

## Post Office closures in London

A report by the London Assembly's Public Services Committee

April 2004



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April 2004**

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## Chair's foreword



The Post Office is a business in retreat from our high streets. It is not clear whether a policy of making services more remote from customers is a winning formula.

The loss of a role in benefits payments and a period of heavy losses have concentrated minds at the Post Office. There is now an accelerated programme of closure with estimates of around 35% to 45% of London's post offices closing.<sup>1</sup>

Our investigations have highlighted the way in which closures impact particularly adversely upon senior citizens and upon the less privileged in London. It is odd that services should be withdrawn from a market that is growing the fastest in our society – namely the growing share of the elderly in our population.

The flight of local Post Offices may be part of a general decline in local district centres. Certainly the removal of key anchor post offices may well undermine the viability of some local shopping parades.

We trust that our balanced and considered recommendations will lead to the reconsideration of some of the large number of post office closure announcements in London over the coming months.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Pelling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke underneath the name.

**Andrew Pelling AM**  
Chair of the Public Services Committee

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum – Postwatch Greater London

# The Public Services Committee

The London Assembly established its Public Services Committee on 10 April 2002. It is one of eight Committees that between them cover the range of policy areas relevant to London government.

The members of the Committee are:

Andrew Pelling (Chair)	Conservative
Diana Johnson (Deputy Chair)	Labour
Meg Hillier	Labour
Elizabeth Howlett	Conservative
Jenny Jones	Green
Graham Tope	Liberal Democrat

The terms of reference of the Committee are:

- To examine and report from time to time on the strategies, policies and actions of the Mayor and Functional Bodies
- To examine and report from time to time on matters of importance to Greater London as they relate to the provision of services to the public (other than those falling within the remit of other committees of the Assembly) and the performance of utilities in London
- To take into account in its deliberations the cross cutting themes of: the health of persons in Greater London; the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and the promotion of opportunity
- To respond on behalf of the Assembly to consultations and similar processes when within its terms of reference

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The London Assembly's Public Services Committee agreed on 21 October 2003 to undertake a scrutiny of Post Office Ltd's programme of post office closures in London. The aim of the scrutiny was to examine this programme of post office closures in London and the implications for London's local high streets and residents. It was envisaged that this would also provide an opportunity to examine some of the current investment strategies that are in place to address the maintenance strategy of the electricity providers.
- 1.2 The terms of reference for the scrutiny were:
- To investigate the planned closure of post offices in Greater London
  - To consider the effects of post office closures on local communities and businesses
- 1.3 The Committee received written evidence from a number of organisations including Age Concern London, the Communication Workers Union (CWU), the National Federation of Sub Postmasters (NFSP), Postwatch, and Post Office Limited (a subsidiary of the Royal Mail group plc). The Committee held an evidentiary hearing on 21 October 2003 where they took oral evidence and a full list of the witnesses can be found at Annex B. The Committee is grateful to everyone who contributed to this scrutiny.
- 1.4 The Committee also received over 240 letters from members of the public who were concerned about post office closures in their local area. Some of these people attended the evidentiary hearing on 21 October 2003 where they were able to make their views known to the Committee. A summary of the letters received can be found at Annex C. The Committee wishes to thank the public for taking part in its scrutiny of post office closures in London.

## 2. Programme of urban closures

- 2.1 The Royal Mail Group plc consists of three wholly owned subsidiaries: Post Office, Royal Mail and Parcel Force Worldwide.<sup>2</sup> Post Office Ltd manages the nationwide network of over 17,000 post office branches. They are the largest post office network in Europe and the largest retail branch network in the UK handling more cash than any other business. There are two regulatory bodies that oversee the postal delivery companies. Postwatch is the statutory consumer watchdog for postal services.<sup>3</sup> Postcomm (the Postal Services Commission) regulates the postal industry's competition and pricing.<sup>4</sup> The London Assembly's Public Services Committee is uniquely charged with investigating issues of importance to London. We believe that the planned closure of some 3,000 urban post offices in the UK, many of them in Greater London, is a matter of importance to Londoners.
- 2.2 A Government report in 2000 found that there were too many post office branches competing for too little business in urban areas.<sup>5</sup> Following this in November 2002, Post Office Ltd started the Urban Reinvention Programme, which sought to restructure its network by closing a third of its 9,000 urban branches and modernising some of the remaining branches. The main aim of the programme is to make the post office network financially viable.<sup>6</sup> This programme was approved by Parliament.
- 2.3 There are just over 1,100 post offices in London.<sup>7</sup> At the time of our hearing, Postwatch told us that 80 post offices had been closed in London and a further 40 had been earmarked for closure.<sup>8</sup> We asked Post Office Limited how many post offices would close in London as a result of their programme, but they were unable to give us a figure.<sup>9</sup> However, Postwatch have estimated that by the end of 2004 around 400 to 500 post offices would have closed in London.<sup>10</sup> If this estimate turns out to be accurate, then London may lose between 35% and 45% of its post offices.
- 2.4 This programme of closure is a voluntary programme where Post Office Ltd has asked its sub postmasters whether they want to leave the business or not. Many sub postmasters have taken up this opportunity as they have been experiencing a reduction in turnover and income since the Government decision to pay benefits and state pensions direct into recipients' bank accounts.
- 2.5 However, this voluntary programme by its very nature has not taken into account the needs of local urban communities, as the driving factor is whether the current sub postmaster of a branch wishes to remain open or to close. Indeed, at our evidentiary hearing senior managers from Post Office Ltd were

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<sup>2</sup> [www.royalmailgroup.com](http://www.royalmailgroup.com)

<sup>3</sup> Memorandum – Postwatch Greater London

<sup>4</sup> [www.postcomm.gov.uk](http://www.postcomm.gov.uk)

<sup>5</sup> Cabinet Office, Performance and Innovation Unit, 2000

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum – Post Office Limited

<sup>7</sup> Memorandum – Post Office Limited

<sup>8</sup> Memorandum – Postwatch Greater London

<sup>9</sup> Minutes of Evidence – 21 October 2003, p.5

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum – Postwatch Greater London



unable to tell us how many post offices in London will close under the Urban Reinvention Programme, because they simply do not know.

- 2.6 This approach has not adequately addressed the needs of Londoners who could find themselves losing their local post office due to the sub postmaster wishing to leave, and then finding that their next nearest post office is also to close under the programme.
- 2.7 Following public pressure the Post Office has, since September 2003 provided an area plan by parliamentary constituency showing which offices are proposed for closure.<sup>11</sup> We welcome this more systematic approach of looking at a whole area in one go, rather than in the more haphazard approach of judging each individual postmaster's application for closure in isolation from his or her neighbouring post offices. The previous process of closures that have been random and led by individual decisions by sub-postmasters may not have led to the best planning of future Post Office services provision. It is to be hoped that the employment of a geographical approach to the review of closures should allow the Post Office to pursue a more holistic approach to ensuring basic service provision in any one Borough.
- 2.8 However, Post Office Ltd will need to do more than close some of its branches to improve its financial standing. Last year Post Office Ltd made a £194 million loss.<sup>12</sup> We believe that it is important that the Post Office retains and hopefully increases its customer base. Richard Barker of Post Office Ltd acknowledged that, "if we inconvenience too many customers . . . we will lose their business".<sup>13</sup>



*A sub post office branch in a typical London high street*

<sup>11</sup> Memorandum – Postwatch Greater London

<sup>12</sup> Minutes of Evidence, 21 October 2003, p.1

<sup>13</sup> Minutes of Evidence, 21 October 2003, p.12

### 3. New business ventures

- 3.1 Thirty years ago the Post Office had a monopoly on all the UK's postal services such as the sale of stamps and the mailing of parcels. It is a very different world now, where many different types of shops can sell postage stamps and there are a number of national and international delivery companies competing for packets and parcels.
- 3.2 However, the Post Office has not stood still. Many post office branches now offer banking and other financial services such as the sale of foreign currency. In fact the Post Office is now the UK's second largest bureau de change. Indeed, at our evidentiary hearing Richard Barker of Post Office Ltd said that they expected to become the market leader in retail foreign exchange.<sup>14</sup> So with the right leadership and management the Post Office could well keep its market share and expand into other business areas.
- 3.3 But the Urban Reinvention Programme is not the only change that the Post Office has found itself subject to. The Government's Direct Payment programme began in April 2003, whereby the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has begun phasing out order books and giro cheques. From now on all state benefits and state pensions will be paid directly into the bank account of the claimant or pensioner. The House of Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee were critical of the DWP for not taking into account the significant number of benefit recipients for whom the traditional payment system was their preferred option.<sup>15</sup>
- 3.4 It is estimated that this change in payments practice will save the Government £400 million, but on the flip side of the coin, it will lead to post office branches losing up to 45% of their income.<sup>16</sup> This is a substantial loss for any business to suffer, but especially when one considers that local post offices are run by sub postmasters, private business people, not salaried officials. Kevin Ray of Post Office Ltd made the point that historically 35% of the Post Office's total turnover came from benefits business, with an additional 15% coming from bill payments and other transactions that benefits customers conducted when coming to collect their benefits.<sup>17</sup> Therefore around half the Post Office's income was from the traditional benefits customer and so the Government decision to move to direct payments will have a major impact on the Post Office.
- 3.5 Some radical rethinking is required for the remaining post offices to maximise their income and so secure their future. Post Office Ltd has negotiated with some of the high street banks so that customers can access their bank account at their local post office counter. This should prove useful with the closure of so many high street bank branches over the past decade. However, some banks have been more co-operative than others.

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<sup>14</sup> Minutes of Evidence, 21 October 2003, p.9

<sup>15</sup> House of Commons, Trade and Industry Select Committee, People, pensions and post offices: the impact of direct payment on post offices and their customers, July 2003

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum – National Federation of Subpostmasters

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of Evidence, 21 October 2003, p.17

- 3.6 At present post office customers can access their bank account at their local post office if they bank with one of the following: Alliance & Leicester, Barclays and Lloyds TSB.<sup>18</sup> However, four major banking groups still do not allow their customers to access their current account over the post office counter: HSBC (includes the former Midland Bank), Halifax Bank of Scotland, the Royal Bank of Scotland (includes Natwest Bank) and the Abbey National.<sup>19</sup>
- 3.7 The National Federation of Sub postmasters expressed their concern that currently 80% of basic bank accounts are not accessible in post offices.<sup>20</sup> We share their concern and would like to see most bank accounts being accessible at the post office. This would not only help secure the viability of the small local post office branch, but would also improve the accessibility of banking facilities to Londoners in general, and in particular the elderly, single parents and those with mobility difficulties. Experience from the United States shows that banking business for the less privileged can be profitable for both bank and bank customers.

*Recommendation 1*

**The Committee recommends that the Department for Trade and Industry together with Post Office Ltd review the current banking arrangements with the major high street banks with a view to extending access to current accounts to raise social inclusion.**

- 3.8 The Post Office announced in October 2003 a joint venture with the Bank of Ireland to provide customers with the following financial products: personal loans, savings accounts, credit cards, personal insurance and mortgages.<sup>21</sup> We welcome this move to provide extra financial services, and extending social inclusion to certain vulnerable groups in urban deprived areas.
- 3.9 There are other areas where the Post Office with its local branch network could be the ideal retailer. For example, the Congestion Charge can already be paid for at newsagents, as can tube and bus passes. We believe that it is time for these services to be available at the post office as well. We understand that earlier negotiations on the Congestion Charge between the Post Office and TfL were unsuccessful. Now is an opportune moment for the Post Office to reconsider this avenue.

