## Risk

Key Risk	Mitigation
Anticipated Cost savings are not realistic (Benefits savings are not realistic)	Each benefit line has been vigorously challenged. In addition a new 'Programme Benefits Board' will monitor and control the delivery of these savings with a direct reporting line in to the Corporate Management Board. The Audit Commission have praised this work and stated that this will increase the likelihood of achieving these savings.
Lack of Council expertise and skills and resources	A detailed set of workshops is currently underway to ensure that every role is assessed.
Funding of programme will require early delivery of savings	Carry out Cost Reduction exercise during Phase Four. This will also align with the implementation of most beneficial 'Quick wins'. Quick wins assessment has already begun.

Lack of Management Buy-in	<p>Effective change planning and managing the change curve, excellent communication to support buy-in through understanding the benefits to be delivered by service users.</p> <p>Deloitte will bring their expertise to bear in this area. There is also to be an emphasis on as much peer-to-peer contact as is needed so that staff can understand and learn from the experience of other authorities. The Change Management Team will be confirmed and will cover Communication, Change Leadership, Organisational Development and Training.</p>
Loss of key staff prior to a decision on the master contract	Negotiations with both the Programme Manager and Deloitte are ongoing to secure key team members are available to re-engage with the programme.

## Alternative Options

Adoption of the alternative technology platform is likely to result in an estimated 5-15% reduction in benefits. Experience, and assessments carried out by the programme team and validated by CAPITA, had shown that those local authorities, central government or private sector organisations who had been most successful at driving out efficiencies had all done so through the use of technologies similar to those offered by SAP.

## Consultees

CAPITA

## Appendices

Appendix 1 Herefordshire Connects Programme: Technical Appraisal.

# HEREFORDSHIRE CONNECTS PROGRAMME

## TECHNICAL APPRAISAL

REPORT BY: PROGRAMME MANAGER

REPORT TO: PROGRAMME BOARD

24TH SEPTEMBER, 2007

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### Purpose

This report has been written for the Programme Board on the work undertaken to consider whether the Council's existing solutions could be used to enable the Herefordshire Connects Programme. This has been considered primarily to understand whether this option could alleviate some of the cost pressures on the Programme. The remit was to provide a technical appraisal as to whether existing solutions will provide the functionality requirements **and** deliver the benefits required.

### 1. Introduction

As explained in the previous paper to the Members Reference Group on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2007, in order to consider ways of reducing the overall Programme cost base, this report is a technical appraisal of the Council's existing solutions Cedar (sometimes called COA), the current corporate finance system, and Selima, the current Payroll system.

Two options have been considered. Firstly, using an upgraded version of Cedar for finance & procurement and HR & Payroll and secondly using an upgraded version of Cedar for Finance & Procurement and an upgraded Selima for HR & Payroll.

### 2. Process

The Process adopted was as follows:

- Cedar were invited to discuss the Programme requirements with the Council and then to provide a high level presentation;
- The technical requirements that were completed by the bidders for the Programme were then completed by Cedar. Some additional questions were asked, based on discussions with HR and ICT;
- HR and Payroll requirements were also sent out to Selima who responded with their capabilities. In addition
- both HR and Payroll and ICT have provided a written appraisal of this option; and
- Capita provided advice by way of two reports on the options.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Akif Kazi, Herefordshire Connects Programme Manager 01432 261550

### **3. Feedback from High level presentation from Cedar:**

This presentation was given to a small team from the Council. The team included Deloitte, Capita and colleagues from ICT and the Resources directorate.

The main conclusions from this are as follows:

- a ringing endorsement of Cedar's finance functionality, in particular around budget planning and control
- sound functionality in the Cedar procurement offering, but gaps around Request for Quote and tendering and strategic sourcing (this will impact benefits delivery); and
- concern around the lack of other Councils using the full Cedar ERP suite, in particular HR & Payroll, and the lack of integration between the finance and payroll modules.

### **4. Response to Technical Requirements**

The results of the technical comparison based upon Cedar's responses to the technical requirements are shown in Appendix A.

Cedar can cover the majority of the functionality with the exceptions of:

- User Authentication and Access Control
- Case Management
- Programme and Project Management
- Knowledge and Information Base
- SLA Management
- Diary Management/Booking Appointments
- Flexible Working

The solution also scores significantly lower than SAP on:

- Human Resources
- Recruitment
- Training and e-Learning
- Asset Management
- EDRMS/ESCR/One Client One Record

## 5. Benefits

The Council asked one of its advisors, Capita to verify the initial assessment of the impact of this option on both the overall benefits case and the Programme as a whole.

In their reports, Capita draw attention to the following points:

- *“Change projects require a powerful vision and a sense of urgency to deliver real benefits, implementing a **new software solution** signals a real commitment to change”*
- *“In addition, Cedar does not provide much of the functionality in the existing SAP Plant Maintenance solution deployed in ICT. It may be necessary to run both Cedar and SAP.”*
- Capita also highlight the lack of a ‘single update’ functionality will potentially compromise benefit realisation. The report states, *“Questions about the links between the approval and spend limit matrix in Cedar and the HR organisation as held in the HR module suggested that a single update across modules was not possible. **The ability to update once across the system is one of the stated aims of the project to release benefits in HR by reducing management of leavers, joiners and employee role changes. SAP offers more enterprise wide management functionality.”***
- *Capita also advise that some of the projected benefits may be affected “**Current sense is that Cedar will enable a part of the FTE savings**”.*

By using Cedar, Capita have highlighted the likelihood for some reduction in the benefits realised. This will be in the areas of procurement, HR and enterprise wide functionality as Cedar appears weaker in these areas.

Work done by the Core team has come to the same conclusions.

It is estimated that this reduction in benefits will be between 5% and 15% of those targeted. This would result in an estimated reduction in savings of between £400,000 and £1,200,000 per annum.

## 6. Costs

Although this report is fundamentally about a technical review and benefits assessment of an alternative technical option for Herefordshire Connects the reason for considering the option is mainly driven by cost considerations. It is therefore useful to have some indication of the scale of any potential cost saving.

Appendix B shows a set of indicative estimates for the Cedar/Selima option compared to the proposed SAP solution. It must be recognised that these are indicative estimates to give an approximate scale to enable decision making and are not as robust as the costs the Council now has for the SAP solution. The implementation effort (and therefore the cost) required for the implementation of SAP has been developed and refined over the past three months, by a combined team of Herefordshire Council, Deloitte, IBM and Epi-Use staff. This has been ratified by Capita.

This has led to a high-level of clarity regarding the scope of the solution and the resourcing levels required from both the Council and its partners. This estimation has included not only the technical configuration staff, but also effort required to design the new organisation and support the transformation of the Council.

## **7. Other Considerations**

As well as the technical assessment and consideration of the benefits and costs outlined above there are three other factors that merit consideration:

### **(1) Advice from ICT:**

The overall support model for the Cedar/Selima will require a number of systems being supported by individuals skilled in different technologies. Attracting skilled resource is a real challenge to ICT. It is thought the support team will be about 20 staff (3-5 per application) as opposed to the projected SAP support model which has 14 staff.

Cabinet recently approved the ICT Strategy. The ICT Strategy will need to be re-written as it was developed on the basis of a single ERP solution. A multiple-system landscape with interfaces will require a revised ICT Strategy.

There is also an increase in the Disaster Recovery costs and the time-to-recovery would be longer and more tortuous than a single system. The impact of running both SAP and Cedar is also raised as a concern.

### **(2) Public Services Trust:**

In addition the Council may wish to consider the impact of such an approach to future PST requirements. It is likely that it will be harder to integrate into multiple systems rather than one, for example, in terms of back office functionality.

### **(3) Future proofing**

The ambitions of the Programme, as with all transformation programmes, are high. The next phase of the Connects was planned to include delivery of, for instance, remote, real time technology to front line staff. SAP has a proven record of this in local government both here and abroad. SAP has proven to provide more opportunity for the ambitions of the Programme to be fulfilled going forward.

### **(4) Risks:**

1. Continuing indecision on the technology choice will lead to a further delay in savings being generated. This will also lead to an increase in costs. Already a 150k discount with our hardware supplier, Dell, has been lost. By delaying this decision the Social Solution will be at greater risk if it is to be implemented by next summer. It is worth noting that the Programme started in August 2005.
2. Programme costs escalate since in effect the Programme design work will have to be delayed until a full evaluation is completed. In addition time-scales will be slipped. A full scale evaluation will require site visits, scenario demonstrations, an assessment panel to be drawn from across the Council (51 staff were used last time) and the process to be fully audited. In addition the Council will need to enter into negotiations with Cedar and Selima.
3. On this note, the Council will need to run an additional six or seven technology solution selections. This will need to be in each of the areas where Cedar cannot meet the functionality e.g. Project Management Software, in order to select a suitable alternative. Deloitte will also need to be satisfied so that they can underwrite each selection. The current Social Care selection has taken three months.

4. Cedar has not been able to provide a local government customer that has implemented their complete ERP (Smart Business) suite. The Council would therefore be one of the first to do so. The risks associated with being an early adopter of the SAP Social Care solution was cited as one of the reasons for looking for an alternative solution to meet the Social Care requirements.
5. It has also not been possible to establish why there is a lack of councils that use their Payroll and HR modules.
6. There is lack of process blue print that can be used since there are few integrated Finance/Procurement/HR/Payroll shared service centre models (such as Surrey). There is a risk therefore, that processes will be new and un-tested. In addition costs may escalate as design will have to start from scratch.
7. There is a further risk in terms of performance management since data will need to be built from multiple systems.
8. The Cedar to SAP interface, required for CRM, is untested.
9. Deloitte would need to underwrite this option or the Council will end up needing to start a new procurement. Another risk is that Deloitte may pass some of the risk of Programme delivery back on to the Council since their recommendation for the technology base was not accepted by the Council. This may lead to a change in the terms of the yet to be signed master agreement.
10. There is also a risk that during a full assessment the evaluation scores are less for Cedar than the scores achieved by SAP. In addition customer site visits may not be favourable, given the lack of comparable local government sites.

## 8. Conclusions and Recommendations

There is little doubt that by changing the technology base from SAP to Cedar the Council will save at least 400k over five years. This is equivalent to £80k per annum over 5 years. This may alleviate some of the cost pressures on the Programme. It is important to note that it is over the next two financial years that the Council faces cost pressures in relation to the Programme. Beyond that, the Programme will become self-financing. So it is the 80k per annum over the first two years which is of most benefit to the Council.

It is clear that this cost saving needs to be considered in terms of a reduction in benefits and the increased risk of failure.

As Capita have stated in their conclusion, **“Change projects require a powerful vision and a sense of urgency to deliver real benefits, implementing a new software solution signals a real commitment to change. The evaluation of proposals driven by initial price rather than long term value for money (benefits realisation) is highlighted by the IDEA as a reason for projects failing to deliver the promised benefits”**

**As highlighted above, the initial work by both the Core Team and Capita has suggested that some benefits may be adversely affected. This has suggested the loss could be between £400k to £1200k per year. This loss of benefits significantly outweighs the reduction in costs.**

Even if this level is acceptable to the Council, it would end up with a more complex systems landscape with multiple systems. This is what it has at the moment and is trying to move away from. This has been a fundamental axiom of the Connects Programme.

Programme momentum would be lost and the broader transformation agenda is less likely to be achieved. There is increased risk of failure in the Authority deciding to be the one of the first major transformation programmes in local government to select Cedar and Selima as the enabling technologies.

It would also require postponing large parts of the current programme as they move to build stage and in effect the re-running of the technology aspects of the Herefordshire Connects procurement in order for the Council to satisfy itself fully that indeed Cedar [and Selima] can meet our transformational requirements. This in itself will divert Programme resource and inevitably impact costs and target time-scales.

Once again, it is important to ensure that in any option, the ambition remains to transform the Council, not simply upgrade existing software.

**Referring back to the original remit for this report, Cedar can not provide the same level of functionality and there is going to be a reduction in the level of benefit savings.**

**It is recommended, therefore, that the Herefordshire Connects Programme retains SAP as the technology base.**



## Appendix A: High Level Technical Comparison

<u>Doc ref</u>	<u>Heading</u>	<u>CEDAR</u>	<u>SAP</u>
2.1	Customer Access Channels	Y	Y
2.2	External Access	Y	Y
2.3	Usability	Y	Y
2.4	System Administration	Y	Y
2.5	User Authentication and Access control	N	Y
2.6	Case Management	N	Y
2.7	Programme and Project Management	N	Y
2.8	Workflow capabilities	Y	Y
2.9	Knowledge and Information Base	N	Y
2.10	Management Information and Reporting Capabilities	Y	Y
2.11	Service Level Agreements Management (internal)	N	Y
2.12	Production of Documents	Y	Y
2.13	Audit trail	Y	Y
2.14	Authentication Protocols	N	N
2.15	Diary Management / Booking Appointments	N	Y
2.16	Route Planning	N	N
	<b>AREA SPECIFIC</b>		
3.1	Performance Management	Y	Y
3.2	Human Resources	70%	95%
3.3	Recruitment	50%	95%
3.4	Integrated Training and E-Learning	75%	90%
3.5	Integrated Financial Management	Y	Y
3.5.1	General ledger	Y	Y
3.6	Payroll	Y	Y
3.7	Procurement	Y	Y
3.8	Asset Management	40%	90%
3.9	EDRMS / ESCR / One Client, One Record	66%	100%
3.10	Schools Management	N	N
3.11	Flexible Working, Home Working & Smarter Working	N	Y
4	Compliance Requirements	Y	Y
4.2	E-Government Requirements	Y	Y
5	Technical Vendor Criteria		
5.1	Solution Architecture Requirements	Y	Y
5.2	Scalability and Disaster Recovery	Y	Y
5.3	Security	Y	Y
5.4	Technical – Platforms	Y	Y
6	Integration Issues	Y	Y
6.2	Methods of Integration / Interfacing	Y	Y
6.3	Integration to future systems	Y	Y



Appendix B

Cost Items/Comparisons	Costs (£000k) Cedar/Selima	Costs (£000k) SAP	Cedar/Selima FT	SAP FTE
<b>Hardware</b>				
		20		
<b>Software</b>				
<b>ERP</b>		1,100		
Asset Management	400			
Case Management	60			
Programme and Project Management	50			
Knowledge and Information Base	75			
Service Level Agreement Management	30			
Service Management / Works Ordering Package	40			
	50			
<b>Implementation Costs</b>				
Asset Management	838	1,500		
<b>Additional Specific Costs</b>				
Permanent Interfaces	275	91		
<b>TOTAL ONE OFF COSTS</b>	<b>1818</b>	<b>2711</b>		
<b>RECURRING COSTS</b>				
<b>Ongoing Support Costs (per annum)</b>				
Internal ICT – Technical Services FTE	150	150	5	5
Internal ICT - Applications Support FTE	630	490	18	14
<b>Ongoing Maintenance (per annum)</b>				
Software Maintenance	134	175		
<b>TOTAL RECURRING COSTS (Per Annum)</b>	<b>914</b>	<b>815</b>		
<b>TOTAL FIVE YEAR COST</b>	<b>6388</b>	<b>6786</b>		
<b>Cost Differential</b>		<b>-398</b>		

Symology Ltd  
Singularity; DPS Software  
Microsoft Corporate Project Solutions  
ICT  
Singularity  
ICT Helpdesk - AXIOIS; Fusion

200k for Selima; 490 days for Cedar; (1200 days for IBM/EPIUSE)  
200k for Case Mgt, MCPS; Asset Mgt, Service Mgt, Know  
SLA



## LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT PRIORITY SETTING

### PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

11TH OCTOBER, 2007

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#### Wards Affected

County-wide

#### Purpose

To note the process of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) “super-refresh” and endorse the preliminary list of key priorities in appendix 1.

#### Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

#### Recommendations

- THAT (a) **the Local Area Agreement super refresh process, timetables and opportunities to input be noted; and**
- (b) **the list of key priorities for consultation purposes be noted.**

#### Reasons

To ensure that Cabinet is central to the LAA “super-refresh” process and have opportunity to input to its development. Herefordshire Council is the accountable body for the LAA and Cabinet needs to be involved in the decision-making process as it progresses. The LAA is also expected to be a central feature of the Comprehensive Area Assessment. Funding channelled through the LAA Single Pot is likely to increase substantially, and the management of the funding will be through Herefordshire Council as the accountable body, with decision making abilities via the Local Strategic Partnership (Herefordshire Partnership).

#### Considerations

1. The first task in the “super-refresh” of the LAA is to check emerging local priorities and issues against those in the current Herefordshire Community Strategy. Consultation with partner organisations, sectors and groups was undertaken from June to September, and key priorities mapped against those in the Community Strategy. From this a preliminary list of key priorities has emerged, which is attached in Appendix 1. In compiling this list, consideration has been taken of:
  - issues strongly supported by strategic partners and strategies,

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Philippa Lydford, Partnership Officer on (01432) 261788

- priorities which address public concern,
  - weighting for priorities from recent inspections and are backed up by data through the State of Herefordshire Report.
2. The number of priorities aim to give Herefordshire a manageable and focused LAA, but with sufficient scope for negotiation with GOWM and Government Departments, and flexible enough for future delivery.
  3. The Herefordshire Partnership, as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), is the group responsible for co-ordinating the LAA's development and delivery. On the 28<sup>th</sup> September the Herefordshire Partnership Chief Executive Group agreed in principle to the list of key priorities in Appendix 1.
  4. These priorities will now be commented upon by organisations, sectors and Partnerships groups during October and November, and this report is part of this process. Council Members, Scrutiny, public, private and voluntary organisations, including those we now have a duty to co-operate with, will be part of this consultation process. A session specifically for Members is being planned for October.
  5. The National Indicator set of performance indicators is due to be released in mid/end of October as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, and the first draft of Herefordshire's LAA submission has a preliminary deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007, followed by the end of January 2008 and March 2008 for subsequent drafts.
  6. Once the key priorities are agreed, focus of attention will then move to identifying performance Indicators, agreeing targets and identifying actions. Please note a key date for the diary of the 10<sup>th</sup> December, for the Herefordshire Exchange event which will be based on this development work and consultation.

## **Financial Implications**

The financial implications are as set out under key decision.

## **Risk Management**

This approach to our future Action Planning is a step change in the delivery of Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements. In order to achieve this, a joint commitment, proactive and collaborative approach is needed across all groups and organisations, to achieve the Vision and Outcomes of the Herefordshire Community Strategy. Without the commitment and support of all Partners in its development, we risk compiling an Action Plan with limited buy-in and no long-term success. Through a considered approach, the support of Herefordshire Council and by incorporating partners at every stage of the LAA's development we can mitigate these risks.

## **Alternative Options**

There are no Alternative Options.

## **Consultees**

Key Partners of Herefordshire Partnership through the Board, Chief Executive Group and Performance Management Group, this includes:

Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Herefordshire Association of Local Councils

The Primary Care Trust

Herefordshire Council (including checks on key priorities through Directorate Management Teams)

The Learning and Skills Council

Voluntary Organisations

West Mercia Constabulary

Advantage West Midlands

Government Office for the West Midlands

Partnership groups

Herefordshire residents through public consultation on issues to feed in to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, Community Forums and Parish Plans

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Key LAA priorities

### **Background Papers**

None





## Key LAA Priorities

The list of preliminary priorities below has been developed through consultation.

The recommended list of key priorities is:

- Reduce the levels of crime and improve public reassurance and perception of crime
- Improve the provision of access to public transport and encourage alternatives to car use
- Reduce traffic congestion in and around Hereford City
- Provide and improve appropriate workforce training and skills development
- Encourage and promote a healthy lifestyle
- Increase the availability of appropriate and affordable housing
- Encourage higher skilled and better-paid jobs in Herefordshire
- Improve recycling and reduce waste volumes
- Improve access to and availability of local services and facilities
- Address the causes and effects of Climate Change reduction
- Improve participation in decision-making and encourage Community Involvement, such as volunteering
- Increase access to and participation in learning and Improve basic skills levels (skills for life)
- Help to live at home, improve and widen support for carers and improve the quality of health and social care for vulnerable adults
- Safeguarding and support for vulnerable children
- Protect, restore and enhance the built, historical and natural environment
- Build sustainability into the design and planning processes of development, land management, transport and communities
- Reduce household debt

In addition, there may also be priorities emerging from current studies on migration and community cohesion, which will be added in as part of the negotiation process.

Please note

This list is subject to amendment as part of consultations during October and November 2007. They will inform the Herefordshire Local Area Agreement for 2008 – 2011 and the delivery of the Community Strategy. Although the Community Strategy differentiates between age groups in its themes, the above priorities would be supported across all ages, including young people.



# MODERNISATION OF THE REGISTRATION SERVICE

## PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

11TH OCTOBER, 2007

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### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

To approve the proposal to establish a single registration district for Herefordshire and the implementation of a new governance framework.

### Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

It was not included in the Forward Plan however inclusion in the agenda gives the required notice in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) Regulations 2000.

### Recommendations

- THAT (a) the current six registration districts be amalgamated to provide a single registration district for Herefordshire, and;**
- (b) the new governance framework be implemented and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services as Proper Officer be delegated to submit a draft Scheme to the General Register Office for approval.**

### Reasons

To continue the provision of the registration service to the public and to ensure the seamless transition during the new governance and legislative changes to the registration service.

