



**Belfast City Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Strategic Policy and Resources Committee</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Request to address Committee – Post Office Consumer Group</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> August, 2011</b>
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	<b>Stephen McCrory, Democratic Services Manager (ext. 6314)</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer (ext. 6321)</b>

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Consumer Focus is a statutory consumer champion for England, Scotland, Wales and (for postal consumers) Northern Ireland. Consumer Focus was established by The Consumers, Estate Agents and Redress (CLEAR) Act 2007. The organisation seeks to tackle issues which matter to consumers and aims to give local people a stronger voice in service provision. In Northern Ireland the remit of the Group is restricted to representing postal consumers.
1.2	Consumer Focus has published a report which examines the impact of future developments in the post office network in Northern Ireland. The Head of Postal Policy at Consumer Focus Post has offered to brief Members on the implications of Central Government's strategy on the post office network including the Postal Services Bill now going through Parliament.
1.3	The Committee might find it useful to receive representatives of Consumer Focus at a Briefing Session to which all Members of the Council would be invited. In order to provide Members with the full picture, it might be useful to also invite representatives of Post Office Limited to the Briefing to allow them the opportunity of explaining their plans for the roll-out of the Post Office Local Format in the Belfast area.

<b>2</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
2.1	None associated with this report.

<b>3</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
3.1	The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to hold a briefing, to which all Members of the Council will be invited, to receive representatives of Consumer Focus and, if so, to indicate whether representatives of Post Office Limited should be invited also.

<b>4</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Officer responsible: Julie Lilley, Democratic Services Officer	
Date completed by: 2 <sup>nd</sup> September, 2011	

<b>8</b>	<b>Documents Attached</b>
Appendix 1 - Letter from Consumer Focus.	