*Recommendation 2*

**The Committee recommends that the Mayor, TfL and the Post Office Ltd review again the sale of rail, underground and bus travelcards, and the payment of the Congestion Charge, with a view to extending their sale to local post office branches.**

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<sup>18</sup> Memorandum – National Federation of Sub postmasters

<sup>19</sup> Memorandum – Communication Workers Union

<sup>20</sup> Memorandum – National Federation of Sub postmasters

<sup>21</sup> Memorandum – Communication Workers Union



*A main Post Office branch in London with banking facilities*

## 4. Consultation and the future of the high street

- 4.1 The Post Office agreed to consult with Postwatch (the statutory consumer watch dog for postal services) and local residents for each post office branch closure. This took the form of a 4 to 6 week period from the date that the closure was proposed to the date of the actual closure of the branch.
- 4.2 A 12-point action plan to improve the way the Post Office consults on proposed closures of urban post offices was announced on 5 February 2004 by Communications Minister Stephen Timms. This followed upon a review by Post Office Ltd and Postwatch. The plan includes the formalisation of a programme of geographically based reviews, with that information being shared with local Councils and MPs, an invitation to local Councils to inform the Post Office of relevant local issues and plans for regeneration, that any normal six week consultation period shall be extended to take account of public holidays, a responsibility on the Post Office to look at new office openings and a desire that the Post Office should take account of views received in public consultations on closures
- 4.3 Post Office Ltd gives Postwatch two weeks advance notice of a post office closure. At the start of the public consultation period Post Office Ltd write to the local authority, MP, chamber of commerce, Citizens Advice Bureau and elderly persons' charities to inform them of them of the proposal.<sup>22</sup> However, there has been some criticism that this consultation is just lip service, as the Post Office have in effect already decided which branches they are going to close down. The Communication Workers Union (CWU) in their submission made the point that few public meetings and petitions have resulted in the Post Office changing their decision.<sup>23</sup>
- 4.4 We can empathise with these sentiments as no one wants to see their local post office shut down. It is difficult for customers who may have been using the same local post office for many years to see it close. We understand the commercial reality of making the post office network financially viable. However, as the compensation paid to sub postmasters when they close their branches is public money, the consultation process should therefore be robust enough to withstand public scrutiny.
- 4.5 This becomes more important when one considers that 25% of the closures so far have been directly managed post office branches, i.e. directly managed by Post Office Ltd staff and not independent sub postmasters. Many of these branches are located on prime high street locations, which when sold should provide lucrative revenue for a company that has been trading in the red.
- 4.6 The closure of a high street post office is not a decision that should be taken lightly as it is one of the stepping-stones that can lead to the decline of the high street. Age Concern London wrote to us expressing their concern about post office closures. In particular they made the point that in addition to the important services provided by post offices, many older people find their local post office a centre for social interaction and in some cases information and

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<sup>22</sup> Memorandum – Postwatch Greater London

<sup>23</sup> Memorandum – Communication Workers Union

advice can be accessed there. Furthermore, where a post office is combined with a shop, this can be an important resource in areas which lack amenities, especially as older people have a lower than average level of car ownership and many value access to services and shops within walking distance.<sup>24</sup>

- 4.7 We received over 240 letters from members of the public and traders expressing their concerns about the impact of their local post office closing down. A summary of these letters can be found at Annex C. The majority of letters raised the issue of accessibility of the “new” local post office, once the “old” local post office had closed. In particular, people said that instead of a short walk, they would now be faced with a journey by car or one or two buses. The concentration of expression of concerns came from senior citizens who through ill health or reduced mobility would find alternative post office usage difficult.
- 4.8 A recent MORI research study for Postwatch has found that following the closure of their “old” local post office, 50% of customers rated parking facilities at their “new” post office as poor and 35% of customers rated facilities for disabled customers at their “new” post office as poor.<sup>25</sup> We are concerned that some of our vulnerable members of society are being further disadvantaged.
- 4.9 Furthermore 68% of customers said that their “new” post office was more difficult to get to than their “old” post office and 56% said that they had to travel further.<sup>26</sup> Postwatch recommended in their report that the Post Office “encourage investment in those aspects customers feel need improvement, e.g. facilities for customers with disabilities and parking facilities”. We support this proposal and lend our weight to it.

*Recommendation 3*

**We recommend that the Post Office improve disabled access facilities at its branches.**

- 4.10 We also had letters from people saying that it was all very well for the Government to now pay their pension direct into a bank account, but how were they meant to access it, as they either did not have a bank account or that their nearest high street bank was a car drive or bus journey away.
- 4.11 Letters from Post Office users and from local traders brought to our attention that there had already been a decrease in passing trade for local shops where the post office had closed. People expressed concern that as a result their local amenities would suffer. Some queried how young parents with small children were meant to travel further by public transport to access basic postal service amenities.
- 4.12 At our evidentiary hearing we discussed the issue of contact between the Post Office and local authorities. Kay Dixon of Postwatch made the point that the Post Office should try to find the time to talk to local authorities in more detail

<sup>24</sup> Memorandum – Age Concern London

<sup>25</sup> Postwatch, MORI, Assessment of the Urban Network Reinvention Programme, February 2004, p.22

<sup>26</sup> Postwatch, MORI, Assessment of the Urban Network Reinvention Programme, February 2004, p.24, 11

and at an earlier stage. We support this argument, as it is the local authority at the end of the day that will be left with another street without a post office.

- 4.13 During our investigation we heard from members of the public who had witnessed their high street post office close down, following in the footsteps of bank and food store closures.
- 4.14 Richard Barker of Post Office Ltd said that they respect the public consultation process and do make changes to the programme such as what facilities are being made available at surrounding branches.<sup>27</sup>
- 4.15 The decline of district centre high streets disadvantages the less mobile and less affluent, many of who rely on public transport. Out of town supermarkets often have few transport links, catering for customers who drive and park.

*Recommendation 4*

**The Post Office must adhere to the new rules of engagement with Local Authorities announced on 5 February 2004 and recognise their responsibility to maintain the health of local district centres. There should be meaningful joint working between Post Office Ltd and the Local Authorities on the management and impact of post office closures in local district centres.**

- 4.16 The inclusion in the announcement by the Communications Minister of an expectation on the Post Office to seek a balance between sub-postmasters volunteering to leave the network, those offices, which are not viable, and the need for relocations and new openings is welcomed.

*Recommendation 5*

**In the context of the new responsibilities on the Post Office, to consider relocations and new openings, when post offices are closed; we recommend engagement with local businesses and entrepreneurs, in district centres facing a post office closure, to study the scope for alternative post office franchises to be set up more economically.**

- 4.17 The Post Office Ltd is hoping that by closing a third of its urban post office network it will secure the financial viability of its business. However, as local post offices close, not all its customers will be prepared to travel further to use their 'new' nearest post office. Some will use alternative service providers.
- 4.18 Furthermore, as some of the customers of the 'old' nearest post office bring their business to the 'new' nearest post office, queues will get longer as there will be two sets of customers, the original post office users and the displaced ones. The increase in queuing time could lead to customer dissatisfaction, with office workers and business users less likely to want to queue for long periods of time, and so take their business elsewhere.

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<sup>27</sup> Minutes of Evidence, 21 October 2003, p.25

- 4.19 At our evidentiary hearing the Post Office indicated that they were trying to persuade Postcomm to cease using the time spent queuing as a performance measure. They wished for this to be replaced by the quality of service received at the counter.<sup>28</sup> Whilst we agree that the latter is an admirable performance measure, we do believe that the length of time customers queue is an equally important measure of performance, and one that many customers probably rate highly as well.
- 4.20 Furthermore in the recent MORI research study conducted for Postwatch, when asked what could be done to improve their “new” local post office, 21% of people suggested (spontaneously) that the number of counter staff should be increased / that queues should be reduced.<sup>29</sup>

*Recommendation 6*

**We recommend that Postcomm keep the time spent queuing as a performance indicator for the Post Office Ltd, when considering the additional measure of quality of service received at the counter.**

*Recommendation 7*

**We recommend that the Post Office use a quality of service received measure, in addition to the time spent queuing measure, to improve customer satisfaction.**



*The lunchtime queue in a main post office branch*

<sup>28</sup> Minutes of Evidence, 21 October 2003, p.23

<sup>29</sup> Postwatch, MORI, Assessment of the Urban Network Reinvention Programme, February 2004, p.24



## **Annex A: Recommendations**

### *New business ventures*

1. The Committee recommends that the Department for Trade and Industry together with Post Office Ltd review the current banking arrangements with the major high street banks with a view to extending access to current accounts to raise social inclusion.
2. The Committee recommends that the Mayor, TfL and the Post Office Ltd review again the sale of rail, underground and bus travelcards, and the payment of the Congestion Charge, with a view to extending their sale to local post office branches.

### *Consultation and the future of the high street*

3. We recommend that the Post Office improve disabled access facilities at its branches.
4. The Post Office must adhere to the new rules of engagement with Local Authorities announced on 5 February 2004 and recognise their responsibility to maintain the health of local district centres. There should be meaningful joint working between Post Office Ltd and the Local Authorities on the management and impact of post office closures in local district centres.
5. In the context of the new responsibilities on the Post Office, to consider relocations and new openings, when post offices are closed; we recommend engagement with local businesses and entrepreneurs, in district centres facing a post office closure, to study the scope for alternative post office franchises to be set up more economically.
6. We recommend that Postcomm keep the time spent queuing as a performance indicator for the Post Office Ltd, when considering the additional measure of quality of service received at the counter.
7. We recommend that the Post Office use a quality of service received measure, in addition to the time spent queuing measure, to improve customer satisfaction.