### Considerations

#### Background

1. After remaining substantively unchanged for 170 years the Registration Service in England and Wales is embarking on a significant modernisation programme, both nationally and locally. The objective is to restructure the service to meet the needs of today's society, with the emphasis on customer focus while maintaining the necessary rigour and control appropriate to this key service. The government has put in place a challenging modernisation agenda, including legislative change, providing an opportunity for service reform and improvement. Responsibility for the registration

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Fiona Nicholls, Registration Services Manager on (01432) 260007

service is currently shared by the Registrar General, local government and registration officers. Registration officers are statutory post holders, appointed by the local authority but not employed by them.

2. In 2002 the White Paper 'Civil Registration: Vital Change' was published setting out an agenda for a modern, effective and high quality registration service in keeping with the Government's wider reform agenda and four guiding principles to improve customer service:
  - Setting national standards within a framework of clear accountability
  - More flexibility so that public service organisations and their staff are better able to provide modern public services
  - Devolution and delegation to the front line giving local leaders responsibility and accountability for delivery, and the opportunity to design services around the needs of local people
  - More customer choice and the ability, if provision is poor, to have an alternative provider

The White Paper also proposed that local authorities should be given responsibility for delivering the local registration service and that superintendent registrars and registrars should become local authority employees.

3. In the absence of primary legislation to take forward the changes outlined in the White Paper the General Register Office (GRO) and the Local Authority Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) jointly developed proposals for a more modern governance framework for the delivery of the local services. Under the current governance framework, once a scheme has been approved, local authorities must operate within those arrangements with no discretion to vary the terms of the scheme without a formal amendment or scheme change. The new governance framework provides for a more flexible, less prescriptive scheme, allowing local authorities greater discretion to deliver local services which meet both national standards and local community needs.
4. In seeking to implement a new governance framework the authority must agree to the terms of the Code of Practice (attached at Appendix 1) which will be attached to the new scheme. It must also agree to meet at least the national standards as set out in the Good Practice Guide, prepare an annual Service Delivery Plan and have in place a reliable system for monitoring performance and annual reporting to the Registrar General.

### **Current Provision of Service**

5. Herefordshire is currently divided into six registration districts namely Bromyard, Hereford, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye. The current requirement is to have a Superintendent Registrar and Registrar of Births and Deaths for each registration district. These posts hold an unusual status and are known as statutory or principal officers and as such are responsible in law for their 'own acts and omissions'. They do not have any legal employer. Each district provides customers with services for births and death registrations, marriage and civil partnership ceremonies, duplicate certificates, reaffirmation of vows and naming ceremonies

6. Each district has a Register Office which also includes a secure store for registers, where all the registers from 1837 to date are retained for the district, a reception/waiting area and facilities for customers. All of the register offices apart from Kington have a ceremony room. Kington has an agreement with a local hotel to use one of its approved premise rooms.
7. Current legislation dictates that events are registered in the district in which they take place. This limits flexibility for the public in where they register an event and can make it difficult to know which district to contact. It can also create duplication, as an event can be 'declared' in one district (a process which takes nearly as long as registration) and then formally registered in another, entailing sending details and the fees from one district to another by post, then effectively repeating the process of recording the information and accounting for the fees. The customer then has to wait for any certificates to arrive back, again by post.
8. As referred to earlier in this report the current registration staff are not employees of the Council. Whilst one of the proposals in the White Paper was for all registration staff, including principal officers, to become local authority employees there was no legislation to provide for this. It was also felt that it was inappropriate for this proposal to be implemented by means of a regulatory reform order. The Statistics and Registration Service Bill was introduced into Parliament which provided for registration post-holders to become employees of the local authority which appointed them. The Bill received Royal Assent in July 2007 and is therefore now an Act. It has been indicated that the 1st December 2007 will be the implementation date for the employment transfer but this has yet to be confirmed.

## **Consultation**

8. In accordance with the requirements of the new governance arrangements it is intended to consult with all registration staff on the proposed changes. This will commence on 4th October and end on 25th October and will take into account the principles as laid out in the authority's document 'Managing Change – Guidance on Change in Employment'.
9. Local authorities are also required to consult with the public and stakeholders of the service. A consultation exercise took place in March 2007 which included writing to all stakeholders (e.g. medical practices, nursing homes, clergy, funeral directors, town and parish councils etc), placing the consultation document on the Council's website and in libraries and placing a notice in the local papers. Out of 170 letters sent to stakeholders and public notices only thirteen responses were received. There were no objections but the main comment received was concern that the provision of registration services should be removed from any of the current market towns. It is not intended to withdraw the service from any of the market towns. In fact it is proposed that the opening hours be extended in Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye with Kington and Bromyard being open on an appointment only basis.

## **Proposed changes**

10. Set out below are the proposed changes which will be included in the new scheme:
  - a. To move to a single Herefordshire Registration District amalgamating the current six districts.
  - b. The Hereford Register Office based at the Town Hall, Hereford will be designated as the Herefordshire Register Office. The offices currently based at Leominster, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye will become Registration Offices and each provide the

full range of customer services. The offices currently based at Bromyard and Kington will become service delivery points but used on an appointment only basis.

- c. The Herefordshire Register Office will have the official register office ceremony room. It is proposed that the existing ceremony rooms in Bromyard, Leominster, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye be re-designated as approved premises. It is proposed at this stage there will be no increase in fee and that the statutory fee will continue to be charged.
- d. Consolidation of register storage in a single location incorporating a centralised facility for the preparation and issue of copy certificates. It is proposed that this will be at the Herefordshire Register Office. However this may not be able to happen immediately as it is dependant on storage space available.
- e. To increase opening hours at Hereford, Leominster, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye. The hours at Bromyard and Kington will be reduced but as there will be an 'appointment only' system in place it is anticipated that appointments will be consolidated to a few hours rather than spread over a few days.
- f. A central, all appointment/marriage call centre system be introduced with one telephone number located within the service to allocate work appropriately to staff by co-ordinating all service appointments. It is anticipated that in the future Info by Phone will be used to take calls for the registration service.
- g. Full use to be made of technology. Examples - electronic diary management to provide a fully flexible booking system enabling registration appointments and ceremony bookings to be made and viewed for anywhere from anywhere; computerised registration accounting to replace the manual cash books.
- h. To provide increased non-statutory services such as naming ceremonies, renewal of marriage vows, civil funerals, ceremony rehearsals, commemorative certificates.
- i. During the first year of operation of the revised scheme monitoring will take place and a review carried out to determine if there should be any further changes.

## **Financial Implications**

Funding for the new scheme will be covered by existing budgets. Staff are currently being consulted on the proposed new staffing structure however it is not anticipated that there will be any severance costs at this stage. The cost of increasing opening hours will be minimal as hours are being consolidated in some offices which are then redistributed to the remaining offices. As it will be a single district staff will be able to work in any of the offices.

It is proposed to centralise the storage of the registers. There will be no cost for this as it is intended to utilise existing storage as much as possible, however some registers will have to remain at the market town offices until suitable central storage becomes available. This has been flagged up as part of the Archives section in the accommodation strategy.

## **Risk Management**

The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that the service continues to be available throughout the transitional period and beyond.

## **Alternative Options**

There are no Alternative Options.

## **Consultees**

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Code of Practice

## **Background Papers**

None identified.





# Code of Practice for Local Registration Authorities in England and Wales

## 1. Preface

1.1. Civil registration is a vital service that affects everyone at some point in their lives. It provides a name and identity within society; a facility for marriage and civil partnership; evidence of parentage; and evidence of entitlement to inheritance.

The organisation of the registration service in England and Wales is based on the Registration Service Act 1953. It establishes the post of Registrar General, whose role is to oversee the standard of the service, including the making of regulations and, in practice, the issuing of guidance on performance of registration functions.

The Registration Service Act 1953 places a duty on each council to prepare a local "scheme" for the approval of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to appoint a "Proper Officer". The Proper Officer provides the Registrar General with details of organisation and coverage of registration services within the authority. The Proper Officer also manages the local service.

Under the revised governance arrangements the Scheme commits the local authority to comply with the service delivery standards contained in this Code of Practice. Taken together, the Scheme and the Code provide a formal governance agreement between the Registrar General and local authorities, the framework of which enables the local authority to plan, develop and deliver a registration service which meets the needs of the local community.

The Code of Practice is supplemented by a Good Practice Guide which contains guidance on both the application of the Code, and more generally on national standards as well as good and better practice service delivery. In this respect the Code has a strategic focus whereas the Good Practice Guide advises on application and operational delivery.

The Code of Practice also reflects the need for a customer focused, output driven local registration service, one which is delivered sensitively, economically and efficiently to the satisfaction of users.

The principal outputs from the service are accurate and timely:

- registrations of births, deaths and marriages
- marriage notices and ceremonies
- certificates.

In relation to records and registers the principal outputs are:

- safe and secure custody of records and registers.

1.2. The Code of Practice does not extend to other statutory duties such as civil partnerships, citizenship ceremonies, or to discretionary / non statutory registration services. However, authorities are recommended to adopt and apply common standards for all statutory, partnership, discretionary and non-statutory services, and to include all such services in the Service Delivery Plan. The Good Practice Guide contains guidance in this respect.

## 2. Application

2.1. Each authority is required to consult locally and commit to the delivery of a registration service which meets both local needs and national standards, and to publish a Service Delivery Plan. The Registrar General will expect to be satisfied in this respect before she recommends approval of a

Scheme to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (or approves a Scheme with the Chancellor's agreement where there are no unresolved representations).

2.2. The Code of Practice is complemented by a Good Practice Guide that provides further information on:

- specific national standards that authorities must meet
- good performance standards that authorities should aim to meet
- better performance standards representing the highest levels of registration service that an authority could meet
- guidance and advice on applying the requirements of the Code of Practice.

2.3. The Good Practice Guide has been developed jointly by the General Register Office and the Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS). Both parties have agreed to periodically review the guide, initially after twelve months and then every two years; amendments to be agreed by the Registrar General. The national standards which an authority must achieve will contain both national and local elements. The national elements ensure that users of the registration service across England and Wales are able to discharge their statutory responsibilities within the timescales set out in the Marriage and Registration Acts, and have reasonable access to all statutory registration services.

2.4. A formal commitment to the Code of Practice will result in the adoption of a 'lighter touch' inspection regime by the Registrar General, with greater reliance on central monitoring, self assessment and annual reporting. This approach will allow risk based assessments of performance to be used to direct inspection effort to those authorities that would most likely benefit.

### **3. Service Responsibility**

3.1. The Proper Officer is the person appointed by the local authority to manage the service, and is the link between the Registrar General and the registration authority, especially in relation to governance issues and the Scheme.

3.2. The Proper Officer has the following key responsibilities:

- developing a Service Delivery Plan for the authority
- consulting, assessing and periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the service
- assessing and managing the resources needed to deliver a registration service which meets customer needs
- managing the stakeholders of related services (e.g. Coroner services)
- managing staff discipline (other than dismissal of statutory post holders), seeking advice from the Registrar General on technical matters
- ensuring records are stored safely and securely
- liaising with the Registrar General on service delivery and issues related to the Code of Practice and the authority's Service Delivery Plan
- applying the Good Practice Guide - as appropriate - to improve customer service standards.

### **4. Service Delivery**

4.1. Service delivery includes all the aspects of the registration service that deliver registration services to customers, including structure, location, service availability and accommodation.

#### *4.2. Structure*

A registration authority will determine, taking into account the Good Practice Guide, the number and boundaries of registration districts and sub-districts that best meet local requirements.

#### *4.3. Location of Offices*

The registration authority will determine, taking into account the Good Practice Guide, the number and location of service outlets within each district and sub-district that best meet local requirements.

#### 4.4. *Access and Service Availability*

The registration authority will:

- establish customer demand and preferences
- develop and publish a Service Delivery Plan that reflects customers requirements and reasonable expectations and the council's access to services/customer strategy, where appropriate
- publish service delivery targets and results
- assess accommodation requirements that reflect customer needs and delivery standards
- provide registration services that are accessible and available to the public at reasonable times
- ensure safe and secure custody of registers and other records in accordance with the Good Practice Guide.

The service commitments contained in the authority's Service Delivery Plan must be such that the public are able to provide information for the registration of births and deaths within the statutory time limits. Furthermore, that the public's reasonable expectations are met in respect to the giving of marriage notices, marriage ceremonies, and the issue of certificates.

#### 4.5. *Good Practice Guide – Service Delivery*

The Good Practice Guide sets out specific targets and standards that a registration authority must meet together with preferred 'good' and 'better' service standards. It also provides advice and guidance on how to meet each of the headings above, and in respect to the development and content of a Service Delivery Plan.

### 5. **Quality**

5.1. Quality refers to the standards of registration service that the customer expects and receives and how satisfied they are with them. Also, quality management should include consideration of compliance, accuracy, customer service and complaints.

#### 5.2. *Quality - Compliance*

Delivery of the local registration service shall be undertaken in accordance with the Marriage and Registration Acts and regulations, and in line with the Good Practice Guide.

#### 5.3. *Quality – Accuracy*

A registration authority will ensure that accurate registration records are made and maintained.

#### 5.4. *Quality - Service Delivery Plan*

A registration authority shall include in its Service Delivery Plan:

- registration office opening times (including emergency and out of hours arrangements)
- consultation procedures
- service delivery monitoring and reporting procedures
- complaints procedures.

#### 5.5. *Quality – Complaints*

A registration authority shall record and monitor complaints and other responses received and be prepared to show how it has taken account taken of customer feedback, where appropriate.

## **6. Staffing**

6.1. A sufficient number of staff, trained appropriately in registration service matters is essential to meeting statutory requirements and customer aspirations.

### *6.2. Staff numbers*

A registration authority must ensure that sufficient staff are appointed to deliver the local registration service to the standards set out in the authority's Service Delivery Plan.

### *6.3. Staff salaries*

A registration authority shall determine the salaries of its registration staff having regard to

- existing NJC arrangements and
- any local conditions and agreements that apply.

Registration staff holding office in a registration district or sub-district existing immediately before the commencement of any new scheme, and continues to hold office following the commencement of the scheme, may elect to have his salary paid according to either the National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service or the Council's salary and allowance scales. Such an election may be made at such intervals as determined by the local authority.

### *6.4. Miscellaneous Service Provisions*

The Council shall put in place such service provisions regarding security, ordinary, sick and maternity leave and travelling and removal expenses as are in accordance with either the National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service or the Council's Conditions of Service.

### *6.5. Training and Development*

Registration staff shall be trained so that they can demonstrate an appropriate level in the knowledge and conduct of registration matters and the law applying to them.

### *6.6. Staff - Disqualification*

A registration authority should enforce appropriate disqualifications to ensure registration service staff conflicts of interest are avoided. The Proper Officer's Manual contains guidance on this.

## **7. Information Technology**

7.1. A registration authority must provide appropriate hardware, software and internet links to allow reliable access to the central national database and an appropriate level of technical support to ensure a high standard of systems availability locally.

7.2. A registration authority shall exercise reasonable measures to protect the integrity of the national database and access to it. The Registrar General will issue specific guidance in this respect.

# UPDATE ON THE FUTURE OF POST OFFICE SERVICES IN RURAL HEREFORDSHIRE

## PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

**CABINET**

**11TH OCTOBER, 2007**

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### **Wards Affected**

Countywide.

### **Purpose**

To update Cabinet on the Government's post office closure programme and the progress being made on an initiative to develop sustainable options for the delivery of post office services to rural communities in Herefordshire.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision.

### **Recommendation**

**THAT the actions proposed, be approved.**

### **Reasons**

Following on from the announcement in December 2006 by the Government on the closure of up to 2,500 post offices nationally, the DTI issued a consultation document on its future proposals for the post office network. Herefordshire Council has co-ordinated a response to this consultation and has used the opportunity to examine alternative and sustainable options for delivering post office services in the County. The State of Herefordshire Report indicates that 85% of residents found it easy to access post office services in 2006. The Council has a commitment to at least maintain this level of access.

### **Considerations**

#### **Background**

1. In December 2006 the Government announced the closure of a maximum of 2500 (compensated) Post Offices that were deemed to be unprofitable. It is likely that these closures will be spread equally between urban and rural areas. To partly offset these closures the Post Office Ltd will introduce up to 500 "Outreach" facilities (eg mobile post offices).
2. This latest Government action highlights a problem that has been occurring over the last thirty years, that is, the closure of village shops and post offices due to changing shopping patterns, government action and other external factors. Many of the remaining rural retail outlets are struggling with some being unprofitable such that when the owner/manager retires no one is willing to take on the enterprise. This is the case with Hope under Dinmore Post Office that has remained closed since the

sub-postmaster retired despite efforts by the parish council and others to find a replacement.

3. In June 2007, completely separate from the Government's closure programme, three Herefordshire post offices closed on "temporary basis", Colwall, Bartestree and Brampton Road in Hereford. (Note: a temporary closure is an 18-month window, which Post Office Ltd establishes whilst seeking a replacement location/subpostmaster/mistress). All three post offices closed due to change in ownership. Colwall stands a good chance of re-opening, primarily due to the efforts of the parish council working with the Post Office Ltd. The future for the other two remains questionable.
4. These recent closures suggest that the number of post offices to close nationally over the next two years is likely to exceed the 2,500 compensated closures, such is the low morale amongst Sub-postmasters and mistresses and the general state of the sector. The Rural Shops Alliance (RSA) reports that many post offices are waiting on their chance to get compensation before closing their business. If they fail to be one of the 2,500 compensated closures, it is likely they will close anyway.
5. At the end of 2006 there were 14,250 post offices nationally. If 2,500 post offices close, by the end of 2009, this figure is estimated to be 11,750, a drop of 17% (excluding any outreach introductions). If this position was replicated in Herefordshire with 93 post offices (currently open), 16 post offices could close by the end of 2009, though some of these could be replaced by outreach facilities. This is thought to be a minimum figure, bearing in mind the state of the sector.
6. The Government's closure programme will impact on Herefordshire in 2008. However, already in 2007 those post offices deemed to be "at risk" of closure have been informed by Post Office Ltd on a confidential basis, meaning that those post offices face at least 10 months uncertainty as to their fate. In March 2008 the County's post offices will be reviewed and recommendations for closure made by the Post Office Review Group. These proposals will then be scrutinised by PostWatch. Public consultation (including Local Government consultation) on these recommendations will take place in the six weeks from 21<sup>st</sup> July with closures starting in October 2008.
7. At this stage there is no information as to when or how the (up to) 500 "Outreach" facilities will be deployed nationally to "soften" the closure blow, though clearly Herefordshire will need to argue for a share of these resources.
8. Many reports have illustrated that there is a need in rural areas for the services provided by the post office and village shop. The October 2006 report from the Commission for Rural Communities entitled "Rural Disadvantage" has identified the elderly, disabled people, carers, low income groups, the unemployed and the immobile as those in need of these rural services and particularly at risk when services are removed. In addition the 41 Parish Plans that have been completed in Herefordshire provide some evidence of community need.

### **Proposed Course of Action**

9. Against this background, it is proposed to develop and evaluate sustainable options for use in Herefordshire to deliver these services. These options will address needs in communities that currently have a post office but they can also meet those latent needs in communities that currently do not have any service post office provision (e.g. Tillington).

#### Post office Services:

10. Herefordshire Council has been working with the Rural Shops Alliance and has been joined by Business Link to investigate the provision of three essential services in the event that they are not provided locally by a post office:-
- Parcel Post  
Parcel post is easily set up requiring an initial investment of approximately £1,500 with an on-going annual fee of £450 payable to Royal Mail.
  - Bill payment  
Payment of bills can be organised at community level (eg village hall) over the internet but there may be an issue regarding confidentiality in which case options/costs of installing a Paypoint are currently being investigated.
  - Access to cash  
With regard to as access to cash, if there is a shop or a pub in a village, cashback facilities on an informal basis to known residents is not usually an issue. In the absence of any retail outlet, options are limited. Discussions are currently taking place with the Credit Unions in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to see if there are any possibilities in their areas of expertise.

#### Support for Village Shops

11. The closure of a village post office not only deprives the residents of a valuable facility. If combined with a village shop, the closure of the post office may precipitate the closure of the shop as well. Village shops are important to communities in their own right and, as has already been pointed out, they could deliver some of the services that a post office would have delivered prior to closure. It is therefore important to consider the support and promotion of the village shop as an important part of the ongoing strategy for improving access to services in rural areas. As a first stage Herefordshire Council and RSA are holding a series of Information (training) evenings to inform Village shop proprietors on latest market trends and give them an opportunity to network and share good practice.
12. A further initiative is planned to seek funding to provide support to village shops by providing retail development advice and matched funded capital grants. The RSA in conjunction with Herefordshire Council is currently preparing an application to the Herefordshire Access to Services partnership for this funding.

### **Summary of Proposed Actions**

- To audit all post offices in Herefordshire to establish how many are connected to a village shop.
- To finalise the alternative options for communities in the event of post office closure.
- To make communities and businesses aware of the various development options and signpost them to the relevant support organisations.
- To seek funding for Village Shop support 2007/8/9.

### **Financial Implications**

There is no cost implication to the Council, other than through existing officer time.

