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## **POST OFFICE CLOSURES IN ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL AREA**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report seeks Members' views on proposals outlined by the Post Office in respect of the Post Office branch network in the District.

### **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The Post Office have undertaken a comprehensive review of the 15 Post Office branches in the Rayleigh constituency part of the District. As a result of this review, they have reached the conclusion that they can continue to provide the current level of service with fewer branches. They have now contacted the District Council, along with other bodies in the area, outlining their proposals with a view to requiring responses by the 9<sup>th</sup> of December.

### **3 DETAILED CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 Following a comprehensive review of the 15 Post Office branches in the Rayleigh constituency area, the Post Office believe that there are too many branches competing to serve both the existing and forecast customer base. In agreement with the sub Post Masters concerned, they are proposing to permanently close two out of a total of 15 branches in the area and expressed confidence that the remaining 13 branches have the capacity to cope with the increase in customers expected to migrate from the branches identified for closure.
- 3.2 In reaching their conclusions, the Post Office state that they have carried out a detailed review of every branch. They have also considered aspects such as the availability of public transport, parking facilities, topography and ease of pedestrian access to the branches themselves.
- 3.3 The two branches the Post Office is proposing to close are:

Apex Corner  
127 Plumberow Avenue  
Hockley

Golden Cross  
279 Ashingdon Road  
Rochford

Appendix 1 outlines details of the alternative branches which would cover these closures.

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- 3.4 With the Post Office requiring responses to their proposals no later than the 9<sup>th</sup> of December, Members are now asked to consider whether they wish to raise any objections to these proposals or comments on their implementation together with the reasoning behind any response.
- 3.5 From an officer view point, the Head of Revenue and Housing Management has expressed some concerns regarding closures as the Rent Collection System relies on swipe cards. This was a system introduced only two years ago and developed jointly with Post Office Counters Ltd. Around 700 tenants use this facility on a weekly basis for payment of housing and garage rents. Fortunately, the Post Offices proposed for closure serve only relatively few tenants. These tenants will need to find alternative methods of payment, e.g. Internet or telephone payment facilities.

#### **4 PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The relevant Parishes will undoubtedly be considering these closures and determining their responses to the proposals as outlined.

#### **5 RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 It is proposed that the Committee determine its views on the proposals as outlined in the report.

Paul Warren  
Chief Executive

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#### **Background Papers:**

Letter from the Post Office dated 28<sup>th</sup> of October 2003 providing details of proposed branch closures in the Rayleigh constituency.

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## CLOSING BRANCH DETAILS:

<p><b>Apex Corner branch</b> 127 Plumberow Avenue HOCKLEY SS5 5AT</p>	<p><b>Opening times</b> Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri      09:00 - 17:30 (Closed for lunch      13:00 - 14:00) Wed &amp; Sat                09:00 - 13:00</p> <p><b>Services</b> The standard range of services is available.</p> <p><b>Disabled access/ facilities</b> This branch has a step and handrail at the entrance. Internally there is space for a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> There are car parking facilities within 50 yards. There are no designated disabled spaces. There is a bus stop within half a mile.</p>
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## ALTERNATIVE BRANCH DETAILS:

<p><b>Hockley branch</b> 39-41 Spa Road. HOCKLEY SS5 4AZ</p> <p><b>Planned improvements</b> This branch will be improving disabled facilities and access by installing a hearing loop and an automatic door. The carpet will be replaced.</p>	<p><b>Opening times</b> Mon - Fri                09:00 - 17:30 Sat                        09:00 - 13:30</p> <p><b>Services</b> The same range of services will continue to be available with the addition of lottery and motor vehicle licence facilities. Customers can still collect pensions, benefits, tax credits etc in cash.</p> <p><b>Disabled access/ facilities</b> This branch has level access and will have an automatic door at the entrance. Internally there will be a hearing loop, and currently has a low-level counter and space for a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> There are car parking facilities within 50 yards. There are no designated disabled spaces. There is a bus stop within 50 yards. There is not a direct bus route from Apex Corner branch.</p> <p><b>Route</b> This branch is situated 0.8 miles from Apex Corner branch along undulating terrain. Pedestrian crossings are available en route.</p>
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<p><b>Hawkwell branch</b> 208 Main Road HOCKLEY SS5 4EG</p> <p><b>Planned improvements</b> This branch will be installing a low level counter and hearing loop. A new fascia, lozenge and menu board will be installed. There are plans to make the access level. Opening hours will be extended to those shown.</p>	<p><b>Opening times</b> Mon - Fri                09:00 - 17:30 Sat                        09:00 - 12:30</p> <p><b>Services</b> The same range of services will continue to be available. Customers can still collect pensions, benefits, tax credits etc in cash.</p> <p><b>Disabled access/ facilities</b> There are plans for this branch to have level access. Internally there will be a hearing loop, low-level counter and space for a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> There are car parking facilities within 50 yards. There are no designated disabled spaces. There is a bus stop within 100 yards. There is not a direct bus route from Apex Corner branch.</p> <p><b>Route</b> This branch is situated 1.3 miles from Apex Corner branch along undulating terrain. Pedestrian crossings are available en route.</p>
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## CLOSING BRANCH DETAILS:

