

**To receive an update on the closure of Lloyds Bank and consider any actions.**

At the Full Town Council meeting held Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023 the below was resolved in relation to a meeting with representatives from the announced Banking Hub for Saltash.

**201/23/24 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE CLOSURE OF LLOYDS BANK AND CONSIDER ANY ACTIONS.**

The Chairman advised a meeting had been scheduled with the Link Hub Manager to discuss how a Banking Hub will look and be resourced at Saltash.

The meeting is to be held with key stakeholders on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 2pm, Members are encouraged to attend if available.

A further report will be provided at the following Full Council meeting to be held in November.

It was **RESOLVED** to note.

The mentioned meeting took place on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023 at 2pm with the following in attendance, **Richard Bickford** – STC Councillor, **Julia Peggs** – STC Councillor, **Jean Dent** – STC Councillor, **Hillary Frank** – Cornwall Councillor, **Martin Worth** – Cornwall Councillor, **Peter Ryland** – Town Team/Chamber of Commerce, **Melisa Whittaker** – Community Engagement Manager Cash Access UK.

At this meeting the following points were discussed by those in attendance.

The Community engagement manager for Cash Access UK explained the background of a Banking Hub, who is the owner of Banking Hub with processes involved for a Hub to be placed in situ in an announced area. An explanation followed concerning the companies involved with the setup of a Banking Hub, being LINK and Cash Access UK, together with their allocated roles. It was made clear that these companies do not have any involvement with the decision for the closure of the Lloyds Branch in Saltash.

LINK's involvement is with the review of requirements for a Banking Hub against set criteria. LINK will identify whether a community requires a Hub following assessments, including notification of the closure of the last branch in a Town. In addition, any community without branches can contact LINK directly and ask to be assessed for support. From this review LINK will use assessment measures inclusive of population, transport links to other locations, banks located nearby and individual branch market share, among other suitable measures.

Cash Access UK will then begin and manage the process of opening a viable Banking Hub, announcing that one will be coming to an area. Cash Access UK then begin their process of finding a suitable property / location that meets their criteria. Cash Access UK are a not-for-profit company. When reviewing a suitable location Cash Access UK look for a property to operate from that is ideally located in a Town Centre and is easily accessible. Further criteria are that an approved location is approximately 1,000sqm to accommodate two banking counters, a private room, staff facilities and to ensure full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. Old banks are reviewed but these can at times be too large to accommodate Cash Access UK requirements and set up. Property agents will action a desktop review of proposed sites and may action a site visit if required.

Cash Access UK works in partnership with the Post Office to resource their Banking Hubs. Post office staff operate the Banking Hubs, with individual banks using the private space for their agreed times / days providing their own community bankers as part of the service. Times and days are scheduled by review of the available banks within a regional radius, transport available and the market share of each bank in the area. Though the Hubs are operated by Post Office staff there are no postal services, only banking services are available at a Cash Access UK Banking Hub. Post office branding is displayed at a Banking Hub which can sometimes cause users to feel that they can also access postal services at a Hub.

Cash access UK has noted an increase in footfall for the standard post office branch that offers postal services. A Banking Hub cannot provide postal services, so customers are being directed to their nearest post office, which can be situated within a rural community. As the need for customers to visit branches within large cities has reduced, Cash Access UK have noted an improvement to High Streets within which Hubs have been located, thus adding further economic and social benefits to the local community.

Banks currently signed up to be part of a Banking Hub service are as follows:

- Bank of Ireland UK
- Barclays Bank
- Danske Bank
- HSBC UK
- Lloyds Banking Group
- NatWest Group
- Santander
- TSB
- Virgin Money

At present, Banking Hubs operate Monday to Friday 9:00-17:00. However, there is currently no appointment process in operation which allows customers to meet with an individual community banker on an agreed date/time.

There are 10 Banking Hubs in the UK, 7 permanent and 3 temporary. Cash Access UK are looking to grow this to 30 by the end of the year, pending agreements with landlords, leases and contracts at proposed locations. Cash Access UK will only use a mobile Hub as a temporary solution whilst a property is prepared and organised in a particular area.

On average it takes 12 months from the time of announcement to the point opening of a Hub. If this was to take longer a temporary mobile solution would be put in place but, this would operate only until a property is ready for use. Cash Access UK only permanently operates from a physical property.

At a Banking Hub there are a variety of things you can and cannot do depending on your individual bank's agreements. These are stated on the individual bank's website and the Cash Access website.

Counter Services at a Banking Hub are the same banking facilities that can be provided at a post office, but limits exist depending on the service required and the bank in question. Each individual bank will have their own set limits for users needs on deposits and withdrawals at a Banking Hub, which can be viewed on the relevant bank's website. A user will only be able to access the account linked to the card they are using, not others that are linked to their account. For example using a debit card would not allow the user to review their credit account with the same bank.

The example given during the meeting was that currently a charity would bank their money daily due to insurance purposes, at the remaining bank in Saltash. However, if there was no banking branch available in the area, they would need to travel to a branch nearby. The only other available method to deposit funds is the post office in Saltash but, this has a limit of £200 which for most businesses, charities and organisations is too small. A Banking Hub would allow for larger deposits and withdrawals, depending upon an individual bank's limits. These are promoted online via each individual bank's website.

It was noted that the Saltash Cash Access UK branch has the potential to be the first Hub in Cornwall by location and date of opening and a real benefit for the wider community. The importance of promoting this was also discussed to ensure longevity.

Due to legislation and surveys, Cash Access UK branches tend to not have ATMs installed as there are usually others available within the various locations. The intention of a Cash Access UK branch is to offer physical interactions for users within branch during operating hours. If an ATM was to be installed this would be outside of the branch, though there are no plans to do so for Saltash.

When opening a Branch, there is usually a soft opening to ensure processes and systems are working correctly. Approximately, two weeks later there will be an official opening of the Banking Hub Branch. When the lease is officially signed Cash Access UK will inform the Town Council and request a press statement to be included with the official release prior to any announcement.

**End of Report**  
**Assistant Town Clerk**