

Agenda

**Meeting: Corporate and Partnerships
Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Venue: Brierley Room, County Hall,
Northallerton DL7 8AD
(see location plan overleaf)**

Date: Monday 3 September 2018 at 10.30 am

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Business

1. **Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2018** (Pages 5 to 13)
2. **Declarations of interest**
3. **Public Questions or Statements**

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to Daniel Harry of Legal and Democratic Services (*contact details below*) no later than midday on Wednesday 29 August 2018. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes on any item. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak:-

- at this point in the meeting if their questions/statements relate to matters which are not otherwise on the Agenda (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes);
- when the relevant Agenda item is being considered if they wish to speak on a matter which is on the Agenda for this meeting.

4. **Chairman's Announcements - Any correspondence, communication or other business brought forward by the direction of the Chairman of the Committee. (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

5. **Update on North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership** – Odette Robson, Head of Community Safety, North Yorkshire County Council & Dr Justin Ives, Chair of Community Safety Partnership

(Pages 14 to 18)

Purpose of the Report: To provide an update on the:

- Roles and responsibilities of North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership
- Agreed priority areas for delivery (2018-2021), including further development of the Community Safety Hubs.

6. **Update on Youth Justice Strategic Plan & Implementation of New Practice Model** – Julie Firth, North Yorkshire County Council

(Pages 19 to 25)

Purpose of the Report:

7. **Bank & Post Office Closures Scrutiny Review Draft Final Report** – Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, North Yorkshire County Council

(Pages 26 to 57)

Purpose of the Report: To consider the findings from the scrutiny review of cash-based, over the counter banking and Post Office services in rural areas of the county, and agree the recommendations arising from the review.

8. **Work Programme** – Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, North Yorkshire County Council

(Pages 58 to 61)

9. **Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances.**

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services)
County Hall
Northallerton

Date: 23 August 2018

NOTES:

- (a) Members are reminded of the need to consider whether they have any interests to declare on any of the items on this agenda and, if so, of the need to explain the reason(s) why they have any interest when making a declaration.

The relevant Corporate Development Officer or Monitoring Officer will be pleased to advise on interest issues. Ideally their views should be sought as soon as possible and preferably prior to the day of the meeting, so that time is available to explore adequately any issues that might arise.

- (b) **Emergency Procedures For Meetings**
Fire

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Persons should not re-enter the building until authorised to do so by the Fire and Rescue Service or the Emergency Co-ordinator.

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Accident or Illness

First Aid treatment can be obtained by telephoning Extension 7575.

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

1. Membership

County Councillors (13)					
	<i>Councillors Name</i>	<i>Chairman/Vice Chairman</i>	<i>Political Group</i>	<i>Electoral Division</i>	
1	ARNOLD, Val		Conservative	Kirkbymoorside	
2	ATKINSON, Margaret		Conservative	Masham and Fountains	
3	BASTIMAN, Derek	Chairman	Conservative	Scalby and the Coast	
4	GOODRICK, Caroline		Conservative	Hovingham and Sheriff Hutton	
5	GRIFFITHS, Bryn	Vice-Chairman	Liberal Democrat	Stokesley	
6	MUSGRAVE, Richard		Conservative	Escrick	
7	PARASKOS, Andy		Conservative	Ainsty	
8	PARSONS, Stuart		NY Independents	Richmond	
9	RANDERSON, Tony		Labour	Eastfield and Osgodby	
10	THOMPSON, Angus		Conservative	Richmondshire North	
11	TROTTER, Cliff		Conservative	Pannal and Lower Wharfedale	
12	WILKINSON, Annabel		Conservative	Swale	
13	Vacancy				
Total Membership – (13)				Quorum – (4)	
Con	Lib Dem	NY Ind	Labour	Ind	Total
10	1	1	1	0	13

2. Substitute Members

Conservative		Liberal Democrat	
	<i>Councillors Names</i>		<i>Councillors Names</i>
1	CHAMBERS, Mike MBE	1	WEBBER, Geoff
2	ENNIS, John	2	
3	PATMORE, Caroline	3	
4	LUNN, Cliff	4	
5	JENKINSON, Andrew	5	
NY Independents		Labour	
	<i>Councillors Names</i>		<i>Councillors Names</i>
1		1	DUCKETT, Stephanie
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	
5		5	

North Yorkshire County Council
Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny
Committee

DRAFT AT 5 JULY 2018

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 18 June 2018 at 10.30 am.

Present:-

County Councillor Derek Bastiman in the Chair.

County Councillors Val Arnold, Margaret Atkinson, Phillip Broadbank, Caroline Goodrick, Richard Musgrave, Andy Paraskos, Stuart Parsons, Tony Randerson, Angus Thompson, Cliff Trotter, Annabel Wilkinson.

Also in Attendance

County Councillors Carl Les and David Chance (Executive Members).

Officers: Richard Flinton, the Chief Executive of NYCC; Barry Khan, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services); Michael Leah, Assistant Director Strategic Resources; Julie Blaisdale, Assistant Director, Library and Community Services, NYCC; Chrys Mellor, General Manager Libraries, NYCC; Marie-Ann Jackson, Head of Stronger Communities Programme, NYCC; and Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, NYCC.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Bryn Griffiths (substitute Phillip Broadbank)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

47. Exclusion of the Public and Press

The Chairman of the Committee, County Councillor Derek Bastiman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then asked Members to consider whether it was appropriate for the public and press to be excluded from discussions on Item 6, Appendix 1. County Councillor Derek Bastiman stated that the grounds for exclusion of the public and press related to commercial sensitivities.

A vote was taken and there was unanimous agreement that it was appropriate to exclude the public and the press.

48. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2018, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

49. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Philip Broadbank noted a declaration of interest as the Treasurer of Starbeck Community Primary School.

County Councillor Val Arnold noted a declaration of interest in being a volunteer at the Helmsley Library.

50. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements.

51. Chairman's Announcements - Any correspondence, communication or other business brought forward by the direction of the Chairman of the Committee

County Councillor Derek Bastiman welcomed County Councillor Angus Thompson to the committee, as he has taken the place of County Councillor Paul Haslam.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman informed the Committee that the Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire had been successful in her bid to take on the governance for the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. He said that it was anticipated that the transfer in governance arrangements would happen in October or November of this year. This would then mean that the Fire and Rescue Authority would cease to exist and all governance arrangements would formally be taken on by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Daniel Harry informed the Committee that the Police and Crime Commissioner, Julia Mulligan, had been invited to attend the October mid-cycle briefing of the Committee to provide an update on plans for closer working between emergency services in the county.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman requested that the invitation to the mid-cycle briefing be opened up to all Committee Members.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman said that the next steps relating to the scrutiny of post office and branch banking services in rural areas of the county would be to contact the Rural Services Network and the Local Enterprise Partnership and seek a view from them. Thereafter, to write to the relevant Minister requesting that further action be taken to ensure that cash-based counter service banking is available in rural areas of the county in the long term.

Appendix 1 to the following report was considered in private and the public have no right of access to this Section of Minute No. 52

52. Overview of Partnership Arrangements and Traded Services - Annual Report of the Brierley Group

Considered -

The joint report of the Chief Executive, Director Strategic Resources, Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) and Assistant Director Strategic Resources.

Richard Flinton, the Chief Executive of North Yorkshire County Council, introduced the Annual Report. In summary he said that the Brierley Group is made up of a total of eight different companies. The companies in the group are: North Yorkshire Education Services, Nynet, First North Law, Brierley Homes, Align Property Partners, Yorwaste, and Veritau. Richard Flinton noted that all of these companies are at different stages of development but that the long term ambition was to have a solid commercial base which would be able to generate additional income to the Council. This income could

then be used to support existing mainstream County Council budgets and further protect the provision of frontline services.

Richard Flinton said that by pulling the eight companies together into one group enables much stronger and more coherent governance. A Shareholder Committee had been established as a sub-committee of Executive to provide regular oversight of the activity of the Brierley Group. Richard Flinton noted that the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee would also be able to play a key role in scrutinising the activity of the Group.

Richard Flinton said that the turnover of the Brierley Group at the moment was around £100m with approximately £2m on an annual basis going directly to the Council to support frontline services. He noted that two of the companies in the Group are also linked to City of York Council.

Richard Flinton said that the newest of the eight companies is First North Law which will be providing legal services and advice across the region and hopefully nationally. He said that North Yorkshire Education Services (NYES) is the largest commercial operator within the Group. NYES was now looking beyond the county borders and looking at providing more extensive services to schools across the region and the country. To date work was being done with over 900 schools outside of North Yorkshire.

Richard Flinton noted that there was likely to be increased competition over time as a number of different Councils and Local Authorities in the country began to develop their own commercial enterprises. He also noted that NYES may have increasing competition from the emergence of academy chains that undertake their own support services internally.

Richard Flinton reiterated that the rationale for the Brierley Group and the eight companies within it was income generation for the Council. He said that the Council is facing increasing funding pressures and that there were limits to what income could be derived from Council Tax and business rates. As such, it was more important than ever to explore alternative funding options.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman asked whether frontline services were becoming increasingly dependent on earnings from businesses and if that was the case what risk did that present to the Council.

In response, Richard Flinton said that there was a gap of approximately £11m that needed to be bridged in order to protect services at the Council. The generation of income through commercial services was part of that solution and increasing the financial return from those services would deliver greater security going forth.

County Councillor Stuart Parsons stated that there was a need for there to be more County Councillors on the Shareholder Committee.

Richard Flinton said that the Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader and County Councillor Don Mackenzie are members of the Shareholder Committee. Richard Flinton said that all County Councillors would be welcome to attend the meeting but that there was an advantage to keeping the Committee small and fleet of foot. He reminded Members that there is scrutiny in place through the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee and that an annual report would be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

Barry Khan said that any decisions of the Shareholder Committee could be called in by the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

County Councillor Stuart Parsons raised his concerns that the work of the Brierley Group might be misinterpreted by the public. At a time when the Council is under

significant financial strain and services are either being cut or re-modelled it might seem odd that we are investing directly in building houses. County Councillor Stuart Parsons then asked that the Chairman of the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee be made a member of the Shareholder Committee.

County Councillor Carl Les said that the existing Shareholder Committee meet three times a year and that he would be happy to review the governance arrangements at the end of the year. He said that it was a public meeting and that all County Councillors are welcome to attend.

County Councillor Philip Broadbank noted his support for the proposal by County Councillor Stuart Parsons to have someone from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Sub-Committee.

County Councillor Richard Musgrave noted his support for activity to generate income for the Council. He said that he presumed that they were all limited companies. He asked for further details of the Directors including their previous experience and background. County Councillor Richard Musgrave said that he had some concerns about the profit margins. He noted that the ratio of profit to turnover was low and that if it was a private business it was highly unlikely that they would continue to trade.

Richard Flinton said that there was a need to factor in the shareholder return when looking at the profit and turnover figures. He agreed that overall the profit did look low but that this was in the context of the Brierley Group only being in existence for about a year.

Richard Flinton said that the eight companies in the Brierley Group varied in structure. North Yorkshire Education Services is part of the County Council and does not have a separate legal identity. The other seven companies have separate legal standing and identities.

County Councillor Richard Musgrave asked what was the risk to the Council. He questioned what would happen if the Brierley Group companies stopped making profit and began to make losses and whose obligation it would be to make up those losses. He also asked whether it would be possible for projections to be given in the annual report as to turnover and profit over the next three to five years.

Richard Flinton said that the development of services for schools out of county presented a great opportunity to increase income into the Council. House building which was the earliest of stages also presented a possible significant income to the Council as it was able to utilise small sites on County Council owned land.

County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson asked whether there was a risk that the private sector companies that currently provided educational services would begin to move into academies and schools in the region.

Richard Flinton said that the competitors tended only to offer a small range of services to schools. NYES by contrast offers the full range of services that any school could require. He did note that there was a risk that the large academy chains that were developing would be able to provide services for themselves. In terms of new areas of activity, there was interest in looking at what services could also be provided to private schools.

County Councillor Stuart Parsons asked how many Councils were adopting this commercial approach.

Richard Flinton said that whilst the number of Councils were looking to develop areas of commercial activity in the North and the North East there were relatively few Councils that were in a position to offer such a comprehensive range of commercial services particularly in the education sector. He noted that in the North of England only Leeds

was in a similar position to North Yorkshire County Council. Richard Flinton said that many Councils are struggling to recruit the staff they need to operate commercial services and so would not be in a position to compete.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman thanked Richard Flinton, Barry Khan and Michael Leah for attending the meeting and providing an overview of the work of the Brierley Group and their first Annual Report.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman proposed that he write to Executive formally requesting that greater consideration be given to expanding the membership of the Sub-Committee to include County Councillors and whether consideration would be given to specifically having some Members of the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

This proposal was unanimously agreed by the Members of the Committee.

Resolved -

- 1) Thank everyone for attending
- 2) Ask for an update in 12 months' time with the second Annual Report
- 3) The committee to formally write to the Executive requesting that the membership of the Shareholder Committee be extended to include additional County Councillor representation as voting members.

53. Locality Budgets

Considered -

The report of Marie-Ann Jackson, Stronger Communities, reviewing the third year of operation of County Councillor Locality Budgets (2017/18).

Marie-Ann Jackson, Lead Officer for Stronger Communities at North Yorkshire County Council, introduced the report and asked Members whether they had any questions.

County Councillor Andy Paraskos asked whether Members were encouraged to seek out match funding as part of the budget process.

In response, Marie-Ann Jackson stated that there had been a significant amount of match funding in previous years. This was estimated to be six times the amount of funding that had been released through the Locality Budgets programme.

