

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

FROM: Director of Corporate Services

REPORT NUMBER: **L18**

TO: STRATEGY COMMITTEE

DATE OF MEETING: 2 June 2011

AGENDA ITEM NO 12 – ACTION OUT OF MEETING

- (a) Approval of expenditure from the HRA to carry out works to properties in Harpurs Road Glemsford

Details attached.

- (b) To provide a response to the public consultation on the relocation of Bildeston Post Office

Details attached.

CONTACT: Linda Sheppard

EMAIL: linda.sheppard@babergh.gov.uk

URGENT ACTION - NO SPECIFIC POWERS

ACTION FOR WHICH CHIEF EXECUTIVE HAS DELEGATED
POWERS SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION WITH CHAIRMAN

SERIAL NO 508

SUBJECT MATTER

**SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSIONS AND INTERNAL ALTERATIONS
TO TWO ADJOINING PROPERTIES IN HARPURS ROAD, GLEMSFORD.**

COMMITTEE TO WHICH MATTER RELATES: **STRATEGY**

REASON FOR ACTION BEING TAKEN OUT OF MEETING

These properties are a pair of one bedroom, semi-detached bungalows. One is presently occupied, and one is vacant.

Adaptation works are proposed to assist the current occupier. The Head of Community Development also wishes to take the opportunity to convert the vacant property at the same time. These one bedroom bungalows are unpopular and quite hard to let but by creating a second bedroom and also making the property fit for tenants with disabilities, two properties that meet a consistent need can be created.

Tenders for these works have been received in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contracts Procedure Rules. The intention is to let the contract to the lowest tender received for undertaking the conversion work to both properties in the sum of £71,380 (estimate – £72,500).

Normally this scheme would need the approval of the Strategy Committee as it is above the £50,000 limit set for schemes that do not require approval within the HRA capital programme. The next Committee meeting however is not until 7April. *[This meeting was subsequently cancelled.]*

The lowest tenderer has indicated that he is in a position to commence works with immediate effect. The current tenant presently has to endure unsuitable living conditions and we feel it would greatly benefit the tenant and ourselves if we were to commence these works as a matter of urgency, thus completing 5 weeks earlier than if Committee approval was sought.

BACKGROUND

Officers have been aware of the tenant's housing difficulties for some time but have been unable to find more suitable accommodation. The tenant has considerable support in relation to personal medical difficulties and other matters, from parents who live within the village. This has restricted the search for more suitable accommodation.

We have sought advice from the tenant's Occupational Therapist and it is proposed that, because of the lack of alternative accommodation, we carry out an adaptation.

The Housing Panel has considered the proposals under the criteria which have been set for disabled adaptations, and has agreed that the proposal is a good solution. Planning Permission has already been obtained.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (IF ANY)

There is provision for these works within the Council's HRA as follows:--

HRA Capital Programme: (Uncommitted Schemes)

Major Improvements – 10/11 - £20,000

Major Improvements – 11/12 - £51,380

ACTION AUTHORISED

To approve expenditure from the Council's Housing Revenue Account to carry out the proposed works to properties in Harpurs Road Glemsford, as outlined above.

DATE ACTION AUTHORISED:

3 March 2011

URGENT ACTION - NO SPECIFIC POWERS

ACTION FOR WHICH CHIEF EXECUTIVE HAS DELEGATED
POWERS SUBJECT TO CONSULTATION WITH CHAIRMAN

SERIAL NO 509

**PUBLIC CONSULTATION – SERVICE RELOCATION OF BILDESTON POST OFFICE FROM
90 HIGH STREET TO BANK HOUSE STORES 120 HIGH STREET BILDESTON.**

COMMITTEE TO WHICH MATTER RELATES: **STRATEGY**

REASON FOR ACTION BEING TAKEN OUT OF MEETING

Post Office Limited in accordance with its “Code of Practice on Public Consultation and Communication with respect to change in the Post Office network” has sought the Council’s views on service relocation and the trialling of a Post Office local service in Bildeston.

The six week public consultation which started on 14 February 2011 and ends on 29 March 2011 misses our Strategy Committee cycle. Action out of meeting approval is sought to ensure our representation meets the deadline of 29 March 2011.

BACKGROUND

The sub postmaster of Bildeston Post Office currently located at 90 High Street has submitted her resignation and withdrawal of premises for Post Office use. This service will cease at 13:00 on 4 March 2011.