## **Risk Management**

Failure to be proactive in co-ordinating proposals for the future delivery of key services in the County, may affect the credibility of the Council in terms of its community leadership role.

It will be important to ensure that expectations are not raised for communities and that only sustainable options for delivery of post office services are promoted to rural communities.

## **Alternative Options**

There is the alternative of doing nothing proactive to support the continuation of postal services in Herefordshire. There is good evidence that disadvantaged groups are further disadvantaged when rural services, such as post offices and village shops, are closed. By being proactive, the Council can demonstrate that it is fulfilling its community leadership role.

## **Consultees**

None

## **Appendices**

No appendices

### **Background papers**

CRC Rural Disadvantage Report Chapter 8

Government Response to Consultation on Post Office Closures May 2007.



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**THE POST OFFICE NETWORK**

Government response  
to public consultation

MAY 2007



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# Executive Summary

Post offices play an important social and economic role in the communities they serve. But with new technology, changing lifestyles and a wider choice of ways of accessing services, people are visiting post offices less. The network's losses rose from about £2 million a week in 2005 to almost £4 million a week last year and are likely to increase further unless action is taken to make the network more sustainable.

However, the Government remains committed to maintaining a post office network with national coverage and is putting in place a new policy and financial framework to achieve this. On 14 December 2006, the Government initiated a 12 week public consultation on a range of proposed measures, underpinned by the investment of up to £1.7 billion, to modernise and reshape the network and to put it on a stable footing.

We received over 2,500 responses, more details of which are provided in section 1 of this document and in Annex A. This document summarises the responses to the seven specific questions posed in the consultation document together with wider comments on the post office network and its future role and direction. It also sets out the Government's decisions in the light of the consultation.

In particular the Government has decided (subject to EC state aid clearance) to provide total funding of up to £1.7 billion to 2011 to support the necessary changes to the network to put it on a more stable footing and to provide continuing support for the social network.

We will introduce a new framework of minimum access criteria to maintain a national network of post offices and, in particular, to protect vulnerable consumers in deprived urban, rural and remote areas:

- Nationally, 99% of the UK population to be within 3 miles and 90% of the population to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 99% of the total population in deprived urban areas across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.

- 95% of the total urban population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 95% of the total rural population across the UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

In addition for each individual postcode district:

- 95% of the population of the postcode district to be within 6 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

In applying these criteria, Post Office Ltd will be required to take into account obstacles such as rivers, mountains and valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands to avoid undue hardship.

Post Office Ltd will also consider the availability of public transport and alternative access to key services, local demographics and the impact on local economies when drawing up area plans.

Post Office Ltd will be required to ensure that, by the end of local area plan implementation, in every postcode district, without exception, 95% of the population will be within 6 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

The Government funding will support strategic changes to the network with up to 2,500 compensated closures within the access criteria framework above. The Government expects that Post Office Ltd will implement this over an 18 month period from summer 2007. Post Office Ltd will be establishing new Outreach locations to provide access to services and Government will provide support for about 500 of these to mitigate the impact of the compensated closures.

A new account will be introduced to succeed the Post Office card account, available nationally and on the same basis of eligibility as now. The Government will be tendering for this service in accordance with EU rules.

Post Office Ltd will draw up area plans for closures and other changes in service provision within the framework above. Post Office Ltd will be initiating this process immediately and will in due course seek information and input from relevant parties including Postwatch, subpostmasters and local authorities as area plan proposals are developed for local public consultation.

Nationally, there will be around 50-60 area plans, based predominantly on groupings of parliamentary constituencies but allowing Post Office Ltd and Postwatch the flexibility to establish different boundaries where local considerations dictate otherwise.

Individual local area plans will each be subject to a 6 week public consultation. The role of Postwatch and local authorities in the development of proposals for, and local consultation on, closures and other changes in service provision is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Post Office Ltd and Postwatch and described in more detail below. In drawing up this Memorandum of Understanding, Post Office Ltd and Postwatch have drawn extensively on the lessons learned from the Urban Reinvention programme.

## The Post Office Network

This process will also allow an opportunity both to assess how local authorities can better engage with Post Office Ltd to channel more business through post offices to help strengthen their viability and also to explore the scope for co-hosting or co-locating post office services with local authority facilities under the network change programme or more widely in establishing Outreach services.

We will be working on proposals for devolving greater responsibility after 2011 for decisions on post office service provision to a local level and for providing greater flexibility for local funding decisions.

# Introduction

## Background

Post offices face a long-term challenge. Developments in technology and service delivery channels – such as online services, e-mail, telephone and Internet banking and retail services – enable people increasingly to make choices as to how they communicate and do business. Cumulatively the impact of these wider options is becoming substantial. Some four million fewer people are using their post office each week than two years ago. The network losses each week have risen from £2 million in 2005-06 to £4 million in the 2006-07 financial year. Against this background, the National Federation of Subpostmasters has recognised that the current size of the network of over 14,000 offices is unsustainable and the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee has acknowledged that many witnesses giving evidence to them also believe that the network is unsustainable.

Post offices provide key services in villages, towns and cities across the country and play an important social role in addition to their economic value. In recognition of this, the Government has invested £2 billion since 1999 to support the network and has confirmed that it will continue to make financial support available. On 14 December 2006 it put forward for public consultation its proposed future strategy for the post office network based on a funding package of up to £1.7 billion to 2011 to maintain a national network and to help Post Office Ltd make necessary changes to transform the network and put it on a stable footing for the future.

The Government's future strategy and funding package, together with the introduction of access criteria, recognise the social and economic role of post offices and also reflect its commitment to safeguard sustainable communities and to provide Post Office Ltd with a flexible framework to respond to new developments. The Government is committed to working with councils, agencies and local people and recognises the value that post offices add to local communities. It will provide continuing support of up to £150million per annum for the social network for the period until 2011. Together with the

## The Post Office Network

introduction of Outreach and support for community-run post offices, this will ensure that a national network with national coverage remains viable.

Beyond 2011, there will be continued need for public support of the social network. The access criteria set out in this document will provide a framework to ensure a national post office network with particular safeguards to protect vulnerable consumers in deprived urban and rural and remote areas. The criteria also provide a framework within which Post Office Ltd will be expected to respond to and make provision for new and developing communities

This package of Government measures is complemented by the steps that Post Office Ltd is taking to modernise the commercial network, restoring the Crown offices to profitability, investing in new product offerings and looking at innovative ways of delivering services that people need more cost effectively.

Changes to the size of the network are necessary but measures to protect vulnerable communities will be put in place. In addition to access criteria, there will be a significant expansion of Outreach services provided by subpostmasters to nearby small communities.

Collectively the Government's proposals are designed to deliver a national network on a stable footing.

## Consultation Process

The Government's public consultation on its strategy proposals for the network ran for 12 weeks from 14 December 2006 until 8 March 2007.

The consultation generated over 2,500 responses from individuals and from organisations and representative bodies at both local and national levels. The responses from many organisations and representative bodies reflected views and comments submitted by their members or allied groups.

In March the Trade and Industry Committee also issued its report 'Stamp of Approval? Restructuring the Post Office Network' following its inquiry.

During the consultation period and before it, Ministers and officials also had extensive contacts with key interested parties, including Postwatch and its Counters Advisory Group (with its wide range of customer representative bodies), Postcomm, the Commission for Rural Communities (and at specifically convened focus group meetings in rural locations) and the National Federation of Subpostmasters (at Executive Council and Branch meetings).

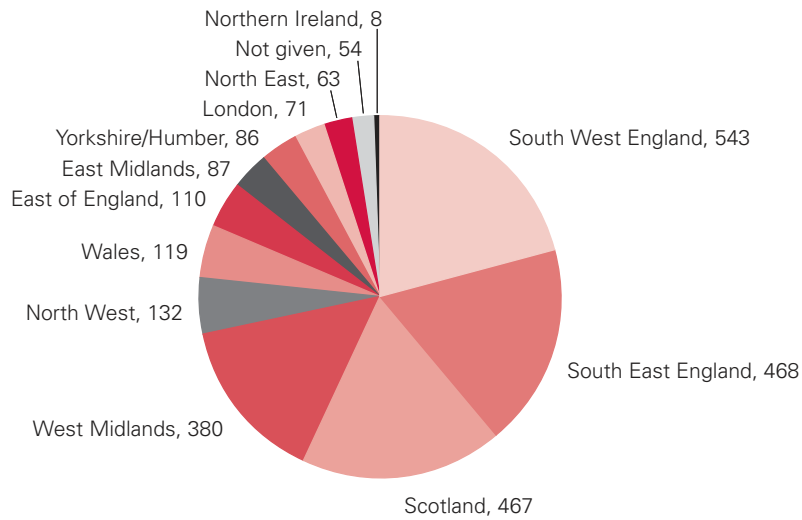
Many Members of Parliament have contributed to parliamentary debates on post office network issues and there has been a series of interdepartmental working group meetings. All of these events and contacts provided valuable insights and views on the issues facing the post office network and the role of post offices in the communities they serve.

All of these contributions have been reviewed and assessed for the views and concerns expressed, proposals put forward, conclusions drawn and

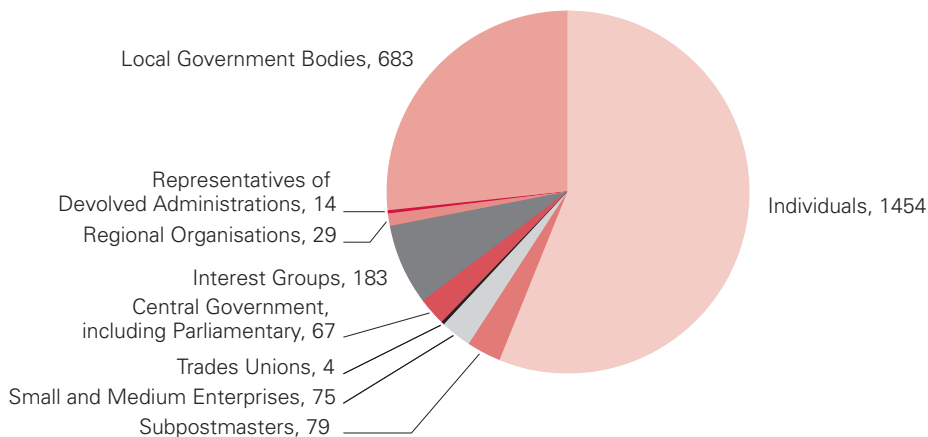


recommendations made. They have been helpful in informing and shaping the Government's final decisions.

### Responses by Country/English Region



### Breakdown of Respondents by Type



## Analysis of Themes

There has been widespread recognition of the scale of the problems the network faces, the need for action to put the network onto a more stable footing and general support for, or acceptance of, the following key strands of the Government's proposed strategy:

- its recognition of the importance of the social and economic role of post offices
- its recognition of the need for continued subsidy to support those parts of the network that can never be commercial but which provide key services in rural and deprived urban communities;

## The Post Office Network

- the introduction of access criteria to maintain a national network and to protect vulnerable consumers;
- the commitment to a very substantial funding package
- the commitment to a successor to the Post Office card account beyond 2010 and
- the use of Outreach services to mitigate the impact of closures.

On more specific aspects, many responses focused on:

- the definition of the social and economic role of post offices,
- a breakdown of the funding package,
- the future sustainability of the network;
- how future attrition can be mitigated,
- the range of factors to be considered in conjunction with access criteria in proposing closures and other changes in service provision, and
- the length of the local consultation period and of the programme overall.

# Responses to Questions in the Consultation Document

## Future Network Strategy

**Q1. Do you think the Government's forward strategy for the post office network addresses all the key issues and challenges the network faces?**

**Q2. Are there other significant factors affecting the future of the post office network which appear to have been overlooked in the Government's proposed approach?**

A large majority of responses addressed these issues together and both questions are therefore taken together in the Government's response below.

The summary does not attempt to repeat every comment made but aims to include the issues that were common to many responses and concerns that were widely reflected in a range of responses.

## Sustainability

A large majority of respondents welcomed the Government's commitment to maintain a stable national network with national coverage and also welcomed Government's acknowledgement that post offices have a social as well as an economic value. It is widely recognised that people are changing the way in which they access services and that the network needs to change to ensure it is better able to capture business and provide new services that people want in the future. Many respondents accept that the current network is unsustainable and some closures are necessary but stressed the social role played by the post office network and the importance of giving due weight to this, alongside economic considerations. There was widespread emphasis of the role of post offices in promoting social inclusion and acting as the social hub of many communities.

A number of respondents questioned whether the proposals were sufficient to put the network on a genuinely sustainable footing for the longer term and called for specific commitments to funding beyond 2011 to provide greater certainty for both customers and subpostmasters.

The Government recognises that further funding will be required beyond 2011. We fully accept that parts of the network can never be commercial and that continued funding will be needed. But it would be premature to make a judgement now about what level of subsidy might be required in four years time given the changes planned for the network in the intervening period.

Without continuing public support, a purely commercial network would comprise fewer than 4,000 branches; implying over 10,000 closures. That cannot be allowed to happen. That is why the Government is providing continuing support to maintain a network with truly national coverage and putting in place detailed access criteria to ensure this, with supplementary criteria focused to ensure reasonable coverage in areas where the social need is greatest.

The purpose of this funding package is to bring stability to the network by 2011 by reducing losses and becoming more competitive whilst ensuring that the social needs of rural and disadvantaged communities continue to be met.

We see no justification for increasing the size of the network as suggested by some respondents. It remains larger than all the banks and building societies combined. It is not the absolute number of post offices which is important but where they are positioned and the ways in which services are provided that will help sustain the network's viability and provide the national coverage to which the Government is committed.

## Funding

The ongoing commitment to a Social Network Payment both up to 2011 and beyond was generally welcomed but some consultees expressed concerns that its extension to the non-commercial urban network after March 2008 would result in an overall reduction in support for the rural network. Many respondents also asked for a breakdown of the £1.7 billion funding package. Some argued for a larger subsidy to avoid the need for any closures and others pressed for the Social Network Payment to be maintained at a level which ensured that the needs of sparsely populated and deprived areas were met. Several respondents suggested that there should be direct support to subpostmasters and funding to help refurbish and improve rural post offices.

The Government has decided that from April 2008, the Social Network Payment should support non-commercial offices across the entire network, not only rural ones. It considers that the overriding priority is to maintain a national network with national coverage as set out in the access criteria. This will require support for non-commercial outlets in urban as well as in rural areas. Post Office Ltd will be making further significant savings through reductions in central costs and overheads, combined with more cost effective delivery of services and the strategically planned closure of up to 2,500 offices. This means that the proposed social network payments

will be sufficient to underpin the whole of the non-commercial network without adverse impact on the support available for the rural part of the network.

The Government notes the requests for the £1.7billion funding to be broken down. Up to £750million is set aside for the Social Network Payment to 2010-11. The Social Network Payment will not be used to fund compensation to subpostmasters leaving the business. These costs will be provided for separately together with funding for ongoing losses. A more detailed breakdown will not be available until Post Office Ltd has developed its detailed proposals for reshaping the network at local level.

Post Office Ltd is planning to establish a small fund to encourage new investment in Core and Outreach facilities and in branches facing access and capacity issues as a result of reshaping of the network.

## Unplanned closures

Some respondents asked about the impact of further unplanned closures over and above the compensated closures of 2,500 offices, and called on the Government to prevent significant unplanned closures creating gaps in the network by retaining the no avoidable closure policy.

The Government accepts that there will inevitably be some natural exits moving forward, in addition to compensated closures under the programme. That is inevitable (for example if a subpostmaster decides to retire or move on, or even if their associated business is proving to be unprofitable) and neither the Government nor Post Office Ltd can prevent that. The Government's access criteria will however establish a minimum level of coverage that Post Office Ltd will be required to continue to ensure. Unplanned closures will be counterbalanced by replacements if those criteria would no longer be met. It is not possible to maintain a static network as new premises or replacement subpostmasters cannot always be found, but the access criteria will replace the no avoidable closure policy and ensure that a national network of post offices is maintained.

## Social role

Many respondents stressed the social role played by the post office network and the importance of giving due weight to this, alongside economic considerations.

The Government agrees. Without ongoing public support a purely commercial network would comprise fewer than 4,000 branches; implying over 10,000 closures. That cannot be allowed to happen. That is why the Government is providing very substantial ongoing financial support to maintain a network with truly national coverage. To ensure that national coverage, the Government is also putting in place detailed access criteria, with supplementary criteria focused to ensure proper coverage in areas where the social need is greatest.

## Government, local authority and banking services

Many respondents suggested that central and local government should closely examine the scope for retaining or offering more services through post offices to strengthen the viability of both the network and individual offices. There were also calls for all retail banks to make their current accounts accessible at post offices. The integration of post office services with the provision of other rural services was also seen as providing a potential synergy which could help create community service hubs adapted to local circumstances. On the other hand, one respondent believed that further subsidy to the post office threatened to distort the market and was unfair to alternative providers of the same services such as bill payment.

The Government notes the suggestion that more public services should be channelled through the post office network but rejects the notion that Government departments and local authorities should be required to do this at the expense of customer choice. People want to choose from a range of methods by which, for example, they can pay their bills or car tax. Increasingly people prefer to use telephone- and Internet-based access to Government services and find these more convenient. People have choices and are entitled to exercise them.

Equally Government departments cannot simply choose to award Post Office Ltd contracts to deliver certain services. EU rules and best practice in achieving value for money require transparent procurement and open competition. Many other private businesses provide similar, if not identical, services to those provided at the post office and to exclude them from the opportunity to bid for delivery contracts would potentially be unlawful under EU procurement law. Furthermore, it can only be right that Government departments and local authorities are required to find the best value options for delivering their services to ensure the best use of taxpayers' money.

It is, however, important that Post Office Ltd is given every opportunity to pursue Government business. Network change will put Post Office Ltd on a much stronger footing to compete for business in future, and to develop strong and innovative bids for delivering Government and other services. Post Office Ltd maintains regular links and contact with Government departments to ensure they are alert to all future business opportunities.

At present all the UK's major banks, along with the Nationwide building society, provide at least one basic bank account that is accessible at the post office. Some choose also to make their current accounts accessible over the post office counter. However some choose not to do so for commercial reasons, which may include concerns around cost or the potential loss of customers to a competitor. Ultimately these are commercial decisions for the banks and Government cannot force them to make their accounts available if they have taken considered commercial decisions not to do so. Discussions between the banks and Post Office Ltd continue on this matter but access to the retail banking services of all the

High Street banks through the post office network, however beneficial, must be a commercial decision for the individual banks and Post Office Ltd to make.

We shall encourage Post Office Ltd to explore further the scope for more cost effective delivery through co-location with other community services when such opportunities present themselves. Current pilot trials of shared service location based on post office premises include those with the police in Norfolk, Fife and Powys.

We will also be exploring how local authorities might channel more business through post offices to help strengthen their viability and to explore further the scope for co-locating post office services with local authority facilities as has been successfully done in Reading.

## Closure strategy

Some respondents expressed concern about further closures in urban areas so soon after the urban reinvention programme and many respondents pressed for Post Office Ltd, in selecting offices for closure, to balance economic viability, customer usage and social role against subpostmasters' preferences.

Although urban reinvention went some way in aligning urban post offices to the numbers of users, there remain urban areas where several post offices are providing services in the same catchment area. It is right that this level of provision be looked at again to enable Post Office Ltd to optimise coverage and efficiency. The access criteria proposed for urban and urban deprived areas will however ensure that proper coverage is maintained in urban areas.

The strategy is to get the right service in the right area to meet the access criteria and ensure national coverage. Post Office Ltd needs to be able to make compulsory closures to ensure these objectives are met. Closure decisions will not be determined by subpostmasters' preferences though there will be cases where there is a strategic fit between a closure proposal and the subpostmaster's wish to leave the network. Post Office Ltd and the National Federation of Subpostmasters have signed an agreement on compensation payment terms and arrangements

## Crown offices

Whilst there was support for Post Office Ltd's strategy for modernising and improving Crown post offices, there was some opposition to further franchising. An alternative viewpoint was that less should be spent on Crown offices in favour of maintaining the rural network and ensuring the continuity of post offices in areas with no alternative rather than supporting the Crown network in areas where there is a concentration of businesses providing similar services. Some respondents asked whether Government support would be used to support the Crown network and expressed concern about distortion of competition.

The Crown network is heavily loss-making, with forecast losses of £70 million this year. Post Office Ltd's vision for the Crown offices is for a smaller national chain of 'flagship' offices which pioneers new technology such as self-service channels. Post Office Ltd sees the retention of Crown branches as vital for the expansion of new business areas given that these branches account for over 60% of the sales of new financial services products. The problems of this part of the network cannot be ignored. In developing an overall strategy for a viable national network, Post Office Ltd needs to modernise the Crown network and restore it to profit by reducing its cost base and generating additional revenue by growing its financial services offer. By pursuing link-ups with well established, respected retail partners such as the recently announced commercial deal with WH Smith, Post Office Ltd can both cut unacceptable losses and maintain, if not improve, customer service. Converting a Crown office to a franchise office does not reduce the number of post offices – it is a different means of providing the same services.