County Councillor David Chance noted his frustration to see that in some cases all of the funding that had been allocated to a County Councillor had been given to one organisation to cover 100% of the cost of a project.

County Councillor Richard Musgrave noted his support for Locality Budgets and stated that this was not something that was done at the District Council level.

County Councillor David Chance said that all Members needed to assure themselves when considering a project for funding that the project was ready to go ahead.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman said that he objected to Locality Budgets being used to support improvements to the highways and footways in the county.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick noted that it was possible to support projects that went outside of the County Council borders where it could be shown that the benefits would be delivered to the people of North Yorkshire.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman thanked Marie-Ann Jackson for attending the meeting and asked that a further update be brought back to the Committee in 12

months' time.

Resolved -

- 1) Thank Marie-Ann Jackson for attending
- 2) Ask Neil Irving and Marie-Ann Jackson to come back to the committee in 12 months' time with an update.

54. Community Libraries - Review of first 12 months of operation

Considered -

The report of Julie Blaisdale, Assistant Director Library and Community Services, Marie-Ann Jackson, Stronger Communities and Chrys Mellor, General Manager Libraries, reviewing the first 12 months of operation of the new library service.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman welcomed Julie Blaisdale, Chrys Mellor and Marie-Ann Jackson to the meeting.

Julie Blaisdale introduced the presentation and report. In summary, she noted the following:

- 8 community libraries reduced their opening hours after the transition and 3 of them increased their hours, in addition 3 have increased their hours for 2018/19
- Since 1 April 2017 there has been an overall drop in active library user numbers. This reduction was less than the previous year and less than the national average of 14%
- Since 1 April 2017 there has been an overall drop in library visits of 7%. However, 2 of the community and 2 of the core libraries were closed for between 2 and 4 weeks during the year which will have impacted on overall visitor numbers
- Since 1 April 2017 overall hard copy loan activity has reduced by 7%, this continued reduction reflects the national trend
- The staff restructure was implemented on 1 April 2017 in tandem with the transition of the libraries to the new management status. 79 staff took voluntary redundancy and 12 staff had compulsory redundancy
- The number of volunteer hours overall has increased by approx. 95,000
- The project has delivered its savings targets of £1.4m
- All 33 libraries continue to be operational
- 22 libraries have transitioned to community management with some but not a significant fall in business
- There has been no Central Government challenge.

Julie Blaisdale said that there had been regular visits from and contact with other local authorities in the country who wanted to understand how North Yorkshire County Council had changed the delivery of its library service. This had included Devon, Dorset, Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire and Sunderland.

The overall project for the reconfiguration of library services in the county has made savings in line with those stated in 2020 Programme and libraries are still open with only one exception and delivering a comprehensive service to local people.

Julie Blaisdale noted that nationally there had been a decline in use of libraries but this was not reflected locally. There had been some impact on visitor numbers and usage numbers due to refurbishments of some of the library facilities but overall a review of the performance data for the past 12 months indicated that the use of libraries remained strong throughout the county.

Julie Blaisdale said that there had been lots of people volunteering to support their local library in the initial stages as it made the transition from being managed by the County

Council to being a community-led library. The challenge now was to maintain the level of volunteer interest, particularly as it moved away from the immediate challenge of setting up to the day to day work of operating a library service.

County Councillor Stuart Parsons said that many of the library systems were complex and difficult for the volunteers to use, particularly if people were not using them on a regular basis day in day out. As such, they may need additional support.

Julie Blaisdale said that further use needed to be made of the County Council's Learning Zone to enable volunteers to access the training and support that they needed. It was recognised that further work needed to be done to make it more user friendly.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman said that we needed, as a Council, to be aware of how we communicated with volunteers and to ensure that we avoided using local authority speech and terms.

Julie Blaisdale said that one of the key learning points from the establishment of the re-configured library system in the county was the difficulty in co-ordinating the broad range of County Council services that were required to enable the change to take place.

Julie Blaisdale said that most of the savings had come out of staffing budgets but that some paid staff were still needed to support community libraries and the volunteers that contributed their time there.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman queried what the legal position was if a library was found to be no longer sustainable and had to close.

In response, Marie-Ann Jackson said that all libraries are regularly monitored and support is given to the Library Management Committee. The Stronger Communities Team are in a position to intervene with intensive support as and when required.

County Councillor Stuart Parsons said that often the lack of flexibility of the County Council inhibited the Library Management Committees in their work. He noted that often it took too long for issues to be resolved and that the solutions became overly complex.

Julie Blaisdale said that she accepted that there had been difficulties with setting up the new community libraries but there were lessons learnt that would be applied for the future. She accepted that it can be difficult for someone unfamiliar with a local authority to be able to navigate their way through the many different systems, approaches and policies. In particular she highlighted some of the ongoing challenges around GDPR, Data Protection legislation, training and workforce development, and commercial leases. Julie Blaisdale said that the paid staff in the Library Service continued to provide every support they could to the volunteers but acknowledged that the roles had changed and that expectations were different.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman said that there needed to be a more and consistent support for the community libraries on the technical aspects of their work such as property leases and finances.

County Councillor Stuart Parsons said that Colburn Library had experienced problems previously with anti-social behavior. He said that the County Council had responded quickly and effectively but that other stakeholder and partner agencies had not been as quick to respond. He suggested that it might be worth considering giving volunteer library staff training in how to manage difficult situations and difficult customers.

Julie Blaisdale noted the success of the 2017 Summer Reading Challenge and looked to equal or more success for the 2018 Summer Reading Challenge.

Julie Blaisdale noted that further consideration was being given to how volunteer staff were rewarded for their loyalty and hard work.

County Councillor Derek Bastiman thanked everyone for attending and asked that Marie-Ann Jackson and Chrys Mellor come back to the Committee in 12 months' time with an update.

Resolved -

- 1) Thank everyone for attending
- 2) Ask Marie-Ann Jackson and Chrys Mellor to come back to the committee in 12 months' time with an update.

55. Visit to HMP Kirklevington Grange on 16 April 2018

Considered -

The report of Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, updating the Committee on the visit to HMP Kirklevington Grange on 16 April 2018. The visit was part of the Committee's ongoing scrutiny of re-offending rates in the county and what is being done to reduce them.

Daniel Harry introduced the report noting some of the key issues that had come out of the discussions with the prisoners at HMP Kirklevington Grange. Whilst the prisoners were very positive about the opportunities they had received at HMP Kirklevington Grange, many expressed their frustrations at not being able to access the full range of education and training that they felt they required to enable them to secure a job upon release from custody.

Daniel Harry noted that another theme had been that many prisoners felt that there was insufficient support from the Probation Service upon release particularly if a prisoner was judged as being low risk.

Daniel Harry suggested that the Committee could pursue a number of lines of enquiry that arose from the discussions with the serving prisoners at HMP Kirklevington Grange as follows:

1. What support services are in place for prisoners upon release from custody and who co-ordinates them?
2. What role do the County Council and District Councils have to play in the provision of education and training and housing to people released from prison?
3. What additional education and training funding could be identified and released to prisons that hold people from North Yorkshire?
4. What more could be done in North Yorkshire to support the employment of prisoners released from custody particularly those who have served long sentences?

The Committee Members agreed with the proposal to pursue the four lines of enquiry.

County Councillor Caroline Goodrick noted that it had become a statutory requirement that all prisoners are allocated accommodation prior to release.

County Councillor Carl Les suggested that the Committee could write to the Housing Board for York, North Yorkshire and East Riding to find out what more could be done to ensure that prisoners secure accommodation prior to release.

County Councillor Val Arnold said that she found the visit very positive and that the
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prisoners were receptive and willing to talk about their experiences. They seemed to appreciate that the Committee had taken an interest and that it was incumbent upon the Committee to follow up on their behalf.

Resolved -

- 1) The Committee to write to the Housing Board for York, North Yorkshire and East Riding to find out what more could be done to ensure that prisoners secure accommodation prior to release.
- 2) Follow up on the lines of enquiry:
 - What support services are in place for prisoners upon release from custody and who coordinates them?
 - What role do the County Council and District Councils have to play in the provision of education and training and housing to people released from prison?
 - What additional education and training funding could be identified and/or released to prisons that hold people from North Yorkshire?
 - What more can be done in North Yorkshire to support the employment of prisoners released from custody, particularly those who have served long sentences?

56. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, providing Members with a copy of the Committee's Work Programme for review and comment.

Daniel Harry asked Members to consider the Work Programme and get back to him outside of the meeting if there were any areas of work that people felt needed to be included.

Resolved -

That the Work Programme be noted.

57. Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm.

DH

**Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee
3rd September 2018**

Update - North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The report provides an update on the:

- Roles and responsibilities of North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership
- Agreed priority areas for delivery (2018-2021), including further development of the Community Safety Hubs.

2. Background

2.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory duty on local authorities to create multi-agency partnerships to tackle crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment and to reduce re-offending.

2.2 Community Safety Partnership (CSP) must include 'responsible authorities'

- Police
- Local Authority
- Fire and Rescue
- Probation
- Health.

2.3 Community Safety Partnerships can work with any other local, relevant partners; membership of North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership (NYCSP) includes the responsible authorities, including community safety lead representation from all of the district councils. The partnership is chaired by the Chief Executive of Hambleton District Council.

2.4 In addition to the above, CSPs also have a statutory duty to undertake domestic homicide reviews when the criteria are met. Under section 9 (1) of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004), a domestic homicide review means a review of the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect by a person to whom he was related or with whom he was or had been in an intimate personal relationship, or a member of the same household as himself,

3. NYCSP Partnership Plan

3.1 Effective partnership working is essential in achieving the partnership's vision

“Working together to make North Yorkshire a safer place”

Legislation placed a statutory duty on CSPs to develop a strategic plan which addresses multi-agency issues affecting communities and residents. The strategy

(2018-21) that is being developed will demonstrate how strong, strategic leadership, planning, performance management and problem solving will result in action which aims to deliver positive outcomes for our communities.

- 3.2 The partnership plan outlines the key strategic priorities for the next 3 years, which will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain fit for purpose. For each of the strategic priorities, an annual action plan details multi-agency interventions along with specific performance measures for each area. The governance structure of NYCSP will allow for multi-agency scrutiny and support. All plans must allow for new and innovative approaches as we respond to an ever changing and more challenging community safety landscape.
- 3.3 Following a partnership development session the agreed NYCSP areas for delivery are:
- NYCSP development
 - Community Safety Hubs
 - Domestic Abuse (including scoping around Sexual Violence and Trauma)
 - Serious and Organised Crime (early intervention and prevention)
 - Hate Crime and Community Cohesion.

4. Inter Board Arrangements

- 4.1 NYCSP will continue to maintain effective relationships with other partnerships. An inter board network in North Yorkshire has been established, where the managers of the boards (CSP, safeguarding adults board, safeguarding children board, and the health and well-being board is to join soon) regularly meet to ensure agreed core principles are met.
- Safeguarding is the business of all boards
 - The board will know each other's business
 - A culture of scrutiny and challenge will exist across the boards
 - The boards will work together to avoid duplication and ensure consistency
 - At the heart of their decision making, the boards will remain focused on delivery that benefits people in North Yorkshire
 - The boards share a commitment to a strategic approach to understanding needs including analysis of data and engagement with stakeholders
 - The boards are committed to developing a joined up approach to assessing the effectiveness of services and identifying priorities for change, including where services need to be commissioned, improved, reshaped or developed.
- 4.2 The network reports to its respective boards and the Systems Leadership Group, where the chairs of the partnerships across North Yorkshire and York meet.
- 4.3 NYCSP has received reports and updates from other connected partnerships, this will continue.
- 95 Alive (Road Safety)
 - North Yorkshire Drug and Alcohol Partnership
 - Prevent Strategic Board (North Yorkshire and York)
 - Serious and Organised Crime Board (North Yorkshire and York)
 - Business Development and Innovation Board (Reducing reoffending North Yorkshire and York).

5. Community Safety Hubs

- 5.1 Since the last partnership plan was developed all seven North Yorkshire districts have worked on increasing multi-agency collaboration to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime affecting communities, including the co-location of police, district councils and other services into 'Community Safety Hubs'. Some arrangements and approaches vary, but common ways of working within these hubs include:
- The colocation of police, council and other staff
 - A common 'matrix' scoring form to assess and agree referrals
 - Active multi-partner case management
 - Use of regular Multi Agency Problem Solving Meetings (MAPs)
 - Joint working on agreeing actions.
- 5.2 General feedback and a number of hub specific formal evaluations indicate significant improvements in multi-agency working, better coordination and better outcomes for some individuals in our communities. North Yorkshire Police commissioned a Public Health Registrar to undertake a holistic evaluation across the hubs, considering activity, demand and impact. Findings of this evaluation will shape the partnership plan and related objectives.
- 5.3 Working with the inter board network, the community safety hubs and all partners, NYCSP will address the key messages from the evaluation, through effective delivery of the strategy.
- 5.4 *"1. Community Safety Hubs in North Yorkshire are effective multi-agency partnerships, dealing with complex individuals with a high number of social risk factors. A small but promising reduction in demand suggests that further development and investment in this model may yield positive outcomes for individuals and partners involved.*
- 2. There are several areas of hub work where development efforts could focus: the overlap with safeguarding and domestic violence work; engagement and capacity in non-statutory partners, and swifter resolution and closure of cases.*
- 3. The balance of enforcement and other approaches should be addressed, so hubs are enabled to intervene earlier, have a greater range of resolution options, and can better manage demand from highest risk cases."*

6. Domestic Abuse

- 6.1 The multi-faceted and complex nature of Domestic Abuse means that it cannot be addressed by one agency alone. Strong partnership arrangements will help victims and those affected by Domestic Abuse by providing an effective first response to violence and abuse. The Domestic Abuse Joint Coordinating Group (DAJCG) is a sub group of the CSPs for North Yorkshire and York, and leads strategically on Domestic Abuse arrangements. Two additional multi-agency groups have been established that report directly to the DAJCG, focusing on operational matters and commissioning arrangements.
- 6.2 The agreed objectives are:
- To coordinate services committed to early intervention and prevention of Domestic Abuse for adults, children and young people

- To improve the safety of victims who experience Domestic Abuse and support them in rebuilding their lives
- To coordinate and deliver interventions for perpetrators to reduce reoffending
- To work together to improve the equity and consistency of services with committed funding through effective partnership working.