<p><b>Golden Cross branch</b> 279 Ashingdon Road ROCHFORD SS4 1UA</p>	<p><b>Opening times</b> Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 09:00 - 17:30 Wed 09:00 - 13:00 Sat 09:00 - 12:30</p> <p><b>Services</b> The standard range of services is available.</p> <p><b>Disabled access/ facilities</b> This branch has a step at the entrance. Internally there is space for a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> There are 2 car parking spaces outside the branch. There are no designated disabled spaces. There is a bus stop within 100 yards.</p>
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## ALTERNATIVE BRANCH DETAILS:

<p><b>Ashingdon branch</b> 509 Ashingdon Road ROCHFORD SS4 3HE</p> <p><b>Planned improvements</b> This branch will be installing a low level counter, hearing loop and automatic doors. There will also be a new fascia, an improved ramp and handrail and a redecoration. Opening hours will be extended to those shown.</p>	<p><b>Opening times</b> Mon - Fri 09:00 - 17:30 Sat 09:00 - 12:30</p> <p><b>Services</b> The same range of services will continue to be available with the exclusion of lottery. Customers can still collect pensions, benefits, tax credits etc in cash.</p> <p><b>Disabled access/ facilities</b> This branch will have a new ramp, handrail, bell push and an automatic door at the entrance. Internally there will be a hearing loop, low-level counter and space for a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> There are car parking facilities within 50 yards. There are no designated disabled spaces. There is a bus stop within 100 yards. There is a direct bus route from Golden Cross branch.</p> <p><b>Route</b> This branch is situated 0.8 miles from Golden Cross branch along flat terrain. Pedestrian crossings are available en route.</p>
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<p><b>Rochford branch</b> 17 North Street ROCHFORD SS4 1AA</p> <p><b>Planned improvements</b> The interior of the branch will be redecorated. The exterior will have a new menu board, fascia and automatic doors. There are plans to relocate the ramp at the entrance.</p>	<p><b>Opening times</b> Mon - Fri 09:00 - 17:30 Sat 09:00 - 12:30</p> <p><b>Services</b> The same range of services will continue to be available with the addition of motor vehicle licence facilities and the exclusion of lottery. Customers can still collect pensions, benefits, tax credits etc in cash.</p> <p><b>Disabled access/ facilities</b> This branch has a ramp at the entrance and will have an automatic door. Internally there is a hearing loop and space for a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> There are car parking facilities within 50 yards. There is one designated disabled space outside the branch. There is a bus stop within 50 yards on a direct route from Golden Cross branch.</p> <p><b>Route</b> This branch is situated 1 mile from Golden Cross branch along mainly flat terrain. Pedestrian crossings are available en route.</p>
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<p><b>Hawkwell branch</b> 208 Main Road HOCKLEY SS5 4EG</p> <p><b>Planned improvements</b> This branch will be installing a low level counter and hearing loop. A new fascia, lozenge and menu board will be installed. There are plans to make the access level. Opening hours will be extended to those shown.</p>	<p><b>Opening times</b> Mon - Fri 09:00 - 17:30 Sat 09:00 - 12:30</p> <p><b>Services</b> The same range of services will continue to be available with the exclusion of lottery. Customers can still collect pensions, benefits, tax credits etc in cash.</p> <p><b>Disabled access/ facilities</b> There are plans for this branch to have level access. Internally there will be a hearing loop, low-level counter and space for a wheelchair.</p>	<p><b>Transport</b> There are car park/parking facilities within 50 yards. There are no designated disabled spaces. There is a bus stop within 100 yards. There is a direct bus route from Golden Cross branch.</p> <p><b>Route</b> This branch is situated 2.3 miles from Golden Cross branch along undulating terrain. Pedestrian crossings are available en route.</p>
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