### Role of local authorities

The proposal to investigate what future role local authorities might play in decisions influencing the shape of the network and delivery of services beyond 2011 was generally welcomed in the responses.

Government is working with the relevant organisations and administrations with a view to deciding, in the longer term, the extent that funding and decision making on the provision of local services can be devolved to local level. The involvement of local authorities in the forthcoming network change programme will provide an opportunity to explore ways in which local councils can work with Post Office Ltd to help mitigate potential gaps in service and the potential role that local authorities could play in future funding decisions.

### Social and economic factors

A number of respondents questioned whether the social cost of closures had been fully factored into the Government's strategy and commented on the need to offset the withdrawal of Government and other public services by increasing the subsidy to the post office network. Many respondents also questioned whether the Government's proposals adequately reflected factors such as impact on local small retail businesses (including the last shop in the village), availability of public transport, the environmental impact of increased car use, alternative access to key services, local demographics (especially the impact on older people) and impact on local economies. Many respondents commented on the importance of local access to post office services for small businesses and home workers, a significant and growing element of the local economy, particularly in rural areas, and many were concerned that the loss of the local post office would result in additional travel time and costs and reduced opening/working hours.



The consultation document stated that closures will principally affect a combination of branches in areas of over-provision and those that are least used. Post Office Ltd will be tasked with taking a strategic overview of service provision to ensure that in areas of over-provision, people should be able to find an alternative branch nearby and the vast majority will still be within walking distance of their nearest office. With the least used, the number of people affected will, by the nature of the offices, be low. The introduction of new access criteria will minimise the impact by ensuring that the network remains readily accessible across the UK – with far greater coverage than any other retailer or financial service provider or indeed any other public service provider

A number of studies have sought to put a price on the social and economic value of a post office, but this will vary from location to location as an assessment is highly dependent on the demography of the area. Some studies also indicate that people quickly adapt to new ways of accessing the post office services. But the retention of a large national network with continuing comprehensive coverage will ensure that many people will be largely unaffected by the changes.

## **Access criteria**

**Q3. Do you have comments on the national access criteria proposed?**

**Q4. Do you have specific comments on the access criteria proposed for deprived urban and rural areas?**

The consultation document proposed a framework of access criteria to establish a minimum level of coverage nationwide and in areas of particular need.

A large majority of responses addressed the issue of access criteria and many of the responses to these two questions overlapped. The responses to both questions are therefore taken together below as is the Government's response.

Many respondents welcomed the Government's proposals to introduce access criteria as a step in the right direction.

A number of parties asked for further clarification of how the access criteria would apply and an explanation of the urban/rural area definitions for the purposes of access criteria. Some questioned whether the proposed criteria provided sufficient protection at local level and some argued that specific access criteria should be applied at country (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) or a more local level.

The Government's intention is to establish a comprehensive set of criteria applying at national level to ensure that access to post office services continues to be available across the country. Four of the criteria will apply at national level:

## The Post Office Network

- Nationally, 99% of the UK population to be within 3 miles and 90% of the population to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 99% of the total population in deprived urban areas across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 95% of the total urban population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 95% of the total rural population across the UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

In addition the following criterion will apply at the level of each and every individual postcode district, establishing a minimum level of coverage at a very local level.

- 95% of the population of the postcode district to be within 6 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

The access criteria replace the requirement placed on Post Office Ltd to prevent avoidable closures of rural offices. But it is important to note that these criteria represent the minimum levels of accessibility and in many, if not most, cases actual coverage will be greater.

The emphasis of our policy is to maintain a national network with national coverage. We reject therefore the proposal that the criteria above should be applied at the level of individual countries or smaller local areas.

Accessibility to a post office for most people will be covered by the national criteria. However, in more remote areas where the population tends to be widely dispersed, it could be the case that they are not captured by the national criteria - an issue picked up by many respondents. The introduction of the postcode district criterion will address this issue and provide protection to those communities.

There are some 2,800 postcode districts (the first half of the postcode e.g. GU51) in the UK. We believe that a requirement to ensure that 95% of the population in every postcode district is within 6 miles of their nearest post office provides protection at a local level. In the consultation document our proposal was to exempt 38 postcode districts that currently do not meet the criterion. However, we have reflected on the comments received and concluded that no postcode district should be exempt from meeting this standard. In implementing local area plans, following local consultation, Post Office Ltd will be required to ensure that every postcode district provides that coverage, without exception. Post offices in the 38 postcode districts that currently fail the criterion will not be compulsorily closed during the transformation programme and Post Office Ltd will look to fill the gaps in coverage at the time that they develop local area plans so that by the end of each implementation plan, every postcode district in the local area plan will be required to ensure that 95% of the population is within 6

miles of the nearest post office outlet. This may mean that some new post offices will be required to open.

Many respondents believed the deprived urban criterion to be a diminution of the current protection which they assumed ring-fenced from closure those branches located in deprived urban areas where the nearest branch was more than half a mile away. There were also many calls for an extension of the criterion to cover the 15% most deprived urban areas and for specific provision for deprived rural areas.

Currently there is no protection for access to post office services in deprived urban areas. The half mile 'ring-fence' protection only applied for the purposes and duration of the urban reinvention programme and focused on the retention of the specific post office rather than taking account of the closest branch to customers. Our proposal focuses provision on accessibility rather than protection of post offices solely because of the distance to the next one, irrespective of the number of people that they actually serve.

The introduction of the specific protection for deprived urban areas, in addition to the national criteria, further safeguards these vulnerable communities. We proposed that the protection would apply to the 10% most deprived urban areas but have decided, in light of responses to consultation, to extend this to ensure that the 15% most deprived urban areas are protected

We understand the requests for further explanation of the definitions in relation to the access criteria. We have elected to continue to use the urban/rural divide that applied in respect of the urban reinvention programme. The definitions are:

Urban – a community with 10,000 or more inhabitants in a continuous built up area.

Rural – a community not covered by the definition of urban above.

Deprived Urban – the most disadvantaged urban parts of the UK.

To ensure a fair balance between the countries in the UK, urban deprived areas will be defined by reference to the most deprived 15% of Super Output Areas in England, 15% of Data Zones in Scotland, and 30% of Super Output Areas in Wales and Northern Ireland. This takes into account the proportional spread of disadvantaged areas across the UK<sup>1</sup>.

1 Each nation produces separate Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This means that the 15% most deprived areas across the UK cannot be specifically identified from existing data. A blanket 15% application across each nation would not be equitable or reflect the relative need of each country (since an urban area outside the 15% most deprived areas in one country might have greater need than an area within the 15% most deprived in another). We have built on the approach developed for the application of stamp duty relief, and sought to apply the same protection to each nation as that experienced by its most comparable English region (based upon appropriate socio-economic indicators). As a result 15% of urban areas in England and Scotland will be defined as 'urban deprived' and 30% in Wales and Northern Ireland.

## The Post Office Network

Many respondents welcomed the proposal to tailor access criteria to take account of significant local geographical constraints such as rivers, mountains and valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands and other practical constraints like railways to avoid undue hardship. We also received many responses asking that other factors be added, including the availability of public transport, actual travelling distances and times by road or other routes accessible on foot, and other socio-economic factors including the wider economic impact on communities. Some respondents took the view that the distances proposed in the criteria would be physically taxing for many customers if making both legs of the journey on foot. The key concern of many respondents was that access criteria had to be relevant to people at the local level with appropriate safeguards for the vulnerable and proper consideration given to factors relating to people, place and provision of essential services. The need for the criteria to be responsive to future population trends with particular reference to areas of population growth was also raised.

**We recognise the force of the points above and in applying the access criteria, Post Office Ltd will be required to take into account obstacles such as rivers, mountains and valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands to avoid undue hardship. Post Office Ltd will also consider the availability of public transport and alternative access to key post office services, local demographics and the impact on local economies when drawing up area plans. Post Office Ltd will demonstrate how these factors have been considered in arriving at their plans in each local consultation document.**

Many respondents also called for parity of treatment between rural and urban areas, between countries within the UK and for parity to be maintained.

**We agree that no particular part of the network and no particular group of people should be significantly more adversely affected by closures or other changes in service provision than any other. We therefore expect that Post Office Ltd will be making roughly similar numbers of closures in rural and urban areas. We also expect that when developing detailed area plans Post Office Ltd will reflect the principle that no country within the UK and no group of inhabitants at the area plan level should be significantly more adversely affected than any other.**

## Ensuring that access criteria continue to be met

Several respondents asked how access criteria would be monitored and enforced to ensure that potential gaps in the resulting network from unplanned closures would be avoided. It was asked how monitoring might note changes over time in most deprived area rankings and check compliance in development areas which experience sizeable population growth.

**The Government considers that external monitoring of and responsibility for reviewing of Post Office Ltd's compliance with the access criteria should rest with Postwatch (and subsequently its successor body – the National Consumer Council). Postwatch already contributes to the annual report on**

the network prepared by Postcomm and the role of periodically monitoring and reviewing compliance with access criteria would be a logical extension of that work. Discussions are in progress on the nature of the monitoring and review arrangements.

## Relationship to the universal service obligation

Some respondents asked how the new access criteria would relate to Royal Mail's universal service obligation and whether Outreach services would be part of the universal service. Some also called for the access criteria to include a minimum service obligation for all post offices and Outreach outlets including minimum opening hours and a minimum range of products.

It is the responsibility of Postcomm to define and protect the universal service and to ensure licence holders' compliance with the universal service obligation. The Government has established these access criteria in recognition of the social role which the post office network performs in addition to its role in providing postal services. These criteria are separate from, and independent of, Royal Mail's universal service obligation which is a matter for Postcomm. It is therefore for Postcomm to enter into discussions with Royal Mail Group to ensure that the universal service obligation is not in any way compromised in fulfilling access criteria requirements.

Decisions about local service offerings and opening hours are a matter for Post Office Ltd and local subpostmasters, reflecting the needs and demand in local communities. It is not appropriate for the Government to intervene in this or seek to set national standards for matters which are best considered at local level.

There were also calls for consideration to be given to the potential for integrating post office services with other local services.

We believe that local people are best placed to understand the needs of their communities but we also recognise the continuing need for national provision. We will be reflecting on experiences of local involvement in light of the forthcoming change programme and will be considering further what role local authorities might play in the future provision of services.

## Closure programme & the future network

A number of respondents questioned the scale of the closure programme and the potential for the network to decline over time significantly below 12,000 outlets as a result of further uncompensated closures yet still be within the requirements of the accessibility criteria.

The Government believes that the access criteria ensure reasonable coverage levels on a nationwide basis. We have set a maximum number of compensated closures as we believe that a network of around 12,000 branches will be sustainable. However, the market in which post offices

operate has changed dramatically in recent years and is likely to continue to evolve. Post Office Ltd must be able to develop with that market and it would be wrong for Government to invest in their future while at the same time placing arbitrary and inflexible constraints on them. Some closures are unavoidable and this is likely always to be the case.

The Government decided on a network closure programme of 2,500 offices following detailed consideration with Post Office Ltd. In arriving at this decision, we were aware of the need to balance the social needs of the network with the cost to the taxpayer of continuing to fund a national network.

As was stated in the consultation document, Post Office Ltd cannot continue to sustain current levels of losses. The network as it stands is unsustainable. In addressing these losses, Post Office Ltd will need to take a strategic approach to the network. While significant efficiency savings have been identified, the scale of losses cannot be properly tackled if the network remains at its current size. The Government has to strike a balance between ensuring that the network remains accessible, particularly to vulnerable groups, and the heavy cost to the taxpayer. We believe that a net closure programme of 2,000 – as 500 new Outreach access points will replace some closures – enables us to meet those goals.

### Local consultation

Respondents welcomed the commitment to local consultation on Post Office Ltd's proposals for closure and associated changes in service provision and were keen to see wide engagement to ensure that the views of local people are taken into account before any final decisions are taken by Post Office Ltd. Many consultees were keen to see early input from local authorities to the development of local area plans. Many respondents sought an increase from 6 to 12 weeks for the consultation period on local area plans. Many also thought that an 18 month period for the whole programme was challenging and should be extended to allow for the complexity of matching closures with Outreach arrangements without gaps in service. A contrary view called for local consultation to be carried out speedily to minimise continuing uncertainty for subpostmasters and customers

The Government notes the arguments but has decided to confirm its decision for a six week local consultation period. That reflects the approach followed during the latter stages of the urban reinvention programme. The early stages of the local process will involve detailed area plan development discussions with Postwatch and the involvement of local authorities in advance of formal public consultation. When combined with the subsequent six weeks of public consultation, the Government believes that this will enable sufficiently robust consultations to take place at a local area level. We are also mindful of the fact that the organisation representing subpostmasters has argued for a speedy local consultation

to minimise uncertainty for subpostmasters and customers, an issue acknowledged by other respondents.

Post Office Ltd's timescale for developing, and consulting publicly at local level on, local area plans for changes in post office service provision is 90 days overall. In the pre-public consultation phase, Postwatch will provide input and advice on how best to meet the area criteria while achieving changes to the network that are sensitive to customer needs, implement Government policy requirements and minimise adverse customer impact. The aim is to assist Post Office Ltd in developing a practical area plan for a sustainable network to put to public consultation. During public consultation, Postwatch will ensure that the right people are being consulted, that the consultation process is being properly observed and that issues raised are promptly shared with Post Office Ltd. After public consultation, Postwatch will consider the responses and discuss the specific issues raised with Post Office Ltd. There is also provision for Postwatch to nominate individual branches for further discussion and joint review by Postwatch and Post Office Ltd before final decisions are reached.

Post Office Ltd considers that implementation of the changes, including the introduction of new Outreach services, within an 18 month period is deliverable. The Government confirms the decision to aim to complete the programme within that period.

## **Delivery of Services**

**Q5. Do you have any suggestions as to how services might be better delivered through the post office network?**

### **One stop shops**

Many respondents called for Government to recognise and support local post offices as focal points or 'information gateways' for national and local Government products and services enabling all vulnerable groups access to vital services in their communities.

The suggestion that post offices become 'one stop shops' for Government services has been voiced on numerous occasions. This is an area which Government has looked at previously. In 2002 we provided £25m for the 'Your Guide' pilot to test the concept of post offices as a one-stop shop for advice on Government services. The impact of the 'Your Guide' pilot was limited with 85% of customers commenting that they would have found the information they obtained elsewhere. The pilot showed that the costs of rolling out a publicly funded national scheme would be excessive and would not represent value for money given the size of the likely customer base that would use and benefit from it.

## Extension of opening hours

A number of respondents believed consideration should be given to extending opening hours at post offices to broaden the customer base and increase footfall. The absence of Saturday opening by smaller rural offices was seen as a significant impediment to accessing services in such areas.

The core opening hours for a full time post office branch are 09:00-17:30 weekdays and 09:00-12:30 on Saturdays. Where the branch operates an open plan or combined retail and post office counter, retailers are encouraged to offer post office services for extended hours, preferably to the same times as the associated retail. Therefore subpostmasters can, if they choose, open the post office for longer than the core hours but their remuneration would be based solely on the value and volume of the post office products or services sold. In some rural branches the level of business generated does not cover the costs of operating on a full time basis. In order to maintain services in that location the subpostmaster is contracted to open on a restricted hours basis and receives a fixed payment for the number of hours under the terms of the contract. In branches offering restricted opening the subpostmaster can still choose to offer Post Office services for longer and many do choose this option as they are in attendance anyway.

## Open network to other mail service providers

Many respondents called for the network to be opened up to other mail providers as a means of strengthening the viability of sub post offices.

The Government recognises the benefits of competition. It is clear that encouraging extra business into the network is absolutely essential. It is simply wrong to suggest that there are barriers to competitors. We opened up the postal services market with the Postal Services Act 2000 and any mail company that wants to use the post office network can approach Post Office Ltd to discuss a commercial agreement. In the event that a deal cannot be reached the matter can be taken up by the Regulator.

At present, Post Office Ltd only provides mail services for Royal Mail and Royal Mail uses the network to satisfy its regulatory obligation to provide service access points. The company is alive to the potential benefits to be had from providing package and parcel collection services at post offices. Royal Mail already offers a parcel collection service through the network. Its 'Local Collect' service enables customers ordering goods from selected mail order catalogues and Internet suppliers that use Royal Mail (and Parcelforce Worldwide) services to have goods delivered to a post office if they do not expect to be at home when the delivery is made. Alternatively, people can elect to have their Royal Mail package or Parcelforce Worldwide parcel redirected to their local post office for collection later for a small charge.



Clearly this is a developing market, and we will continue to encourage the Post Office to take opportunities where they exist. Post Office Ltd stands ready to develop its business in this area. Realistically, however, it is unlikely that any new commercially negotiated deal between Post Office Ltd and other mail providers would create significant volumes of new business and revenues for subpostmasters; rather it is likely to be a substitute for Royal Mail business.

## POca

Respondents generally welcomed the Government's decision to continue with a new account after the current Post Office card account (POca) contract ends in 2010 in view of their importance for financially and socially vulnerable people. Many also offered views on the replacement POca with some suggesting increased functionality, such as ATM access and a direct debit facility, with simple application procedures and for anyone switching to the replacement POca a seamless process with no requirement for new applications and no change to the existing PIN numbers.

We understand the concerns about the future POca and note the suggestions made. The scope for introducing new functions in the replacement product will be considered as part of the product design and tendering process, but, as mentioned in response to Questions 1 and 2, we must recognise that one of the attractions of the POca is its simplicity and we do not simply wish to create a basic bank account by another name when there are many such accounts already on the market, many of which can be used at the Post Office. We share the aim that any change from the existing product to the new product is as seamless for customers as possible, and this will again be taken into consideration as part of the product design and tendering process.

## Credit Unions

Some respondents suggested that working closely with Credit Unions would help the post office extend financial inclusion and generate new business.

This is a commercial matter for Post Office Ltd and the Credit Unions. There have been some discussions between Post Office Ltd and the Credit Union body at a national level on the scope for working together and they continue to explore all the possible options.

## Financial services

A number of consultees suggested that Post Office Ltd should introduce a greater mix of financial services to suit low-income customers and to help meet social and financial inclusion objectives.

Post offices are now the leading supplier of foreign currency exchange services. In a venture with the Bank of Ireland, Post Office Ltd has in recent

years introduced a wider range of financial services. The Government's proposals support Post Office Ltd's efforts to develop new financial services products, building on their existing success in this area. For example, the Instant Saver account, introduced in April 2006 has proved very popular with customers as has car and home insurance. The venture partners continue to look for products that are well matched to the needs of Post Office Ltd's customers. In common with all providers of financial services, Post Office Ltd is bound by the regulatory framework set by the Financial Services Authority. Subpostmasters are not qualified to give financial advice but can and do act as introducers to financial products available through the post office. Beyond this, there is no obstacle to expansion of financial services available and Government will continue to encourage Post Office Ltd to explore all possible opportunities in this market.

### Parcel delivery/collection

Many respondents wanted post offices to offer a parcel delivery and collection point service.

Royal Mail already offers a collection service through the post office network. In addition, the 'Local Collect' service enables customers ordering goods from selected mail order catalogues and Internet suppliers that use Royal Mail (and Parcelforce Worldwide) services to have goods delivered to a post office if they do not expect to be at home when the delivery is made. Alternatively people can elect to have their Royal Mail package or Parcelforce Worldwide parcel redirected to their local post office for collection later for a small charge.

### Outreach

#### Q 6. Do you have any comments on Outreach arrangements as a means of maintaining service to small and remote communities?

Many respondents agreed that Outreach has the potential to provide a more cost effective service in areas with low footfall whilst offering a mutually beneficial option where another small business acts as 'host' site for post office services.

Of the four generic Outreach types, respondents generally see the 'Partner' and 'Hosted' services as the most preferable alternative to a fixed branch. While sensitivities about location may need to be taken into account, many diverse locations such as pubs, petrol stations village halls and churches are already being successfully used.

There was a general welcome for the idea of a mobile post office as a means to maintain service, particularly in remote rural areas. Though the mobile post office has received significant attention and levels of acceptance where it has been trialled, it is clearly something of an unknown for the majority of respondents who have no personal experience of using it. As a result, a wide

range of concerns was raised over logistical and operational issues. Many respondents expressed concerns that a mobile office might not be available when they needed it and there were also substantial concerns about security.

Others suggested that it would be sensible to explore whether there might be the potential to link mobile post offices with other mobile services as has been piloted by Post Office Ltd working with a mobile library in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.

The 'Home' service was seen as the least preferable alternative service for individual users. Many respondents expressed a concern that despite the additional convenience, having services delivered to the door was in fact least preferable because it removed the reason to leave the house and therefore reduced social interaction. However, it is apparent that in some instances, the Home service has been successful in supporting the needs of small businesses with Core sub-post offices in Aldeburgh and Glastonbury having arranged for mail pick ups directly from small businesses that have signed up to the service.

**In our consultation we set out our proposals that, building on trials in place since 2005, Post Office Ltd should introduce some 500 Outreach services to mitigate the consequences of some managed post office closures. We indicated that we would provide support for Post Office Ltd to open new Outreach locations to provide access to services for small remote communities by building on the success of the pilot trials including mobile post offices and post offices hosted in other locations such as village halls, community centres or pubs.**

We welcome the overall acceptance in the responses of the need to explore more cost-effective means of providing post office services, particularly in remote areas. Respondents generally agreed with the principle of increasing scope of the Core and Outreach approach. It has also been helpful to receive detailed suggestions for how implementation of Outreach, beyond the existing pilot schemes, can be best achieved.