6.3 Following a homicide in the Selby area in March 2018, a review has been instigated. An independent review panel chair and author has been commissioned. Funding for the review has been agreed and secured from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The review and its recommendations are due to be published in late autumn. NYCSP will lead on ensuring any identified lessons are embedded and effective change takes place.

7. Serious and Organised Crime

7.1 Although Serious and Organised Crime (SOC) is often thought of in a regional, national or international context, its impact is most felt by local communities.

7.2 SOC is controlled by Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) that use intimidation tactics and corruption for unlawful gain. Groups can supply and distribute illegal drugs, commit fraud, tax evasion and facilitate human trafficking. Modern slavery and human trafficking can include:

Labour exploitation- being forced to work long hours, often in hard conditions and to hand over the majority, if not all of their wages. Examples include car washes and nail bars.

Criminal exploitation- involves forcing victims to engage in criminal activities such as cannabis farming, forced begging and benefits fraud. This also includes 'County Lines' where gangs and organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs. Often these children are made to travel across counties and they use dedicated 'phone lines' to sell drugs.

7.3 The national strategy for tackling SOC is based on the '4Ps' approach:

Prevent To stop people becoming involved in SOC

Protect To increase protection against SOC

Prepare To reduce the impact of SOC

Pursue To prosecute and disrupt those engaged in SOC.

7.4 NYCSP within the partnership plan will lead on the Prevent arm, with the objectives of:

- Protecting families affected by OCG
- Prevention of child criminal exploitation
- Prevention of criminal exploitation in vulnerable adults.

7.5 These objectives will be delivered by developing education and training for professionals and communities and establishing clear pathways for intelligence sharing and referring concerns. Funding to be sought to support intervention activities and create effective networks of support.

8. Hate Crime and Community Cohesion

- 8.1 Hate crime is any criminal offence committed against a person or property that is motivated by hostility, towards someone based on their disability, race, religion, gender identity or sexual orientation. Whilst reported levels of hate crime are low, we have anecdotal evidence from a range of agencies, including schools, that the true extent may not be known.
- 8.2 Hate crime can happen in any community and can have an impact on a range of community safety matters. A multi-agency Hate Crime Working Group already exists for North Yorkshire. By adopting this as a priority area NYCSP will have oversight of this group and will ensure that there is a clear multi-agency delivery plan that supports the delivery of awareness raising around Hate Crime and effective reporting mechanisms.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 To take note of the report's content.
- 9.2 Members may also wish to explore opportunities where they can explore in more detail, activity instigated by NYCSP. For example regular reporting on the delivery plan, a specific themed discussion around one area, learning and action from the findings of a domestic homicide review.

Odette Robson
Head of Safer Communities
North Yorkshire County Council
21 August 2018

Corporate & Partnership Overview & Scrutiny Committee

3rd September 2018

Youth Justice New Model of Practice, Performance and Strategic Plan Update

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Scrutiny on the implementation of the new practice model in the Youth Justice Service (YJS), the current performance of the service against national indicators and the priorities in the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2018 -2020.

2 Implementation of the New Practice Model

- 2.1 As part of the 2020 North Yorkshire programme the authority commenced a major change programme to review and transform Youth Justice Services to ensure they remain fit for purpose, are sustainable and, where achievable, will deliver improvements in efficiency and practice. The revised YJS structure and delivery model became operational from 1st September 2017. The reconfigured YJS is now managed under the Prevention Service and adopts a tiered approach which ensures greater capacity to focus on early intervention, whilst at the same time enhancing the offer to the more complex and higher risk young people (through integration with No Wrong Door for wrap around support). As part of the service reconfiguration, clear pathways were also established between YJS and wider Children and Families services.
- 2.2 In addition to improved service integration, flexibility and operational delivery for service users (young people who offend and their parent/carers, victims and communities), the YJS restructuring delivered substantial financial savings of £324,442, which were necessary, as a result of a reduction in funding through the Youth Justice Board annual grant, to balance the budget.
- 2.3 The restructure achieved its cashable benefits target of £324,442, which created a balanced budget.

- 2.4 In order to capture the views of staff at the six-month stage following service reconfiguration, a survey was developed and made available to all YJS staff. In total, 41 responses were received to the survey. Overall, the majority of respondents felt that they are clear about what is expected of them in the new integrated structure (65.9%), that they are clear about the priorities and outcomes which we aim to achieve through service integration (58.5%) and that the service is maintaining its focus on risk management and public protection (68.3%). In addition, positive feedback was given by staff in relation to the support provided by managers throughout service reconfiguration - the majority of survey respondents agreed that they have been well supported by my local managers during the integration journey (61.0%), they have received good quality supervision since the move to the new structure (73.2%) and that senior managers are visible and supportive, providing good leadership (65.9%).
- 2.5 In contrast, a significantly lower proportion of respondents (24.4%) felt new integrated structure is resilient and flexible enough to meet service demands and also the service is making good progress towards integration and collaboration with Prevention. Overall, the overwhelming majority of respondents (95.1%) believed that more time spent on direct work with young people and families would improve outcomes.
- 2.6 Whilst some recommendations were made, it was still early in the implementation journey to look at the overall impact of the new model. However, early indications are that the model is providing a tiered approach which is impacting positively on the provision of early help to prevent involvement in the criminal justice system.

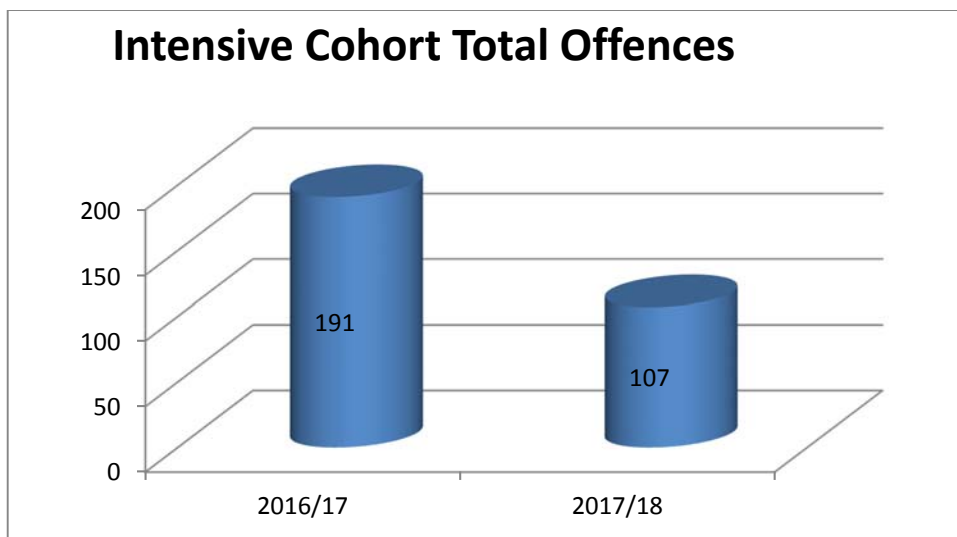
3. Performance

- 3.1 Performance was a key area for improvement as a result of the new model of practice. At this point in time, it is clear that the model is having a significant impact on First Time Entrants and on re-offending rates (this is based on our local data as the most recent national data is two years old and so relates to the previous model of practice).

4. Re-offending Rates

- 4.1 Due to the 12 month period required to track offending cohorts and the subsequent 6 month period to enable offences to come to light and be processed through the criminal justice system, the latest official reoffending data relates to the April to June 2016 cohort. As such the official re-offending data has been excluded from this report as it clearly pre-dates the implementation of the new YJS structure on 1st September 2017.

- 4.2 However, YJS does manually monitor the frequency and seriousness of re-offending by those young people assessed as having a high likelihood of re-offending.
- 4.3 The charts below relate to the cohort of 21 young people who were open to YJS as at 01.04.17 and who were assessed as having a high likelihood of re-offending. The target was to reduce both the frequency and seriousness of their offending in 2017/18 by 10% using the 2016/17 data as the baseline.
- 4.4 In the 12 months ending 31.03.18 the cohort committed a total of 107 proven re-offences, compared with 191 proven re-offences in the full baseline year – a reduction of 44%.

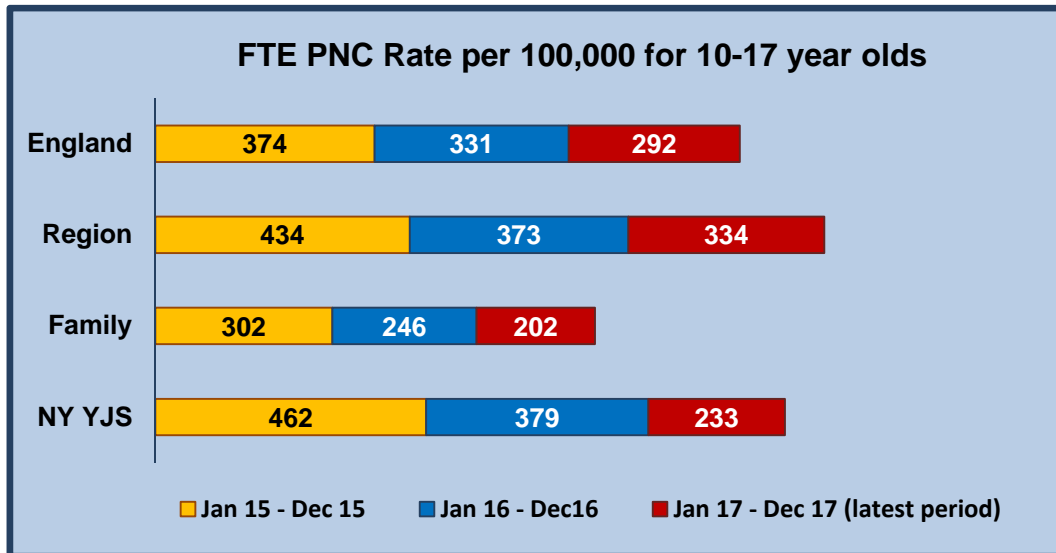


- 4.5 There was, however, an increase in the average highest gravity score from 3.52 in 2016/17 to 3.71 in 2017/18. This was primarily due to one young person being found guilty of the unusual offence of Causing Dangers to Road Users by persistently running onto main roads causing drivers to swerve to avoid hitting her. This offence carries a high gravity score of 7.

5. First Time Entrants into the Criminal Justice System

- 5.1 The official data relating to First Time Entrants (FTE's) is more current and relates to the 12 months ending 31st December 2017.
- 5.2 The chart below illustrates the significant progress that has been made in reducing the rate of FTE's in North Yorkshire, particularly in 2017. Whilst nationally the rate of FTE's has been decreasing for some years, the rate in North Yorkshire in 2015 increased. Although a decrease was seen in 2016, the rate in North Yorkshire remained above that seen nationally, regionally and within its Family Group.

5.3 Significant progress was seen in 2017, with the rate in North Yorkshire decreasing at a faster rate than the comparators mentioned and by the end of the year, the rate in North Yorkshire was lower than that seen nationally and regionally, with the gap narrowed on the Family Group. This period includes a significant crossover with the introduction of the Youth Outcomes Panel, which commenced on 10th May 2017.



5.4 Internal data taken from the YJS Case Management System indicates that the rate of FTE's has continued to decrease in North Yorkshire during the first half of 2018.

6. Youth Outcomes Panel

6.1 The Youth Outcomes Panel was introduced as a result of the new model of practice, it has been operating since 10th May 2017, involving North Yorkshire Police, YJS and York Youth Offending Team.

6.2 The purpose of the Panel is to consider the most appropriate disposal for young people who have committed a criminal offence. It is the decision making forum to ensure Police Disposals are:

- proportionate to the crime committed
- effective in reducing first time entrants to the Criminal Justice System
- reducing the risk of further offending.

6.3 Key to the successful operation of the Panel is the up to date relevant background information regarding the young person that is provided to Panel Members. This information includes details of Services that the young person has/is open to and enables Panel Members to make informed decisions.

6.4 Of the North Yorkshire cases referred to the Panel during the initial 12 month period:

- The 26 Panels received 213 referrals relating to 181 young people.
- Looked After Children are represented in 29 (16%) cases. 14 (48%) of the Looked After Children were placed in North Yorkshire by other Local Authorities.
- Significantly, 50% (107) of the referrals to the Panel have been dealt with outside of the criminal justice system through CRD or DAR, with an appropriate intervention or referral. In addition the decision in 4% (8) of the cases was to take No Further Action.

6.8 In terms of re-offending:

27 Young people have been re-referred to subsequent panels following further offending:

- Of the 159 young people referred to the Panel as at 31.03.18, 31 (19.5%) re-offended within a 3 month period
- The majority of the original offences and re-offences related to Theft and Assault.
- Other than 1 NFA, 1 CRD and 2 DAR, the Outcome in every case where a subsequent referral to the Panel has been made has resulted in a pre-court criminal justice sanction or a Charge to Court.