## **Annex B: Evidentiary Hearing and Written Evidence**

The following expert witnesses appeared before the Committee and submitted written evidence:

Richard Barker, General Manager, Commercial Branches, Post Office Ltd

Patrick Breen, Head of External Relations, SE and E of England, Post Office Ltd

Kevin Ray, Head of Area – Directly Managed, Post Office Ltd

Kay Dixon, Chairman, Postwatch – Greater London

Andrew Furey, Assistant Secretary, Communications Workers' Union

Nicola Side, Chair, Kings Cross and Brunswick Neighbourhood Association

Councillor Alan Craig, London Borough of Newham

Brian Studwick, Resident, Carshalton Beeches

Peter Carhill, Hayes Village Association

Paul Ellis, Carshalton Beeches

## Annex C: Summary of letters received

Name/organisation	Summary of their key points
Mrs K Plumer, Chadwell Heath	<p>The Post Offices at Little Heath and East Road Chadwell Heath are closing and customers of these branches have been asked to use the Mark Gate branch. It is over one mile from both closing branches to the Mark Gate branch and involves either crossing the A12 or using the subway underneath it. These journeys are difficult for older people particularly those in sheltered accommodation close to the East Road branch. Mrs Plumer feels that visits to a local Post Office are helpful in keeping pensioners mobile and motivated.</p>
David Lomas	<p>Difficulties of customers contacting a local contact at Post Office by telephone.</p>
RB of Kingston	<p>Kingston Council is very concerned about the closure programme; in its first year four local branches have been shut down. Tolworth Rise, Ewell Road and South Lane New Malden Offices closed despite lengthy campaigns by the community. The closure of Elm Road, New Malden branch is particularly unwelcome as this was presented by the Post Office as a near alternative branch to South Lane.</p> <p>Kingston Council held a special community overview panel to scrutinise the Post Office closure plan. They are continuing to lobby Parliament and Post Office Ltd and to work with Postwatch, Local Authorities and the Voluntary Sector/Partner organisations. Local Residents have also given written submissions, presented petitions and attended Parliament with their local MP. As a result of this and other work Post Office Ltd have now increased the consultation period from 4 to 6 weeks. Kingston Council are continuing to resist sub Post Office closures in a number of ways including discussions with local Subpostmasters and plotting distances between Post Offices to determine if 95% residents will still live within a mile of a Post Office at the end of the programme of closures. They will query 'as the crow flies' distances.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Community overview panel</a></u>  <b>Ed Davey MP</b></p>

Mr Davey gave the Panel new information: the sub Post Office at Elm Road, New Malden is set for closure. This branch is the nearest alternative for the residents of the South Lane area. Mr Davey is also concerned about the possible closure of the Tolworth Rise branch, which currently serves the Sunray Estate, a residential area that is separated from Tolworth Broadway by the A3.

Mr Davey felt the Post Office had made the following errors in implementing the programmes:

1. Rapid time scale in introducing the closures – some 1000 to date, with another 2000 by 2005.
2. Not innovative enough in looking at alternative ways of generating income.
3. The consultation process is not meaningful and futile if there is a target of 3000 to close anyway – some meetings took place when the decision was already made.

Mr Davey further felt that the programme to discontinue payment via pension books was happening too quickly and that it could be introduced only for new pensioners.

Mr Davey called on the Council and the community to oppose closure. He believed the key is to get together the widest coalition possible and lobby Post Office Ltd and Stephen Timms, Minister for e-Commerce and Competition for maximum impact.

**Shane Brennan, Age Concern, Kingston Upon Thames**

Older people view the Post Office as a community facility and feel disempowered if they can no longer get to it and have to ask others for help. This is at odds with the Government's drive to reduce social exclusion.

Mr Douglas Reynolds – Tolworth Resident

Disabled Tolworth Residents face difficulty getting to the nearest Post Office. Walking routes involve either negotiating 25 steps or a quite steep hill. The bus route from Tolworth to Surbiton has not got full disabled access and it is very difficult and costly to park in the area. Additionally Mr Reynolds informed the panel that a Chemist in Ewell Road had shown interest in running the Post Office but the Post Office did not explore this option. He also

pointed out that local small businesses would suffer through not having a local branch were they could despatch parcels etc. and loss of customers to shops near the Surbiton branch

**Mr Bob Baker, new Malden Resident and Representative of Kingston Borough Forum for Elderly people.**

Mr Baker is 78 and both he and his wife both have heart conditions. They use the Post Offices for services that are unavailable elsewhere. The area around the closed South Lane Post Office has a high concentration of elderly people. There is only an hourly bus to the main High Street Post Office and the walk is uphill making it difficult for older and disabled people. Mr Baker also pointed to the potential difficulty in the change to the benefit system where he will be required to remember a PIN number.

A suggestion of having residents having a co-operative was rejected by Post Office Ltd because it was viewed as competition.

Mr Donald Inkster, New Malden Resident

As a result of closures of other branches existing Post Offices now have very large queues especially on pension days.

Kay Dixon, Chairman of Postwatch, Greater London

Postwatch is an independent statutory consumer group representing all users of UK Post Officers services. Postwatch believes there should be a strategic closure programme and is pushing for the code of practice to include a formal appeals process. Postwatch spend a great deal of time proposing plans and bringing social issues to the attention of the Post Office as Postwatch fear that public service is not high on the Post Office's agenda. Although opposition campaigns are transparent, Postwatch is unable to offer the Council any information about the state of individual Post Offices, as this is commercially sensitive information.

Mr Drew McBride, Head of Area at Post Office Ltd

Post Office Ltd feel the closures are necessary because to do nothing would result in unmanaged closures with Sub Post Offices going bust, as the Post Office is currently losing

£160 million a year. The pension/benefits payments modernisation programme is an additional threat as benefit payments accounts for 40% of Post Office business. The Government has given £180m in compensation funding and made £30m available to fund measures to cope with extra business at other Post Offices.

Mr McBride explained how the Post Offices were identified for closure. SubPostmasters were asked if they would like to leave their Post Office and go elsewhere. The Post Office then had to match these preferences with their criteria of an unviable Post Office. The Post Office pays Postmasters a fixed payment and then another payment based on the number of transactions made. As the closure plan is based on financial pressures, Post Office Ltd are looking to close Post Office branches to which they pay a high fixed payment. However they do take into account location, travel links and how many Post Offices there are nearby. Netspec, a computer programme predicts the effects of shutting a Post Office, where the business will go and the long term viability. Mr McBride made it clear that the Post Office would not consider closing a branch with a high fixed payment and opening it again with a lower fixed payment. One option would be to merge two Post Offices together in a more convenient location and to create 'combi position' which would extend the opening hours and accessibility of Post Office services.

Mr McBride reported that Post Office Ltd has been told to function as a commercial organisation so it is not organising business as if it had a social responsibility. He added that the Post Office does consider its public service role to be important which is why they have a consultation process. Although there is no right of appeal -and none anticipated – Mr McBride said the consultation process is an opportunity for communities/councils to put their views forward. Mr McBride said he would advise Post Office colleagues who deal with the strategy for closures of the Panel's comments but could not guarantee that any changes would be made.

In discussion with Mr McBride it emerged that there may be more or less that 3,000 Urban Post Office closures. He said that once the programme is completed, 95% of users would live

within one mile of a Post Office – a shorter distance than the three miles considered acceptable by the Regulator. He confirmed that the distance is measured ‘as the crow flies’. The actual journey could be longer.

Post Office Ltd will offer new services, reduce the number of admin staff and drive down its overhead costs but ultimately the numbers of customers using the service drives closure plans.

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Community Overview Panel consideration

The panel agreed to recommend to the executive that Kingston Borough will actively oppose closure of local Post Offices within the Borough and close to the boundaries and implement the following action:

- a. Identify and contact all local Post Offices in the Borough and set up a meeting of SubPostmasters and mistresses;
- b. Make available the demographic statistics from the 2001 census to those campaigning against closure;
- c. Make available council owned properties for meetings of local people;
- d. Find out about the three Post Offices nationwide, that in recent months, have successfully campaigned against closure;
- e. Work closely with local residents, MPs, Postwatch, the Association of London Government, the Local Government Association and other neighbouring local authorities in a co-ordinated campaign to resist closures; and
- f. Investigate further the availability of the Post Office Fund for Urban Deprived Areas to help restore services in South Lane and similar locations.

Elm Road branch Post Office, New Malden

Councillor Julie Haines

The Maldens and Coombes Neighbourhood Committee held a public meeting to allow the community an opportunity of expressing views on the proposed closure of Elm Road branch Post Office. The outcome was overwhelming opposition for the following reasons:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation letter provided factually incorrect information</li> <li>• Insufficient time for consultation</li> <li>• The Post Office suggested the Postmaster was seeking to pursue different interest when enquiries have suggested this is not the case.</li> <li>• Local buses do not operate from the Elm Road catchment area.</li> <li>• Branch Post Offices have a community responsibility</li> <li>• Many local people have signed a petition against the closure. Many local people have restricted mobility and would be left without access to the service.</li> <li>• Knock on effect for Elm Road shopping parade.</li> <li>• The recent closure of the South Lane Post Office.</li> </ul>
Ms Gogswell London Borough of Sutton	Stanley Park Road Post Office is in walking distance from her house. As well as buying stamps she bought stationery and used the photocopier; she would not travel to a more distant branch to use these facilities. The Gordon Road branch is a drive or a bus-ride away.
Mrs Broad London Borough of Sutton	Closing the Banstead Road branch would particularly affect elderly people because travelling further in the vicinity is difficult as the area is very hilly. The Gordon Road branch is not a satisfactory substitute because of poor public transport links. The premises at Gordon Road are small and cramped and there may be difficulties coping with increased amounts of customers. Banking services provided at Gordon Road Post Office are invaluable as there are no local banks and getting the state pension at a local Post Office is the only way of getting cash.
Mr and Mrs Evans London Borough of Sutton	With Banstead Road closed there is no way to avoid an extremely steep climb to Gordon Road, the only existing branch in the area, without your own transport. This is a particular difficulty for the elderly.
Mrs Cummins London Borough of Sutton	Local shops risk closure due to competition from the larger supermarkets without the attraction of a Post Office. The Post Office in Banstead Road is convenient for the elderly and those with young families. Those with friends and family overseas who need to have letters and cards weighed will be inconvenienced travelling to another Post Office and this could involve parking fees.
B Gutteridge	The tiny sub-Post Office in Gordon Road is difficult to park close to and so will involve a



London Borough of Sutton	long walk. The main Post Office in Wallington is already often over-crowded and this closure will make the situation worse. The Post Office has just introduced a banking service but how can this flourish with so many closures?
Mr Deans London Borough of Sutton	Until a few years ago queues were general at the local Post Offices on National Pension day. Mr Deans wonders if now most people have bank accounts there are too many Post Offices for the number of customers.
Mrs Catton London Borough of Sutton	With the closing of Banstead Road and Stanley Park Road Post Offices Mrs Catton uses Gordon Road branch. This is inconvenient as her partner is disabled and it is difficult to park there.
Mr and Mrs Brown London Borough of Sutton	The closures of the Banstead Road and Stanley Park Road Post Offices will inconvenience many people. It is a steep walk from Banstead Road branch to the Gordon Road branch and some of the people who have to walk such as the disabled and parents with small children and pushchairs could find it a problem.
Mrs Mooney London Borough of Sutton	The elderly and those that do not have a car will suffer from the Stanley Park Road and Banstead Road Post Offices closures as will those with young children as both Post Offices are close to primary schools and form part of the local shopping centre. The closures will inevitably cause queues in the remaining branches and further use of cars. Closures may also have an impact on local shop trade. Residents' protestations saved the Gordon Road Post Office from closure some years ago.
Ms Collier London Borough of Sutton	Ms Collier responded to the initial letter from the Post Office relating to the proposed closure of the Stanley Park Road and Banstead Road branches. It seemed obvious to her that a decision to close these branches had already been made and that local opposition was unlikely to carry any weight. The closures will cause great inconvenience to local people and local shops to lose business. The remaining Post Office in Gordon Road is small, has no facilities for the disabled and is not served by any public transport. There is limited public parking and no useful shopping facilities by the Gordon Road. There are no local banks; to draw cash now entails a bus journey to Wallington or Sutton.
Mr Smith London Borough of Sutton	Mr Smith is happy that the Gordon Road branch is still open after 90 years and due to the closure of Stanley Park Road and Banstead Road branches business is likely to boom. However there are no other Post Offices south of Gordon Road until Woodmansterne and the closures must affect thousands of people. Mr Smith feels that the Post Office saw three