## Shared concerns

Whilst many were supportive of the introduction of new service delivery methods, there was an over-riding concern that there should not be any decrease in the availability or range of services provided. There was also a strong emphasis on engaging with communities at an early stage to determine their usage requirements and on local authorities and parish councils being involved in local consultation on changes to service.

Many respondents commented that Outreach, as a replacement for a fixed branch, would need to be carefully tailored to local circumstances as regards type and availability of service offered.

**We want Post Office Ltd actively to engage with local authorities and communities, through a process of local consultation and ahead of establishing Outreach services, so that they can be tailored to individual**

circumstances and stand the best chance of acceptance and success. The company should take account of local usage patterns and ensure that Outreach services are adequate to accommodate the level of demand. Where possible, the company should ensure that the social benefit of Outreach is maximised by arranging availability to fit with local activities. The company should also investigate the level of demand for making Outreach services available in areas where there is no longer, or has never been, a fixed post office service.

### Specific concerns

Some consultees were sceptical about the financial benefits and the viability of Outreach and had concerns that the proposed number of Outreach would not be sustainable. The technical reliability of the portable or mobile equipment for some types of Outreach service was also a concern to some respondents

Post Office Ltd will need to continue to work with the National Federation of Subpostmasters so that entrepreneurial subpostmasters who are willing to offer Outreach services, and are well placed to do so, are incentivised and are remunerated accordingly.

Post Office Ltd's pilots have shown that Outreach services can yield significant cost savings and the continued operation of the pilots has enabled the company to overcome initial teething problems and achieve very high levels of technical and service reliability, demonstrating the sustainability of the Outreach model.

### Community ownership

**Q 7. Do you have comments on the practicality of community ownership of parts of the post office network, which might involve the transfer of assets to community organisations and/or the establishment of local mutual or co-operative organisations to own and run local services?**

Many respondents broadly welcomed the potential for greater community involvement, taking the view that Post Office Ltd should be encouraged to engage actively with any communities expressing an interest in adopting a community ownership solution. However some questioned whether this was a means of transferring a Government public service provision problem over to communities whilst others expressed concerns about the long-term sustainability of community owned models which rely on the goodwill and funding of local residents. Others raised concerns about security and questioned whether the role and services provided by post offices are suited to community ownership given the levels of training and knowledge required of subpostmasters and whether access to post office services should be contingent on community enterprises.

The community ownership model was seen as being capable of successfully catering for rural communities of between 400 – 1,000 people. It was thought

work should be done to identify a community ownership contract that would help facilitate development of the community ownership model. As pointed out by the National Federation of Subpostmasters, there are also financial service regulations that subpostmasters abide by and this poses further issues when seeking to expand further the concept in this field.

The vast majority of post offices are private businesses – traded commercially. Having a community run its own office will not, on its own, make it financially viable from Post Office Ltd's perspective.

But there are currently some 150 thriving community-owned shops in the UK, many of which already incorporate post offices. And it is clear from the comments received that there is widespread interest in the concept of establishing more. The Government has since published the Quirk review into community management and ownership of assets, Making Assets Work, and its response which set out practical proposals for removing barriers to increasing community ownership. The Quirk Review recognises that community ownership can play a role in enhancing the local environment and giving local people a bigger stake in the future of their area.

The Government wants to encourage more community-run post offices where they are viable. We recognise that the processes can be daunting. The Government will therefore work with stakeholders to ensure there is suitable advice available to interested parties and that community ownership is promoted as a possible means of maintaining post office services where other options are not available. We will also expect Post Office Ltd to engage constructively with groups who present a viable case for community ownership in those circumstances.

# Next Steps

Having reached its final decisions, the Government believes it is important to implement its strategy for the post office network as soon as is practicable and is consistent with sound preparation and planning.

Key steps for Government include obtaining state aid clearance from the European Commission for the Government funding package underpinning the post office network strategy. A notification will now be submitted. In addition, Parliamentary approval for elements of the funding package will be required and this will be sought before the Summer Parliamentary recess.

The Government is particularly keen that measures that will help to contain or reduce the network's losses and to reduce damaging uncertainty over future service provision for customers and subpostmasters should be taken forward as soon as possible. The programme of compulsory closures together with the introduction of Outreach will therefore be a priority.

Government will continue to work up proposals on the scope for devolving greater responsibility for decisions on post office service provision to local authorities and devolved administrations and for providing greater flexibility for local funding decisions.

Post Office Ltd will develop its network change programme within the framework of the access criteria and the wider factors which they will be required to take into account or consider in developing area plan proposals for closures and other changes in service provision. In the first instance this will require extensive analysis of the characteristics, usage and financial performance of the existing network on an office by office basis to identify and assess options for change. Post Office Ltd will be initiating this process immediately as a comprehensive data analysis exercise. The second stage will be to seek information and input from relevant parties, including Postwatch, subpostmasters and local authorities, as area plan proposals are developed for public consultation. Taking the pre-consultation phase together with the six week public consultation period, the total process allows a reasonable period of time analysis and assessment of proposals at the local level.

Nationally, Post Office Ltd expects to accommodate its network reshaping programme in around 50-60 area plans, based predominantly on groupings of parliamentary constituencies. Post Office Ltd plans to develop these plans progressively over a 12-15 month period from mid-summer 2007 and by July will publish a timetable of when they expect to announce plans for each area. They aim to complete the closure and network reshaping programme by the end of 2008.

# List of Respondents

Abberley Parish Council  
Abbotskerswell Parish Council  
Abbott DM  
Abbott P  
Abell BJ  
Aberdeen City Council  
Aberdeenshire Council  
Aberlady Community Association  
Abingdon Town Council  
Aborfield & Newland Parish Council  
Acourt B  
Action with Communities in Rural England  
Acton Turville Parish Council  
Adam B (MSP)  
Adams CF,DPW,RV,ML  
Adams P  
Adams T  
Ade P  
Ade S  
Adey F/Gable Tea Rooms  
Adie J  
Adisham Parish Council  
Adkins Mrs&Mrs  
Advice NI  
Age Concern England/Jones G  
Age Concern Islington/Tansley K  
Age Concern Lerwick/Erskine A  
Age Concern Ripon/Rainer P  
Age Concern/Huskinson M  
Age Concern/Simmonds T  
Age Concern/Spye J  
Age Concern/Turnock H  
AICMO  
Aitken E  
Alconbury Parish Council  
Alconbury Weston Parish Council  
Alexander D  
Alexander D (MP)  
Alexander P  
Alford Parish Council  
Alford S  
Alfred R  
All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural Services/Dunne P (MP)  
Allen A  
East Hoscote Parish Council  
Allen B  
Allen CVD  
Allen P  
Alvsaker R  
AMICUS  
Anand M Reverend  
Anderson A  
Anderson E  
Anderson KME  
Anderson M  
Anderson Mr&Mrs G  
Anderson S  
Andrew J  
Andrews M  
Andrews Mr&Mrs C  
Andrews Mrs  
Andreoss Community Council  
Anglesey Federation of Womens Institutes/Uchaf S  
Anson B  
Antaur JW  
Applewhite Mrs  
Archbishops' Council, Church Buildings Division/Griffiths P  
Archer E  
Archer IJ  
Ardovicone D  
Ardrishaig Community Council  
Ardrross Community Council  
Argyll & Bute Council  
Arkell J  
Arlington J  
Armagh District Council  
Armstrong J  
Arne Parish Council  
Arthur JS  
Arthur JW  
Arthur Rank Centre  
Ashingdon Parish Council  
Ashurst Wood Parish Council  
Association of British Credit Unions Ltd  
Association of Independent Cash Machine Operators  
Association of Scottish Community Councils ASCC  
Attfield S  
Attwood Ms  
Auphlet DJ  
Austin AM  
Austin HE  
Avery L  
Avory G  
Awre Parish Council  
Axbridge Town Council  
Aylesbury Vale District Council  
Ayliffe S  
Ayton Village Community Council  
Badgett FD  
Bailey A  
Bailey Mr  
Baines P  
Baker D/Lydbury English Centre Ltd  
Baker H  
Baker JM  
Balfour Scott D  
Balhatchet P  
Ball EE  
Ball P  
Ballantine TA  
Ballatonet P  
Baltonborough Parish Council



Bamber J  
 Banks H&D  
 Banks S  
 Banner M  
 Bantick A  
 Bantick A/Cairngorm Music  
 Bantick H  
 Barber S  
 Barcis J  
 Bardgett F&A  
 Barham Parish Council  
 Barker CD  
 Barnes MJ  
 Barnes R/Select Research Ltd  
 Barnett C  
 Barnett P  
 Barnett S  
 Barnsley MBC  
 Barr C  
 Baron J MP  
 Barret J (MP) and Margaret Smith MSP  
 Barrett P  
 Barrington Parish Council  
 Barrios C  
 Barton A  
 Barton B  
 Barton Parish Council  
 Barton St David Parish Council  
 Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council  
 Bass JM  
 Bassetlaw District Council  
 Bassington KJ/Roxwell Wednesday Club  
 Bate B  
 Bateman R  
 Bates D  
 Bates H/Milton House Holiday Lets  
 Bates MG  
 Bates RD  
 Bates S  
 Bathford Parish Council  
 Bathgate M  
 Baughen K  
 Bawden R  
 Bawdsey Parish Council  
 Bawn T  
 Baxter D  
 Baxter L  
 Bayliss NC  
 Bean Residents Association  
 Bean T  
 Bear P  
 Bearcroft B  
 Beard J  
 Beasley W  
 Beattie WM  
 Beaumont B  
 Beckett J Reverend  
 Bedford L  
 Bedlow Women's Institute  
 Beeching J  
 Bees A  
 Beetham Parish Council  
 Belbroughton Parish Council  
 Beus EE  
 Bell A  
 Bell B  
 Bell JR  
 Bell S  
 Bennett AW  
 Bennett J  
 Bergin S  
 Berkeley Town Council  
 Berry C  
 Berry G  
 Berryman Mr  
 Bertie C  
 Better Government for elderly in South Lanarkshire  
 Bettyhill, Strathnaver & Altnaharra Comm. Council  
 Biawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council  
 Bickford J  
 Bideford Town Council  
 Biggs K  
 Bijman Adirana  
 Billericay Town Council  
 Billing T  
 Bingham A  
 Birch HJ  
 Birches Community Association  
 Birchwood B  
 Birmingham City Council/Hill M  
 Birmingham City Council/Hughes S  
 Birmingham City Council/Kirk L  
 Bishop D&M  
 Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council  
 Black MC  
 Blackawton Parish Council  
 Blackburn and District Trades Council  
 Blackburn with Darwen BC  
 Blackford Community Council  
 Blackler GFA  
 Blackwood N  
 Blaikie G  
 Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council  
 Blakemore R  
 Blandford District Trades Council  
 Blandford Forum Town Council  
 Blean Parish Council  
 Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council  
 Blewitt C  
 Blewn J  
 Blockley Parish Council  
 Boardman K  
 Boardman W  
 Boddington C  
 Boddington Parish Council  
 Bolingbroke L  
 Bolney and Cowfold Parish Councils  
 Bonehill Mr  
 Bonner L  
 Bonson G  
 Boonham A J  
 Booth P  
 Borough of Pendle  
 Borthwick  
 Bossom P  
 Boston Borough Council  
 Boughton RH  
 Bourne FA  
 Bournemouth Borough Council  
 Bourton Parish Council  
 Bowes Parish Council  
 Bowhay J  
 Bowman M  
 Bowyer P  
 Boyce J  
 Brachtvogel P  
 Braco & Greenloaning Community Council  
 Bradford & Cookbury Parish Council  
 Bradford A  
 Bradford Metropolitan District Council  
 Bradford on Avon Town Council  
 Brady G (MP)  
 Braggins M  
 Brain L/Gem Jewellery Ltd  
 Braintree District Council/Barrett K  
 Braintree District Council/Bolter S  
 Braithwaite A  
 Bramall D and Jennifer and David Thomson  
 Bramley Parish Council  
 Brandean and Hinton Ampner Parish Council  
 Brandon & Byshottles Parish Council  
 Braunton Parish Council  
 Brayshaw R  
 Breed C (MP)  
 Brett P  
 Brewer D  
 Brewer M  
 Brice M  
 Brice, Sarah/Rachel/David and Anna Brice  
 Bridport Local Area Partnership  
 Brighton and Hove City Council  
 Brill Parish Council  
 British Chambers of Commerce  
 Britnell BG & L

## The Post Office Network

Broadbent S  
Broadley M  
Brocklehurst S  
Brocks P  
Brocton Parish Council  
Bromsgrove Council  
Bronstein JM  
Brooke E  
Brooks H  
Brora Community Council  
Brotherton LW  
Brough Parish Council  
Broughton A  
Brown EB  
Brown ED  
Brown Mrs  
Brown R (MP)  
Bruce J  
Bruce N  
Bruno F  
Bryant F  
Bryer-Parsons D  
Buchanan V  
Buckden Parish Council  
Buckham CJ  
Buckland Brewer Parish Council  
Buckland D  
Buckland Monachorum Parish Council  
Buckley Antiquarian Society  
Buckman B  
Buckridge T  
Budd L/The 100 Minute Press Ltd  
Bufton IJ  
Bufton SA  
Bullough D and David Midgely  
Burden R (MP)  
Burgess Hill Town Council  
Burgess S  
Burke D  
Burke J/Flourishing People Ltd  
Burke J/Townswomen Today  
Burke Mr  
Burke VM  
Burney GG  
Burnham Health Centre  
Burnip A  
Burnmouth Community Council  
Burra and Trondra Community Council  
Burrell P  
Burrows SM  
Burton Mr&Mrs  
Bury Parish Council  
Busby Mr&Mrs  
Butcher B  
Butler MJ  
Butterfill J (MP)  
Buttle M  
Bwrdd Yr Iaith Gymraeg (Welsh Language Board)  
Byrne BH  
Byrne F  
Byrne MP  
Byrt M  
Caernarfon Civic Society  
Cain G  
Cairns J  
Callicott B  
Calmady-Hamlyn Mrs  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Cameron J  
Campaign for Community Banking Services  
Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales  
Campaign to Protect Rural England/Bawtree R  
Campaign to Protect Rural England/Willis G  
Campbell J  
Campbell S  
Campton & Cruickshanks and Silsoe Parish Councils  
Canonbie and District Council  
Canterbury City Council  
Carhampton Parish Council  
Carleton Rode Parish Council  
Carley J  
Carlisle City Council/Bainbridge J  
Carlisle City Council/Sutton Z  
Carlisle Parish Councils Assoc.  
Carmarthenshire Council  
Carmichael A (MP), Tavish Scott MSP  
Carmichael A (MP), Wallace MSP  
Carmichael CD  
Carney A  
Carpenter J  
Carpenter Mr&Mrs T  
Carter C  
Carter G  
Carter J  
Cartwright EM  
Cash W (MP)  
Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council  
Castletown and District Community Council  
Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council  
Cawkwell K  
Cawood Parish Council  
Ceredigion County Council  
Cerme Valley Parish Council  
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council  
Chalford Parish Council  
Chalmers D  
Chamberlain R  
Chambers C  
Chandler C and Nick Whiteley  
Chapman B (MP)  
Charfield Parish Council  
Charles Mr&Mrs  
Charles R  
Checkley A  
Chelmsford Borough Council  
Cherry JM  
Cherwell District Council  
Chesham Bois Parish Council  
Chesham Evening Townswomen  
Cheshire & Warrington Rural Partnership  
Cheshire County Council  
Cheshire Rural Retail Advisory Partnership  
Chester le Street District Council  
Chesterfield Borough Council  
Chestfield Parish Council  
Chetnole and Stockwood Parish Council  
Chichester District Council  
Chidgey A  
Chilcompton Society, The  
Child Okeford Parish Council  
Child S/Rackford Village Shop Company  
Chitham R  
Chowcat H  
Christleton Parish Council  
Christopher B  
Christy A  
Chryston Community Council  
Churches of Scotland, The  
Churches Rural Group, The  
Churt Parish Council  
Citizens Advice and CA Scotland  
Citty Mr  
City of Edinburgh Council  
City of Ely  
City of Lincoln Council  
Civil Service Pensioners Alliance Shropshire  
Clapham D  
Clapham V  
Clark D  
Clark E  
Clark M  
Clark M  
Clark Mr&Mrs  
Clarkson T  
Clayton M  
Clayton R  
Clouts M  
Coates S  
Cockburn D  
Cockburn G&W  
Cogan C  
Cohen P  
Cohn L  
Colbourne B

Cole EJ  
 Coles A  
 Collins C  
 Collins C/Civil Service Pensioners Alliance  
 Collins F  
 Collins P  
 Coltman D  
 Comerford G  
 Commins M  
 Commins PJ  
 Community Council of Staffordshire  
 Constable E  
 Consumer Council NI, The  
 Conwyn M  
 Cook D  
 Coole D  
 Cooper D  
 Cooper G  
 Cooper TP  
 Corfield Mrs  
 Cornford S  
 Corrance H  
 Corrie A  
 Cottage A  
 Cotterill G  
 Coughlin M  
 Countryside Agency, The  
 Cowper J  
 Cowper JE  
 Cowperthwaite D  
 Cox A&S  
 Cox C  
 Cox G (QC MP)  
 Craythorne S  
 Creed J  
 Crombie M  
 Crompton R/Storth Post Office  
 Crooks G  
 Cross HN  
 Cross R  
 Cross RB  
 Cross RNR  
 Cross S  
 Crouch C  
 Crouch Mrs&Mrs CJ  
 Crowe A  
 Crowhurst A  
 Cryer M/Martin Cryer Consulting Ltd  
 Cunningham A  
 Cunningham N  
 Curd KH  
 Currie DF  
 Currie S  
 Curtis D  
 Curwen Sir Christopher  
 Cylde M  
 Dale J  
 Dane Walters T  
 David B  
 Davies D/The Silk Bureau  
 Davies I  
 Davies N  
 Davies SD  
 Davis A  
 Davis D  
 Davis R  
 Davis S  
 Dawes Y  
 Dawson CH  
 Dawson DG  
 Dawson R  
 Day B  
 Day Ms  
 Deacon M  
 Deamer W  
 Dean and Shelton Parish Council  
 Dean D  
 Deas SD  
 Deeming J  
 Denbighshire County Council  
 Denny G  
 Denny MJ  
 Dent M  
 Denton E  
 Derbyshire S  
 Derrick K  
 Derrick K  
 Derry J  
 Destefano N  
 Devenport P  
 Deverish VK & R  
 Dhorey TJ  
 Dick R  
 Dickinson W  
 Dickinson WE  
 Dickinson WE  
 Dickson H  
 Dison MS  
 Dixon M  
 Dobbins B&J  
 Dobson D  
 Dobson WH  
 Donald Mr&Mrs  
 Donaldson TR  
 Done M  
 Dorrell S (MP)  
 Dorries N (MP)  
 Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils  
 Double V  
 Doubtfire T  
 Douglas S  
 Dow S  
 Downey A  
 Downey P  
 Downward C  
 Dowsing K  
 Dowswell Mr  
 Drake K  
 Drew D (MP)  
 Driver I/Post Office at the Black Lion Hotel  
 Drumchapel Lawn Tennis Club  
 Drumchapel St Andrews Church  
 Drummond S  
 Dryden A  
 Duffy D  
 Dumo L  
 Dupleton C  
 Dunbar JCM  
 Duncan A (MP)  
 Dundas J  
 Dunlop AJ  
 Dunrossness Post office  
 Durham County Council  
 Duval JE  
 Dyer HM  
 Dymoke K  
 Dyson J  
 Dziejwulskie K  
 Eachain T  
 Eaglesham & Waterfoot Community Council  
 Earp Ms  
 East and West Buckland Parish Council  
 East Leake Parish Council  
 East Midlands Regional Agency  
 East Northamptonshire  
 East Riding of Yorkshire Council  
 East Sussex Rural Partnership  
 Eastleigh Borough Council  
 Eday Community Council  
 Eden District Council  
 Eden District Council  
 Eden Local Strategic Partnership  
 Edmunds HV  
 Edrom, Allanton and Whitsome Community Council  
 Edwards A J  
 Edwards DP  
 Edwards Mr/Oliver House (Evesham) Ltd  
 Edwards Mrs  
 Edwards MS  
 Edwards R  
 Edwards S  
 Edwards W  
 EEDA  
 Elderton B