6.9 The Panel has had considerable interest from other Youth Offending Teams, who have viewed the process and adopted the methodology. The Youth Justice Board have also asked to use it as an example of good practice.

7. Youth Justice Strategic Plan Priorities

7.1 The draft Strategic Plan is going to the Youth Justice multi-agency management board in September 2018 for final sign off. We have taken a very different approach to the development of our draft strategic plan, basing it very clearly on feedback and consultation from stakeholders (young people, families, victims, staff and the YJS Management Board) and their views on what our priorities should be. The tables below set out the identified priorities: -

Operational Priorities 2018 -20

What Do We Want	What We Will Do	How We Will Know
Every child will have a positive and influential relationship with their YJS worker.	Invest time making in relationships Recognise trust and influence as tools Discuss and reflect in supervision Listen to children and young people and parents	Feedback from children and families Improved self-esteem and optimism Better compliance with supervision Improved attainment and behaviour in school Reduced offending and ASB
Parents and carers will feel positively supported by their YJS worker.	Engage parents with empathy More contact, talking and listening. Encouragement and constructive challenge Explore whole-family working approach	Feedback from children and families Improved self-esteem and optimism Reduced need for agency support Reduced offending and improve outcomes
Young victims will receive enhanced support, recognising their particular vulnerability to re-victimisation and reprisal.	Provide personal caseworker where needed Access to specialist therapy and support Offer RJ and mediation in peer context Support for parents and carers	Feedback from young victims and their families Improved self-esteem and optimism Reduction of re-victimisation Increased confidence in the justice system
YJS staff will spend more of their time on direct work with service users.	Value and prioritise direct work Streamline desk-based activity Visit families and schools regularly Respond quickly to adverse events	Feedback from children and families Improved engagement and attainment Improved self-esteem and optimism Reduced offending and ASB
Closer collaboration with Emotional and Mental Health services	Improve pathways to EMH support Identify and resolve service gaps Challenge exclusionary barriers Embed Psychologically Informed Practice	Feedback from children and families Improved engagement and attainment Improved self-esteem and optimism Reduced offending and ASB
The Management Board will be more closely involved in addressing gaps and challenges.	Board will receive Problem Profile Reports Board will work with us to identify solutions	Minutes and Action Logs of Board Evidence of strategic impact Reduced offending and ASB

Strategic Development Priorities 2018-20

*Note – These aspirational goals will require extensive partnership development over a period of years

What Do We Want	What We Will Do	How We Will Know
Children and young people will have affordable access to leisure and sport in their community.	Develop provision with Prevention Service Support project development Challenge exclusionary barriers Encourage children and young people to participate	Monitor and measure provision Monitor and measure participation Improved self-esteem and optimism Reduced FTEs, re-offending and ASB
Every school-age young person will be enjoying a suitable full-time education.	Support development of appropriate provision Support parents to secure needed services Provide information, advice and advocacy Challenge exclusionary barriers	Improved engagement and attainment Feedback from children and families Feedback from schools and providers Reduced offending and ASB
A comprehensive and consistent service will be available to all victims of crime.	Engage with OPCC scoping project Develop common values and practice Support virtualised service integration Improved transitions for victims	More victims will report high satisfaction, with increased confidence in the justice system Victims will experience less long-term harm Reduction of re-victimisation

8. Recommendations

8.1 Corporate & Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee members are asked to discuss the content of the report. In particular to note the following: -

- Early indications that the new model of practice is having a positive impact on:
 - Providing a tiered approach which allows for greater capacity to address prevention and first time entrants
 - An improved and coordinated service for young people, family/carers, victims and communities
 - Improved performance around First Time Entrants & Reducing Re-offending
- The draft priorities for the Strategic Plan 2018 -20, which will be agreed at the YJS Management Board in September 2018.

8.2 Corporate & Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee may wish to ask for a further update in 12 months' time.

Julie Firth
Head of Partners in Practice & Quality of Practice
Children & Families Service

23 August 2018

North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Review of cash-based, over the counter banking and Post Office services in rural areas of the county

Purpose of the Report

1. Members are asked to consider the findings from the scrutiny review of cash-based, over the counter banking and Post Office services in rural areas of the county, and agree the recommendations arising from the review.

Background

2. The Corporate & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee recognised that SMEs are key to the long term sustainability of rural areas, and that the closure of branch banks in rural areas posed a significant risk to their long term future. They also recognised that many older people would be affected by the closures (see paragraph 13).
3. In December 2017 Members agreed to carry out a review of the effect of branch bank closures and the loss of access to face to face banking and ATMs, particularly in rural areas across the county, and to consider the cumulative effect alongside the closure of Post Offices across the county. A list of the current availability of branch banks, ATMs and Post Offices is shown at Appendix 1.

Introduction

4. Access to banking is a basic requirement of any functioning economy. Research¹ into the impact of bank branch closures on local businesses reveals that it often creates additional costs for the wider local economy and for business owners, making it more difficult to manage cash flow and hit productivity.
5. For small rural businesses, many of which are cash-based and operating in largely cash dependent local economies, this typically means being able to easily manage cash flow. To do this, they need access to banking services. Put simply, cash remains the most frequently used payment method in the UK² and those businesses need to deposit their cash safely and securely. It is therefore unsurprising that over three quarters of small businesses continue to use branches for a wide range of services.
6. Rural businesses and cash-dependent businesses are therefore particularly affected by branch closures. The impact on their productivity can be notable e.g. a business owner will have to travel further for the nearest bank branch.

¹ Locked Out: The Impact of Bank Branch Closures on Small Businesses”, Federation of Small Businesses Scotland, April 2018.

² UK Cash and Cash Machines: 2017 Summary”, UK Finance, August 2017.

7. In March 2015 the major high street banks, consumer groups and the government signed up to an industry-wide agreement to work with customers and communities to minimise the impact of branch closures and put in place alternative banking services.
8. As a result, the British Bankers Association (BBA) - the trade association for the UK banking sector - agreed a protocol which committed banks to:
 - Working with local communities to establish the impact of the branch closure, prior to its closure
 - Finding suitable alternative provision to suit individual communities
 - Putting satisfactory alternative banking services in place before a branch is closed. Options for this to include free to use cash machines, the proximity of alternative branches, and Post Office branches and mobile banking arrangements.
9. However, evidence suggests that the replacements put in place following branch closures (mobile banking units and Post Office access) are often inadequate and do not meet the needs of business customers. Added to that, if LINK's plan to reduce the fee paid by card providers to cash machine operators goes ahead³, there is a risk of closure of Free-to-use ATMs, which are an essential part of a thriving local economy.

Information Gathered

10. Closure of Branch Banks
In January 2018, Members met with a Natwest Bank representative responsible for Yorkshire and the Humber, and for managing the engagement process for closure of NatWest branch banks. Whilst not speaking for the industry as a whole, he was able to provide an insight into the processes that are undertaken when a bank is considering closing a branch, and the thresholds applied.
11. As part of his presentation he confirmed:
 - There had been a 40% reduction in the number of customers coming in to bank branches over the past 5 years.
 - More people were going on-line and using telephony to access banking services and 2017 was the first time that there were more online than branch based transactions.
 - 90% of branch bank processes can be undertaken at a Post Office
 - Reducing banking hours and changing opening times were considered and trialled.
 - Factors that are taken into account include: proximity to other bank branches, ATMs and Post Offices; level of use; and transport links
 - The decision to close a branch bank is a commercial one and it has to comply with government guidelines, but there is no industry body or regulator that sets or enforces standards.
 - NatWest typically gives 6 months' notice of a closure, compared to the Government Minimum standard of 3 months

³ See: <https://www.link.co.uk/about/news/link-moves-to-secure-future-of-free-atms/>

- Ahead of a closure NatWest contacts all its frequent customers, often owners of SMEs - NatWest have continued to employ 'SME relationship managers', other banks have not. These provide a direct link with SMEs and usually go to see them at their company site.
 - MPs are informed of any closures
12. Members also received information from the Rural Services Network (RSN) who confirmed that their next Sounding Board Survey which goes out to all Local Authority Councillors and Parish Councillors will focus on the withdrawal of cash machines and banks from rural areas. The RSN confirmed they plan to use the information they gather from across the country to campaign against further losses/closures.
13. Finally, Members received information provided by Age UK who had previously called for all banks and building societies to work harder to respond to the needs of their older customers. Members noted that while a minority of older people are able to use internet banking, around a quarter (26%) of people aged 65 to 74 and around three-fifths (61%) of people aged 75+ do not regularly use the internet. Many older people also have a strong preference for in-branch banking, with face-to-face services allowing the chance to talk to people – an important component of tackling loneliness, particularly in rural communities. In-branch banking also offers peace of mind and the security of seeing bank transactions take place and receiving a paper record to prove it.
14. Post Office Closures & their link in to Bank Branch Closures
The Post Office has a requirement to provide branches in all parts of the UK in line with national access criteria set by government, and to date the government has protected rural post offices. Research carried out in 2017 confirms the particular importance of post offices to rural consumers and businesses - see Appendix 2.
15. In April 2018, Members met with the Post Office External Affairs Lead for Scotland and Northern Ireland (previously the External Affairs Manager for the National Post Office Company) who confirmed there were no planned closures of post offices. He also provided an overview of the current situation as follows:
- There are 11,500 post office branches in the UK - the National Post Office wants to increase this by 2,000
 - Almost 93% of people live within a mile of their local post office, and 99.7% live within three miles.
 - The National Post Office do not run their own post offices other than 200 Crown post offices. All other post offices are commercial ventures run as individual businesses.
 - Closures occur for a number of reasons but they are usually due to contractual issues or commercial issues.
 - An existing agent has to give six months' notice of ending a contract.
 - It is difficult to get someone to take on a post office. The post office field team will try to get a new post office agent up and running as quickly as possible.
 - There are outreach post offices that get additional payments that help in more rural areas.
 - There are also 3,000 community branches that get an additional payment - a community branch is one where there is no shop within half a mile.

- Community run post offices are an option but they would still need a designated postmaster who would be prepared to be liable for any losses incurred.
 - A 6-year agreement between the Post Office and banks has been in place since 1 January 2017, to provide basic bank branch services particularly over the counter bank transactions for bank customers - both for personal accounts and small business accounts. Banks are obliged to pay for this service and given the number of previous and upcoming branch closures, it is likely this will be extended.
 - There are approximately 2,700 ATMs in the post office network but every post office is in effect an ATM.
 - Standalone post offices were very rarely commercially viable any more. Even a post office with a large catchment area could at best hope to earn income of £14,000 per annum based purely on post office counter services
 - Four years ago the post office network was transformed and modernised and since then efforts had been made to encourage retail.
 - There are over 170 products and services in post offices (postal orders are the only one owned by the post office) - Greater advertising is needed nationally to highlight the services that post offices operate but this is incredibly expensive to do.
 - 2017/18 was the first year that post offices had made money nationally.
16. With respect to changes in the post office network, Members also considered the Post Office's code of practice for public consultation and communication, published in May 2014.
17. Finally, in May 2018 Members received information on an action plan developed by the Finance Industry and the Post Office working with the Treasury and government officials⁴. The aim of the plan is to raise awareness among local communities grappling with bank branch closures, of the day-to-day banking services that bank and building society customers can access at 11,500 Post Office branches across the UK.
18. Members learnt that customers in rural or urban areas with less bank branch coverage are the primary focus of the plan, which seeks to:
- i. Raise awareness of banking services available at the Post Office via regional and targeted localised pilot media campaigns. These will be timed to coincide with Post Office in-branch campaigns across the Post Office network.
 - ii. Support specific communities, including those impacted by bank branch closures, through information leaflets, joint Post Office and bank outreach to communities and improved collaboration between Post Office and banks during any bank branch closures.
 - iii. Promote the Post Office as an integral channel for day-to-day banking, with clear and prominent information for customers in banks' literature, on websites and telephony channels.
 - iv. Provide enhanced support for vulnerable consumers to be developed based on Citizens' Advice best practice guidelines.

⁴ <http://www.rsonline.org.uk/post-office-eases-bank-closure-pain>

- v. Carry out ongoing monitoring of awareness and confidence in the Post Office counter service.

Analysis

19. In regard to branch bank closures, Members identified a number of concerns, including the lack of any cumulative impact assessment of branch bank closures, and an over reliance on Post Offices to fill the gaps made by those closures. They noted the importance of ATMs in some of the more rural areas of the county, and questioned what type of contracts were in place with Post Offices to ensure the sustainability of banking services, once a nearby bank branch had closed.
20. They also questioned whether the existing community banker role could be extended to provide accessible banking services in places such as community libraries, or whether multi-bank hubs could be established in buildings of community use. They agreed it may be possible to explore with the Stronger Communities Team what community bases could support banking services.
21. In regard to post office services, Members recognised that commercial decisions were determining what Post Office services were available. They acknowledged with surprise the low amount of income generated through post office counter services solely, and questioned how best to highlight the services on offer in Post Offices and encourage use of their retail facilities, on the basis that if you don't use it you lose it.
22. They also questioned whether it would be possible to levy greater charges upon the banks for the services provided by post offices, as this may influence the decision making around branch bank closures.
23. Finally, they were pleased to note the national action plan developed by the Finance Industry and the Post Office. However, they questioned whether at a local level the true impact of a branch bank closure was being recognised, particularly as in their view; there was a need to balance commercial concerns with community concerns.

Review Conclusions

24. The Committee were unable to say with confidence that banks were fully considering their 'corporate social responsibility' as part of their decision making around the closure of a branch bank. They highlighted their concern for the number of people that may get left behind without access to banking services, as the move towards a cash-less society and dependence upon on-line technologies continues.
25. They therefore agreed that:
 - Decisions were not taking account of the full impact upon rural communities and the SMEs within those communities, and;
 - At a local level, assumptions were being made about the ability of nearby Post Offices to fill the resulting gap in banking services provision.
26. However, the Committee accepted there was little they could do to influence banks from making a unilateral decision to close a branch, made in response to commercial pressures.