The owner of Bank House Stores, 120 High Street has offered to take on the Post Office services from his existing shop premises. This application is currently progressing through the Post Office Limited recruitment process and forms part of the public consultation. Subject to a successful appointment it is proposed to trial a Post Office local service from this outlet which will be monitored over a twelve month period.

The establishment of a Post Office local service at Bank House Stores presents a sensible alternative to maintaining post office services in Bildeston, it will also help to increase the viability and vitality of the existing village store which provides the community with day to day essential provisions. Post Office local is a new concept for delivering post office services from the premises of an established outlet, the service will operate from a newly formatted open plan counter that will offer a range of key Post Office products and services alongside retail transactions.

The views of Cllr Desmond Keane have been sought, who agrees with the comments detailed in the proposed response.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (IF ANY)

There are no financial implications for Babergh.

ACTION AUTHORISED

To authorise the Deputy Chief Executive to provide a response to the public consultation on behalf of the Council as detailed in the attached letter.



Mike Hammond
Deputy Chief Executive
Babergh District Council
Corks Lane, Hadleigh, Ipswich IP7 6SJ

DX NO: 85055 Exchange: Babergh
Website: www.babergh.gov.uk

Wendy Hamilton Field Change Advisor
Post Office Limited
c/o National Consultation Team
PO BOX 2060
WATFORD
WD18 8ZW

Your Ref:
My Ref: MH/SD

Please ask for: Sue Dawes
Phone Direct Line: **01473 825868** 
Fax: 01473 825770
Email: sue.dawes@babergh.gov.uk

1st March 2011

Dear Ms Hamilton

BILDESTON POST OFFICE 90 HIGH STREET, BILDESTON, IPSWICH, 1P7 7EA
PUBLIC CONSULTATION – SERVICE RELOCATION

Thank you for consulting with Babergh District Council on the proposal to trial a Post Office local service in Bank House Stores in the High Street, which will replace the existing branch.

We note the current post office is closing due to the resignation of the current sub post master and the withdrawal of the premises for post office use and that the closure date will be 13.00 hours on 4th March 2011.

We are extremely pleased that a suitable alternative is being proposed at Bank House Stores, albeit in a newly formatted open plan counter service basis on a trial basis for a twelve month period. We are also glad to hear the Post Office Limited will be closely monitoring the situation to ascertain if this new service meets the needs of the local community as we feel sure that the residents of Bildeston and the surrounding area value the existence of a post office in the local community.

We are extremely disappointed that the closure of the existing service and establishment of the new have not been synchronized resulting in the rural community being left without a post office during the handover period. I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important post office provision is for rural communities like Bildeston and the Council strongly opposes closure at anytime as it can lead to impact on community cohesion with the loss of access to services.

It is our view Post Office Limited should ensure continuity of service is provided during the handover process either by way of an outreach service or accelerated process being established including a transition budget to fund minor capital and revenue works to premises such as Bank House Stores in order to take on and provide the post office service at the earliest opportunity.

Cont'd/...

To address the three specific questions within the consultation letter of 14th February 2011, I make the following views:

Q1: Do you have any comments about the proposed opening hours?

A1: The proposed opening hours are a significant improvement to the existing service, providing greater opportunity for the community to access the day to day services.

Q2: Do you have any comments about access and facilities at the new location?

A2: Access to the new facility is improved with car parking available at the Market Square opposite Bank House Stores, this might encourage more people to stop and use the post office services available.

The proposed location remains on the main bus route through the village and is within a very short walking distance of the existing facility and thereby should not create disadvantage to the community who access the services by foot or public transport.

All facilities within the shop are at ground floor level, the wide door access and space for wheelchair ensures there is no significant impediment for disabled access.

Q3: Are there any local issues specific to Bildeston you would like us to consider?

A3; Bildeston is a thriving rural community that uses the local services well, it has a mixture of established and ageing population with newer younger families who will all benefit from the continuation of the post office service.

With the service moving to the village shop location, the many residents of Bildeston with limited access to other services will be regular visitors to the site; this will strengthen the viability and vitality of the store.

Yours sincerely



Mike Hammond
Deputy Chief Executive

F:\DOCS\Committee\REPORTS\Strategy\2011\020611PostOfficeLtd.doc