## The Post Office Network

Elderton P  
Ellesmere Port & Neston BC  
Elliot B/Sci-Lab Analytical Ltd  
Elliot MC  
Ellway RM  
Elston Parish Council  
Elsworth E/GE Elsworth & Son & Carastore  
Elsworth Jubilee Club  
Elwes HWG  
Emerson EC  
Emery J  
Enticknap LR  
Erewash Borough Council  
Erricker N  
Erwood Community Council  
Essex County Council  
Essex Rural Partnership  
Evans D  
Evans DR  
Evans LB  
Evans R  
Evans S  
Everard T  
Evercreech Parish Council  
Everett CL  
Everett Mrs  
Everitt L/Framework HA  
Evershot Parish Council  
Everton Parish Council  
Evie & Rendall Community Council  
Ewing A  
Excell MKC  
Fair Oak & Horton Heath Parish Council  
Fairbrother J&J  
Falconers AI  
Fallon A  
Farcet Parish Council  
Farquhar Munro J (MSP)  
Farr S  
Farr W  
Farrell J  
Fearn T  
Federation of Small Business Anglesey/Williams S  
Federation of Small Business Oxford /Bage D  
Federation of Small Business/Davenport C  
Federation of Small Business/King A  
Feering Parish Council  
Felixstowe Town Council  
Felton Parish Council  
Fenton G  
Fenton P  
Fenwick J  
Ferrier A  
Field McNally Leathes Ltd  
Field R  
Fifehead Neville Parish Meeting  
Finch J  
Finch RM  
Finn Mr&Mrs  
Finnegan B & TP  
Fisher P  
Fisher WK  
Fivehead Parish Council  
Flack E  
Flack PR & VM  
Fladbury Parish Council  
Flaherty PJ  
Fleetwood J  
Fliellor R (MP)  
Fleming FG  
Fletcher S  
Folkard P  
Folke Parish Council/Crothers D  
Folke Parish Council/Dolder J  
Follett P  
Folwer SE  
Foot NP  
Ford J  
Ford RG  
Forde I/Snacktime UK Ltd  
Forest Heath District Council/Cooney E  
Forest Heath District Council/Syvret SJ

Forest of Dean Citizens Advice Bureau  
Forest of Dean District Council  
Forsyth W  
Forsythe N  
Forum of Private Business (FPB)  
Foster P  
Fox C  
Fox EM  
Fox I  
Frame Mr&Mrs  
Frampton Cotterell Parish Council  
Frampton on Severn Parish Council/Howe J  
Frampton on Severn Parish Council/Ireland L  
Francis AO  
Francis GO  
Franke L  
Frankland E  
Frankling C&P  
Fraser C (MP)  
Fraser JW  
Freij R  
Fremington Parish Council  
French P  
Fresson RA  
Freuchie Community Council  
Frinton and Walton Town Council  
Fross CV  
Frost B  
Froxfield Parish Council  
Froyle Parish Council  
Fryer PA and E  
Fryer R  
Fuller M  
Furnace Community Council  
Fyfield & Tubney Parish Council  
Fyfield Parish Council  
Gairloch Community Council  
Galleywood Parish Council  
Gard B  
Gargrave Parish Council  
Garnethill Community Council  
Garrett M  
Garthwaite G  
Garwood P  
Gash AF & A  
Gasking D  
Gateshead Council  
Gedard V  
Geddes J  
Gee P  
Georgeham Parish Council  
German V  
Gibb R  
Gibson PAJ  
Giddins M  
Gilbert FW  
Gilbert JA  
Gilbert N  
Gill B/Gretton Village Hall  
Gill C  
Gill J  
Gill S  
Gillham A  
Gillingham Town Council  
Gillis B  
Ginns S  
Gittos Mr  
Glaschw Community Council  
Glen Lyon & Loch Tay Community Council  
Glenorch & Innishail Community Council  
Glos Assoc. of parish & Town Councils  
Gloucestershire County Council  
Gloucestershire First  
Gloucestershire Rural Community Council  
Glover GW  
Goldie S  
Goldsmith DC  
Gooch AJ  
Goodleigh Parish Council  
Goodman H (MP)  
Goodrich N  
Goodwin J&B

Goom J  
 Gordon A  
 Gordon AC  
 Gordon GAG  
 Gorton D&J  
 Gorton J  
 Gorton K  
 Goss M  
 Gow I  
 Gow ID  
 Gowers R&JE  
 Graham A  
 Graham W  
 Grahame C (MSP)  
 Grange over Sands Town Council  
 Grant E  
 Grasmere Village Society  
 Gray E  
 Gray J  
 Gray JM  
 Gray Mr&Mrs  
 Gray Mrs  
 Gray W  
 Grayling K  
 Graysan H  
 Great Abingdon Parish Council  
 Great Brington Post Office & Stores  
 Great Elm Parish Council  
 Great Gransden Parish Council  
 Great Staughton Parish Council  
 Great Torrington Town Council  
 Great Waltham Parish Council  
 Greater London Authority/Lorimer K  
 Greater London Authority/Mayor Of London  
 Green A  
 Green J  
 Green Mrs  
 Green R  
 Greening J (MP)  
 Gregg GJ  
 Gregory R  
 Greves J&G  
 Grey W  
 Griffith N (MP)  
 Griffiths L  
 Griffiths Mrs  
 Griffiths R  
 Grimes VC/Focusability Wakefield  
 Grimwood RW  
 Grinnell G  
 Gristwood IE  
 Groom G  
 Grove GG  
 Grummant J  
 Gulberwick Quarff & Cunningsburgh Community Council  
 Gunn AR  
 Gunn AR  
 Gurnard Parish Council  
 Gurney RD  
 Guy JR  
 Guy N  
 Haines I  
 Hair A  
 Hale Parish Council  
 Hall E  
 Hallam DM  
 Hallsworth B  
 Halton Borough Council  
 Hambledon Parish Council  
 Hamilton A  
 Hamilton M  
 Hamlin G  
 Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils  
 Hampton E  
 Handford DM  
 Hanikens P  
 Hanmer M  
 Hanna M  
 Hanson M&N  
 Hardie R  
 Harding M  
 Hardman RJ  
 Hardwood HM  
 Harman K  
 Harmer M  
 Harpenden Town Council  
 Harper M (MP)  
 Harray Scottish Womens Rural Institute  
 Harris  
 Harris EM  
 Harris J&J  
 Harrison W  
 Harrogate Spa Ladies  
 Harrower EM  
 Hart C  
 Harting Parish Council  
 Hartland R  
 Hartlepool Borough Council  
 Hartley S  
 Hartpury Parish Council  
 Hartwell A E  
 Harvey C  
 Harvey S  
 Harwood EJ  
 Hassocks Parish Council  
 Hastings Borough Council  
 Hastings DJ  
 Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council  
 Haven's Older Persons Forum, The  
 Hawkes R  
 Hawkins JE  
 Hawkins S  
 Hawkins S&J  
 Haworth, Cross Roads & Stanbury Parish Council  
 Hay JC  
 Hayes A  
 Hayes B  
 Hayes GA  
 Hayes J  
 Hayes N  
 Haynes Parish Council  
 Hay-on-Wye Town Council  
 Hazelwood J  
 Healey J (MP)  
 Heanton Punchardon Parish Council  
 Heathhall Community Council  
 Hednesford Town Council  
 Heley E  
 Helliker L  
 Help the Aged  
 Help the Aged in Wales/Lloyd V  
 Help the Aged/Sinclair D  
 Hemingway J  
 Hemingway J  
 Hendry C (MP)  
 Hendry G  
 Henham Parish Council  
 Henio S  
 Hennock Parish Council  
 Henry S  
 Herald A  
 Herald G  
 Herbert JP  
 Hereford A  
 Herefordshire Council  
 Herefordshire Federation of Women's Institutes  
 Heritage BM  
 Heritage P  
 Herod S  
 Herod V  
 Herongate and Ingrave Parish Council  
 Hessel L  
 Hetherington MA  
 Hewlett B  
 Heydon GM  
 Heywood J  
 Hickman I&B  
 Higbee C  
 High B  
 High Offley Parish Council  
 High Peak Borough Council  
 Highland Council/Clark A  
 Highland Council/Edge H  
 Highlands & Islands Enterprise

## The Post Office Network

Highton E  
Hildersham Parish Council  
Hildersley C  
Hill A  
Hill C Venerable  
Hill H  
Hill J  
Hill M  
Hill REW  
Hill W  
Hilperton Parish Council  
Hincliffe AE  
Hindson JNR  
Hinsley BM  
Hintz N  
Hirst P  
Hitchman J  
Hitts J  
Hoare S  
Hoareau L  
Hobson ME  
Hockley Heath Parish Council  
Hockley Parish Council  
Hodges J  
Hodges SJ  
Hodges SJ/Richmond and Partners  
Hodgson N  
Hodgson S (MP)  
Hodson Mr  
Holberry GA  
Holbrook P  
Hollining J  
Hollis J/FML Public Relations  
Hollywell B  
Holm and Wideford Community Council  
Holm WRI Orkney Isles Scotland  
Holme Parish Council  
Holme Post Office & News  
Holmes Mr  
Holmes S  
Holtey Classic Handplanes  
Holton DW and HRB  
Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council  
Holywood and Newbridge Community Council  
Honour Fiancial Planning Ltd  
Hope  
Hope GD  
Hope P (MP)  
Hopewell S  
Hopewill D  
Hopkins S  
Hopton on Sea Parish Council  
Horn Mr&Mrs  
Horningham Parish Council  
Hornsby AP  
Horoen C  
Horrocks-Taylor P  
Horrold C&D  
Horsham District Council  
Hosking S/Meeth Post Office  
Houghton and Wyton Parish Council  
Hourihan K  
How R  
Howard P  
Howard RG  
Howarth D (MP)  
Howarth T  
Howett D  
Howley J  
Howse T  
Huckfield C/Tivetshall Monday Club  
Huckson A  
Hudson R  
Huges J  
Hughes HI  
Hughes I  
Hughes RM  
Hull C  
Humble LJ  
Humphreys R (MP)  
Humphries Mr&mrs  
Hunsdon Parish Council  
Hunt M  
Hunt Mr  
Hunter M  
Hurstpierpoint Trades Association  
Hush A  
Hussey D  
Hutcheson JJ  
Hutchings P  
Hutchings V  
Huxley LM  
Hyatt S  
Hyman F  
Ibbeson DB  
Ibstone Parish Council  
Icke D  
Ickleton Parish Council  
Ickleton Society, The  
Idiens Mr&Mrs  
Ierston J  
Impington Parish Council  
Ingleby Barwick Parish Council  
Insley PR/Knowle Hill Nurseries Ltd  
Iravani A/Business plus Scotland Ltd  
Irongray Community Council  
Irranca Davies H (MP)  
Irranca Davies H (MP) on behalf of constituents  
Isherwood C  
Island of Bute Community Council  
Isle of Anglesey County Council/Dunning P  
Isle of Anglesey County Council/Jones E  
Isle of Wight County Federation of WI  
Issaacs E  
Iver Parish Council  
Ivybridge Town Council  
Jack AM  
Jack C  
Jack E  
Jackman BJ  
Jackson JE  
Jackson S (MP)  
James A  
James S (MP)  
Jardine E  
Jarvis D&I  
Jeenings H  
Jeffrey J  
Jenkins J  
Jenkins JV  
Jenkins R  
Jenkins R  
Jennings H  
Jennings M  
Jewer M  
Jiggin B  
Jiggins E  
John C  
John I/Ruislip Residents Association  
Johnson D  
Johnson D  
Johnson DT  
Johnson K  
Johnson L  
Johnson M  
Johnson P  
Johnson S  
Johnson-Hill Mrs  
Johnstone GG  
Joint P  
Jones A  
Jones B  
Jones BP  
Jones BR  
Jones I  
Jones I  
Jones O  
Jones P  
Jones P  
Jones S  
Jordon A  
Jowett Mr&mrs  
Junor A  
Kalis H

Kanok Ms  
 Keddie M  
 Kelly C  
 Kelly Mrs  
 Kelly S  
 Kemble and Ewen Parish Council  
 Kennedy M  
 Kennoway Community Council  
 Kentisbury and Trentishoe Parish Council  
 Kenton Mandeville Parish Council  
 Kenward I  
 Kerwood R  
 Kettle M  
 Kiltarlity Community Council  
 Kincaig & Vicinity Community Council  
 King B  
 Kingoon Mr&Mrs D  
 Kings Sutton Parish Council  
 Kinoulton Parish Council  
 Kirk M  
 Kirklees Metropolitan Council  
 Kirkwall Community Council  
 Kirkwood Sir Andrew  
 Kitchin JR  
 Knight A/Magdalen Street Post Office  
 Knight G Baroness  
 Knight V  
 Knott RE  
 Knowles Bolton P  
 Kramer S (MP)  
 Lancashire City Council/Thompson W  
 Lamb JM  
 Lamb N (MP)  
 Lancashire Association of Parish & Town Councils  
 Lancashire County Council/Buddle K  
 Lancashire County Council/Wardle M  
 Lancashire County Council/Whipp D  
 Lancaster City Council  
 Lane E  
 Lane Mr  
 Lane S  
 Langan J  
 Langley CR  
 Langmaid N  
 Langston D  
 Large J  
 Largo Area Community Council, Fife  
 Latham DS  
 Latham V  
 Launder C  
 Launder M  
 Laurance K  
 Lavers B  
 Lawrence R  
 Laws D (MP)  
 Lawson M  
 Lawson WG  
 Leach P  
 Leahy L  
 Leamington SPA Town Council  
 Lee A  
 Lee Mrs  
 Lee V  
 Leeds City Council  
 Lees G/Roxburgh Press Agency  
 Lees LS  
 Leicestershire Rural Partnership  
 Leigh G  
 Leigh Mr&Mrs  
 Lepper D (MP)  
 LeSage DM  
 Leslie M  
 Levett A  
 Levings E/Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Business Initiative  
 Levington & Stratton Hall Parish Council  
 Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council  
 Levitt T (MP)  
 Lewin D  
 Lewis J  
 Lewis L  
 Lewis Mr  
 Lewisham Council  
 Lickfold R  
 Lighthorne Parish Council  
 Lilly J  
 Limond J  
 Limpley Stoke Parish Council  
 Lincolnshire Accessibility Partnership  
 Lincolnshire Assembly  
 Lincolnshire County Council  
 Lindfield Parish Council  
 Lindford Parish  
 Lindford Parish Council  
 Lindsay A  
 Linton N  
 Linton Parish Council  
 Lippett GL  
 Liss Parish Council  
 Lister L  
 Little Abington Parish Council  
 Little Downham Parish Council  
 Little Gransden Parish Council  
 Little Hallingbury Parish Council  
 Little Leigh Parish Council  
 Littlebourne Parish Council  
 Littlejohn R  
 Livesey A  
 Livett P  
 Llanarmon yn Ial Community Council  
 Llandegla Community Council  
 Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council  
 Llangefni Town Council  
 Llangernyw Community Council  
 Llewlyn Jones R  
 Lloyd Jones A  
 Lloyd L  
 Local Government Association Northampton/Dunbar K  
 Local Government Association/Bruce-Lockhard (Lord)  
 Lochhead R (MSP) and Angus Robertson MP  
 Lockwood JB  
 Lodge P  
 Lodgills GM  
 London Assembly, Health and Public Services Committee  
 London Borough of Lewisham  
 London Borough of Newham  
 Long Horsley Parish Council  
 Long Newton Parish Council  
 Long Sutton Parish Council  
 Longbridge Deverill + Crockerton Parish Council  
 Longden J/Pub is the Hub  
 Longford Mrs  
 Longthorpe Post Office  
 Loosley J  
 Lowe DR  
 Lower Winterborne Parish Council  
 Lowrie T  
 Lowther A  
 Lubbock B  
 Luckett M  
 Luckhurst L&M/National Business Services  
 Luig Community Council  
 Luker JC  
 Lunan M  
 Lunch A  
 Lunnon S  
 Macdonald Bennett T  
 MacDonald E  
 MacDonald H  
 MacFarland S  
 MacGillivray A  
 MacGillivray C  
 MacGregor J  
 Machfillow C  
 Mackay T  
 Mackenzie J  
 Mackie I&T  
 Mackrill A  
 MacMillan MW/Overton Post Office  
 MacPherson G/MacPherson Electrical Ltd  
 MacPherson L/Max Management Ltd  
 Maddock E  
 Madson K

## The Post Office Network

Maidstone Borough Council  
Mail AE  
Maisemore Parish Council  
Major S  
Malcolm V  
Malone P  
Malone SE/Bettyhill General Merchants  
Maltby WM  
Maltman M  
Managhan R  
Manchester City Council  
Manklow J  
Manning D  
Manson A  
March MJ  
Marcham MO  
Markahm J  
Market Bosworth Parish Council  
Markey J  
Marks GM  
Markyate Parish Council  
Marsh W/Millhouse Green Post Office  
Marshall B&P  
Marshall G  
Marshall J  
Martin J  
Martin L  
Martin MA  
Martin Parish Council  
Martlesham Parish Council  
Marwood C  
Mary Tavy and Peter Tavy Womens Institute  
Mason  
Masters AR  
Masters I  
Mather MF  
Matthew A/Farm Crisis Network  
Matthews J  
Matthews M  
Matthews NM  
McCafferty A Reverend  
McCall Mr  
McCaul D  
McCreath CA/Inside Story  
McCullen G  
McDonald J  
McDonald JE  
McDonald P  
McDougal C  
McElliott K  
McGillis L&J  
McGivern E  
McGuinness A  
McInnes C  
McInnes S  
Mcintosh A (MP)  
McKee I  
Mckereth R&D  
McLean R  
McLeod B&M  
McLeod L  
McMillan I  
McNab C  
McNaughton F  
McVey D  
Mears  
Meatchem JVS  
Mechell Community Council  
Medd P  
Melchbourne & Yelden Parish Council  
Mells Parish Council  
Melville N  
Melvin P  
Membury Community School  
Membury Parish Council  
Mendip CAB  
Menhinick M  
Mennell S  
Mepal Parish Council  
Merched Y Wawr (Anglesey)  
Merched Y Wawr (Bontuchel)  
Merched y Wawr (Ruthin)  
Merched Y Wawr Pumsaint  
Merchiston Community Council  
Mere Parish Council  
Merrill J  
Merritt P  
Metcalf A  
Methodist Church East Anglia District  
Meton Borough Council  
Micklewaite M  
Mid Atholl, Strathtay & Grandtully Community Council  
Mid Devon District Council  
Mid Sussex District Council  
Mid-Beds Council  
Middleborough P  
Middleton E  
Middleton Parish Council  
Midlothian Council  
Midwood A  
Midwood S  
Miles A  
Miles N  
Miles RA  
Milford Haven Town Council  
Miller D  
Miller HT  
Millett R  
Millett R  
Mills F  
Milne Mrs  
Milroy P  
Milton A (MP)  
Milton N  
Ming P  
Ministerworth Parish Council  
Mitchell A  
Mitchell C  
Mitchell D  
Mitchell GB  
Mitchell J  
Mitchell K  
Mitchell N  
Mitchell W  
Mobley Mr&Mrs PJ  
Moncur GF  
Monkleigh Parish Council  
Montague Parish Council  
Moole C  
Moon M (MP)  
Moon Mr&Mrs  
Moor C  
Moore M (MP)  
Moore P  
Moore S  
Morgan AM  
Morgan C  
Morgan S  
Morris A  
Morris FJ  
Morris H  
Morrison B  
Morrison ND  
Mortimer JGM  
Moseley CWRD  
Moseley ME  
Motcombe Parish Council  
Mould H  
Moyses J  
Much Hadham Parish Council  
Mundell D  
Murby J  
Murchie R  
Murphy J  
Murray R  
Murray R  
Murray S  
Murtough K  
Murtough L  
Mustoe C/Penderyn Post Office  
Mylechereest A  
Mylor Parish Council  
Nairn SJ/SJN Consultants  
Napier A



