

# ITEM No. 9 (b)

Report No 653/96

## ANGUS COUNCIL

PLANNING AND TRANSPORT POLICY COMMITTEE

29 AUGUST 1996

SUBJECT: VILLAGE SHOP AND POST OFFICE, WESTMUIR  
REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Abstract:** Ownership of the village shop and post office at Westmuir has recently changed and the new owner is required to carry out various alterations to the premises to meet the requirements of both Post Office Counters Limited and the Health and Safety Regulations. The owner has approached Angus Council regarding financial assistance towards the cost of these works.

### 1 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to offer a grant of 90% of the cost of the approved works to the shop and post office at Westmuir up to a maximum grant of £2,500 under the Rural Shops and Community Post Office Conversion Grant Scheme subject to receipt of two competitive estimates for the works and subject to the Chief Quantity Surveyor confirming the costs are reasonable for the works involved.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The current owner took possession of the village shop in March 1996 and successfully applied for consent from Post Office Counters Limited to set up a sub-post office in the shop (the owner had previously been running the sub-post office from her home). This necessitated various alterations, mostly for security purposes, to satisfy POCL's operational requirements, some of which she had to meet from her own pocket.
- 2.2 Previously, the shop has been attached to the adjoining cottage but was sold as a separate unit. The current owner is therefore required to install a toilet and wash-hand facilities and carry out other upgrading works to meet the Hygiene Regulations. A building warrant for these works has been granted.

### 3 RURAL SHOPS AND COMMUNITY POST OFFICE CONVERSION

- 3.1 The applicant meets the eligibility criteria under the above Scheme. It is the only general store in Westmuir, is open 12 months of the year and is over one mile from the nearest town (Kirriemuir). The works are required principally to meet the requirements of the Food Hygiene Regulations although they will also aid the more effective running of the business.
- 3.2 The owner is currently seeking competitive estimates for the works and these will be submitted shortly but it is estimated that the total cost will be in the region of £2,000.

Based on this estimate, the grant offered would be £1,800 (90%). The maximum grant available in these circumstances would be £2,500 as the shop is less than three miles from the nearest provision.

#### **4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The approved budget for the grant scheme for the remainder of the current financial year is £5,000 and as this is the first application to be considered, it can be met within this budget.

#### **5 CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Chief Executive and the Directors of Finance, Law & Administration and Environmental & Consumer Protection have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The special role which village shops and post offices play within rural communities is well recognised and the shop at Westmuir is no exception. In fact, the people of Westmuir nominated it for the Village Shop of the Year Award and it came third in this national competition. The alterations to the shop are essential to its continued operation and, clearly are eligible for assistance under the grant scheme. It would be normal practice to require receipt of the competitive estimates before considering the application but under the circumstances and in view of the fact that the estimated cost is within the maximum allowable grant it is felt that an exception can be made in this case.

#### **NOTE**

The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report -

- Report No. 704/96 by the Director of Planning, Transport and Economic Development to the Planning and Transport Policy Committee.

AA/RM/IAL  
20 August 1996

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