	offices within a half mile of one another and decided to close the outer two without realising the steepness of hills in the local area. The Gordon Road Post Office has a parking limit of 30 minutes outside with no provision for disabled drivers. Many motorists park in excess of this time limit and problems are already occurring.
Ms Bourne London Borough of Sutton	Banstead Road Post Office provides an essential service to local people especially older people and those without transport; it is part of the fabric of life that should be there. This is a wider issue than the closure of sub Post Offices – what will replace them? The whole issue of public service versus profit needs to be reconsidered before it is too difficult to restore the balance.
Mr Elliot London Borough of Sutton	The Banstead Road Post Office always seemed well patronised. If it closes Mr and Mrs Elliot will use the Grove Road, Sutton branch for his weekly postal requirements. They will continue walking to the alternative but it is less convenient.
Mr Maccabe, Highfields Residents Association, London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Banstead Road Post Office will cause much inconvenience to the elderly and those who have no car. Our members are between about 7 to 12 minutes walk from this Post Office. The nearest alternative would be to walk up the steep hill, Waverly Way, cross Beeches Avenue to the Gordon Road Post Office; adding another 6 to 10 minutes to the journey. Bus routes S1 and S3 to Sutton are about 5 minutes walk away for most residents.
Ms Rolls London Borough of Sutton	Full-time working mothers find it very useful to get to the Post Office on Saturday mornings to post parcels and registered letters or to draw family allowance. If Banstead Road Post Office closes this would involve travelling to Sutton Post Office with the added stress of finding parking space or using public transport wasting half of Saturday morning. Elderly people could have difficulty getting to Sutton or walking up the steep hill to Gordon Road Post Office. The local Post Office has kept the community alive. The Postmaster has played an important part; making sure that that the old and disabled are taken care of, enquiring about the health of her regular customers especially when she does not see them for a while. She also helps them with transactions, which they find difficult.
Ms Clifton London Borough of Sutton	At present it is possible to get everyday needs from the shops around the Banstead Road Post Office when going there to buy stamps and pay bills. If it closes Ms Clifton will buy her stamps from the newsagent but local shops may have a decline in business if there is no Post Office and some may shut. Closure of the branch will mean an extra walk to Gordon Road and Ms Clifton is concerned she may have a problem when she is older with the steep hill

	getting there.
Mrs Gee London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Banstead Road Post Office is shocking because going to the alternative, Gordon Road Post Office, involves climbing a hill, which is difficult for the elderly.
Mrs McCormack London Borough of Sutton	Mrs McCormack in her mid-80's and is strongly opposed to the closure of Banstead Road Post Office; she would find it very difficult to get to Gordon Road to draw her pension.
Mrs Rickwood London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Rickwood draws her pension in cash, which she needs to do her local shopping for food and a daily paper. She has lived at her present address for forty-one years and has already lost all the local banks. She purchases special stamps at the Post Office throughout the year, which she can't do from the paper shop. The journey to Gordon Road Post Office would involve a steep climb; this would be difficult for Mrs Rickwood and Mr Rickwood who both suffer from ill health. It would be helpful if the Post Office facilities could be placed in one of the shops nearby.
Miss Dunstan London Borough of Sutton	Miss Dunstan uses Banstead Road Post Office to post parcels, renew her travel permit and purchase a television licence. If it closes she will use one of the Sutton Post Offices. Going up the steep hill to the Gordon Road branch is a problem for the elderly. Miss Dunstan knows of one elderly lady who now has to collect her pension fortnightly. Since the closure of local banks there is nowhere to withdraw cash necessary for use in small local shops, which do not accept debit or credit cards.
E Chadwick London Borough of Sutton	E Chadwick lives halfway between Banstead Road and Gordon Road Post Offices and uses the Post Office to collect the state pension and buy stamps; closure of Banstead Road branch will not cause personal inconvenience.
Mrs Prendergast London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Prendergast is 85 years old and unable to walk far because she has had hip replacements. If she is not feeling fit there is no way that she will be able to get to the Carshalton Beeches Post Office.
Ms Haseler London Borough of Sutton	Ms Haseler is opposed to the closure of Banstead Road Post Office particularly on behalf of elderly people without transport who use the Post Office regularly. She collects an elderly, blind friend's pension every week from this branch. Ms Haseler can park nearby and shop in the parade of shops there. Gordon Road is further away and parking there is difficult; her friend worries about who will travel there to collect her pension for her when Ms Haseler is away.

Miss McDonough London Borough of Sutton	Miss McDonough is 77 years old and suffers from ill health. Closing Banstead Road Post Office will have a detrimental effect on her way of life making it virtually impossible for her to collect her pension.
Ms Manning London Borough of Sutton	Ms Manning is registered blind and would feel lost without the Post Office in Banstead Road; she wouldn't be able to cope with going to another area and knows lots of elderly people and mothers of young children who would feel the same as her. The shopping parade used to be busy but now shops are closing and the closure of Banstead Road Post Office would be another nail in the coffin.
Mrs Usher London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Usher have lived in the area for 26 years and have used their local Post Office at least twice a week during this time. They feel that the Banstead Road shops have a village atmosphere and to close the Post Office is like taking the heart out of the area. Mr and Mrs Usher will be collecting their pensions in a couple of years time and would rather have their money paid into the local Post Office than travel a distance by car or bus to withdraw cash.
Dr Gosling London Borough of Sutton	Dr Gosling is a busy working mother and uses Banstead Road Post Office to send parcels to relatives and friends. She tries to limit use of her car and would regret having to drive to Sutton with parcels. She anticipates that older people who use the branch for a broader range of services would be more seriously disadvantaged.
Mrs Salkilld London Borough of Sutton	It would be very bad for the growing number of local elderly people if Banstead Road Post Office were to close. To get to the main Post Office in Sutton is difficult, particularly for the disabled; parking is at a distance and limited. Some elderly people are not familiar with using banks and experience problems; it can be difficult knowing which key to press to get through to the right department by telephone. Banks have gone from local shopping centres and shops are rapidly closing so to lose Post Offices would be the final straw. Mrs Salkilld is not able to use buses. At present, she is still able to drive but anticipates as she gets older she will not be able to do this and will have to move house. She feels that in future more elderly people, despite their wishes to be independent, will become dependent on the state for accommodation if they no longer have local amenities. Mr Salkilld is recently widowed and has experienced a great deal of difficulty with banks, building societies and council offices, all the places that elderly people would have to deal with if the Post Office closed.
Mr Akhurst London Borough of Sutton	The Royal Mail should take stock here. Mr Akhurst questions whether the closure programme for sub Post Offices will this result in increased use of their services. Will the

	closure programme contribute to reduced losses or will customers go elsewhere where possible, for example the internet. The Post Office in Banstead Road is a well-supported facility. Mr Akurst uses it two or three times a week to buy stamps and sending letters or parcels overseas. If it closes Mr Akhurst will have to drive to Sutton to use the Post Office there.
Miss Turner London Borough of Sutton	Miss Turner is in her 80's and has suffered a stroke. She relies on a kind neighbour of the same age to collect her pension. If Banstead Road Post Office were to close Miss Turner would not want her neighbour to risk her own health climbing the steep hill to Gordon Road to collect her pension. There is no local bank and Miss Turner needs access to cash facilities..
Mr and Mrs Strudwick London Borough of Sutton	If Banstead Road Post Office closes Mr and Mrs Strudwick are able to walk up the hill to Gordon Road Post Office but know that many others are not so mobile. They wonder if the Gordon Road Postmaster will be able to cope with the increased demand especially at peak times such as Christmas. They see that the introduction of pensions and benefits being paid directly into a bank account will impact on the amount of business a Post Office will do but not all pensioners have bank accounts. Mr and Mrs Strudwick feel it is about time that an end was called to the breaking up of businesses that provide an essential service to the community.
Mr Drury London Borough of Sutton	The Banstead Road shops have been in steady decline for some years, a bakers and hardware store have been replaced by less useful businesses. Loss of the Post Office would further this unwelcome trend. Mrs Dury uses the Banstead Road Post Office to send registered and recorded mail in connection with her business and would have to travel to by car to Carshalton if it closes. Mr Drury feels that the root of the problem is the absurd notion that the Post Office is a business which should run either at profit or shut down, instead of a vital part of the country's social and governmental infrastructure which is quite right and proper that the taxpayer should subsidise.
R Clark London Borough of Sutton	Uses the Banstead Road Post Office at present for parcels, purchases and other business; the nearest alternative is the Gordon Road branch, which is further away. The Banstead Road shops are vital for the local community especially the elderly; once the Post Office goes people will go elsewhere for their shopping and a chain of closures follows.
R Fuller London Borough of Sutton	R Fuller has lived in the area for 40 years and a friend collects his pension for him. At the same time the friend buys stamps and posts his letters and parcels. The local bank closed and

	getting cash from the Post Office is necessary for paying the milkman and giving his helpers cash for shopping and their services.
Mrs Miller London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Banstead Road Post Office will cause some distress to older residents as it provides social as well as other services. Perhaps something positive could result from these closures. Could the old Post Offices provide small, safe local venues for local youngsters to meet in early evenings? They could then be a benefit all local communities provided they are well managed and monitored.
Mrs Mann London Borough of Sutton	If Banstead Road Post Office closes Ms Mann will use the Post Office less as her nearest one would then be the Gordon Road and she does not want to use her car just to go to the Post Office. She feels it is a shame that the Post Office is going ahead with the closure of Post Offices as they serve the community well and ultimately it will lead to a far poorer service.
Mrs West London Borough of Sutton	The Banstead Road area has already lost local banks and to lose the Post Office would put the local shops under more threat. Going further would necessitate the use of the car. This closure will particularly affect the elderly and parents of young children without transport. As the elderly population grows more and more rely on good local facilities.
Mr McBrien London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs McBrien are elderly and the Banstead Road Post Office is easy for them to access and adjacent to local shops. The branch is run by a couple who are familiar with local needs and who provide a personal service of the highest quality. There is a rapport between management and customers that would be impossible to find in a high street Post Office. For elderly people often unfamiliar with changing procedures it is an essential facility where help and advice can be patiently obtained without the recipient being made to feel a nuisance. Should the Banstead Road Post Office close Mr and Mrs McBrien would be forced to use the main Sutton Post Office. In the absence of public transport this would involve a walk of around three-quarters of a mile; impractical at their age. Mr McBrien drives but does not welcome contending with driving and parking in Sutton.
W A Lipscombe London Borough of Sutton	Mr Lipscombe uses Banstead Road Post Office three times a week. Mr Lipscombe collects his pension from the Post Office. If it closes he will have to use his car to travel to the office in Wallington, which will add further traffic to an already congested area that has little parking.
A W Alston London Borough of Sutton	If Mr Banstead Road Post Office closes then the alternative branch could only be reached by climbing a steep hill. This will make it difficult for older residents to use the alternative Post