Napier J/Chairman of Royal and Sun Alliance  
 Napton on the Hill Parish Council  
 Nardi R&N/Riverside Stores and Post Office  
 National Assembly for Wales  
 National Association of Local Councils  
 National Consumer Council  
 National Farmers Union  
 National Partnership Forum Older People in Wales  
 National Pensioners Convention  
 National Pharmacy Association  
 Natland Parish Council po support group  
 NDMC consulting  
 Neal BR  
 Neal Y  
 Neenton Parish Council  
 Neil L/SRG  
 Nelson A/Pheasant Inn  
 Nelson JS & PF  
 Nesting Methodist Church  
 netCUDA Ltd  
 Nether Kellett Women's Institute  
 Nether Witton Parish Council  
 New Radnor Community Council  
 Newbold MN  
 Newbold Mr&Mrs  
 Newbold R  
 Newbury M&J  
 Newcombe P/Wilton Friendship Club  
 Newick Parish Council  
 Newport and Dinas Cross Older Persons Forum  
 Newport City Council  
 Newsome DD & GM  
 Newton A  
 Newton S  
 Newton St Boswell Community Council  
 Newton ST Cyres Parish Council  
 Newtown St Boswells & Eidon Community Council  
 National Federation of SubPostmasters  
 Nichol B  
 Nichols Mr&Mrs  
 Nicholson C  
 Nicholson J  
 Nicoll M  
 Nielsen D  
 Nigbet Mrs  
 Nimmo WD  
 Nisbet A  
 Niven M  
 Nixon RJ  
 Noble N  
 Noble S  
 Norfolk Rural Community Council  
 Norfolk Rural Support Network  
 Norham Parish Council  
 Norman G  
 Norman PD  
 Norris D  
 North Bradley Parish Council  
 North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council  
 North Cornwall District Council  
 North Devon District Council  
 North District Council  
 North Dorset District Council  
 North East Assembly  
 North East Derbyshire District Council  
 North Lincolnshire Council  
 North Roe Methodist Church  
 North Shropshire District Council  
 North Staffs Pensioners Convention  
 North Sunderland Parish Council  
 North Vale Parish Council  
 North Wales Group of Labour MPs  
 North West Leicestershire District Council  
 North West Rural Affairs Forum  
 North West Rural Community Councils  
 North York Moors National Park Authority  
 North Yorkshire County Council  
 North Yorkshire District Councils  
 Northamptonshire ACRE  
 Northamptonshire County Council  
 Northaw & Cuffley Parish Council  
 Northern Ireland Rural Development Council  
 Northmaven Community Council  
 Northumberland County Council  
 Nottinghamshire County Council  
 Noyes E  
 Oakamoor Senior Citizens Association  
 Oakley B  
 O'Brien S (MP)  
 Odoson KM  
 O'Flanagan P  
 Ogilvie D&H  
 Oliver PO  
 Osborne EM  
 Osborne S (MP)  
 Osgathorpe Mr&Mrs  
 Oswald S  
 Ottaway M  
 Overton Parish Council  
 Owen G  
 Owen G,S,M and C  
 Owen S  
 Owermoigne Parish Council  
 Owestry Borough Council  
 Oxford City Council  
 Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils  
 Oxfordshire Pensioners Action Group  
 Oxfordshire Rural Community Council  
 Pace A  
 Painswick Parish Council  
 Pakenham Village & Playing Field Assoc.  
 Palmer T  
 Pamber Parish Council  
 Pamlyn V  
 Panting Ms  
 Parade Hangleton Sub-Post Office  
 Parish Council of Norton  
 Parker D/editor Valley News  
 Parker K  
 Parkin D  
 Parkinson MH  
 Parsons BL & SJ  
 Parsons I  
 Parsons JA  
 Parsons N  
 Partridge RA  
 Paslen K&R  
 Pasquire L  
 Patching J  
 Patching Parish Council  
 Pate T  
 Patterson DM  
 Pattison D  
 Pauley M  
 Pawlyn V  
 Paypoint  
 PCS ARM Wales Branch  
 Peacock P and Maureen MacMillan  
 Peakirk Parish Council  
 Pearce C  
 Pearce JE  
 Pearce P  
 Pearson AR  
 Pearson B  
 Peasenhall & Parham Parish Council  
 Peel RE/Blockley Post Office  
 Pembrokeshire County Council  
 Penhow Community Council  
 Penney H  
 Penney R  
 Pensioners Forum Wales  
 Penwith District Council  
 Penzance Town Council  
 Pepper C  
 Percival H  
 Perranuthnoe Parish Council  
 Petch S  
 Peters S  
 Peterson L  
 Petrie R  
 Phillips B  
 Phillips A  
 Phillips C  
 Phillips R

## The Post Office Network

Phillips V  
Picard A  
Pickering JT  
Pickersgill M  
Pickett C&J  
Pickford BM  
Pierce M  
Pilling C  
Place S  
Plas Cybi Partnership  
Platten M  
Pledger  
Plewa L  
Plumridge K  
Plunkett Foundation, The  
Plymouth & SW Cooperative Society Ltd  
Podington Parish Council  
Pollard M  
Polley M  
Polley MV & G  
Port William & District Community Association  
Port William Community Council  
Porthcawl Town Council  
Postcomm/Stapleton N  
Postwatch/Banerjee M  
Postwatch/Hodder E  
Potepa S  
Potts I  
Powell R  
Powys County Council/Jones E  
Powys County Council/Morris M  
Powys Radnor Federation of Women's Institutes  
Preece K & D  
Prescott A  
Prescott D&D  
Prestbury Parish Council  
Preston A  
Prestwood Evening Women's Institute  
Price AE Reverend  
Price G  
Price H  
Price RA  
Priestner J  
Pringle M (MSP)  
Pritchard E  
Pritchard L  
Pritchard R  
Prudden Mr  
Pucklechurch Parish Council  
Pugh A L  
Pugh AL  
Pugh DE/Llanwnnen Post Office  
Pullin J  
Pulloom L  
Pulloxhill Parish Council  
Puw D  
Pwllgor Cyfiawnder Cyndeithasol ac  
Queen Thorne Parish Council  
Queennan CK  
Quendon & Rickling Parish Council  
Quin V  
Quinn K  
Quinn S  
Rabone VJ  
Radford P/Civil Service Pensioners Alliance  
Ramsey J  
Randall J  
Randall Mr  
Randolph I  
Rankine E  
Ranking CO  
Raper H  
Ray OT  
Read Mr&Mrs NC  
Reay K  
Redd L/O&M Redd & Son  
Redfern M  
Redgewell K  
RedMarley Parish Council/Cullimore B  
Redmarley Parish Council/Lambert Y  
Reece Mr  
Reed T  
Rees A  
Reffin Mr&Mrs  
Reid A (MP)  
Reid BA  
Reid Thomson R  
Renfrewshire Council  
Rennie W (MP)  
Rennison E  
Renshaw RML  
Renton M  
Renton RA  
Revelstoke Community Trust  
Rhodes ML  
Rhodes S  
Rhondda Cynon TAF  
Rhudlan Town Council  
Richardson DJ  
Richardson Mr&Mrs  
Richardson P  
Richardson S  
Richardson S  
Richardson T/Salvation Army  
Richmond-Hardy M  
Ridd H  
Rigeh M  
Riley MJ  
Rimmell G  
Rimmer DT/The Hai Management Co Ltd  
Rimmer PJ  
Ripley G  
Ripley G&F  
Rippon I  
Roat M  
Robbins B&D  
Roberts AL  
Roberts CA  
Roberts MF  
Roberts P  
Roberts P  
Roberts PA  
Roberts T  
Robertson CG  
Robertson H  
Robertson IM  
Robertson W  
Robinson A  
Robinson JW  
Robinson M  
Robinson RA  
Robinson S  
Robinson TH  
Robson J  
Robson V  
Rochford District Council  
Rock E  
Rock M  
Rode Parish Council  
Rogate Parish Council  
Rogers D  
Rolfe C  
Rolfe K  
Romans J  
Rooke A  
Rooke A/Punkermentality  
Rosburgh P  
Roskams R&M  
Ross B  
Ross R  
Rossendale Borough Council  
Rostherne Parish Council  
Rother District Council  
Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Community Council  
Rouse EM  
Rowe A  
Rowley M  
Rowley WNK/Touchdown  
Roxburgh J  
Roxburgh P  
Royal Borough Selkirk & District Community Council  
Ruane C (MP)  
Rugby Borough Council  
Rural Community Council of Essex

Rural Shops Alliance  
 Rural Voices Rural Choices  
 Ruscoe J  
 Rushmore Borough Council  
 Russell AG & B  
 Russell B (MP)  
 Rutter D  
 Ryan J  
 Ryder Mr&Mrs  
 Ryedale District Council  
 Sadler T  
 Sage WH  
 SALC  
 Salter S  
 Sanday Community Council  
 Sandown Evening Townswomen's Guild  
 Sandown Town Council  
 Sarjant Alan and Deborah  
 Saunders M  
 Saunders PJ  
 Saunders RM  
 Saville Roberts L  
 Saward J  
 Scaife M  
 Scarborough Borough Council  
 Schneider J  
 Sclates E  
 Scorroth R  
 Scott AG/Village Hall Management Committee  
 Scott EF  
 Scott ES (MSP)  
 Scott J  
 Scott NS  
 Scott S  
 Scottish Borders Council/Hume D  
 Scottish Borders Council/Scott D  
 Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations  
 Scottish Disability Equality Forum  
 Scottish Executive  
 Scottish Women's Rural Institutes  
 Scott-Thompson I Reverend  
 Scotwest Credit Union Ltd  
 Scully M  
 Seabeck A (MP)  
 Seabright V  
 Sebastian J  
 Sedgemoor District Council  
 Seed S  
 SEEDA  
 Seehy S  
 Selattyn & Gobowen Parish Council  
 Selby District Council  
 Semington Parish Council  
 Sennen Parish Council  
 Sevenoaks Town Council  
 Seymour H  
 Shamley Green Village Society  
 Shaw B  
 Shaw P  
 Shaw R&R  
 Shay Mr&Mrs  
 Sheehan D  
 Shelley D  
 Shenley Brook End & Tattenhoe Parish Council  
 Shepard M  
 Shepherd RC  
 Shepton Montague Parish Council  
 Sherbourne Area Partnership  
 Sheriff Mrs  
 Sheringham Town Council  
 Shetland Islands Council/Clunes A  
 Shetland Islands Council/Gregson BP  
 Shetland Islands Council/Hawkins IJ  
 Shewan H  
 Shildon Town Council  
 Shillingstone parish Council  
 Shinfield Parish Council/Barnes J  
 Shing D  
 Shiplake Parish Council/Hudson RV  
 Shiplake Womens' Institute  
 Shipton A  
 Shirdley Hill Roadside Environment Workers  
 Shropshire County Council  
 Shute M  
 Sibford Ferris Parish Council  
 Sibley C  
 Siddons G  
 Silcock P  
 Silk Willoughby Parish Council  
 Sim M  
 Simm J  
 Simmonds J  
 Simpson F  
 Simpson J&M  
 Simpson Mrs  
 Sinclair M  
 Singleton Mr&Mrs T  
 Sisson J  
 Sisson K  
 Skeabost & District Community Council  
 Skellett A  
 Skerratt S/Scottish Agricultural College  
 Skerries Community Council  
 Slack S  
 Slaley Community Trust  
 Slate G  
 Slater L  
 Slaughter EP  
 Sleeman J  
 Smart LD  
 Smaut M  
 Smith A  
 Smith A (MP)  
 Smith C  
 Smith C  
 Smith D&D  
 Smith E  
 Smith E  
 Smith EH  
 Smith F  
 Smith G  
 Smith G  
 Smith I  
 Smith MJ  
 Smith N  
 Smith NFC  
 Smith P  
 Smith P  
 Smith R  
 Smith R  
 Smith Ross D  
 Smith Sir Robert (MP)  
 Smith TJF  
 Smith V  
 Smith Y  
 Smurthwaite D  
 Smyth EUC  
 Smyth M&P  
 Smyth M/Pentre Bach Holiday Cottages  
 Smyth MJ  
 Smythe G  
 Smytherman B  
 Snape A  
 Snerborne St John Parish Council  
 Soames N (MP)  
 Socha M  
 Soham Post Office  
 Somerby Parish Council  
 Somerset Association of Local Councils  
 Somerset County Council  
 Somerton Town Council  
 Sorsky JD  
 Sothcott TJ  
 South Ayrshire Council  
 South Ayrshire Council, Rural Development Officer  
 South Bucks District Council  
 South Cambridgeshire District Council  
 South Cambs District Council  
 South Cave Parish Council  
 South Derbyshire District Council  
 South Gloucestershire Conservative Group  
 South Gloucestershire Council/Hope S  
 South Gloucestershire Council/White D  
 South Green Parish Council

## The Post Office Network

South Hams District Council  
South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership  
South Molton Town & Parish Forum  
South Northamptonshire Council  
South Oxfordshire District Council  
South Shropshire District Council  
South Somerset District Council  
South Staffordshire Council  
South Tyneside Council/Stewart M  
South Tyneside Council/Waggott P  
South West ACRE Network of Rural Community Council  
South Wingfield Parish Council  
South Woodham Ferrers  
Southampton City Council  
Southend-on-Sea Borough Council  
Southlake District Council  
SPARSE & the Rural Services  
Spaull DJ  
Spencer BM  
Spencer P  
Spetisbury Parish Council  
Speyside Council  
Spicer Sir Michael (MP)  
Spiers E  
Spittles L  
Spooner J  
Spratt V  
Springfield Parish Centre  
Sprouse J  
St Briavels Parish Council  
St Dominic Parish Council  
St Erme Parish Council  
St Giles on the Heath Parish Council  
St Helens Council  
St Ibbard Parish Council  
St Levan Parish Council  
St Martha Parish Council  
St. Helens Council  
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council  
Staffordshire Parish Councils Association  
Stalmans B  
Stamfordham W. I.  
Stanley L  
Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council  
Stanton EM  
Stapleford Parish Council  
Stark VA  
Staveley with Ings Parish Council  
Stazicker D  
Stebbing J  
Stenning PD  
Stephen A  
Stephen O  
Stephens D  
Stevens C  
Stevens C/Euronova Ltd  
Stevens G  
Stevenson P  
Stevenson S (MP)  
Steward R  
Stewart A  
Stewart B  
Stewart B  
Stewart BE  
Stewart D  
Stewart Dr & Mrs R  
Stewart IJ  
Stewart MJ & RD  
Stirling Council  
Stock Parish Council  
Stoehr G  
Stoke Mandeville Parish Council  
Stoke Poges Parish Council  
Stoke St. Michael Parish Council  
Stoker S  
Stollery L  
Stone T  
Storth Community Co-op  
Stourpaine Parish Council  
Stout W  
Stowe Mr&Mrs  
Strathaven & Glasford Community Council  
Stratton JA  
Streeter M  
Stromness SWRL  
Stroud DG  
Stroud District Council  
Stroud S  
Stuart-Turner M  
Stubbs B  
Stubbs Y  
Sturdy J (MP)  
Sturry Parish Council  
Sturtevant B  
Suffolk County Council's Policy Development Panel for Post Offices  
Suffolk Rural Alliance  
Sullivan D  
Summers A/Orleton Post Office & Stores  
Sumner P  
Sunday Community Council  
Surani K  
Surani K/Sneinton Elements Post Office  
Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council  
Swale Borough Council  
Swan DK  
Swan J  
Swan S/Kincraig Stores  
Swavesey Parish Council  
Sweet CJ  
Swift A  
Swift A  
Swift J&C  
Swift M  
Swift Mr&Mrs P  
Swindon and District Group of Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance  
Swinney J (MSP) and Peter Wishart MP  
Swinson J (MP)  
Sykes Sir David  
Tacolneston Parish Council  
Tait A  
Takeley Parish Council  
Tameside MBC  
Tanar G  
Tarporey Parish Council  
Tatham Parish Council  
Tatsfield Parish Council  
Taylor A  
Taylor A/Aquila Business Services Ltd  
Taylor D  
Taylor E  
Taylor G  
Taylor H  
Taylor K  
Taylor O  
Taylor R  
Tchaikovsky S  
Tector M  
Teignbridge Association of Local Councils  
Telford & Wrekin Council  
Temple-Fry C  
Templeton W  
Terling and Fairstead Parish Council  
Terling C of E Primary School  
Tewkesbury Town Council  
Thatcham Town Council  
Thaxted Parish Council  
Theobald IR  
Thirkill K  
Thirsk Town Council  
Thomas GM  
Thomlinson P/Maiden Bradley Post Office and Stores  
Thompson GS  
Thompson K  
Thompson K/Sanquhar Post Office  
Thompson Mr&Mrs  
Thomson C  
Thorne T  
Thornhackett Parish Council  
Thould R&S  
Threadgill J&C  
Threstic J  
Thronton AM

Thurlton Parish Council  
 Thurso J (MP)  
 Thwaites B  
 Tickhall Parish Council  
 Tidey AC  
 Tidsley Mr  
 Tierney S  
 Titchmarsh G  
 Tivetshall Parish Council  
 Todd M (MP)  
 Todd SF  
 Toll C  
 Tolley J/Limpsfield Village Store Association  
 Tomkinson MJ  
 Tomkotowicz A  
 Tompsett J  
 Torbay Council  
 Tordoff A  
 Torr A  
 Totnes and District Sustainability Group  
 Towers M  
 Townsend H  
 TravelWatch South west  
 Travery D  
 Trenfield M  
 Trenfield R  
 Trimdon Foundry Parish Council  
 Trinder J  
 Tring Rural Parish  
 Trowbridge Town Council  
 Try S/Welland Post Office  
 Tryanor M/Oxenholme Post Office & Store  
 Tuck C  
 Tucker AS  
 Tucker S  
 Tudor E  
 Tull CS  
 Tulloch S  
 Tully K  
 Tumble Post Office  
 Turbeville J  
 Turnbull E  
 Turner A  
 Turner E  
 Turvey J  
 Twin M  
 Twyman P  
 Twynning Parish Council  
 Tyler EWWW  
 Tyler MA  
 Tynedale Council  
 Uley Parish Council/Robins RC  
 Uley Parish Council/Sutcliffe A  
 Underwood S  
 UNITE  
 Upper Tweed Community Council/Armstrong K  
 Upper Tweed Community Council/Middlemass P  
 URR Community Council  
 Vale of White Horse District Council  
 Valley G  
 Vaughan B  
 Veitch A  
 Venamore BP  
 Vernon B/Tithe Farm Oaks Works  
 Vewles J  
 Vidall MA  
 Village Shop Association  
 Voice Mr&Mrs MC  
 Voluntary Action Cumbria  
 Vowles J/Spar Store & Post Office  
 Waaldron JA  
 Waddell M&M  
 Wade I  
 Wade P  
 Wakefield District Council  
 Wakefield Metropolitan District Council  
 Wakeling SC & PM  
 Walford B  
 Walford Mr&Mrs  
 Walhest JP  
 Walker C  
 Walker L  
 Walker N  
 Walker R  
 Walker T  
 Walkett S  
 Wallace K  
 Wallace KM  
 Wallace W  
 Wallbank F  
 Walsh D  
 Walsh D and Val Holmes  
 Walton Mr&Mrs  
 Wandsworth Borough Council  
 Wandsworth Pensioners Forum  
 War Widows Association of Great Britain  
 Warboys Parish Council  
 Ward B  
 Ward J  
 Ward Mrs  
 Wardlaw P  
 Ware Town Council  
 Wareham St Parish Council  
 Wargrave Housing Association  
 Warmington D&W  
 Warwick Town Council  
 Waterman G  
 Waters KC & GA  
 Watford and District Group of CS Pensioners  
 Watkins R  
 Watling S  
 Watson GD  
 Watson J&S  
 Watson N&P  
 Watson S  
 Watson V  
 Watt A  
 Watters P  
 Watton C  
 Waverley Borough Council  
 Way E  
 Way Mr&Mrs S  
 Wayte M  
 Wealden District Council  
 Webb MJ  
 Webster D  
 Webster MC  
 Weir J  
 Weir M (MP)  
 Weir S  
 Welbourne Parish Council  
 Welch Mrs  
 Wells J  
 Welsh Assembly  
 Welsh Group of Parliamentary Labour Party  
 Welsh H  
 Welton Parish Council  
 Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet Parish Council  
 Wernham T  
 West & East Putford Parish Council  
 West Ardnamurchan Community Council  
 West Berkshire Council  
 West D  
 West Devon Borough Council  
 West Dorset District Council  
 West Dorset Partnership  
 West Dunbartonshire Council  
 West Lancashire District Council  
 West Lindsey District Council  
 West Mr  
 West Oxfordshire District Council  
 West Somerset Council  
 West Sussex County Council  
 West Wales Pensioners Alliance  
 West Wiltshire District Council  
 West,Nigel/Liam/Laura and Jean Bell  
 Westbury on Severn Parish Council  
 Western Isles Council  
 Weston & Basford Parish Council  
 Weston Colville Parish Council  
 Whalsey Community Council  
 Wharton P  
 Wharton RP  
 Whitaker V

## The Post Office Network

Whitby R  
Whitby S  
Whitchurch Town Council  
White CG & KM  
White DB & CA  
White J  
White M  
White P  
White S  
White S/One Voice Wales  
Whitcroft Community Association  
Whitehead P  
Whitehouse J  
Whiteley J  
Whiteside Mr&Mrs MR  
Whittington D  
Wickham Market Parish Council  
Wickham St Paul Parish Council  
Wicks EH  
Widdrington Station + Stabswood Parish Council  
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council  
Wigman MA  
Wild ED  
Wild R  
Wilkes J  
Wilkinson P&W  
Williams A  
Williams E  
Williams J  
Williams K  
Williams LE  
Williams Mrs  
Williams Mark  
Williams N  
Williams R (MP)  
Williams TG  
Willing D  
Willington Parish Council  
Willis F (MP)  
Willis P  
Willis R  
Willis S/R3N  
Wills D  
Wilmot AE  
Wilsdon C  
Wilson A  
Wilson G  
Wilson GE  
Wilson J  
Wilson J  
Wilson J  
Wilson J  
Wilson JD  
Wilson JL  
Wilson L  
Wilson M

Wiltshire County Council  
Winchelsea Community Office  
Winchester City Council  
Windermere Town Council  
Windmuller L  
Windsor Mr&Mrs  
Winkleigh Parish Council  
Winnington E  
Winterburn P  
Wishart JF & DL  
Witley Parish Council  
Wokingham District Council  
Wolverhampton City Council  
Wonersh Parish Council  
Wood J/Highland Archaeology Services  
Wood M  
Wood RE  
Woodchester Parish Council  
Woodham Water Parish Council  
Woods PJE  
Wookey S Reverend  
Woollcott N  
Woolley LAD  
Woolsey EA  
Worcestershire Chaplaincy for Agricultural and Rural Life  
Worcestershire County Council  
Wotherspoon T  
Wreay IM  
Wright C  
Wright DE  
Wright H  
Wright J  
Wright J  
Wright LB  
Wright M  
Wright R  
Wright W  
Writtle Parish Council  
Wyatt Mrs  
Wyatt RJ  
Wychavon District Council  
Wylam J Reverend  
Wynn C  
Wyre Borough Council  
Wyre Forest District Council  
Wythall Parish Council  
Yarrow F  
Yeatman Biggs N  
Yendell DM  
Yendell Mr&Mrs DG  
York Conservatives Association  
Yorkshire & Humber Rural Community Councils  
Yorkshire and Humber Assembly  
Young H  
Younger S  
Yoxford Parish Council





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## ADULT SOCIAL CARE FAIRER CHARGING

### PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

11TH OCTOBER, 2007

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#### Wards Affected

County-wide

#### Purpose

To inform Cabinet of the outcomes of the recent public consultation on the Fairer Charging for non-residential Social Services recommendations made by Cabinet in June 2007. The report also recommends revisions to the recommendations made in June following the consultation.

#### Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included on the Forward Plan.

#### Recommendation

- THAT a) The proposals set out in Appendix A be approved with the exception of the proposed change to Day Care which should be set at £4 per person and;**
- b) Charges be subject to an annual inflationary uplift as appropriate.**

#### Reasons

To report to Cabinet the outcomes of the consultation exercise following the recommendations made to Cabinet in June, 2007 on the Council's Fairer Charging Policy.

#### Considerations

1. Cabinet approved consultation on a number of changes to the Council's Fairer Charging Policy on June 7th 2007. These are set out in Appendix A to this report. The one change was the reduction in the proposed rate for day care services to £7.30 per hour.
2. The recommendations from this report have been the subject of extensive public consultation during the summer. This has included:
  - A telephone hotline

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
Andrew Tanner Adult and Community Services (01432) 260396

- Formal meetings and Drop in sessions in the market towns and Hereford;
  - Formal meetings for service users in Ross-on-Wye; Leominster and Hereford;
  - A meeting for service providers in Hereford;
  - E-mail and letter correspondence.
  - In total of 262 people who will be affected by the changes some 70 people attended the meetings and a further 30 people provided written responses
3. The main messages arising from this consultation are summarised as follows:
- By far the most significant concerns were in regard to the increase in day centre fees from £2.90 to £7.30.
  - A concern was raised that by increasing charges people will move further away from community care services and this will accelerate a decline in health and hence residential nursing care.
4. Other concerns were raised in regards to:
- Charging people for two care assistants instead of just one, where two were required;
  - The impact of including 100% of occupational pensions in the financial assessment on people's income and in particular the perceived inequity of this when people have been prudent in making such pension provision;
  - The value for money received from some care service providers.
  - There was an understanding that this was largely a national problem in regard to the funding and not because Herefordshire were not committed to social care services.
5. All the concerns raised by the consultees have been heard and responded to verbally in the meetings or by letter and e-mail. The most significant have been around the provision of day care and Cabinet will need to decide how they wish to respond to these. There are a number of factors which are pertinent in coming to a decision on this issue:
- The current provision of day care is largely traditional and buildings-based and does not necessarily meet the needs of either the Council or many service users. Whilst appreciating that it provides a valuable social function to many people, new, low level services are being developed in the community which provide a more flexible approach to day opportunities for older people as part of the wider Prevention agenda.
  - Current day centre provision can be very expensive in terms of costs per day for each service user. This is largely due to some day centres having low attendance whilst retaining fixed contractual costs.

- The decision cannot be made purely for financial reasons. Some service users will stop attending day centres because of the increase in the charge to £7.30. This becomes a concern to Social Care where the service was provided as part of a formal care package and alternative provision is not made available in a relatively short time scale.
6. Given the level of concern during the consultation on day centre fees, an alternative option is proposed to reduce further the increase in the day centre fee to £4 per session (from the current £2.90 charge). This will then be reviewed in March 2009 in light of the proposals for a new pattern of day opportunities for older people. The Council is commencing a separate review of day care provision and will be carrying out extensive public consultation within the near future.
  7. In regard to the remaining changes to Fairer Charging contained in the June Cabinet report it is recommended that these remain, whilst at the same time recognising that they will have a financial impact on a minority of service users. This analysis was not available in June, however officers have been able to estimate this impact as follows:
  8. The changes on occupational pensions and tariff income will have a combined impact on 262 service users as follows:

12 people > £100 per week
32 people > £50 per week and < £100 per week
43 people > £30 per week and < £50 per week
36 people > £20 per week and < £30 per week
139 people < £20 per week

9. The reasons set out in the June report are still valid and the Council needs to adopt a revised and equitable Fairer Charging structure in order to sustain care services in to the future.
10. Appendix A contains the initial proposals approved at Cabinet in June this year for public consultation. It is recommended that these are now finally approved with the option to reduce the proposed charge for day care from £7.30 to £4 per session. This will be reviewed in June 2009.

## Financial implications

The proposals in this report will generate significant additional income for the Council as set out in Appendix A.

## Alternative Options

There are no alternative options.

## Consultees

As set out in the report.

## **Risk Management**

Failure to implement the recommendations from the 9th June, 2007 Cabinet report will seriously jeopardise the ability of Adult Social Care to sustain and improve vital care services to vulnerable people in Herefordshire. Demographic growth in older people in particular is placing significant pressure on social care budgets and an equitable charging system for non-residential services is an absolute requirement to address this challenge.

The major risk to the Council in implementing this structure is the financial impact this may have on some individual service users. Alternative service provision is being actively developed in lower level community based services which will not only prove to be more cost effective, but will also ensure that individual needs are more closely met.

## **Background Papers**

Cabinet Report on Fairer Charging June 9<sup>th</sup> 2007

**APPENDIX A**

<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p>	<p>The revised and updated Fairer Charging Policy and Appendices be approved. These are available in the Member’s Room and on the Intranet.</p>
<p>Reason</p>	<p>The existing policy has not been updated since its inception and does not reflect current guidance</p>
	<p>The redrafted policy provides background to the Fairer Charging regulations and gives clear procedures and guidance that is readily understandable and relatively free of jargon. The three main changes are as follows:</p> <p><u>Day centre attendance charges should be levied when the day centre arranges a trip out</u></p> <p>Currently a service user will not be charged day centre attendance if they go out of the centre on activities including trips. Despite the fact that a trip out will produce some savings in terms of heat and light at the day centre, there is still a cost attached to the accompanying staff time. It is therefore proposed that service users should be charged for their day centre attendance when out of the centre on activities or trips. This is justifiable given that the charge remains a “low token contribution” to the actual cost of running the day care scheme.</p>
<p>Outcome/Impact</p>	<p><u>Where service users require two carers at once they should be charged for the time of both carers</u></p> <p>The existing policy states that if a service user requires two carers to provide their care, they will be charged for only one carer. The reasoning for this is that the requirement for two carers is beyond a service user’s control. However, if a service user’s high level of need requires them to receive only one carer, but for 24 hours a day, they would be charged for every hour that they receive. It is therefore proposed that the policy be amended to charge for two carers where a service user has been assessed as requiring two carers.</p> <p><u>Charges for major adaptations</u></p> <p>The Authority is able to charge for major adaptations (over £1,500) but the current policy makes no mention of this. It is proposed that the policy be amended to allow us to charge for major adaptations.</p>
<p>Estimated additional income per year</p>	<p>There will be increased income from the first recommendation which is difficult to estimate but is not deemed to be significant.</p>

<b>Recommendation 2</b>	Changes to the maximum weekly charge so the current absolute ceiling charge is replaced by one defined as the 'full cost of the service', calculated as the applicable unit charge in force at the time multiplied by the amount of service delivered.
Reason	Currently there is a maximum weekly charge of £272. This means that self-funders having over £21,500 may not be charged the full cost of the services that they receive. In practice this has meant that self funders have been asked to arrange services for themselves, meaning that we can not include these service users against our 'Helped to Live at Home' performance indicators.
Outcome/Impact	Improved performance against PAF indicator C32 which is a key measure of overall Social Care performance on independent living.
Estimated additional income per year	There are currently 124 services users that are assessed as full charge payers. Only 5 of these receive a level of service that results in paying the full cost of the service. £40,000
<b>Recommendation 3</b>	The inclusion of tariff income in the financial assessment from savings and capital between £13,000 and £21,500.
Reason	Herefordshire Council currently disregards all savings/capital below £21,500 in the financial assessment. Local authorities are able to include income generated from a client's savings/capital at a rate of £1 for every £250 (or part thereof) of savings held over £13,000. This is called 'tariff income'.
Outcome/Impact	There are currently 82 service users (6%) that have capital between £13,000 and £21,500 and would be affected by this change (subject to reassessment).
Estimated additional income per year	£66,000
<b>Recommendation 4</b>	Include 100% of occupational/private pensions in the financial assessment
Reason	Herefordshire currently disregards 55% of any private/occupational pension from the financial assessment. It includes 100% of any state retirement pension. As the financial assessment is designed to ensure that service users retain basic income support levels plus 25% it is deemed unnecessary to apply this additional disregard and Herefordshire has missed the opportunity to maximise income here in the past.

	<p>Herefordshire is very unusual in applying this disregard at all and it is recommended therefore that 100% of a private/occupational pension is included in the financial assessment in line with most other authorities.</p> <p>Based on current numbers, 306 service users (33%) will be affected by this change. An example below is:</p>																																													
<p>Outcome/Impact</p>	<p>Example: Mr A. N. Other is a gentleman over 60 living alone. He receives income from a variety of sources including an occupational pension of £61.54 per week (current average occupational pension figure). The table below demonstrates the outcome of his assessment firstly with a 55% pension disregard (as per the current policy) and secondly taking 100% of the pension into account.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="549 663 1248 1597"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Current Policy (55% pension disregard) £ per week</th> <th>Proposed Policy (no pension disregard) £ per week</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Income</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Occupational pension</td> <td>27.69</td> <td>61.54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>State Retirement Pension</td> <td>133.50</td> <td>133.50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Attendance Allowance</td> <td>41.65</td> <td>41.65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Income</td> <td>202.84</td> <td>236.69</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Less Outgoings</b></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Contents Insurance</td> <td>1.00</td> <td>1.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Council Tax</td> <td>5.57</td> <td>5.57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Heating Costs</td> <td>1.75</td> <td>1.75</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rent</td> <td><u>68.95</u></td> <td><u>68.95</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Outgoings</td> <td>77.27</td> <td>77.27</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total income taken into account</b></td> <td>125.67</td> <td>159.42</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less Applicable Amount</td> <td><u>(142.56)</u></td> <td><u>(142.56)</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Assessed Charge</td> <td>0.00</td> <td>16.86</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*Applicable amount is defined as the amount of money that we must leave a person with to live on after costs of disability have been taken into account. It amounts to the basic relevant income support amount plus 25%.</p>		Current Policy (55% pension disregard) £ per week	Proposed Policy (no pension disregard) £ per week	<b>Income</b>			Occupational pension	27.69	61.54	State Retirement Pension	133.50	133.50	Attendance Allowance	41.65	41.65	Total Income	202.84	236.69	<b>Less Outgoings</b>			Contents Insurance	1.00	1.00	Council Tax	5.57	5.57	Heating Costs	1.75	1.75	Rent	<u>68.95</u>	<u>68.95</u>	Total Outgoings	77.27	77.27	<b>Total income taken into account</b>	125.67	159.42	Less Applicable Amount	<u>(142.56)</u>	<u>(142.56)</u>	Assessed Charge	0.00	16.86
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Estimated additional income per year	£269,000
<b>Recommendation 5</b>	Continue to charge a flat rate for meals and transport
Reason	The Fairer Charging Guidance ("Fairer Charging Policies for Home Care and Other Non-Residential Social Services Practice Guidance") pre-supposes that with the exception of meal charges, all non-residential services will be included in the financial assessment. Currently flat rate charges are applied to both meals and transport. As the majority of transport users receive other social care services and are likely to be receiving packages of care in excess of their assessed contribution, moving the transport charge into the assessment is likely to result in a loss of income for the authority. As long as the charge remains a "low token contribution" then the application of a flat rate charge can be justified. This policy will be reviewed annually.
Outcome/Impact	No change
Estimated additional income per year	~
<b>Recommendation 6</b>	Increase charges to reflect the actual cost of the providing the service
Reasons	<p>The average cost of an hour of commissioned homecare is £13.60. As Herefordshire's unit charge for an hour of homecare is £11.20, this means that even full charge payers are receiving a £2.40 per hour subsidy. It is therefore proposed that the unit charge for homecare be brought in line with the average unit cost of commissioned homecare.</p> <p>The unit cost of a day care session is £29.00, considerably higher than the current unit charge for the service of £2.90. It is therefore proposed that day care increases be staged in at £14.00 (changed to £7.30 at Cabinet) with further increases to be considered in later years.</p> <p>It is proposed that transport charges remain unchanged and that the two different meal charges be brought in line at £2.50. These are flat rate charges and the guidance anticipates such charges will be kept low.</p> <p>Charges will be increased again in April 2008 in line with inflation.</p>



The table below outlines the current and proposed charges:

Client Charges	Unit of Service	Current Charge 2007-08	Proposed Charge from Jan 2008	Increase	
		£	£	£	%
Home Care	Per hour	11.20	13.60	2.40	21.4
Day Care	Per day/session	2.90	14.00	11.10	383.0
Transport	Per journey	1.25	No change		
Meals	Per meal	2.40	2.50	0.10	4.2
Meals on Wheels	Per meal	2.50	No change		

The table below shows the proposed charges against the comparative charges of other authorities.

Client charges 07/08	Herefordshire £	Gloucestershire £	West Berkshire £	Average Benchmarking Club* £
Home Care	13.60	13.46	17.30	10.53
Day Care	14.00	15.54	3.40	7.29
Transport	1.25	n/a	1.00	0.86
Meals	2.50	2.30	3.40	2.68
Meals on wheels	2.50	2.20	3.40	2.62

\* CIPFA /IPF Financial Assessments Benchmarking Club all members average 06/07 plus 2.5% inflation

Information has been received on at least 8 other LA's who have day centre charges higher than £14 per hour and

	these include Cardiff, East Riding, Northants, Torfaen, and Bucks. 5 of these authorities have daily charges of £26 or over.
Outcome/Impact	129 service users will be affected by this change, the majority (69), will be charged between £10 and £15 extra per week.
Estimated additional income per year	£65,000
<b>Recommendation 7</b>	Direct payments charges to be set using the same principles as day care and homecare
Reasons	Direct Payments clients are charged the same unit charge for home care as other service users (£11.20 per hour), despite the fact that the amount of money they receive with which to purchase services is only £9.31 per hour. It is possible therefore that someone could be asked to contribute more in client contributions than they receive in services. The Council will plan therefore to set the unit charge equal to the cost of the service, ie: £9.31 per hour.
Outcome/Impact	The estimated loss of income per year is £5,000, although this potential loss will probably be offset by an improved assessment and reassessment process capturing more service users, as many currently have not been financially assessed.
Estimated additional income per year	(£5,000)
<b>Recommendation 8</b>	Services for carers remain free of charges
Reasons	Services to carers provided under the Carers and Disabled Children Act are chargeable according to the Government Guidance. Herefordshire Council currently provides them for free, in line with many other councils, recognising the value that carers provide in preventing vulnerable people from going into residential care. The Needs Analysis report highlighted the vital role carers played and the need for additional investment, rather than disinvestment, in them.  The spring Delivery and Improvement Statement 2006 identified that the Council planned to provide services to 237 service users in 2006-07 at a cost of £467,000, i.e. an average cost per service per carer of £38 per week.
Outcome/Impact	This recommendation emphasises the important role carers continue to play in the provision of social care in the county.
Estimated additional income per year	~

# HEREFORDSHIRE HOUSING POST TRANSFER IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

## PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

CABINET

11TH OCTOBER, 2007

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### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

To provide an update to Cabinet of the progress made in delivering improvements to housing stock transferred to Herefordshire Housing.

### Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

### Recommendations

- THAT (a) **Cabinet notes the progress made by Herefordshire Housing to date in delivering against the programme of repairs and improvements identified within the Formal Consultation document; and**
- (b) **Cabinet should receive a summary report after 26th November, 2007 on repairs and improvements delivered in the first five years following transfer.**

### Reasons

The transfer contract between the Council and Herefordshire Housing Ltd (HHL) contained a series of promises relating to qualifying repairs and improvement to be carried out within the first five years following a successful stock transfer. The Council monitors progress made by HHL in delivery against those promises since the transfer date of 26th November, 2002.

### Considerations

1. 'Your Home Your Choice', the transfer document provided to tenants in the lead up to transfer confirmed that if transfer went ahead, HHL promised to undertake a programme of repairs, improvements and planned maintenance to the housing stock. At the point of transfer, HHL entered into a legally binding contract with the Council committing the company to honour the promises made within the formal consultation document.
2. This is the third monitoring report to be considered by Cabinet, the first report covering progress against the promises since transfer up to 31st March, 2004 having been presented at the Cabinet meeting of 25th November, 2004

3. The promise to tenants included an undertaking that HHL would spend £41m on repairs and improvements in the first five years following transfer and would spend £41 million in the subsequent five years following that on a planned repair, improvement and maintenance programme.
4. The formal consultation set out a list of Repairs and Improvements that would be carried out where required. Taking into account the change in stock numbers since the consultation was undertaken, assumptions about component condition have had to be constantly reviewed by Herefordshire Housing Limited.
5. As a result, promise figures have been revised to reflect the loss of stock through Right to Buy between the date of the consultation document and now. Additionally, physical inspection aligned with tenant consultation has identified which specific components are not in need of renewal/replacement. All works are on a cyclical basis, therefore, if a new kitchen was put in a property six years ago (e.g. before transfer), this will be scheduled to be replaced within a specific future timescale under Herefordshire Housing Limited's rolling programme.
6. The table below, provided by Herefordshire Housing Ltd, sets out progress achieved to date and remaining for completion up to November 2007 against each consultation promise. Promises are to be completed within five years of stock transfer, i.e. by 26th November, 2007.

Improvement element	Promise made	Properties completed	Left to satisfy promise	On target to complete by
<b>Kitchen replacements</b>	<b>2182</b>	<b>2260</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Promise kept</b>
<b>Bathroom replacements</b>	<b>1243</b>	<b>1423</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Promise kept</b>
*Homes rewired	2102	1,920	182	November 2007
<b>Homes double glazed</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>1335</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Promise kept</b>
<b>External doors (properties)</b>	<b>3492</b>	<b>3936</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Promise kept</b>
<b>Central heating</b>	<b>1309</b>	<b>1912</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Promise kept</b>
<p>*Note - Promise reduced by 80 (from 2182) in July because there are no further properties that need rewiring.</p>				

7. Herefordshire Housing confirm that the programme of works was designed to concentrate on rewiring and external doors in this, the last year of the 5 year initial programme. The Company is confident that it will complete all the improvement promises ahead of time.
8. Herefordshire Housing have provided the following additional information to update Cabinet on the development of the Company and its services since the last update report.

- a. HHL reports significant improvements in customer satisfaction. Results for 2006 found that 85% of respondents were 'quite' or 'very satisfied' with HHL – compared to 76% reported in the first post-transfer survey conducted in 2004. 83% considered their rent provides value for money (80% in 2004); 86% considered staff helpful compared to 74% (2004). 'Repairs' and 'Improvements' to homes is identified as a key priority for their customers, with HHL reporting satisfaction levels running at 95% and 96% respectively. HHL report that this suggests HHL is continuing to move in the right direction and putting the right things in place to satisfy tenants requirements.
- b. Overall, in 2006/2007, the Company improved its position by comparison to other similar organisations, with 80% of the performance measures above average (i.e. a good or excellent performer) compared to 70% previously.
- c. Since transfer, the company has factored in an additional £23m, over 30 years, to improve the condition of existing stock. The Company reports that it is confident of meeting the government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010, having estimated that, currently, 84% of properties meet the standard and having made provision for the £1m to £1.5m investment required to enable the standard to be met.
- d. In service improvement terms, HHL reports that it has conducted a complete review of the way it manages the provision of disabled aids and adaptations for tenants resulting in a significant reduction in waiting time. It has changed the arrangements for gas servicing increases the proportion of services completed within set timescales. Void property standards have been reviewed and an appointments system for repairs implemented.
- e. Herefordshire Housing continues to be a key partner in the Home Point Herefordshire choice-based lettings partnership, which now covers 97% of all social housing in Herefordshire. It is also part of the Spectrum Development Partnership, led by West Mercia Housing Group, through which the Company accesses Housing Corporation grant funding for affordable housing development.

## **Financial Implications**

None

## **Risk Management**

HHL are contracted to complete the improvement works specified in the report as promised to tenants prior to transfer. The Council has a responsibility to ensure these obligations are delivered and will continue to monitor progress through subsequent reporting to Cabinet and through ongoing transfer review meetings.

## **Alternative Options**

There are no Alternative Options.

## **Consultees**

Tenants are being kept informed of progress through regular newsletter updates. Herefordshire Housing Limited's Regulators and Funders are being kept updated on progress through financial and performance returns and regular liaison meetings.

## **Appendices**

None identified.

### **Background Papers**

None identified.

Document is Restricted





Document is Restricted