27. The Chair therefore proposed writing to both the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to North Yorkshire MPs to raise the Committee's concerns about the impact on rural communities and small businesses.

Recommendations

28. Having considered the findings from this review, it is proposed that:
- i. The Chair write to both the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to North Yorkshire MPs to raise the Committee's concerns about the impact on rural communities and small businesses.
 - ii. The Committee recommend to the Executive that they:
 - a) Note the findings from the review.
 - b) Endorse this Committee's views in regard to the impact of bank branch closures on local businesses and rural communities.
 - c) Highlight the concerns identified by the review to members of the Local Government York & North Yorkshire Partnership Group.

Report Author:

Melanie Carr
Principal Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer

Appendices:

Appendix 1: List of Branch Banks, Post Offices & ATMs across the county
Appendix 2: Briefing note on rural Post Office use dated November 2017

**Banks & Building Society Branches, LINK ATMs and Post Offices in North
Yorkshire Market Towns and Large Settlements**

<p>Bedale Barclays (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society LINK ATMs at Co-op, Tesco and Spar. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Bentham Barclays (incl. ATM) LINK ATM at Spar. Free to use. Post office.</p>
<p>Boroughbridge Barclays (incl. ATM) LINK ATMS at Spar and Morrisons. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Catterick Garrison Lloyds (incl. ATM) Santander LINK ATMs at Poundland, Aldi, Co-op, Tesco and various barracks. Free to use. LINK ATMs at Brewers Fayre, a pizza shop and McDonalds. Charge to use (£1.75 - £1.95) Two post offices.</p>
<p>Easingwold Barclays (incl. ATM) HSBC – closing Nationwide (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Building Society (agency) LINK ATMS at Co-ops and Costcutter. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Filey Barclays (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank – closing 3 May 2017. LINK ATMs at Spar, Tesco, Londis, Heron Foods, Millers, and post office. Free to use. LINK ATMs at Brigs Amusements, Holdsworths Amusements and Filey stores. Charge to use (99p - £1.85) Post office.</p>
<p>Glusburn & Cross Hills Barclays (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society LINK ATMs at Spar, Co-op and Snax 24. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Grassington Barclays (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society (agency) Post office.</p>
<p>Great Ayton LINK ATM at Co-op. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Hawes Barclays (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society (agency) Post office in Community Office.</p>
<p>Helmsley Barclays (incl. ATM) Nationwide (incl. ATM) Nat West - ATM only LINK ATM at Costcutter. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Ingleton LINK ATMs in Co-ops and at Marton Arms, Thornton in Lonsdale. Post office in community centre (open Tuesday and Wednesday).</p>

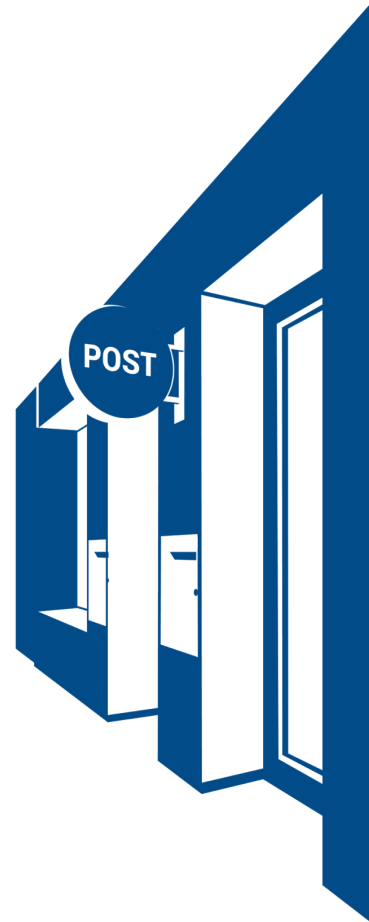
<p>Kirkbymoorside HSBC – closing LINK ATM at Co-op. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Knaresborough Barclays (incl. ATM) Halifax (incl. ATM) Nat West – closing Santander (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at Co-op and Sainsburys. Free to use. LINK ATMs at Premiere and Chain Lane stores. Charge to use (£1.50 - £1.65)</p>
<p>Leyburn Barclays (incl. ATM) HSBC – closing Skipton Building Society (agency) Yorkshire Building Society (agency) LINK ATMs at Co-op and One Stop. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Malton Barclays (incl. ATM) Halifax (incl. ATM) HSBC (incl. ATM) Nat West (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society TSB (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at Asda, Morrisons, Heron Foods, and One Stop. Free to use. LINK ATM at McColls. Charge to use (£1.99) Post office.</p>
<p>Masham Barclays (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank LINK ATM at Co-op. Free to use. Post office in Masham News.</p>	<p>Middleham LINK ATM at Central Stores. Free to use. Mobile post office at Key Centre (not open all week)</p>
<p>Northallerton Barclays (incl. ATM) Darlington Building Society Halifax (incl. ATM) HSBC (incl. ATM) Nat West (incl. ATM) Santander (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society TSB (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATM in a number of Co-ops and at Sainsburys. Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Pateley Bridge Barclays (no ATM) LINK ATMs at Spar, Costcutter and the Oldest Sweet Shop. Free to use. Post office.</p>
<p>Pickering Barclays (incl. ATM)</p>	<p>Richmond Barclays (incl. ATM)</p>

<p>Nat West (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank – closing 4 May 2017. Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at Co-op, Costcutter and Malton Road garage. Free to use. Post office in Morlands newsagents.</p>	<p>HSBC (incl. ATM) Nat West (incl. ATM) TSB (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank – closing 20 April 2017 Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at Nisa, post office, N Shaw Ltd, Heron Foods and The Station. Free to use. LINK ATM at McColls. Charge to use (£1.65) Two post offices.</p>
<p>Ripon Barclays (incl. ATM) Halifax (incl. ATM) HSBC (incl. ATM) Leeds Building Society Lloyds Nat West (incl. ATM) Santander (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society Yorkshire Bank – closing 6 June 2017. Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at McColls, Sainsburys, Nisa, Booths, Morrisons and Co-ops. Free to use. Three post offices.</p>	<p>Selby Barclays (incl. ATM) Halifax (incl. ATM) HSBC (incl. ATM) Lloyds (incl. ATM) Nat West – closing Santander (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society Yorkshire Bank (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at Griffin Hotel, post office, Wilkinsons, Sainsburys, Morrisons, Tesco, Flaxley Road newsagents, Selby college, Co-op and McColls. Free to use. LINK ATMs at Millgate service station, Two Stop Shop, Wishing Well, Three Lakes Retail Park, and Abbeyside filling station. Charge to use. (£1.85 - £1.99) Two post offices.</p>
<p>Settle Barclays (incl. ATM) HSBC (incl. ATM) Lloyds Nat West – closing Skipton Building Society LINK ATMs at Co-op and Booths, Free to use. Post office.</p>	<p>Sherburn in Elmet Nat West – ATM only. LINK ATMs at Spar, Tesco and Co-op. Free to use. Post office.</p>
<p>Skipton Barclays (incl. ATM) Halifax (incl. ATM) HSBC (incl. ATM) Nat West (incl. ATM) Santander (incl. ATM) Skipton Building Society (incl. ATM) TSB (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank (incl. ATM)</p>	<p>Stokesley Barclays (incl. ATM) HSBC – closing Nat West (incl. ATM) Newcastle Building Society Santander (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Building Society (agency) LINK ATM in Co-op. Free to use. Post office in Quality Fare.</p>

<p>Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at Tesco, Morrisons, Spar and Rendezvous Hotel. Free to use. LINK ATMs at Rowland Street Stores and Londis. Charge to use. (£1.25 - £1.99) Two post offices.</p>	
<p>Tadcaster Barclays (incl. ATM) Halifax (incl. ATM) Nat West – closing LINK ATMs at Sainsburys and Esso garage. Free to use. Two post offices.</p>	<p>Thirsk Barclays (incl. ATM) HSBC (incl. ATM) Lloyds (incl. ATM) Nationwide Nat West – closing Santander – closing 15 June 2017 LINK ATMs at Heron Foods, Co-op, Tesco, Thirsk Garden Centre. Free to use. LINK ATMs at Bytheway Stores, Thirsk Service Station and Thirsk Racecourse. Charge to use. (£1.65 - £1.99) Post office in Co-op.</p>
<p>Whitby Barclays (incl. ATM) Halifax (incl. ATM) HSBC Nat West (incl. ATM) TSB (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Bank (incl. ATM) Yorkshire Building Society LINK ATMs at Pleasureland Amusements, Millers Amusements, Poundland, Heron Foods, Co-op, Spar, Sainsburys, Eves & Co. Free to use. LINK ATMs at the Board Inn, George Hotel and Heldradale Stores. Charge to use (£1 - £1.85) Three post offices (One in Co-op).</p>	

Rural Post Office Use

How rural
consumers and
small businesses
use post offices



Annabel Barnett

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Summary

Post offices have always been particularly important for rural communities. But in the context of declining mail use and dramatic growth in digital communications, what role do they play today? And do people in rural areas use post offices differently to people based in urban areas?

This briefing note draws on a survey of over 800 rural residents and over 250 small businesses. Although almost all rural residents and businesses use post offices, people in rural areas are visiting post offices less frequently than they did a decade ago (31% visit at least once a week, compared to 56% in 2005). Our research shows:

- **Rural consumers still use post offices significantly more often than urban consumers and they are more likely to use many of the services offered.** Rural residents make greater use of mail services including buying stamps and sending parcels, for example. Post offices in rural areas are also used much more for cash withdrawals (24% of rural consumers, 19% in urban areas).
- **Post offices remain embedded in rural life, providing a range of community and retail services.** These include offering local information, informal support and a place for meeting fellow residents. 7 in 10 rural consumers buy essential items like groceries and food at post offices.
- **Rural small businesses rely on post offices more than their urban counterparts.** Rural businesses make more use of postal and banking services in particular. And the current breadth of the post office network helps their bottom line: 71% of rural small businesses say that without their local post office, their costs for accessing services would rise.
- **The more rural a community, the more important its post office.** 6 in 10 remote rural residents describe the Post Office as 'very' or 'extremely' important to them. They withdraw cash most frequently, are more likely to buy retail goods and make most use of community services.

The Post Office has a requirement to provide branches in all parts of the UK in line with national access criteria set by government, and to date the government has protected rural post offices. Our research confirms the particular importance of post offices to rural consumers and businesses. It is vital that the government and Post Office Ltd continue to maintain the number of rural post offices and ensure they retain their wide range of services.

Introduction

The post office network is a crucial access point to the public postal service.¹ Post offices also deliver other essential services to citizens, including banking services, access to benefits, bill payment and a range of central and local government services. Post offices have long played particularly critical roles in rural areas, frequently described as ‘lifeline’ and ‘essential to the vitality of the local community’.²

But post offices - and the ways in which individuals and small businesses use them - have undergone very considerable change in recent years. These changes reflect the enormous social, economic and technological developments within wider society. A range of factors including the increasing digitisation of communications and transactions, pressure on local retail and ongoing bank branch closures are likely to continue to have a significant impact on service provision.

With an older population and often less choice in service providers, rural residents and businesses may be disproportionately affected by these changes. The post office network with its extensive geographic coverage, is key in providing services in rural and remote areas.

However, the network has been loss-making since 2000, and in order to maintain its size and financial viability, the Post Office is undergoing a major transformation programme, which involves converting traditional branches into new operating models. Many smaller post offices are being integrated into retail premises where they operate for longer opening hours but with a slightly reduced range of services. In addition, the government has committed to ‘safeguard the post office network, to protect existing rural services’³ and provides a Community Branch Fund to strengthen branches that may be the last shop in the village serving small, often remote, communities⁴.

As the statutory watchdog for postal consumers, it is our role to monitor matters relating to post office numbers and location. We have particular responsibilities regarding the interests of more vulnerable consumers, including those in rural areas. With the post office transformation programme approaching its conclusion, in this briefing note we look at how consumers and small businesses in rural areas are currently using post offices, and the value they place on them.⁵

¹ Royal Mail, [Universal Service Obligation](#)

² Business and Enterprise Committee, [Post Offices - securing their future](#), 2009

³<https://s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/manifesto2017/Manifesto2017.pdf>

⁴ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2013-11-27/debates/13112751000003/PostOffice>

⁵ Unless otherwise referenced, the figures quoted in this report are from Accent/Citizens Advice, [Use of Essential Services Traditionally Provided at Post Offices](#), June 2017. See Appendix. In the report, we use the term ‘consumer’ to refer to citizens (not businesses).

1. Post offices have a unique reach in rural areas

There are significant differences in the ways rural and urban post offices are used.⁶ This is partly for geographical reasons - rural areas are more sparsely populated and less well provided with services than urban areas. But it is also because rural and urban demographics are distinct.

