
REPORT TO:	Community Scrutiny Committee	AGENDA ITEM:
DATE OF MEETING:	4th December 2006	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Deputy Chief Executive	
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	John Porter	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Rural Post Offices - Feedback re. 'Drop in' events held	REF:
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the public consultation exercises which were held in November 2006.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At it's meeting on the 23rd October 2006, (Minute No. CYS/27) Members of the Committee were advised that three informal 'drop-in' events that had been arranged for the late afternoon/early evening at Melbourne Leisure Centre, Overseal Village Hall and the Hatton Centre on the 13th, 14th and 15th November 2006 respectively.
- 2.2 The purpose of the meetings were twofold; to enable rural post-masters, parish councillors and residents to make any comments regarding possible changes to the rural post office network; and for Members to explore various options and proposals to support the viability of the rural post office network in the district of South Derbyshire
- 2.3 The Committee agreed a letter of invitation to the meetings, together with details regarding the publicity arrangements
- 2.4 It was also agreed to circulate details of the feedback received from the consultation exercise undertaken with Parish Councils, rural sub-postmasters, Heads of Service and Member of Parliament. This is now complete.

3.0 'Drop-in' Events

- 3.1 The events were publicised at Area Meetings, in a series of press releases, including an announcement on local radio station.
- 3.2 The table below shows details of the attendances at each of the meetings held

Venue	Attendance details
Melbourne Leisure Centre	8 people comprising of residents, a rural sub-postmaster, and District / Parish Council representatives
Overseal Village Hall	6 people comprising of residents, a rural sub-postmaster, representatives from the Citizens Advice Bureau, and Parish Council
Hatton Centre	5 people comprising of residents, a rural sub-postmaster, and representatives from the Parish Council

- 3.3 The meetings were well received. In addition, attendees welcomed the Council's initiative in supporting the rural post office network. In particular, lobbying the Government regarding any possible post office closures in South Derbyshire and adding its concerns to the withdrawal of funding by the Department of Works and Pensions with regards to the recently introduced Post Office Card Account after 2010.
- 3.4 A number of possible options and proposals, in order to sustain the rural post office network were explored with the rural sub-postmasters in attendance at these meetings. For example, the provision of council leaflets/forms, information points, and delivery of some council services etc. In addition, suggestions were made on how other Partners of the Council could make use of the rural post office network.
- 3.5 It suggested that any proposals should also be further explored with the National Federation of Sub- Postmasters (NFSP) to ensure that a consistent and equitable approach is followed.
- 3.6 At these meetings attendees were also asked to complete a short questionnaire (copy attached at appendix A) in order to attain additional information regarding local post office usage and post office services provided.
- 3.7 Additional questionnaires were made available for distribution at local post offices and parish councils. To date over 30 questionnaires have been returned, which require a detailed analysis.
- 3.8 However, from the questionnaires returned, the initial analysis is that there appears to be no surprises regarding the value, which residents place on their local post office, all of which reflect the findings, which have been well-documented in other national surveys undertaken.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 A meeting is to be arranged (mid- December 2006) with representatives of the NFSP and appropriate Officers and Members of the Council, in order to explore in detail possible options and proposals to support the viability of the rural post office network in the district of South Derbyshire

RURAL POST OFFICE SURVEY

Q1. Do you ever visit your post office?

YES / NO

Q2. How often do you visit your local post office? (Please tick one box)

6 or more times a week	
4-5 times a week	
2-3 times a week	
About once a week	
Once a fortnight	
Once every 3 weeks	
Once a month	
Less often	

Q3. How far away from your home was the post office?

½ mile or nearer	
Over ½ mile under 1 mile	
1-2 miles	
3-5 miles	
More than 5 miles	
Don't know	

Q4. Does this post office have a shop attached? (Please tick one box)

YES	
NO	
Don't know	

Q5. Did you ever visit the post office on behalf of other people (e.g. to collect pensions, pick up shopping, etc)?

YES / NO

IF YES: Who was that on behalf of (e.g. elderly relative, friend, neighbour, etc)?

