

Report to: Cabinet
Date: 12th June 2008
Subject: Post Office Closures
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive
Contact officer: Sue Johnson Ext 2148

Purpose / summary: To inform the Cabinet of the Post Office's decisions in relation to branch closures across the Wigan Borough.

Recommendation / decision: Cabinet is requested to note the decision of the Post Office in relation to branch closures.

Key Decision: This report does not involve a key decision. The decision made as a result of this report will be published within **48 hours** and cannot be actioned until **seven working days** have elapsed, i.e. before 10 June 2008

Risks / Implications:

Financial:	None
Staffing:	None
Policy:	Equality and Diversity
Equal Opportunities - Has a Diversity Impact Assessment been conducted?	No. The Post Office have undertaken the review of post offices for closure taking into account government guidelines relating to service levels in the most deprived communities.
Wards affected:	Leigh East, Abram, Orrell, Standish with Langtree and Ince.

Property Implications – Does the proposal involve a reduction, addition or change to the Council’s asset base or its occupation?

No

Does this proposal have significant implications for the Council and the local population?

The closure of the post office branches concerned will make it necessary for local people to make longer journeys to obtain post office services.

Does this proposal involve a new policy or procedure or significant changes to an existing policy or procedure?

No.

Has the Service Director - Borough Solicitor confirmed that the recommendations within this report are lawful and comply with the Council’s Constitution? **Yes**

Has the Service Director - Corporate Services confirmed that any expenditure referred to within this report is consistent with the Council’s budget? **Yes**

Are any of the recommendations within this report contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council? **No**

* delete which applicable

For Cabinet reports only :

Categorisation of the report:			
Discussion leading to a decision		Discussion	
Monitoring		Decision	
Sharing for corporate understanding		Information	X

Tracking/Process:

	Consultation	Ward Members	Partners
		May 2008	
Panel	Overview & Scrutiny	Cabinet	Council
		10 June 2008	

List of Background Papers in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972:

Document	Date	File Reference	Place of Inspection
Consultation documents from the Post Office.	4 th February 2008	Post Office Closures	Office of the Deputy Chief Executive, Wigan Town Hall
Letter and report from the Post Office	13 th May 2008		
Report to Cabinet	27 th Nov 2007 13 th March 2008		

Proper Officer Sue Johnson

Date _____

Background:

The Government announced in May 2007 a range of measures to modernise and reshape the post office network. As a result of this the Post Office has undertaken a Network Change programme intended to reduce the number of post offices by 2500.

The Post Office has been undertaking area reviews. As a result of feedback in relation to public consultation in Merseyside, Wirral and Cheshire the Post Office amended proposals, and also proposed to close the Pepper Lane branch in Standish. This was in addition to the proposed closures in:

- Lower Ince
- Scholes
- Orrell Post
- Leigh Road, Leigh

to which Cabinet had already submitted objections.

Proposals:

The Post Office have applied the national criteria set out by the government in determining which branches might be closed. These national criteria applicable in Wigan are:-

- 99% of the UK population to be within 3 miles and 90% to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office branch
- 99% of the total population of deprived urban areas across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office branch
- 95% of the total population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their near post office branch
- 95% of the total rural population across the UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest post office branch

The area plan document does include for each of the proposed closures details of the two nearest offices, the hours of opening, the services provided and the extent of the public transport access to them. The Post Office has made its decision on closures and the report is attached.

Conclusions:

The closure of 5 branches in the borough will have an adverse impact on those local communities.

Appendix 3 of the attached report indicates there are 36 branches remaining open across Wigan.