Rural post offices have unparalleled coverage

There are around 11,600 post offices in the UK, with a unique reach across all parts of the country. Rural areas are particularly well-served by post offices, and over half (55%) of the UK's branches are rural.⁷

98.7% of the rural population is within 3 miles of a post office. This exceeds government access criteria that require Post Office Ltd (POL) to ensure 95% of the rural population is within 3 miles of a post office. There is a further requirement that 95% of the population of every postcode district is within 6 miles of their nearest post office, to ensure a minimum level of access for those based in remote rural areas.⁸

The Post Office also has to report on accessibility for particular groups of consumers, including small businesses, lower income consumers, older people and those with disabilities. In 2016, well over 99% of all of these groups were within 3 miles of a Post Office branch. However, ease of use of a post office in practice, particularly in remote areas, often depends on access to transport as well as direct distance.⁹

There are fewer alternative services in rural areas

In many rural and remote areas, post offices are especially important because of the decline in availability of local alternatives providing these services. The number of bank branches has fallen sharply¹⁰, and some have particular concerns about the impact on small businesses in rural areas¹¹. More widely, closures of other services such as pubs¹² and shops¹³ have also affected rural

⁶ Throughout this report we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) definitions for urban, rural and remote rural areas. See Citizens Advice, [Use of Essential Services Traditionally Provided at Post Offices](#), 2017 (Appendix A).

⁷ Post Office Ltd, [Network Report 2016](#)

⁸ BIS, [Securing the Post Office Network in the Digital Age](#), 2010. Our independent analysis confirms the access criteria were being met in 2017, [Citizens Advice. Access All Areas?](#), 2017.

⁹ This issue is explored further Citizens Advice, [Access All Areas?](#), 2017

¹⁰ From 20,583 in 1998 to 8,837 in 2012, with a further 1,000 branches closing 2012-2016. (House of Commons Library, [Bank Branch Closures](#), 2016)

¹¹ Federation of Small Businesses, [Locked Out](#), 2016

¹² The Campaign for Real Ale [reports](#) 21 pub closures a week in 2016, of which just under half were in rural areas.

areas, especially where alternatives are distant.

Bank and other service closures are driven partly by the changing use of technology. While many consumers in rural areas do use the internet to access services, there are also both physical and behavioural barriers to replacing face to face counter services completely:

- Broadband speeds are generally inferior in rural areas¹⁴
- Older people are less like to use the internet: 78% of those aged 65-74 are online, but only 41% of over 75s.¹⁵

Rural population is different to urban population

Whilst 17% of the UK's population live in rural areas,¹⁶ the rural population is not evenly distributed throughout the country. For example, only 1% of the population of England live in remote rural areas compared to 6% in Scotland.¹⁷

The population of rural areas is significantly older than that in urban areas. For instance in rural areas in England, 24% of the population is aged 65 or over, but in urban areas only 16% are aged 65 or over.¹⁸ This rises to 28% in remote areas of England. However, in the majority of cases where there is a difference in the way post offices are used in rural and urban areas, this is due to rurality rather than age.

¹³ The Rural Shops Alliance [estimates](#) 2,500 village shop closures in the decade to 2014.

¹⁴ House of Commons Library, [Superfast Broadband Coverage in the UK](#), 2017

¹⁵ 99% of adults under the age of 34 use the internet.

www.ons.gov.uk/businessindustryandtrade/itandinternetindustry/bulletins/internetusers/2017

¹⁶ data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS

¹⁷ www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-population-and-migration/rural-population-201415

www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/09/29133747/2

¹⁸

www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-population-and-migration/rural-population-201415

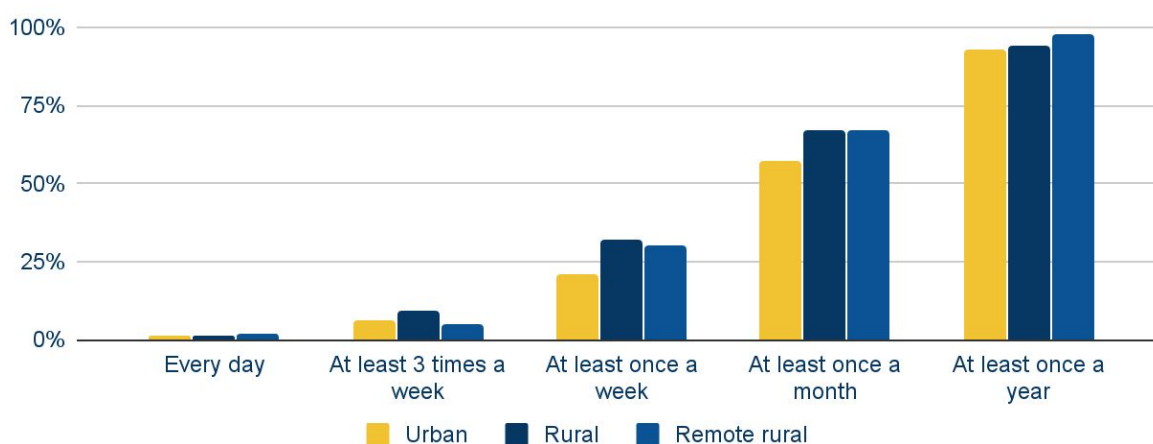
2. Rural consumers visit post offices more frequently

Almost everybody uses a post office at some time, but rural consumers are slightly more likely to use post offices than urban residents. 98% of rural consumers ever use post offices (compared with 97% of urban consumers). People based in rural areas also use post offices more frequently. In both rural and urban areas consumers say that localness or proximity is the most important reason why they choose to use key services at post offices.¹⁹

Rural residents use post offices more often

Rural residents use post offices more often than those in urban areas. Whilst nearly 1 in 3 (31%) rural residents uses a post office at least weekly, in urban areas only 1 in 5 (21%) uses a post office at least weekly. 2 in 3 (67%) consumers in rural areas use a post office once a month or more (compared to 57% in urban areas). Consumers living in non-remote rural areas use post offices slightly more frequently than remote rural residents.

Figure 1. Rural consumers use post offices more frequently



Rural consumers visit most during core hours

Despite a considerable increase in the hours many post offices are open, people overwhelmingly use post offices during traditional opening hours, both in terms of day (Monday to Saturday) and time (9am-5.30pm). As in urban areas, the vast majority of rural (89%) and remote rural (93%) consumers who use post offices visit during traditional opening times. Most people who visit outside traditional hours, visit just outside these times.²⁰

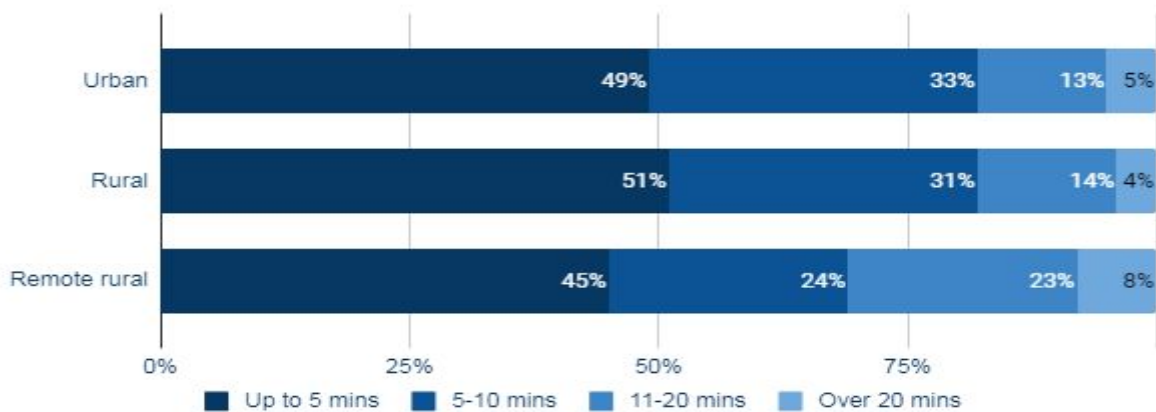
¹⁹ Citizens Advice, [Consumer Use of Post Offices](#), 2017

²⁰ 8am-9am or 5.30pm-7pm.

Remote residents have longest journey times

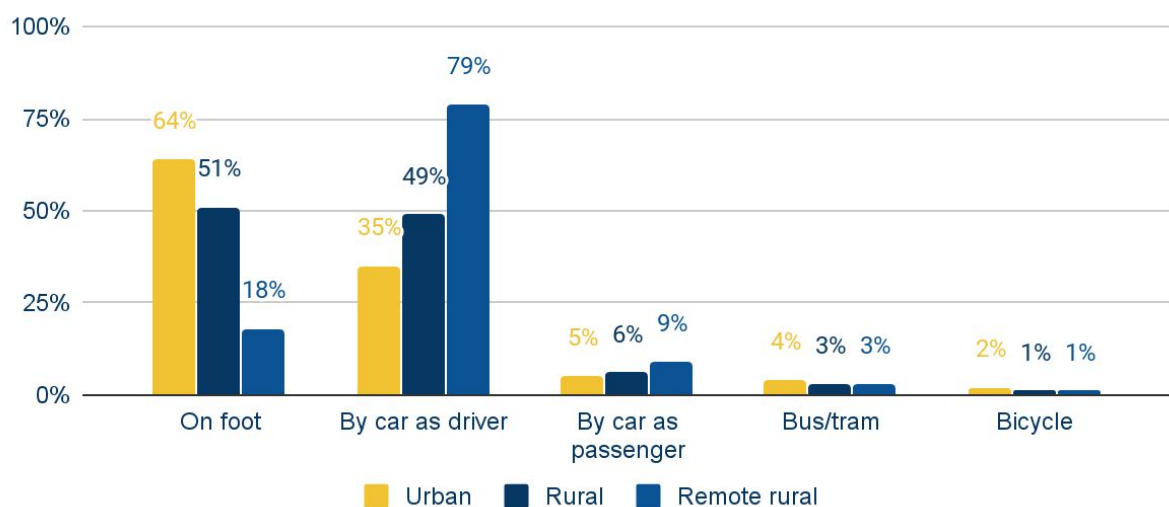
Consumers in non-remote rural areas have very similar journey times to consumers in urban areas. But those in remote areas have longer journey times. Just over half (51%) of customers in rural areas and 45% of those in remote areas are within 5 minutes journey time of the post office they use most. Those in remote rural areas are significantly more likely (31%) to have a journey time of over 10 minutes (18% in rural or urban areas).

Figure 2. Remote consumers have longest journey times



Non-remote and urban consumer journey times are similar despite the greater distance travelled in rural areas, because consumers use different methods of transport. Driving is more than twice as common in remote (79%) compared with urban (35%) areas. Walking decreases with rurality - 64% of urban, 51% of rural and 18% of remote rural post office users travel to the post office on foot.

Figure 3. Remote and rural consumers are more likely to drive



3. Rural consumers use key services more

Post offices provide consumers with a wide range of services including mail, banking and cash services, access to central government and council services and bill payments. Many of these services are available through a range of other channels as well as post offices.

Postal services are used most

Postal services are the most commonly used Post Office service in rural areas, as in urban areas. Almost all (99%) rural residents who visit post offices use them to access at least one postal service.²¹

However, for key postal services a slightly higher proportion of rural consumers than urban consumers are using post offices. Urban residents are more likely to use non-post office outlets for mail services. Alternative outlets, such as supermarkets selling stamps and parcelshops like CollectPlus, tend to be more accessible in urban areas.

80% of all remote rural consumers, 72% of rural consumers and 70% of urban consumers buy stamps or pay for letter postage at a post office. This difference is partly because the rural population is older, and older people send more letter post than younger people, regardless of where they live.

Rural residents are also more likely than urban residents to send parcels and use premium mail services (Signed For and Special Delivery) at post offices.

Figure 4. Remote and rural consumers use key mail services most



Similar proportions of rural (40%), remote rural (38%) and urban (38%) consumers use post offices to return mail order or internet shopping items. But fewer rural residents than urban residents need to collect mail orders that have not been delivered to them at home/work in general. And a correspondingly

²¹ Postal services: sending 1st or 2nd class letters, stamps, Special Delivery, Signed For, international letters, parcels, mail order returns and collections.

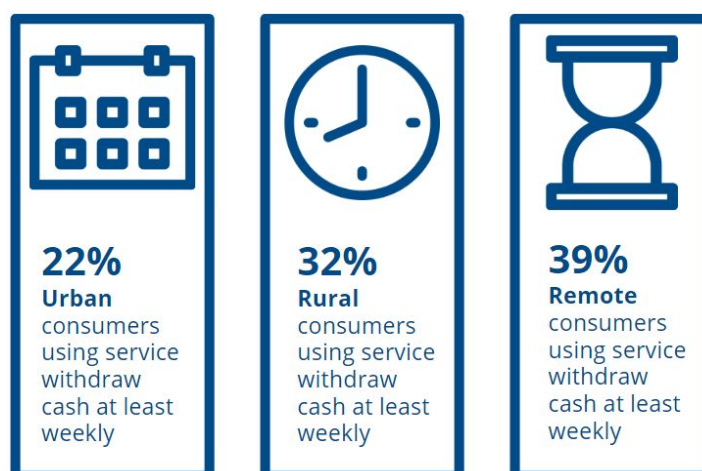
lower proportion of all rural (19%) and remote residents (15%) collect mail order items at post offices.²²

Banking services are used more in rural areas

Post offices are used significantly more for cash and banking in rural areas, than in urban areas. In rural areas nearly 1 in 4 (24%) consumers withdraw cash from their bank account at a post office. In urban areas 1 in 5 (19%) do so. The more remote consumers are, the more likely they are to withdraw cash from post offices weekly, as shown in figure 5 below.

An increasing number of high street banks now offer a broader range of banking services through post offices, and this provision is likely to become more important as rural bank branches continue to close.

Figure 5. Frequency of cash withdrawals increases with rurality



Other banking services at post offices are also used more by rural than by urban residents. 6% of all rural and remote rural residents deposit cheques at post offices (compared with 2% of urban residents). 4% of rural residents and 5% of those in remote areas use a post office to deposit cash (3% in urban areas).