(Write in)

Q6a. Which of these services did you use this post office for, either for yourself, or on behalf of others? (Please tick all that apply)

To post letters/parcels	
To buy stamps	
Car tax/vehicle licence	
Other licences (e.g. TV)	
Collecting pensions	
Collecting child benefits	
Collecting disability benefits	
Collecting unemployment benefits	
National Savings Service	
Financial Services (e.g. banking, postal orders,etc)	
Paying bills (e.g. telephone)	
Picking up forms/leaflets	
Shopping (any)	
Other (please specify below)	

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Q6b Which of these would you say was the most important service? (Please tick all that apply)

To post letters/parcels	
To buy stamps	
Car tax/vehicle licence	
Other licences (e.g. TV)	
Collecting pensions	
Collecting child benefits	
Collecting disability benefits	
Collecting unemployment benefits	
National Savings Service	
Financial Services (e.g. banking, postal orders,etc)	
Paying bills (e.g. telephone)	
Picking up forms/leaflets	
Shopping (any)	
Don't Know	
Other (please specify below)	

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Q6c. Would you use the shop at the post office for? (Please tick all that apply)

Cigarettes/tobacco	
Wine/beer/spirits/other alcohol	
Newspapers/magazines	
Sweets/soft drinks	
Cards/Stationery	
National Lottery/Lotto.	
General groceries (e.g. milk, bread, flour)	
Phonecards	
Photocopying	
Medicines	
Toiletries	
Don't know	
Other (please specify below)	

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Q7. People have told us about the different uses they make of a post office. Which of these did you ever personally do? (Please tick all that apply)

Meet friends/acquaintances	
Get informal advice	
Read community notices	
Get government information	
Don't know	
Something else (please specify below)	

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Q10a. Do you use any of the following services once provided by the post office? (Please tick all that apply)

Use a bank	
Use a shop	
Use a Supermarket	
Use a garage	
Use ATM [cash point]	
Somebody else goes to the post office for me	
Somebody else goes elsewhere for me	
Don't know	
Something else (please specify below)	

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Q10b How easy is it for you to get to these places? (Please tick one box)

Very easy	
Fairly easy	
Neither easy nor difficult	
Fairly difficult	
Very difficult	
Don't know	

Q10c. In what way is it difficult?

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Q10d How easy is it for you to get to the post office you currently use? (Please tick one box)

Very easy	
Fairly easy	
Neither easy nor difficult	
Fairly difficult	
Very difficult	
Don't know	

Q10e. In what way is it difficult?

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Q10f. Is this visit to the post office usually combined with other purposes? If so, what purpose? (Please tick one box)

No other purpose.	
Yes, with other shopping trip	
Yes, on way to/from work	
Yes, while at work.	
Yes, on school run	
Yes, other (specify below)	
Don't know	

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Q11. Thinking about the post office that you currently use most often, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement
(Please tick one box, per statement)

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither/nor	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
Provides an excellent service						
Are trustworthy and reliable						
Give a personal service						
Provides fast efficient service						
Convenient for me						
Is extremely important to me						

Q12. Overall would you say that the closure of your local post office would cause you any inconvenience? (Please tick one box)

A great deal of inconvenience.	
Some inconvenience	
A little inconvenience	
Not much inconvenience.	
No inconvenience at all	
Don't know	

Q13. The following statements are some of the things people have said about their local post office. For each, please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with what they said. (Please tick one box, per statement)

	Agree Strongly	Agree	Neither/nor	Disagree	Disagree Strongly	Don't Know
"A village is not a village without a post office"						
"The post office played an important role in my local community"						
"Provides important services to the community"						
"Is essential to my way of life"						
"Provides support to other businesses and outlets"						
"Provides convenient banking services"						
"You lose your post office and a lot of people lose their						

independence"						
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Demographics

POST CODE

Tel No

GENDER (Please tick one box)

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>

AGE (Please tick one box)

18-24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-44	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-54	<input type="checkbox"/>
55-64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65-74	<input type="checkbox"/>
75+	<input type="checkbox"/>

WORKING (Please tick one box)

Full-time housewife/house husband	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employed part-time (8-29 hours).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employed full-time (30+ hours)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Full-time student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>

MARITAL STATUS (Please tick one box)

Married/living with partner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced/separated	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widowed	<input type="checkbox"/>

THANK YOU