



REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

PORTFOLIO AREA: SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Date of Meeting: 19th March 2007

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: yes

Inside Policy Framework

Title: Yewdale Community Centre Post Office Proposal

Report of: Community Services Directorate

Report reference: CS 13/07

Summary:

The report considers the feasibility and estimated costs of extending Yewdale Community Centre in order to be able to accommodate a Post Office counter service.

Recommendations:

Members are requested to receive the information in the report, together with the proposed option and costs and consider whether or not progressing the proposal would significantly contribute to the Council's key priorities and if so, to decide to proceed with more detailed proposals, in discussion with the Post Office and the Community Centre, to investigate possible tenants and franchising arrangements.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 7th November 2006 the Council agreed a motion (ref C183/06ii) '.... to explore and evaluate the option to build an extension at Yewdale Community Centre to accommodate a new Post Office, therefore retaining this valuable community service in a location close to other shops and the original office location'.
- 1.2 This motion was subsequently considered by the Executive Committee on 20th November 2006 (min Ex 271/06), who requested that '...the Director of Community services explore and evaluate the option to build an extension to Yewdale Community Centre to accommodate a new Post Office....'
- 1.3 This report provides the information for a response to that motion.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Yewdale area was until recently, served by a Post Office based in the local Spar shop.
- 2.2 The shop's proprietors have however withdrawn from their franchise and the Post Office are actively seeking to replace the facility elsewhere in the area, but as yet have not been able to find premises nor any person willing to take on the franchise.
- 2.3 The service can be provided from a stand alone building or as part of another retail outlet, such as a shop or the Community Centre, provided there is a discreet and secure area set aside to do so.
- 2.4 Offers to run the franchise have to come from a named individual, so the Centre Management Committee nor the City Council itself could apply to take on the role of providing the service, even if they wanted to or if the Centre's constitution allowed, which in it's current form, it would not.
- 2.5 Also, there is no space currently within the Centre from which the service could be provided, so an extension would have to be added to the building.
- 2.6 This would require the permission of the Centre who hold a 25 year lease and who have plans themselves to develop the site and indeed have recently added a

substantial extension to one side of the building to provide additional nursery places.

- 2.7 However, at their Management Committee meeting on 29th January 2007, although making no commitment to support the operation of a post office service themselves, they gave approval for the Council to investigate the options and costs of adding a small extension to the building which would not hinder any future developments they would wish to carry out themselves.
- 2.8 Enquiries made of the Post Office concerning the possibility of financial support to create a counter service at the Centre met with a negative response as did an enquiry about covering the costs of security measures and insurance.
- 2.9 It is understood those costs would fall either to the 'landlord' or the 'tenant'.
- 2.10 Those and other minor issues such as planning permission, lease adjustments, responsibility for tenancy or franchise arrangements etc remain to be resolved at such time as any decision is made to progress the matter further, although it is felt unlikely than any of these issues would hinder the process.

3.0 **DRAFT PROPOSAL & COST**

- 3.1 The Building Surveyors have produced the attached draft plan and cost for an extension to the Centre which it is believed would fit the purpose, although there is no specific guidance from the Post Office about minimum size or relevant fittings.
- 3.2 The proposal has not yet been discussed with them, but a 'scoping' meeting has been held on 8th March with a representative from the Post Office, where they advised on a range of issues related to this initiative, notwithstanding the outstanding matter of a potential tenant.
- 3.3 The initial draft estimated capital cost of the proposal shown on the attachment would be in the region of £20,000, although the 'landlord' would be able to charge a rent to help recoup some of this and cover the running costs.
- 3.4 Note.....Following the meeting on 8th March, the following amendments would need be added to the specification and costs.
 - a) The extension will need to be bigger to incorporate a separate toilet facility to enable it to be entirely 'stand alone'.

- b) An independent security system would need to be installed together with some other essential fittings and accessories required in order to meet PO standards.
- c) A separate metering system would need to be installed to independently record energy use.
- d) These measures would increase the costs by a further estimated £11,000.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 Consultation to Date. Community Centre Management Committee 29th Jan '07
Post Office representative
- 4.2 Consultation proposed. Dependant upon the initiative being progressed

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are requested to receive the information in the report, together with the proposed option and costs and consider whether or not progressing the proposal would significantly contribute to the Council's key priorities and if so, to decide to proceed with more detailed proposals, in discussion with the Post Office and the Community Centre and to investigate possible tenants and franchising arrangements.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 To enable members to respond to the motion agreed by Council on 7th November 2006 (C183/06ii) and subsequently endorsed by the Exec Committee on 20th November 2006 (Ex271/06).

7. IMPLICATIONS

- Staffing/Resources – Staff time in undertaking consultation and preparing plans for possible extension
- Financial – The cost of building an extension would be classed as capital expenditure and therefore would have to be financed from capital receipts. A full business case would be required, detailing the resource implications of the project and demonstrating that it is in accordance with the Council's priorities.
- Legal – Possible implications for Council as 'landlord' for PO function

- Corporate – The Council would need to consider this request alongside a range of other interventions at other locations across Carlisle.
- Risk Management – Further investigation would be required into insurance liabilities. There is no guarantee that an operator/tenant could be found.
- Equality Issues – Providing location for Post Office would open up access to an important resource for residents of Yewdale area
- Environmental – Environmental issues would be addressed as part of the planning process if the development proceeds
- Crime and Disorder – None
- Impact on Customers – The provision of a Post Office counter service in the Centre would be a valuable local asset and may lead to an increase in the numbers of people who take up other activities in the building.

Line of existing path

No Consultations have taken place with:
Police Office
Fire Office
Access Officer
Planning Dept
Building Control
Centre Management

Feasibility Option
Post Office
4.50m x 3.50m

OFFICE

LOBBY

TIMBER PHOCCA

RAMP

FRONT
ENTRANCE

MALE
FACILITY

WATER CISTERN AREA

FEMALE
FACILITY

RAMP

STORE

DISABLED

LOUNGE

KITCHEN

STORE

Form new opening thro' existing
wall to form link
(Services to be repositioned
as required)

STEEL COLUMNS

EXISTING RAMP

STORE

STORE

BOILER ROOM

STORE

STORE

STEP UP

Existing 100mm dia Surface Water Drains
Approx 600mm deep pre formed LHD

W/H

TREE

Nursery Unit
(See Manufacturers Drawings
for final layout & Details, Bus

VOID

VOID

VOID

2000

1200

1200

2000

2000

1414

1414

8000

Finish to be 200 x 50 grey with mesh to height of
250mm above finished level. See also
Supplier information sheet enclosed with Planning App

Revisions:



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Drawing Title:
Feasibility Option
New Post Office

Project Title:
Yewdale Community Centre
Hutton Way, Carlisle

Scale:
1:100

Date:
Feb 2007

Drawn:
DR

Approved:

Project No.	Drawing No.	Revision
MBL-59	PO-01	