Figure 6. Rural consumers make more use of banking services

Post Office service	Urban	Rural*
Cash withdrawal from bank acct	19%	24%
Cheque deposit	2%	6%
Cash deposit	3%	5%

* Rural = rural and remote rural

²² 21% of urban residents collect undelivered mail order items at post offices.

A considerable proportion of consumers who say they collect their state benefits and pension payments in cash, use a post office.²³ This Post Office service is used far more extensively by rural residents than urban residents. Over 1 in 3 people (36%) in rural areas who collect their payments in cash use a post office counter, but in urban areas only 1 in 5 (21%) do so.

Foreign currency exchange services at post offices are used by nearly 1 in 4 (24%) rural consumers, slightly more than the 22% in urban areas.

Rural and urban consumers use application and payment services in similar ways

Post offices offer access to a range of application services, including government forms, applications for passports and licences and identity checking services. Consumers can also pay utility bills and access some local council services, mainly payment services, at post offices. For the majority of application and payment services, rural residents use post offices in similar ways to urban residents.

Around half of all consumers make use of the Post Office's passport application form checking service, Passport Check and Send - 46% in rural areas and 42% in remote areas. In urban areas slightly more consumers (49%) use Passport Check and Send. The service is only available in larger post offices, which tend to be based in urban areas.

Only 6% of rural residents use a post office for identity checking services, for example when applying for a mortgage, new job or Home Office Biometric Residence permit. In urban areas this rises to 9%, which may reflect the higher usage of these services among under 45s and Black, Asian and minority ethnic consumers who are more likely to be urban residents.

More rural residents than urban residents pay their vehicle tax at a post office. Almost 1 in 4 rural (23%) and remote rural residents (24%) who pay vehicle tax, pay at a post office.²⁴ In contrast only 1 in 5 (19%) urban residents do so. There is little or no difference in the proportions of rural and urban consumers using post offices to pick up government forms²⁵ (48% of rural consumers), access council services²⁶ (5% rural) or pay utility bills (3% rural consumers).

²³ Only 4% of rural consumers say they withdraw their state benefits or pensions in cash at a post office counter. The majority of people who report withdrawing benefits or state pensions in cash use a bank account or bank ATM. The low figure may also be due to people viewing these payments as general money in a bank account, rather than specifically as a pension or benefit payment.

²⁴ 17% of all rural consumers pay for vehicle tax at a post office.

²⁵ For example, application forms for passports, driving licences or fishing rod licences.

²⁶ For example, paying for rent, council tax or parking fines; payments to consumers; obtaining transport passes.

4. Rural consumers use retail and community services

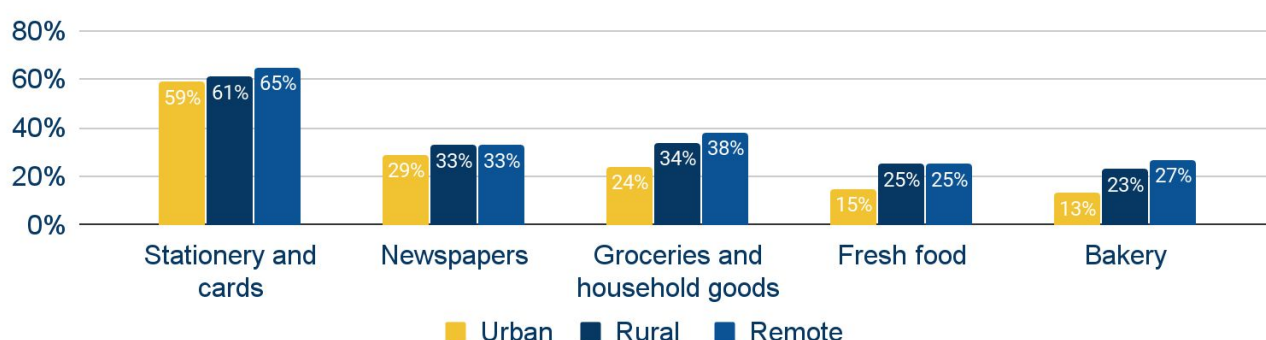
Consumers say they find it useful to be able to access postal and other Post Office services in the same place. People living in rural or remote rural areas are significantly more likely to say that this is very useful - 59% in remote rural and 55% in rural areas, compared with 46% in urban areas.

Rural consumers buy retail goods at post offices

The majority of rural consumers use a post office located within other premises. 6 in 10 rural (64%) and remote rural (60%) residents use post offices co-located or based in the premises of another retailer or enterprise, most commonly a convenience store.²⁷ 54% of urban residents say they use a co-located post office.

The co-location of post offices within retail outlets enables many consumers to buy retail goods in the same premises. This service is particularly well-used in rural areas, reflecting both the greater number of rural post offices based in retail outlets and the lower provision of alternative retailers. Almost 7 in 10 rural consumers purchase non-Post Office retail goods at post offices such as stationery and cards, groceries, household goods, newspapers and fresh food.

Figure 7. Retail goods purchasing increases with rurality



Many rural residents use the community services

As well as offering Post Office and retail services, post offices often play a role in providing more informal and social services ('community services'). These services are more heavily used in rural areas, and most of all in remote communities.

²⁷ Consumers also use post offices based in supermarkets. And less commonly in community centres, chemists, petrol stations, private houses and stationery/book shops.

Overall, 44% of rural post office customers use a post office for at least 1 community service, compared with 33% of urban customers. Post office community services include community information; help and advice; and the provision of a focal point for meeting other local residents.

Community services used by post office customers:

- Information about events and local services: 30% remote, 27% rural, 17% urban
- Place to meet friends and local residents: 31% remote, 26% rural, 16% urban
- Help and advice, such as informal assistance with services, help with state benefits, reading official letters, form filling: 15% remote, 19% rural, 18% urban

1 in 5 post office customers in rural (21%) and remote (22%) areas say they would lose contact with neighbours or friends without their post office.

Figure 8. Rural customers make significant use of community services²⁸



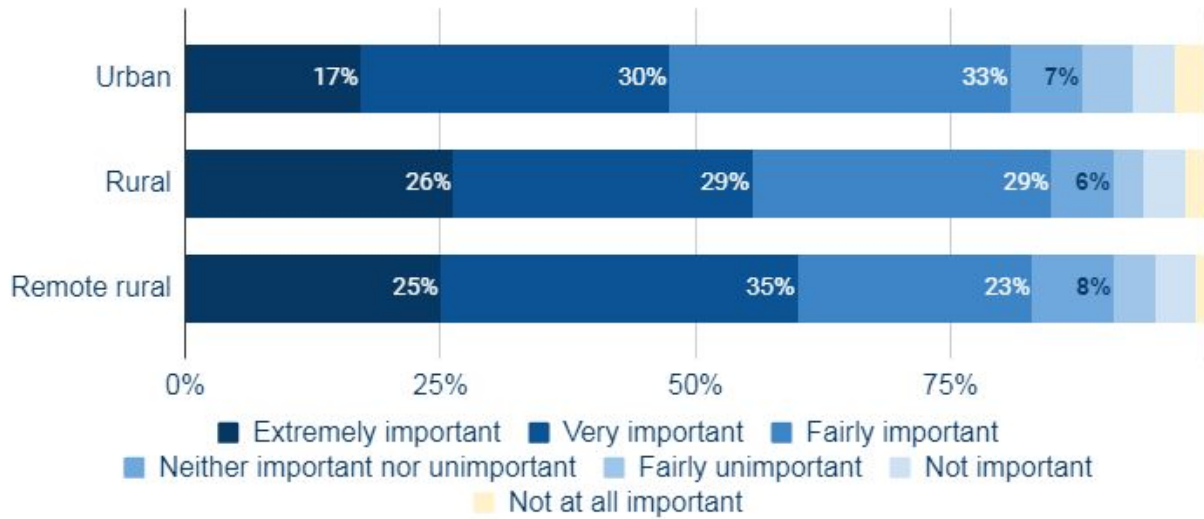
Rural residents are more likely to rate the Post Office as very important

Consumer views of the Post Office are overwhelmingly positive in both urban and rural areas. Almost all (97%) rural and urban of consumers in rural areas say the Post Office is 'trustworthy'. Over 9 in 10 see the Post Office as an 'official service in the community' (93% in rural and 94% in remote areas).

People in rural and remote areas are also much more likely than those in urban areas to describe the Post Office as 'very' or 'extremely important' to them. 60% of remote rural residents, 55% of rural residents and 47% of urban residents say this.

²⁸ Aggregate figures for rural and remote rural customers

Figure 9. Post offices are more important to rural and remote consumers



Perceived importance also increases with age, amongst those whose mobility is limited and amongst people who are digitally excluded.

5. Rural small businesses use post offices more

Rural small businesses are an important part of the UK's economy. For example, in England there are 2.4 million small businesses in rural areas, and 20% of all enterprises with fewer than 50 employees are rural.²⁹

The profile of rural small businesses is very different to those based in urban areas. On average, businesses in rural areas are smaller. There are also more small businesses per head of population in rural areas. In this report small businesses include businesses with up to 50 employees.

Rural businesses use post offices more than urban businesses

Rural small businesses are slightly more likely to use post offices than urban businesses, and they use them more frequently. 95% of rural small businesses ever use post offices, compared with 93% of those based in urban areas.

39% of all rural small businesses use a post office at least weekly (compared with 33% in urban areas). 74% of rural small businesses use a post office at least monthly (65% in urban areas).

Rural businesses use mail and cash services most



Rural small businesses make more use of the key Post Office services. Over 1 in 3 (36%) rural businesses use postal services at post offices at least weekly, compared with 1 in 4 (24%) urban businesses.

Rural small businesses are more likely than urban businesses to use a post office to pay for stamps or letter post.³⁰ They are also more likely to post letters/documents and parcels at a post office, and to use mail order return services.³¹

²⁹

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/641459/Businesses_August_2017_Digest.pdf

³⁰ Pay for letter post: 76% remote small businesses, 73% rural, 71% urban.

³¹ Post letters and documents: 32% remote, 35% rural, 22% urban. Post parcels: 49% remote, 46% rural, 42% urban. Mail order returns: 22% all rural, 16% urban.

Small businesses in rural areas are almost twice as likely those in urban areas to use day-to-day banking services at post offices. 11% of rural businesses withdraw cash for their business from a post office, compared with 6% of urban businesses.

A small proportion of small businesses use post offices for less formal services. Again, this is more common in rural and remote areas, where 6% of rural and 10% of remote rural small businesses use a post office for advertising their business or services (3% in urban areas). Similarly, 4% of rural and 6% of remote businesses use the post office for informal networking.

3 in 4 (75%) of all small businesses find it useful to be able to access mail and other Post Office services in the same place. Businesses in rural areas are most likely to say this is very useful - 54% in rural areas and 48% in remote areas.

Businesses with shorter travel times use post offices more frequently

Small businesses are less likely than consumers to visit outside the 9am-5.30pm core opening times. However, 15% of small businesses in remote areas say that they use a post office between 5.30pm-7pm, a much higher proportion than the 5% that do this in urban and rural areas.

As for consumers, there is a sharp contrast in post office travel times for those in remote areas compared with those in urban or non-remote rural locations. 32% of small businesses in remote areas have a travel time greater than 10 minutes (13% in rural and urban areas). Small businesses with shorter travel times use post offices more frequently than those with longer travel times.

Business costs would rise without local post offices

If their local post office was not available, most small businesses say they would use another post office rather than another outlet or methods to access similar services. 71% of rural and 82% of remote small businesses would use another post office (65% in urban areas).

The negative impacts predicted by small businesses if their post office was not available, increases with rurality. This is particularly striking for costs. 76% of rural and 80% of remote rural small businesses anticipate higher costs to access services, compared with 55% of small businesses in urban areas. Over 8 in 10 rural small businesses (85% rural, 86% remote) say it would take them more time to access services, compared with 77% in urban areas.

87% of all rural small businesses expect they will be using use post offices as much as they do now, or more often, in 2 years' time.

6. People visit less now and use services differently

There have been significant changes to how post offices are used. We have compared results from our 2017 survey with equivalent results from a 2005 survey to show changes over time, both for frequency of visits and the range of services consumers use.

People use post offices less than a decade ago

Previous research indicates that a decade ago, people used rural post offices far more often than they do now.³² We found that in 2017, 31% of rural consumers used a post office at least weekly and this compares with 56% in 2005.

However, asking people about use now compared with 2 years ago suggests that use of post offices is rising among consumers, especially in rural and remote areas. A clear majority of consumers in rural (68%) and remote (69%) areas report using post offices about the same amount as 2 years ago. But there is a stronger net increase in the number of consumers using post offices more often in rural and remote areas than in urban areas. A greater number of rural consumers say they are using post offices more frequently than say they are using them less.

Most rural (68%) and remote (81%) small businesses say they are using post offices about the same amount as they did 2 years ago. Although there is a net increase in the number of rural small businesses using post offices more often and no change in remote areas.

Figure 10. Mixed net change in frequency of post office use compared with 2 years ago

	Urban	Rural	Remote rural
Consumers	+3%	+6%	+6%
Small businesses	-5%	+6%	0%

The types of services people use have changed

Over the last decade there have been considerable changes in the ways rural consumers use Post Office services. They use some more, such as sending parcels, cash withdrawals from bank accounts, currency exchange and passport application and checking. But others are used less, such as letter post, pension

³² ERM/MORI, The Future of the UK's Rural and Deprived Urban Post Office Network, 2006

and benefit withdrawal and paying for vehicle tax.