	Office. Most other Post Offices in the area can only be reached by car and parking is difficult or expensive.
Mrs Henman London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Henman and her husband would find the climb up the steep hill to the Gordon Road branch very difficult.
Mrs King London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Banstead Road Post Office would mean that Mrs King would have to catch a bus to Sutton which would be daunting in her condition.
R White London Borough of Sutton	Banstead Road Post Office is in walking distance its closure would mean taking a car or bus journey to Sutton or Croydon to post parcels and send mail abroad. Having a local Post Office adds to a sense of community.
Ms Hawey London Borough of Sutton	If Banstead Road Post Office closes Ms Hawey will have to drive to Sutton where the Post Office in the St Nicholas centre already has long queues.
Mrs Billing, London Borough of Sutton	Banstead Road Post Office should not be closed; some people are not able to get to Sutton.
A Osbourne London Borough of Sutton	The Osbournes walk to the Post Office in Banstead Road; to go any further would mean using a car and parking is difficult and costly. Mr Osbourne finds it convenient to draw his pension in cash and Mrs Osbourne buys 500 second class stamps a month. There is a social aspect to the local Post Office, they know you; identification and security does not present quite so much of a problem.
Mrs K Chapman London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Banstead Road Post Office will mean having to drive to Wallington, paying for parking and adding to road congestion. In future Mrs Chapman will buy stamps at the local newsagent and stop using the National Savings Account for her grandchildren.
F K Kateli London Borough of Sutton	At present Mr and Mrs Kateli use Banstead Road Post Office for posting parcels and registered mail. With advancing age Mr and Mrs Kateli would soon want to use its banking facilities especially as the local bank closed some years ago and if the Post Office were to close too it would make life more difficult. The alternative would be to go to Sutton by train, which means climbing the hill to the station.
Mr and Mrs Evans London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Evans use the Banstead Road Post Office to buy stamps, TV licence, post packets, draw cash and obtain E111 forms and buy foreign currency. The branch also has a good range of information leaflets and forms to do with passports and benefits. If the Post Office were to close the Evans' would use the Post Office less; they would buy their stamps in other shops. The Evans' are concerned that a closure would have a detrimental effect on

	local shops and result in more road congestion and parking difficulties.
Mr Garrod London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Banstead Road Post Office would make life more difficult for Mr Garrod who is bringing up his young children. He can nip down to this branch on a Saturday morning. The alternative would be to drive to Carshalton. This would add a lot of time and inconvenience to the journey and he would expect there to be long queues particularly as the Westmead Post Office is closing. Mr Garrod feels that closure of the branch would have a detrimental effect on local shops.
Mr and Mrs Gee London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Gee are in their eighties and are not very mobile. They oppose the closure of Banstead Road Post Office. The nearest alternative would be Gordon Road Post Office and there are many steep hills between their home and Gordon Road. The Post Office themselves have stated there is no connecting bus service. If the Gees had their pensions paid direct into the building society accounts they would have to go to Sutton or Wallington to obtain any money.
Ms Willis London Borough of Sutton	Ms Willis is sympathetic to the current postholders of the Banstead Road Post Office wish to retire but is furious that the Post Office has decided to close this office. Ms Willis is a wheelchair user and Gordon Road Post Office is difficult to access and, as it is very small, difficult to turn around in a wheelchair. Ms Willis feels that older people will struggle to walk the long steep hill between Banstead Road and Gordon Road especially in the snow and ice when the road is unusable and as there is no bus link and little parking. Ms Willis feels that the Post Office is ignorant and patronising and has a lack of understanding of access issues despite the elderly and the disabled together make up a large proportion of its customer base. The representative of the Disability Rights Commission said that the case for accessibility of the substitute sub post would not be challenged until all business was transferred there but by then Banstead Road Post Office would be long gone. Ms Willis does not drive and local shopkeepers on whom she depends said they would have to close if the Post Office closes. She is amazed that the Post Office has reported losses last year of £163 million and asks if this includes re-branding.
Mrs Brown London Borough of Sutton	Banstead Road Post Office is vital to Mrs Brown and her family and it is the livelihood and the life and the income of Mrs Patel who has provided a wonderful service there over the years. If it were to shut Mrs Brown would have to take her parcels to Wallington where parking is difficult.



Mrs Gunner London Borough of Sutton	Many people draw their pensions from Banstead Road Post Office and would find it quite a strain negotiating the steep hilly roads to the small Gordon Road sub Post Office. The area around Banstead Road contains a large number of elderly people who are upset by the loss of shops and worry that there will be nothing left but take-aways.
Enid Darling London Borough of Sutton	Gordon Road Post Office is easily accessible to Ms Darling so transferring there from Banstead Road Post Office will not be a problem but Ms Darling feels that others who will have to climb the hill to Gordon Road Post Office will have difficulties.
Mr George Perry London Borough of Sutton	Using the sub Post Office by Carshalton Beeches railway station when Banstead Road Post Office closes will involve going up a steep hill; difficult for pensioners without cars. This alternative is a branch with a single serving counter so it's likely there will be a long queue and difficulty parking on pension day. When Banstead Road closes and Mr Perry retires he intends having his pension paid into his bank account and purchasing stamps from the local newsagent. He is resigned to having to queue twice as long whenever he needs to send mail overseas that requires weighing.
Mrs Bennett London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Bennett is partially disabled and the journey to Gordon Road Post Office includes a steep hill, there is no public transport so she would have to take a cab at the cost of £11.00.
Mr Norman Turner London Borough of Sutton	Mr Turner is 84 and his wife is unwell. At present Mr Turner finds the walk to Banstead Road difficult but there is no way that he could walk up the hill to Gordon Road Post Office and will have to rely on friends to collect his pension.
H V Scott London Borough of Sutton	Mothers with pushchairs, the elderly and the disabled all rely on the busy Banstead Road Post Office particularly as three local branches of banks have closed. Journeying to Gordon Road Post Office will involve climbing steep hills difficult in winter for the elderly and those without cars. The other alternative would be to take a bus into Sutton, which is not as easy with parcels.
Ms Annie Harvey London Borough of Sutton	Ms Harvey was intending using Banstead Road Post Office when she was at home on maternity leave. The next nearest Post Office will be a car ride away, which is inconvenient and time-consuming. The Post Office on the South Bank near where Ms Harvey works has also been closed. Ms Harvey feels the Post Office or the government should have some responsibility for ensuring a healthy number of Post Offices. Ms Harvey wonders if there is any chance of incorporating the basic Post Office services to another shop nearby or of part-time opening hours.

Rev. Geoff Bland London Borough of Sutton	Reverend Bland is a local Baptist minister and was initially concerned about the Banstead Road Post Office being closed down both for the pensioners and the sub-postmistress. Rev Bland spoke to local elderly people at his weekly luncheon club and found that no one seemed to mind the closure. Rev Bland regrets the closure of the facility as it weakens the parade of shops.
Mr Couzins London Borough of Sutton	Mr Couzins collected 200 signatures in his newsagent against the closure of the Banstead Road Post Office. Mr Couzins uses this local Post Office branch for business purposes and to collect his wife's pension. If he has to travel to Carshalton High Street this will involve driving and paying car parking costs and possibly having to employ more staff.
S Bell London Borough of Sutton	S Bell is 82 years old and is fortunate in still being able to get around but is angry that Banstead Road Post Office is being closed down.
Mr Seller London Borough of Sutton	Mr Seller would have used Banstead Road Post Office if it had been tidier and the standard of the stock had been higher. Although he considers the branch closure a loss he regularly drives into Sutton and will use the main Post Office there.
Mr and Mrs Knight London Borough of Sutton	Local Post Offices are suppliers of essential services to the area but also they serve as a meeting point for those only able to walk a short distance from their homes. Mr and Mrs Knight are particularly irritated because one of the main reasons for having moved to their present address just prior to their retirement was the proximity of variety of shops and services. They feel to lose the Post Office would probably sound the death knell of their local shopping parade. At present they use the Post Office for buying stamps, sending mail by recorded delivery, sending parcels, buying foreign currency and as the banking agent for their account with the Cooperative Bank. If it were to close they would have to walk up the steep hill of Waverley Way to Gordon Road Post Office.
Ms Richards London Borough of Sutton	Lots of elderly people live in the area surrounding Banstead Road and rely on the Post Office for its services but also as a meeting place. The buses to Carshalton and Sutton are busy and there is quite a walk at the other end. If the local Post Office closes then Ms Richards would drive to Sutton, which will add to congestion and cause her inconvenience.
M Hooper London Borough of Sutton	Many people will find it difficult to walk up the hill to Gordon Road Post Office. This is a small branch that may have problems dealing with the extra customers. Like the closures of the three banks in the area some years ago it will make life a bit more difficult.

Mrs Parker London Borough of Sutton	With the closure of Stanley Park Road branch Mrs Parker will use Wallington and Carshalton branches. Mrs Parker will need to use her car to travel to these branches and they are further away than her bank so she anticipates using the bank more.
Mr Donaldson London Borough of Sutton	Closure of the Stanley Road branch will mean that Mr Donaldson has to take either a bus or a train journey plus a long walk uphill to Sutton Post Office where there are longer queues in order to pay his utility bills. He is elderly and does not welcome this change.
Mr Dixon London Borough of Sutton	Stanley Park Road branch was in walking distance and convenient for sending parcels and overseas mail as well as paying money into the Co-operative Bank. When Stanley Park Road branch closes the nearest Post Office will be Wallington, which would require a car journey and with customers travelling to Wallington this could impact badly on the shops in Stanley Park Road.
Ms Kitchiner London Borough of Sutton	The closures will be difficult for people without cars particularly the elderly.
Mrs Bradley London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Stanley Park Road branch will cause transport difficulties for many people. The journey to Wallington Post Office includes walking up a hill, which will be difficult for anyone with mobility problems, and there is not much parking available. Wallington Post Office is large and already busy so additional customers will increase queuing that will add to the discomfort and stress. For people with limited mobility a range of local services, including a Post Office, makes a huge difference to a quality of life and keeps local communities alive.
Ms Charman London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Stanley Park Road means that Ms Charman will have to use the Post Office at York Way or Wallington neither of which is within walking distance. Perhaps another shop could have a Post Office opened within it.
Mrs Stacy London Borough of Sutton	Stanley Park Road Post Office was well used by the community especially pensioners. The suggested alternative of the branch near Carshalton Beeches station is not convenient as it would mean an additional journey and there are no direct bus routes between the Stanley Park Road area and the Carshalton High Street branch. Mrs Stacy will have to use Wallington branch to post her overseas items; last time this involved queuing 15 minutes to post two items. Travelling to other branches will be time wasting and cause more air-pollution. Mrs Stacy would recommend to Post Office Ltd that they use Ferring Post Office as a model. The counter there is at the rear of a thriving newsagent/confectioners and staff assist customers, especially pensioners, with form-filling and deposits and withdrawals.

