

DRAFT

Template Scoping Document

<u>Environment & Economy Select Committee</u>	
<u>Scrutiny Review Title:</u>	Post Office services in Stevenage
<u>Background issues</u> to review – rationale for scrutinising this issue:	Members raised the issue of reviewing the Post Office service offer in Stevenage when the committee agreed items for the work programme in March 2019.
Is this issue covered by the Future Town Future Council Programme?	(i) <u>Co-operative Neighbourhood Management</u> - “Work with our communities to improve our neighbourhoods” – “Better understand our communities’ needs and priorities” to “Work with our residents to design and deliver services” This priority is not directly linked to an external service provider like the post office, but there is an indirect link regarding understanding our communities needs and more broadly acting as community advocates to safeguard an important community service
Is this issue one that raises interest with the public via complaints or Members’ surgeries or with Officers?:	The status of local Post Offices is not a matter of direct control for the Council. However, when the Post Office moved from the Westgate Shopping Centre to WH Smith shop this raised concern with local residents. In a similar way the town centre regeneration of Queensway could have an impact on access to the store and post office.
<u>Focus of the review:</u> (State what the review focus will be)	<p>The one off meeting should establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>how well served the town is currently with post offices?</u> • <u>Identify what the pressures are on maintaining the current number of post offices including the sub-post offices in WH Smith and Waitrose and in the neighbourhood centres?</u> • <u>Provide some context including economic viability of post offices and switch to online services for many services such as applying for vehicle taxation etc.</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Establish with the post office providers how well used their facilities are?</u> • <u>To understand ways that local people can be encouraged to use their post offices to safeguard their future provision.</u> • <u>Attempt to find out what users think about the current service?</u>
<u>Timing issues:</u> Are there any timing constraints to when the review can be carried out?	Officers will advise at the meeting if there are any timing issues to consider. The review will have to fit in with the timing of the other Select Committee review work programme items.
The Committee will meet on (provide <u>dates</u> if known):	Dates: Day/Month/Time/Venue Date of the one-off session to be agreed.
<u>SBC Leads</u> (list the Executive Portfolio Holders and SD's Heads of Service who should appear as witnesses):	<i>Officers have suggested the following people:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Executive Portfolio Holder(s) for Neighbourhoods and Co-operative Working, Cllr Rob Broom & Economy, Enterprise & Transport, Cllr Lloyd Briscoe</i> • <i>Assistant Director Planning & Regulatory, Zayd Al Jawad/Chris Berry</i> • <i>Assistant Director Communities & Neighbourhoods, Rob Gregory</i>
Any <u>other witnesses</u> (external persons/critical friend)?:	To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. <i>Possible options identified by officers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Peter Hall, National Federation of Sub Post Offices</i> • <i>Chris Newbitt, Manager Symonds Green Co-op sub-post office</i>
<u>Allocation of lead Members</u> on specific individual issues/questions:	To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting. Members will ask questions on the following areas (list the issues to address during the interviews): <i>Depending on what major strands are identified in the scope these can be allocated to lead Members.</i>

Any other Questions Members wish to cover:	
<u>Site visits and evidence gathering in the Community</u>	Members may wish to visit their local sub-post offices and talk to residents about the local service.
<u>Equalities and Diversity issues:</u> The review will consider what the relevant equalities and diversity issues are regarding the Scrutiny subject that is being scrutinised	To be identified by the lead Member – Cllr ? <u>Equalities & Diversity Issues</u> – Are there any E&D issues to consider in this review? – Access to local post office services for residents is desirable especially older people with mobility issues who may not wish or be able to access services on-line.
<u>Constraints</u> (Issues that have been highlighted at the scoping stage but are too broad/detailed to be covered by the review):	<i>To be identified by the Committee at the scoping meeting 25 June 2019</i> (These issues can be captured and dealt with via other means – Briefings/email/officer action etc)
<u>Background Documents/data</u> that can be provided to the review	<i>As identified by the Committee at the draft scoping meeting 25 June 2019:</i> Evidence requested: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Scrutiny Officer has invited responses from the public via the Council's social media accounts and is canvassing some older people's groups in the town to try to gather views.
<u>Agreed Milestones and review sign off</u> -To be agreed by Members and officers	<i>Formal response from Executive Portfolio Holder (Executives have a Statutory requirement to respond to Scrutiny review recommendations two months after receiving a final report and recommendations of a review: Date Executive Portfolio responses are expected (dependent on the final report & executive portfolio response template publishing date): DD MM YY</i> Date for monitoring implementation of recommendations – final sign off (typically one year from completion of the review): DD MM YY (Close to this date the Select Committee will receive a report at a Committee meeting to agree the final sign off of the review recommendations)