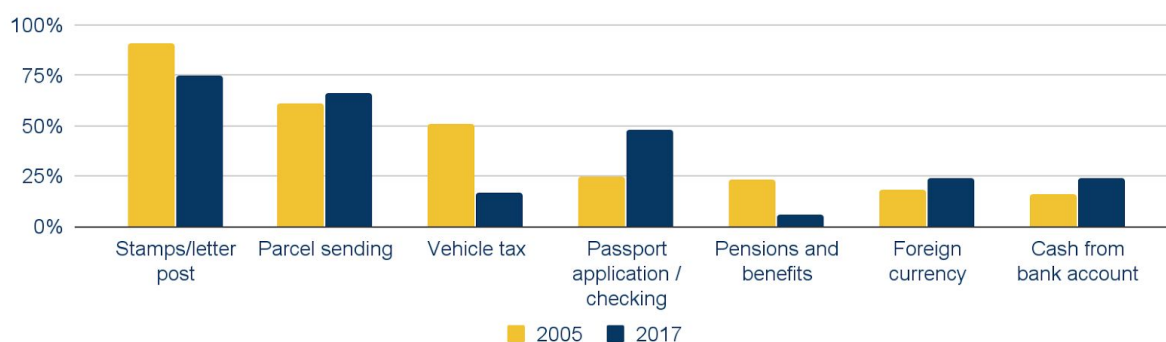
In 2005, 91% of rural consumers bought stamps or paid for letter post (letters, cards, documents etc) at a post office. But in 2017 this had fallen to 75% of rural consumers. Parcel sending by rural consumers has increased from 61% to 66% over the same period.

The number of rural residents paying for vehicle tax at post offices has fallen dramatically from half (51%) to fewer than 2 in 10 (17%) over the same period. The majority now pay online as they find it quicker and more convenient.

The proportion of rural residents who say they withdraw their state pensions and benefits in cash at a post office has also decreased significantly. In 2005 almost a quarter (23%) of the rural population used a post office to withdraw pensions and benefits, but by 2017 this has dropped to 6%. The majority of people who withdraw their state pensions and benefits in cash now use a bank counter or bank ATM.

However, the proportion of rural residents using post offices for other banking transactions has increased. Foreign currency transactions were used by 18% of rural consumers in 2005 to 24% in 2017. Withdrawing cash from a bank account has risen from 16% to 24%.

Figure 11. Services used by rural consumers changed between 2005-2017³³



Travel times have not changed

Over the last decade, travel times to post offices have hardly changed for rural consumers. In 2017, post offices were within a 5 minute journey for 47% of rural and remote residents (49% in 2005). However, there has been a slight fall in the proportions of rural residents getting to their post office on foot (40% of all rural post office users in 2017, 44% in 2005). There has been an increase in the proportions of rural residents driving (57% in 2017, 48% in 2005).³⁴

³³ ERM/MORI, The Future of the UK's Rural and Deprived Urban Post Office Network, 2006

³⁴ ERM/MORI, The Future of the UK's Rural and Deprived Urban Post Office Network, 2006

People expect frequency of use to stay the same

Most rural consumers and small businesses believe there will be little change to how often they use post offices in the near future.

4 in 5 consumers in rural (80%) and remote rural (81%) believe in 2 years' time they will use post offices the same amount as they do now. There is a mixed picture about future predicted use among the remaining 1 in 5 consumers, with some saying they will use post offices more and some less. Overall, 9 in 10 (89%) rural consumers anticipate they will be visiting post offices as much or more frequently in 2 years' time.

Consumers say costs, travel time and dependency would rise without local post office

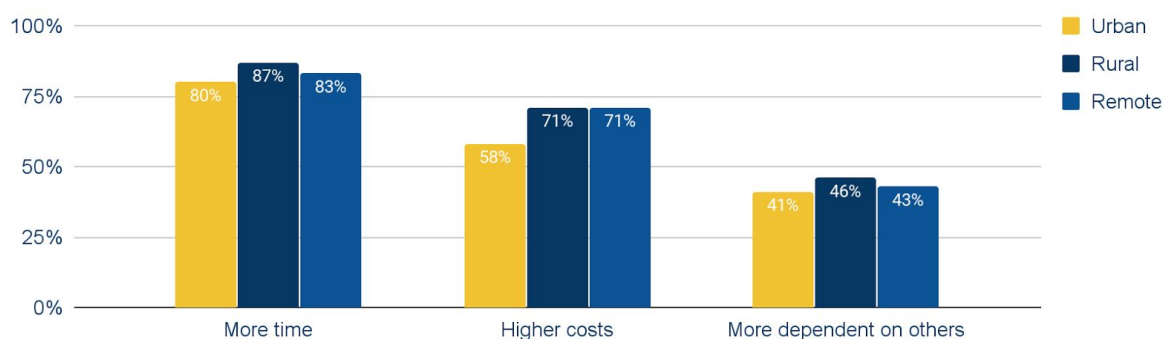
If their local post office was not available, a majority of consumers say that they would use an alternative branch for the services they currently use at their local post office. People living in rural (64%) and remote (58%) areas are more likely to say they would do this than those living in urban (54%) areas.

Around 1 in 5 rural consumers (21% in rural and 19% in remote areas) say they would use an online alternative (compared with 24% of urban consumers). A smaller proportion of rural consumers say they would use another local retailer (15% in rural and 19% in remote areas).

Rural residents are more likely to anticipate a negative impact than urban residents. The difference is particularly striking for the 7 in 10 (71%) of those in rural or remote areas who say it would cost them more to access services, compared with 6 in 10 (58%) in urban areas.

Over 8 in 10 consumers say it would take more time for them to access services (87% in rural and 83% in remote areas). In addition, more than 4 in 10 rural consumers (46% rural and 43% remote residents) say if their local post office was not available, they would be more dependent on others to access services.

Figure 12. Rural and remote consumers expect most negative impact if their post office were unavailable



Conclusion

Almost all rural consumers and small businesses use post offices, and they visit them more than people in urban areas. Rural residents particularly value the wide range of services provided under one roof.

Some of the differences in use between rural and urban areas may be because there are fewer alternative providers in the countryside, and a few differences are because the rural population is older.

Many Post Office services are used significantly more by the rural population. Mail remains the most accessed service. Its use increases with rurality and remote residents are using mail services most of all. Post Office banking services are also accessed more by rural consumers and small businesses than by those in urban areas.

Rural residents make a proportionately greater use of other key Post Office services including pension or benefit withdrawals, vehicle tax payments and the more informal community services. In addition, rural residents tend to buy more retail goods, such as groceries, at post offices.

Compared with 10 years ago, fewer rural residents now pay for letter post, withdraw benefits in cash or buy vehicle tax at a post office. But more use post offices to send parcels, withdraw cash from bank accounts and get passport applications checked.

The vast majority of rural consumers and businesses say they expect to be using a post office just as much or more in 2 years' time. If their local post office was not available, rural residents and businesses anticipate a more negative impact than those in urban areas. Most say they would visit another branch, which would cost them more in time and money. A considerable minority say they would become more dependent on others or lose contact with neighbours and friends.

This research highlights the importance of rural post offices to both consumers and small businesses, and the wide range of locally based services the network provides. It is vital that the government and Post Office Ltd continue to maintain the number of rural post offices and ensure its broad offer is retained.

Appendix - research method

Unless otherwise referenced, the figures quoted in this report are from a research study undertaken by Accent for Citizens Advice, Use of Essential Services Traditionally Provided at Post Offices (June 2017).

A total of 2,000 telephone interviews were undertaken with a representative sample of consumers and 1,000 interviews with small businesses (fewer than 50 employees). Over 800 consumers and 250 businesses were based in rural areas.

The sample was representative of the consumer population, including in terms of rural versus urban dwelling. Remote rural areas were oversampled to provide a more robust sample size of people in those areas. Data was weighted to correct for any imbalances in the sample and to ensure the final total was representative.

Consumers and small businesses were based in Great Britain and interviews took place between 14 January and 12 March 2017. The original findings and a summary report are available on our website.³⁵

The original research was undertaken by Accent in accordance with the market, opinion and social research international quality standard ISO 20252:2012. Additional analysis was conducted by Citizens Advice.

³⁵ <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/policy/post-policy-research/>

We help people find a way forward

Citizens Advice provides free,
confidential and independent advice
to help people overcome their problems.

We advocate for our clients and consumers
on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality
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We're here for everyone.



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Published October 2017

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Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

Scope

- The Council's corporate organisation and structure, resource allocation, asset management, procurement policy, people strategy, equality and diversity, performance management, communication and access to services.
- Partnership working, community development, community engagement, community strategies and community safety.
- This Committee is the Crime & Disorder Committee for the purposes of Part 3 of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

Meeting dates

Scheduled Committee Meetings	18 June 2018 10.30am	3 September 2018 10.30am	3 December 2018 10.30am	4 March 2019 10.30am
Scheduled Mid Cycle Briefings Attended by Group Spokespersons only	23 July 2018 10.30am	29 October 2018 10.30am	21 January 2019 10.30am	15 April 2019 10.30am

Agenda Briefings (Attended by Group Spokespersons only) - will be held at 9.30am on the day of the committee meeting.

*NOTE – this meeting was changed from a mid-cycle briefing to a full committee meeting.

**Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme Schedule**

22 January 2018 – Mid Cycle Briefing

Access to services	Branch bank closures and access to face to face banking and ATMs, particularly in rural areas
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12 March 2018 - Committee

Community Safety – Adult Reoffending	Changes to the Probation Service – Louise Johnson, National Probation Service, North Yorkshire and Martin Weblin, CRC
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Customer access	Progress against the 2020 target of 70% of contact being managed by customers using digital self-service channels – update - Julie Blaisdale and Sarah Foley, Customer Programme Manager
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Community Safety - Justice	Response to the consultation on the proposed closure of Northallerton Magistrates Court
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2020 Council – Data Protection	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – Jason Geldard-Phillips, NYCC
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23 April 2018 – Mid Cycle Briefing

Stronger Communities	Recruitment and retention of volunteers through the Stronger Programme and across the Council as a whole – Marie-Ann Jackson
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Access to Services	Post Office closures – exploratory discussion to determine lines of enquiry for scrutiny – linked to Bank branch closures – Mark Gibson, External Affairs Manager, Post Office
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18 June 2018 - Committee

Access to services	Branch bank and Post Office closures and access to face to face over the counter banking and ATMs, particularly in rural areas
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Locality Budgets	Update on Future Delivery – Neil Irving
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2020 Council – Community Libraries	Review of first 12 months of operation – Julie Blaisdale, Marie-Ann Jackson and Chrys Mellor
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2020 Council – Partnerships and Traded services	Overview of partnership arrangements and traded services – Annual Report of the Brierley Group – Gary Fielding and Barry Khan
Community Safety – Youth Justice	Youth Justice Strategic Plan – implementation of the new model of practice and the impact this has had upon reoffending rates – Julie Firth
Community safety	Follow up to visit adult C-category prison
23 July 2018 – Mid Cycle Briefing	
Equality and Diversity	Overview of progress with achievement of the Council’s Equality and Diversity objectives – Deb Hugill
North Yorkshire Syrian Refugee Settlement Programme	Update on progress - follow up to presentation at 3 October 2016 committee meeting – Jonathan Spencer
3 September 2018 - Committee	
Community Safety - NYCSP	Update on the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership. To include: Overview of the refresh of the CSP Plan and its priority areas; partnership working; and other areas of focus. – Odette Robson and Dr Justin Ives (CSP Chair).
Community Safety – Youth Justice	Youth Justice Strategic Plan – implementation of the new model of practice and the impact this has had upon reoffending rates – Julie Firth
Bank & Post Office Closures Review	Draft Final Report arising from review of cash-based, over the counter banking and Post Office services in rural areas of the county – Daniel Harry
29 October 2018 – Mid Cycle Briefing	
Community Safety – PCC <i>Open invite to all Committee Members</i>	Formal collaboration of Blue Light Services - review of progress made with the implementation of plans for collaboration between North Yorkshire Constabulary and North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service – Julia Mulligan, Police and Crime Commissioner
Community Safety - Prevent	Progress to date and future plans – Neil Irving and Odette Robson
3 December 2018 - Committee	
County Council Plan 2017/21	Progress with the first year of implementation - Neil Irving and Louise Rideout

Customer Access	Update on the Operation of the Customer Portal - Sarah Foley
Annual Workforce Plan	Review of Annual Plan – Justine Brooksbank
Asset Management	The rationalisation of NYCC’s Property Portfolio – Gary Fielding
Customer Access	Update on the operation of the Parish Portal and Parish Council engagement – Nigel Smith (Plus: Update on County Cllrs Access to Parish Portal – Daniel Harry)
21 January 2019 – Mid Cycle Briefing	
Equality & Diversity	Progress Update on the Embedding of the County Council’s Equality & Diversity Objectives – Deb Hugill
Corporate Risk Register	Review of Corporate Risk Register – Gary Fielding and Fiona Sowerby
Insurance	Update on Insurance Claims, Risk Exposure & Management – Fiona Sowerby
4 March 2019 - Committee	
Community Safety	Bi-annual Update on Community Safety Plan Delivery & Partnership Working – Odette Robson
Community Safety – Adult Reoffending	Update on how effective rehabilitation interventions and work programmes are changing adult offenders’ offending behaviour in the county – Louise Johnson, National Probation Service, North Yorkshire and Martin Weblin, CRC
2020 Council – Community Libraries	Review of first 18 months of operation – Marie-Ann Jackson and Chrys Mellor
June 2019 – Committee - TBC	
2020 Council – Partnerships and Traded services	Annual Report of the Brierley Group – Gary Fielding and Barry Khan

Areas of overview and scrutiny that do not yet have a confirmed date for committee:

- Devolution – proposals and progress to date
- NYCC Budget Setting Process
- Investment Strategy – possibly Dec 2018

Melanie Carr
07/08/2018