<p>Mr Pichett London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Mr Pritchett is concerned that when he is incapacitated due to an upcoming hip replacement his wife, who does not drive, will have a long walk to Wallington to use the Post Office. He feels small Post Offices provide a lifeline to the most vulnerable members of society. As well as providing accessible facilities and services they are a place to interact for isolated people and closing them creates a ghost area. The government intention of having pensions paid direct to the bank will be another nail in the coffin of sub Post Offices.</p>
<p>E Williams London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>E Williams is against the closure of the Stanley Park branch, which was in walking distance and in future will use local shops and not other Post Offices.</p>
<p>Mr and Mrs Walsh London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Mr and Mrs Walsh frequently weigh and post letters and parcels for abroad. Rather than being able to do this when we collect their son from school it will require a separate trip to an alternative Post Office at weekends. They consider the impact on them to be inconvenience but feel the impact on pensioners who may have more limited mobility and finance to travel to be more serious.</p>
<p>Mr Sharp London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Mr Sharp feels that more people would use the branch offices if they offered a greater range of services, in particular the renewal of car road fund licences. At present his area is short of banking facilities and suggested that the Post Office links up with a major bank and, as the services and security requirements are similar, provides a combined Post Office/bank. Mr Sharp feels that every time an essential shop such as the baker, grocer or butcher and now Post Office closes they are replaced by a takeaway shop and that shoppers go to Wallington or Sutton leading to a loss of belonging to a community. When an organisation becomes solely profit driven, the idea of providing any form of service to the community is completely abandoned. The area from Carshalton High Street to Woodmansterne and Banstead is very hilly. Older, infirm and disabled residents and those unable to drive would find the trek to and from Ross Parade, Wallington or Beacon Grove, Carshalton for their postal needs too much. In larger Post Offices branches such as Wallington, Raynes Park and Streatham High Road the queues are always longer.</p>
<p>Mr and Mrs Ellis London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>The Gordon Road Post Office, the alternative to the closing Stanley Park Road branch, will involve a car journey, parking problems and time wasted. Along with Royal Mail depriving us of a much used essential service, National Government's policy of centralising the distribution of pensions has greatly reduced the number of regular visits to Post Offices reducing their revenue and the number of potential customers available to nearby small retail</p>

	businesses. Forcing people to use their cars for the simplest of requirements increases traffic problems and the elderly are denied the social interaction and exercise so vital in later life.
Mr and Mrs Smith London Borough of Sutton	Since the closure of Stanley Park Road Post Office Mr and Mrs Smith who are both over 70 have to walk to Wallington Post Office or to the sub-Post Office in Gordon Road, as they wouldn't be able to park nearby either branch. The proprietors of the closed branch were polite and helpful and sold a good range of greeting cards and stationery and will be missed.
Mr Greenaway London Borough of Sutton	Mr Greenaway prefers to use the Gordon Road branch because it is also a newsagent and has one or two neighbouring shops but feels that older people in the Stanley Park Road area will find walking to the Gordon Road branch inconvenient.
Ms Tring London Borough of Sutton	The large number of elderly, disabled people in the Stanley Park Road area will find the journey to Wallington inconvenient especially in winter even with the S4 bus running. The journey will be particularly difficult in winter with the risk of falling.
Mr Heayes London Borough of Sutton	Mr Heayes is 73 and is partially disabled, preventing him from walking great distances. He is not able to use buses safely and must use mini-cabs. There are long queues at the Wallington Post Office and he would not be able to stand in line for long periods, the area has double red lines and so the office is inaccessible to him as there is nowhere for the cab driver to drop him off and pick him up. He finds Brighton Road branch the easiest to use but the return fare will cost me him around £14.00 so he will be able to use the journey only once every three weeks. When he is unwell or in severe weather hMr Heayes will be unable to make the journey he has arranged with his milkman to change a cheque sufficient to keep him solvent and avoid starvation. Mr Heayes is not happy with this arrangement; it is one of self-preservation that he never dreamt he would have to employ. Mr Heayes has thought of alternatives for many of the services previously provided by the Post Office such as buying stamps elsewhere.
R A Chubs London Borough of Sutton	The closure of the Stanley Park Road branch would mean a two-mile trip into Wallington; older people will find these journeys very difficult especially in winter. There will be a loss of business to local shops and may drive some out of business this will cause further hardship to the elderly particularly if the local chemist closes.
Mr Aylett London Borough of Sutton	Carshalton on the Hill, our local Post Office, served as a centre to the community, the only contact point for the elderly, elderly who will; not be able to walk the increased distance to Gordon Road. Carers that do the shopping for a number of older people will have to walk the

	additional mile possibly several times a day. There are no cycle stands at the Post Office in Wallington and parking is virtually impossible which creates great problems for the disabled.
Mrs Wilkes London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Wilkes used to draw her pension and pay her utility bills at the Stanley Park Road Post Office. Now she has her pension paid into her bank and as she is disabled relies on her sons to collect it. She fears that the closure of the Post Office will affect local shops.
K Rogers London Borough of Sutton	K Rogers uses the Carshalton on the hill Post Office for collecting pensions and buying stamps and feels that many pensioners will be inconvenienced if it closes and that the Royal Mail wasted money with a name change that no one wanted.
Mrs Bicker London Borough of Sutton	If Stanley Park Road closes then there will be longer queues especially on pension day at Gordon Road branch.
Mrs Higgs London Borough of Sutton	Since the closure of Stanley Park Road branch Mrs Higgs uses the Ross Road Post Office but after parking in Wallington car park still has to walk the length of Woodcoote Road and back. The S4 and 154 buses are both quite regular but they are jerky when cornering and stopping, and so many people are nervous of using them. Parents collecting children from schools nearby Stanley Park Road were able to use the Post Office there while collecting their children rather than driving into Wallington adding to more hassle and congestion. Mrs Higgs would like the Stanley Road Post Office re-opened.
Mr and Mrs Wood London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Stanley Park Road will cause a problem to older, disabled people.
B Yea London Borough of Sutton	The Post Office in Stanley Park Road is convenient for older people and for parents taking their children to school as well as being the focus of the small terrace of shops and without it the trade for the other shops would probably fade away.
Mr Giltrow London Borough of Sutton	There are many elderly people who rely on the services of Stanley Park Road Post Office for services especially pensions; no Post Offices should be closed.
Mrs Hall London Borough of Sutton	When Stanley Park Road Post closes the walk to Wallington will inconvenience elderly residents. Even those with cars will not find the situation much easier as parking facilities in Wallington are at the opposite end of the high street to the Post Office. Wallington Post Office is already overextended and the service in small post offices is more personal and queuing times usually shorter.
Mrs Stephen	Mrs Stephens is registered blind and felt safe using the Post Office at Carshalton Beeches ,

London Borough of Sutton	she found it a helpful environment and a place that brought people together. Mrs Stephens would be unable to walk the two miles to Wallington.
A Glasby London Borough of Sutton	The Royal Mail wasted millions of pounds changing its name, no one wanted it, and that money could have been spent helping out small Post Offices. Allowing shops to sell stamps loses the Post Office business.
Mrs Crump London Borough of Sutton	Royal Mail has ridden roughshod over people's wishes to keep Stanley Park Road Post Office open. It was a convenient two-minute walk away; going to the replacement branch means standing around waiting for a bus.
D Brickwood London Borough of Sutton	D Brickwood is 88 years old and at the moment can still drive but eventually this will not be possible. Stanley Park Road Post Office is now closed and the nearest branch is either Wallington or Banstead Road; both are beyond walking distance and not public transport friendly.
The Wickham family London Borough of Sutton	The closures of Stanley Park Road and Banstead Road Post Offices have been done without consultation. They understand that other shops had requested the Royal Mail franchise but had been refused. The closures will cause access problems for older and disabled people and loss of income for local shops, possibly leading to closure of these shops and the breakdown of the local community.
Mr Cacutt London Borough of Sutton	Close the Stanley Park Road Post Office by all means but reopen a branch in another shop nearby such as the newsagent otherwise the nearest Post Office is in Wallington which means a mile plus walk or a bus ride or car journey.
Ms Wortley London Borough of Sutton	Although stamps can be bought in other places the costs of parcels are odd amounts that cannot be made up with a combination of 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> class stamps. The nearest alternative Post Office to Stanley Park Road is a 15-minute walk away for a fit healthy adult; this is time consuming and would result in extra car use. Although a short walk can be useful for maintaining independence for older and disabled people they would find the increased distance too far. Those most likely to be collecting benefits/pensions from the Post Office such as many elderly people and parents of small children are on low incomes and do not have access to a car. There is nowhere to park in Gordon Road or Ross Road, which are already very busy. Because there is a railway line running between Stanley Park Road and Gordon Road there are a limited number of routes to it. The loss of the Stanley Park Road and Banstead Road Post Offices would have a knock on effect on other shops nearby;

	people switching to Wallington Post Office will shop there instead. While benefits can now be paid into bank account people need cash and there is no bank cash machine locally causing increased car use and traffic and parking problems. The Wallington Post Office often has long queues and a twenty-minute wait to be served and the Gordon Road branch is very small and will struggle to cope with additional customers.
Mrs E Marshall London Borough of Sutton	Being disabled Mrs Marshall will find it very difficult to get to another Post Office when Stanley Park Road branch closes; the replacement will be reached only by using two buses.
Mrs Wakeford London Borough of Sutton	Stanley Park Road Post Office will be missed because, along with local shops, it serves the community.
Ms Magalova-Evans London Borough of Sutton	Ms Magalova-Evans will make less frequent visits items to other Post Offices with larger quantities of post when the Stanley Park Road branch closes.
Mrs Spellman	Mrs Spellman suffers from ill health and has great deal of difficulty walking any distance;she will now have to use the bus to collect her pension. She finds it unacceptable that the Post Office allows closures of branches without giving consideration to the people it effects.
Miss A Henser Secretary of Residents' Association London Borough of Sutton	Miss Henser's resident association has a large number of elderly and disabled residents as well as many young single mums and feels that to expect them to get buses to their nearest Post Office is unbelievable. Miss Henser used Stanley Park Road branch to post heavy business parcels and will now have to travel to further which will cause difficulty because of health problems. The Post Office claimed that the closure was made after consultation with the general public but this is not true; the only consultation was with the lady who ran it.
Mrs Bance London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Bance uses the Gordon Road branch that offers a variety of services including banking facilities but she feels that closures for those that cannot drive, particularly the elderly, are outrageous.
Mrs Killick London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Killick is 85 years old and lives alone and could just manage to get to Stanley Park Road using two sticks. The journey to the Wallington is impossible for her, as it would include a walking to a bus and another walk at the other end.
A Young London Borough of Sutton	When Stanley Park Road closes Mr Young will have to walk a mile and half to Wallington which is an hour round trip. This is an inconvenience to Mr Young but he feels sorry for the elderly who will be hit the hardest.
Mr Gardner	For the past four years Mr Gardner has walked to Stanley Park Road Post Office twice a week



