

## **The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

**Cabinet: 9 May 2016**

### **Report of the Leader**

### **Barry Crown Post Office - Local Public Consultation - proposed branch closure**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To advise of a Post Office Consultation in relation to a proposal to permanently close the Barry Crown Post Office branch in August 2016.

#### **Recommendations**

1. That Cabinet notes this report and agrees that a copy of the report be submitted in response to the Consultation.
2. That Cabinet urges the Post office to reconsider the planned closure of the Crown Post Office at 3-5 Holton Road for reasons outlined in paragraphs 5-9.

#### **Reasons for the Recommendations**

1. To enable a response to be issued with consultation.
2. To seek the retention of the Crown Post Office at 3-5 Holton Road.

#### **Background**

2. A copy of a letter from the Post Office, dated 15 March, is attached at [Appendix 1](#). That letter advises of the intention to close the Crown Post Office at 3-5 Holton Road, Barry. The letter advises that a period of consultation will run until 8 June 2016 with a planned closure month of August. The letter contains details of other post offices in the area. The letter also seeks views on 4 questions, as listed within the letter.

#### **Relevant Issues and Options**

3. Members will be aware that the post office announced in January 2016 that consideration was being given to the closure of the Crown Post Office at 3-5 Holton Road. At this time I did correspond by email with the Post Office to outline my concerns at the intended closure. This correspondence was issued after a meeting with Mr. Stuart Taylor, which I attended with the Managing Director and Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

4. In the letter, attached at [Appendix 1](#), the Post Office makes it clear that, in their view, there are 5 other branches nearby to meet demand. These are listed within the letter.
5. In terms of this Council's response the key issues relate to the fact that the Post office at 3-5 Holton Road is a Crown Branch and if closed people will need to travel further afield (beyond the Vale of Glamorgan) to access specialist services only available in crown branches. In addition, the post office has become a landmark in Barry, occupying a prominent position and providing a comprehensive range of services. It is therefore not simply a case of residents being able to access other branches as many services may not be available within those branches.
6. It is particularly disappointing that closure is being considered at a time when the investment and regeneration activity in the town is increasing. With this comes an increase in confidence with new businesses being established. The planned closure of this branch is therefore highly regrettable and has the potential to be damaging to the vibrancy of the town centre, as well as negatively impacting on those residents and businesses who rely on the services provided.
7. In addition, and a point already raised with the Post office is the fact that the accommodation appears underused and that the option of making better use of the floor space (especially at upper floor levels) has not been considered. I raised this after our meeting earlier this year and have not received any response.
8. Finally, it is not unusual in circumstances such as this to see services from a branch that is threatened with closure being provided in neighbouring retail premises. In such cases, (and if closure becomes inevitable) the provision of post office services within existing retail premises do help sustain that business by increasing footfall and patronage. This is an issue that I have also previously discussed with the Post Office but one that has not been addressed in the consultation letter. At the time of writing I have sought an update on this matter, as reports in the local press appear to suggest that this is something that has not been addressed and concluded.
9. It is recommended that a copy of this report be issued to the Post Office as this Council's response to consultation and it is further recommended that the Post Office reconsider the proposal to close the Crown Post Office at 3-5 Holton Road.

### **Resource Implications (Financial and Employment)**

10. None directly attributable to this report.

### **Sustainability and Climate Change Implications**

11. As the Crown Post Office provides a full range of services, the closure could have a negative impact, given that people will need to travel further afield to access services.

### **Legal Implications (to Include Human Rights Implications)**

12. None directly attributable to this report.

### **Crime and Disorder Implications**

13. None directly attributable to this report.

## **Equal Opportunities Implications (to include Welsh Language issues)**

14. The proposed closure of the Post Office could well have a negative impact on those customers who currently use the Post Office for essential services and who would have difficulty accessing other sites and locations.

## **Corporate/Service Objectives**

15. Closure of the Crown Post Office and the services currently provided will impact negatively on the objective of reducing poverty and social exclusion as well as the objective of promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment.

## **Policy Framework and Budget**

16. This is a matter for Executive decision.

## **Consultation (including Ward Member Consultation)**

17. As this is a Crown Post office which covers a full range of services that potentially serve customers across the Vale of Glamorgan no specific ward member consultation has been undertaken.

## **Relevant Scrutiny Committee**

18. Corporate Resources

## **Background Papers**

Letter to the Vale of Glamorgan Council - 15 March 2016 ([Appendix 1](#))

## **Contact Officer**

Rob Thomas, Managing Director

## **Officers Consulted**

Head of Regeneration and Planning  
Head of Legal  
Head of Finance

## **Responsible Officer:**

Rob Thomas, Managing Director