

Time commenced – 4.20pm
Time finished – 5.00pm

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION 1 OCTOBER 2004

Present: Councillor Troup (Chair)
Councillors P Berry, Lowe, MacDonald, Repton and Travis.

32/04 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ahern, Bayliss, Graves, Hussain, Jones, Latham, Redfern, and Smalley.

33/04 Late Items Introduced by the Chair

There were no late items.

33/04 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

Items for Discussion

34/04 Post Office Closure Proposal

The Commission had been carrying out informal evidence gathering interviews from with a number of witnesses on the impact of the proposed Post Office Closure Programme.

Conclusions were summarised under the following headings:

1. Transport difficulties.
2. Sustainable communities.
3. Lack of partnership working.
4. Little time to respond to the proposed closure programme.
5. Need for co-operative working with Derby Homes, City Council, Royal Mail and the Post Office regarding the proposed closure programme to come up with viable sustainable alternatives.
6. A managed closure programme was better than a piecemeal one but that should not be used as a reason for premature decisions on closing Post Offices as there might be viable alternatives which had not yet been explored thoroughly.

7. Migration of business to other Post Offices could not be guaranteed.
8. The possibility of providing mobile/satellite Post Offices had not been investigated.
9. Public transport was not currently optimised for providing access to the Post Office network.
10. Technological changes were difficult for certain members of the community to adapt to.
11. Derby Homes closure programme has not been taken into account which could potentially provide extra business for Post Offices. New Housing Developments also had not been fully taken into account.
12. Neighbourhood Renewal Areas may be areas where people would be more than half a mile from a Post Office and therefore the Post Office could be failing to deliver its own policy.
13. The siting of Post Offices could have dictated the sites chosen for Neighbourhood Bases and the closure programme may undermine the viability of the Neighbourhood Bases.
14. Bob Laxton MP was to explore at a senior level in Government and with the Post Office ways to lessen the impact of the proposals and minimise the negative effect of closure and to provide as comprehensive a service as possible.
15. It seems unlikely that the Government would be prepared to offer any continuing subsidies to support unviable Post Offices and this was accepted. There was Government funding for modernisation of existing and remaining Post Offices.
16. Distances do not reflect the topography particularly in relation to gradient and therefore distance should not be the only factor considered.

Resolved to make the following recommendations

- a) **To request a delay in the final decision, for a period of six months, to enable the City Council, the Post Office and appropriate agencies to consider serious alternatives to closure and that full and active consideration be given to joint working with the City Council, Derby Homes, Royal Mail, the Post Office and other interested groups in the provision of possible alternative service delivery.**
- b) **For the Post Office to investigate the possibility of a secure mobile facility.**
- c) **For the Post Office to secure a satellite / peripatetic service.**
- d) **To send all the supporting documents to the Post Office to show what had been considered and how the conclusions and recommendations had been arrived at and to seek an urgent meeting with the Post Office to progress a-c above.**

MINUTES END