London Borough of Sutton	to post his business parcels. He now drives to Wallington and uses the branch there where he has to queue for 10 to 20 minutes. Staffing levels have not been increased in other branches in response to these closures. With a little more lateral thinking the Royal Mail could have produced innovative solutions such as developing partnerships with local petrol stations such as the Total garage in Stanley Park Road.
Ms Durbin London Borough of Sutton	Banstead Road Post Office is due to close shortly; already lost a bank, bakery and a hardware shop from that parade of shops. Trade in this area is bound to decline in the remaining shops with the loss of the Post Office. The nearest Post Office will then be the Gordon Road branch; for elderly people climbing the hill in Waverley Way to get to it will make life very difficult.
Mr and Mrs Edser London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Edser feel it is strange that as the population rises the number of outlets for services in general is being reduced, forcing people to use cars whereas they formerly might have walked to get what they needed.
Mrs Cornes London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Cornes understanding is the Stanley Park Road Post Office closure is at request of the current owners who are now retiring and it is unfortunate that Royal Mail is not finding new tenants.
M Wilkins and M Houghton London Borough of Sutton	For some people, mainly the elderly, who do not have a bank account or their own transport a local Post Office is a lifeline.
Ms Exell London Borough of Sutton	Older people will have difficulty getting to Wallington or Gordon Road Post Offices when the Stanley Park Road branch closes. Although the journey from Stanley Park Road to Carshalton Beeches station for Gordon Road is fine, the return journey includes an uphill walk.
Ms Poppe London Borough of Sutton	The Carshalton on the Hill branch is very convenient for many people in this area, particularly for the elderly who are inclined to use the other shops on the parade for their grocery and greengrocery shopping; this keeps the area vibrant. When small shops close, premises are not readily re-let and the area takes on a run-down appearance. The queues in the Wallington branch are long and the Post Office should consider installing seating for the elderly who often find prolonged standing painful and tiring. Ms Poppe asks the Post Office to reconsider their decision to close the branch and suggests shedding some office positions instead.
Mrs Bates	Stanley Park Road Post Office is in a densely populated area, on a main road with residents

London Borough of Sutton	of all ages. It is close to a bus stop, which would enable customers from a little further afield who are unable to walk distances to hop on and alight outside unlike the Gordon Road branch that is inaccessible. Mrs Bates is a Senior Citizen and suffers from a bad back that is exacerbated by walking.
Ms Dewey London Borough of Sutton	When Stanley Park Road Post Office closes disabled people will have to rely on others to help them if possible. The convenience of this branch will be missed and lead to extra queuing at the other Post Offices.
Mrs P Latter, Mrs Barton London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Barton is 87 years old and is able to retain some independence by using the S4 bus door-to-door to Stanley Road Post Office. If this branch closes the journey to Wallington involves a bus-ride followed by an uphill climb. This area is very hilly and can be difficult for the many elderly residents. Mrs Latter can manage hills but cannot stand for more than a few minutes without fainting so extended queuing times would be a problem.
A R Phillips London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Stanley Park Road Post Office will leave the parade of shops without a focal point and the queues at Wallington Post Office are already too long.
Mr McDonald London Borough of Sutton	Stanley Park Road is a 10 minute walk away and if it closes Mr MacDonald would use his car to travel to Wallington increasing traffic because it would otherwise be an hour's commute.
Ms Hill London Borough of Sutton	Ms Hill cycles to Wallington for renewal of vehicle tax and other items that local offices do not handle. It would be useful for local Post Offices to be able to offer these services and banking facilities.
Mrs Farquhar London Borough of Croydon	When the Wickham Post Office closes many people will be frightened to venture into Shrublands because of the nature of the area. Many people who collect their pensions in cash go shopping in the vicinity so closure of the Post Office may affect small local shop trade.
The MacAskill Family London Borough of Croydon	It will be inconvenient if the Wickham Road branch shuts; the use of the main Post Office in West Wickham will involve a car journey and parking costs as well as longer queues. The community in this area benefits from local shops in Wickham Road, which are already suffering as a result of larger supermarkets and petrol station shops opening in the area; once the Post Office goes it will be the beginning of the end for the other shops.
Mr Black	The Government policy is to encourage people to have their benefits paid directly into their

London Borough of Croydon	bank accounts as this reduces fraud. It also reduces serious crime since sub-Post Offices holding a large amount of cash are targets. If local residents wish to save their Post Office they will need to find someone willing to take on the commitment and sadly this is not likely since the expected income is insufficient. The real problem is for the elderly who cannot manage ATM machines at banks or get to a supermarket to make use of 'cashback'. Our local postmistress offers a real social service to this group and, of course, she knows them all.
Mr Mackay London Borough of Croydon	Overhead costs have apparently made it impossible to justify keeping open the Wickham Post Office; perhaps it could be incorporated into the local newsagent as the Post Office closure will inconvenience many people.
Mr Plymsol London Borough of Croydon	Wickham Post Office is in easy walking distance to go to make payments into the Co-operative bank and to tax the car, pay bills and buy currency. If it closes transportation of some kind will be needed to go to Croydon or West Wickham Post Offices where there are long queues.
P. J. Treweek London Borough of Croydon	Both of the Post Offices in Wickham Road are busy so if one close this will create a lot of problems for local people.
Mrs Parrott London Borough of Croydon	The Government is encouraging the use of a bank for benefits and pensions however there is no bank in easy reach. If Wickham Road Post Office is closed perhaps the business could be transferred to Safeways Supermarket, which is only a short distance away and where many people do their main shopping. The Post Office could be placed at the back of the store for greater security.
Mr and Mrs Parry London Borough of Croydon	The Parrys' local Post Office in West Wickham useful for money transactions and sending parcels to their son in Australia. Local people cannot understand the closure as queues are often out of the door. They are unable to walk to the alternative branch that is a bus-ride away.
Ms Baine London Borough of Croydon	The staff in Wickham Road are friendly and the branch has a special atmosphere; if it is removed it is going to make life more difficult for people who do not have cars and value meeting each other and chatting.
Mr Davies London Borough of Croydon	Mr Davies wrote on behalf of his 90 year old aunt who finds the Wickham Road Post Office sufficiently close to walk to and it also has the added advantage of being opposite the bus stops for Croydon and Bromley. She does not have a bank account so she pays her utility

	bills there as well as collecting her pension.
Mrs Dixon London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Dixon feels sorry for the people that use Wickham Post Office when it closes.
Mr Cross London Borough of Croydon	Wickham Road Post Office is used by patients of Bethlem Royal Hospital and there is no reasonable alternative for them as they will not wish to spend the £1.40 return bus fare to get to any other branch. The remaining branch in Wickham Road will be issuing road tax discs. This is likely to result in long queues and unacceptable waiting times.
Mrs Mitchell London Borough of Croydon	Once again the senior citizens will suffer when Post Offices close. Where will pensioners get their pensions from now?
Mrs Girling London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Girling uses the 805 West Wickham Post Office for posting parcels where she has always received an excellent, friendly service. When the this branch closes she will have to walk a mile to West Wickham; she is able to do that at the moment but many are not.
Mr Littlewood London Borough of Croydon	Mr and Mrs Littlewood strongly object to the closure of the Wickham Road Post Office. They are 83 and 84 years old respectively and are frequent users of this branch; if it were to close they would have to go a great deal further in all kinds of weather. Shirley is a large residential area and the Post Office is well used. Many of the local shops have closed down including the bank. When the bank closed the Post Office helped enormously by cashing Mr Littlewood's cheques and allowing him to pay into his bank account. He feels that Post Offices are more than just profit making enterprises they are to a large degree a public service.
Mr Harwood London Borough of Croydon	It seems that the Royal Mail is unable to stem the huge losses in spite of the two recent very high salary executives who have been appointed.
Mr Cross London Borough of Croydon	The closure of 806 Wickham Road, though regrettable would not affect Mr Cross greatly as he uses the West Wickham branch.
Mrs Stiles London Borough of Croydon	The walk to any other Post Office is at least twice as far. The other branches are not dedicated Post Offices but also sell groceries, confectionery etc so the queues are longer. Parking facilities at the three remaining branches are almost non-existent whereas the 806 Wickham Post Office has a long lay-by for parking. The sub-postmistress is courteous, quick and attentive; Mrs Stiles would be extremely sorry to lose her.
Mr and Mrs George	It would be highly inconvenient to have to go to Croydon to post parcels if 806 Wickham

London Borough of Croydon	Road Post Office closed. It would mean making a special journey and paying for parking in Central Croydon as it is not possible to park near the Post Office. It is much more inconvenient for the old, disabled or those lacking their own transport.
Mr York London Borough of Croydon	The woman who runs 806 Wickham Road Post Office is a lovely lady is always efficient and calm coping extremely well in difficult conditions. Mr York prefers getting his pension personally rather than from a machine with someone breathing down his neck.
Mrs English London Borough of Croydon	Mrs English is 86 and very concerned about the proposed Post Offices closures. Although very independent she sometimes finds it necessary to ask neighbours for help as all her relatives are in their nineties. Up to now she has been able to walk to 806 Wickham Road to collect her pensions or if she is indisposed a neighbour collects it for her. She wonders how this would be possible if she had to collect her pension from a bank when customers are told not to disclose their PIN numbers. Mrs English has a good memory but feels that many people of her age are not so fortunate and would find it difficult to remember their PIN numbers. If this branch were to close then the journey to other branches would require a bus journey and apart from waiting for buses she recently had a nasty fall causing her to lose confidence.
Ms Sparling London Borough of Croydon	Ms Sparling uses the Post Office for sending birthday parcels and at Christmas time and if 806 Wickham Road closes this will mean taking a bus to West Wickham. Using crowded buses while carrying parcels is not easy and neither is the wait between buses. Although staff are quick and efficient there are almost always queues as many people use 806 Wickham Road Post Office. Its closure will lead to difficulty for its elderly customers who perhaps have no private transport.
Mrs R Hammond London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Hammond is 93 years old and frail and to go any further than 806 Wickham Road Post Office would be impossible. It is difficult to get to West Wickham and the risk of being mugged would be increased.
Mr E Holman London Borough of Croydon	The closure of 806 Wickham Road would cause some inconvenience to Mr Holman who uses the branch for buying stamps and other services. He will have to start using the West Wickham branch where there are queues.
Mrs Mansi London Borough of Croydon	Although Mr and Mrs Mansi are both mobile pensioners they feel that the closure of 806 Wickham Road will cause problems for many older and disabled people and so the branch should not be closed.

Mrs Penfold London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Penfold draws her incapacity benefit from 806 Wickham Road Post Office if it closed then the nearest Post Office would be Woodmere Avenue. There is no public transport from Mrs Penfold's house to Woodmere Avenue and Mrs Penfold understands that too is earmarked for closure. She feels that the community would be at a loss without the friendly and helpful Postmaster at 806 Wickham Road.
Mrs Cunningham London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Cunningham is upset about the proposed closure of 806 Wickham Road Post Office because she is an OAP and finds it convenient to collect the pensions of her two housebound neighbours. If it were to close the nearest then would be in Shirley, which is a bus ride away.
Mr Underhay London Borough of Croydon	The closure of 806 Wickham Road Post Office will inconvenience Mr Underhill as he collects his mother's attendance allowance from there. The branch has ample parking and is in a parade of popular local shops; its loss will serve to run down local services and deprive the community. The other Post Office in Wickham Road does not offer as good parking and is remote from other shops. The main Post Office in West Wickham involves paying for parking and the Post Office in Shrublands does not feel as safe.
Mrs Bowden London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Bowden's father uses the 806 Wickham Road Post Office every week to get his pension, his TV stamps and post parcels. She feels sure that there are a lot of pensioners who find this branch a lifeline.
Mrs Hill London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Hill uses the 806 Wickham Road Post Office for posting parcels and buying stamps and greeting cards and would not like to see it close.
Mrs Smith London Borough of Croydon	The loss of 806 Wickham Road Post Office would be dreadful for Mrs Smith; she uses the Wickham Road Post Office to buy TV stamps and pay her council tax and utility bills. If the branch closes she would go to West Wickham but would find this inconvenient and she's unsure if she could pay her council tax there as it comes under Bromley. If 806 Wickham Road Post Office closes it will limit her use of the Post Office elsewhere.
Mrs Grover London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Grover uses 806 Wickham Road Post Office for Giro/Alliance withdrawals and appreciates the friendly advice she receives from the postmistress; she would find it very inconvenient to have to go to the West Wickham branch.
Mrs Moon London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Moon would not want either Post Office on Wickham Road to close; like Mrs Moon many of her friends are in their 80's and would find it a great hardship if they were not in

	walking distance of the Post Office.
Miss Acock London Borough of Croydon	Miss Acock uses 806 Wickham Road Post Office regularly for paying her utility bills and council tax. The postmistress there takes time with all the many elderly residents and will be missed. If this branch closes Miss Acock would use the 134 Wickham Road branch, which is a bus ride away.
Ms Walton London Borough of Croydon	Ms Walton is a wheelchair user and cannot access the entrance to the 806 Wickham Road Post Office so does not use it but she is aware that lots of elderly people who do use it will be forced to go to Croydon or West Wickham if the closure goes ahead. Ms Walton would regularly use 806 Wickham Road Post Office if it was wheelchair friendly.
Mr Jeffries London Borough of Croydon	Mr Jeffries writes that 806 Wickham Road Post Office is busy and well used by young and old alike. He uses the branch twice a month to buy stamps and send post by special delivery. The alternative branches are a bus ride away and this is particularly difficult to get to by people with limited mobility and for those for whom the Post Office represents an important contact point with the wider community and a focal point of the week.
Ms McCarthy London Borough of Croydon	Ms McCarthy uses 806 Wickham Road Post Office and shops nearby when she does; if it closes she would have to shop elsewhere. She feels its closure would be inconvenient to all and disastrous for the elderly.
Ms Oliver London Borough of Croydon	Ms Oliver agrees with the chairman of the Spring Park Residents Association who sees the closure of 806 Wickham Road Post Office as a retrograde step that puts profits before people. She would like to know if the post box would remain outside 806 Wickham Road.
Mr Wood London Borough of Croydon	Mr Wood is 81 and moved into his present address seventeen years ago a location close to buses, shops and a Post Office. Mr Woods neighbours are almost all over 80 years of age, one is 103 and one nearly 100 and will not be able to use shops unattended. They think it is unfair that they will have to travel over a mile to visit a Post Office when at the moment they have one on their doorstep.
Mrs Edwards London Borough of Croydon	Mrs Edwards would be sad to lose 806 Wickham Road Post Office with its helpful and pleasant postmistress where for many years she collected her Family Allowance. For her as an active housewife to have to use the Shrublands or West Wickham branches would be an inconvenience but a disaster to the elderly or those without transport.
Mrs Fisher	Mrs Fisher, 82, uses 806 Wickham Road Post Office to buy stamps, stationery and get

London Borough of Croydon	information on postage. If it closes she will miss the friendly, personal service there and will have to travel to the West Wickham branch where there are queues.
Ms Hussey London Borough of Croydon	Ms Hussey mainly uses 806 Wickham Road Post Office to draw pensions for two elderly relatives; this will soon be changed to bank transfer. When the branch closes she will have a 45-minute round journey to the nearest Post Office. This will be inconvenient for her but impossible for her elderly mother who is permanently on crutches and just able to walk to 806 Wickham Road Post Office but unable to use buses unaided so will have to rely on others doing errands for her.
Ms Addison London Borough of Croydon	Ms Addison uses 806 Wickham Road Post Office for mail services and to purchase cards and stationery; if it closes she would buy these items on the high street and use the West Wickham branch. Ms Addison is able bodied and relatively young and feels although she would be inconvenienced she would be able to cope but elderly residents would find it very difficult.
Mr and Mrs Maynard London Borough of Croydon	Mr and Mrs Maynard are in their mid-70's and have been using 806 Wickham Road Post Office for 43 years to send parcels including unwanted mail order goods; they also send family mail overseas so need the mail weighing to assess cost. The branch is a few minutes walk away. If the branch closes the nearest Post Office is over a mile away in West Wickham, which is an uncomfortable walk as they use walking sticks. When they first moved into their house the parade of shops that contains the sub Post Office also had a greengrocer, butcher, hardware store, a chemist and a shoe repair shop. They have all gone now and the Post Office is under threat. Mr and Mrs Maynard strongly support endeavours to keep their local branch open.
Mr and Mrs Bebington London Borough of Croydon	<p><u>The Post Office's closure programme</u></p> <p>The Post Office either has no strategic plan for branch closures or is being extremely coy about the programme it has; when the branch at East Croydon was closed, St James Road was offered as an alternative but that too has now closed. The diffusion of PO services leads to a tendency to travel by car rather than on foot, cycle or perhaps by public transport. As distances between branch offices increase, travel patterns change for the worse. This in turn leads to increased congestion and pollution, hardly in line with Government policy. Many branch Post Officers are in District Centres; the viability of these underpins the Council's</p>



	<p>UDP as it did for the District Plan over 20 years ago. This viability is threatened by local branch closures, which diminishes the choice available to all, but especially to those with transport issues usually older and disabled people. The resultant increase in car travel adds to congestion and pollution, wastes resources and reduces the health advantages of walking and cycling the shorter distances to more local facilities.</p> <p><b>806 Wickham Road Post Office</b>  There are frequently queues at this and nearby branches and it is unlikely that these queues would diminish if this office were to be closed so service would be reduced. The viability of local shops would be reduced. This branch offers a local service in walking distance of Royal Bethlem Hospital for recovering patients; no other branch is in walking distance.</p>
Mr Fryman London Borough of Croydon	Mr Fryman finds the service at 806 Wickham Road Post Office to be helpful and friendly; if it closes then he will use the Post Office in West Wickham, which is always busy and the staff are not as willing to spend time in providing information or correct leaflets. There are many elderly, disabled and single parent local residents who will find the closure of this branch a severe inconvenience.
Ms Taylor London Borough of Croydon	806 Wickham Road Post Office is busy which is clearly indicative of demand. For retired residents and those who do not go out to work closure of this facility would cause great inconvenience especially to those who do not have their own transport.
Mr and Mrs Durling London Borough of Croydon	Mr and Mrs Durling use 806 Wickham Road Post Office several times a week. If it closes they would have to drive into West Wickham increasing traffic. They are also concerned for the surrounding shops that would suffer a loss of trade and possible closure if there were no local Post Office.
Ms Stewart London Borough of Croydon	Ms Stewart was horrified to hear of the proposed closure of 806 Wickham Road Post Office; she works from home and buys stamps and post different weight letters from there as well as buying travellers cheques and for Giro transactions and Barclaycard payments.
Mrs Hudson London Borough of Sutton	The closing of Oldfields Road Post Office will mean many old people will have to travel all the way to Sutton, which is very inconvenient. Sub Post Offices are essential in all areas and closing them down is a bad move.

<p>Mrs Hedges London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Mrs Hedges feels without knowing the financial implications incurred by the Royal Mail it is difficult to judge whether they are being unfair when they close sub-Post Offices. Unless the London Assembly look into the wider issue of why small shopping areas appear to becoming redundant such as ever-increasing rents, business rates, parking restrictions, unequal stock-purchasing power, too much red-tape and unattractive neglected areas. Mrs Hedges has some sympathy for the Royal Mail being expected to operate an uneconomic service. For example when 'Red-Routing' the A217 (the road in front of Oldfield Road Post Office) a slip road was included in front of the Gander Pub affecting about 15 other small business shops. Extra width kerbs were added which further obstructed parking areas.</p>
<p>Mrs Hall London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Mrs Hall is sure that a great many people would be inconvenienced by the closure of Oldfields Road Post Office. People sending parcels, airmail and registered letters, Senior Citizens, and mothers with small children regularly use the branch. Many people prefer to collect their pensions/allowances from a Post Office; they feel it is safer. Older people often prefer to retain their independence by conducting their own financial affairs through the Post Office. If this branch closes the nearest Post Office would then be approximately a quarter mile away; not a problem for the fit and active but more of a hassle for older people and those with young children who find it more difficult to board buses.</p>
<p>Miss Cook London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Miss Cook uses her local Post Office to draw her pension, to pay the majority of her bills and to pay in cheques to her bank or building society. She has always received excellent service and would miss the friendly, personal service if it were to close. If her local branch were to close then she would need someone to take her to the next nearest Post Office.</p>
<p>Mrs Stanborough London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Mrs Stanborough opposes the closure of Oldfields Road Post Office, which she uses two or three times a week. If it closes she will have to drive to Sutton or North Cheam and incur parking fees.</p>
<p>Mrs Saban London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>Mrs Saban uses Oldfields Road Post Office to pay gas bills and TV licence and to send parcels and registered letters. If it closes she will use Churchill Road Post Office, which is further away, and she doesn't drive.</p>
<p>G S H Smith MBE London Borough of Sutton</p>	<p>G S H Smith writes that at the end of the Second World War, we set out to produce a society that cared for all expected it to be able to meet an open-ended financial commitment. Our weakened state and uncompromising idealism finally ran out of steam by the 1970's. Sharp reaction set in, to make the country governable and keep spending within income, which</p>

	permitted individuals to get outrageous personal wealth and cripplingly restrained public spending. Services, by their nature have to be supported and although losses should be expected they should be kept to a minimum. Services will continue to deteriorate if it is believed that they can be run on a self-financing basis, if only they are squeezed enough. The Post Office worked well as a service whilst its monopoly gave it the advantage it needed to balance its inevitable losses.
R Collins London Borough of Sutton	R Collins is self-employed operating a mail-order business supplying badges and engraved plaques. A Post Office is essential to the business and closure of the Oldfields Road Post Office would mean travelling to North Cheam or Sutton to get parcels weighed and posted.
Mr and Mrs Winter London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Winter see no good reason why the local populace should be deprived of the valuable service of the Oldfields Road Post Office.
Mrs Price London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Oldfields Road Post Office will be a great loss to Mrs Price and local residents. She is an older person and would find walking to Collingwood Road the next nearest Post Office an arduous task. She uses Oldfields Road Post Office to pay bills and photocopy and finds the staff friendly, helpful and caring; often giving service beyond the call of their normal duties and queues are seldom more that a few minutes, which is an advantage to those who have difficulty standing any length of time. Its closure would be inconvenient and upsetting to the elderly and young mums with pushchairs who would then have to use buses.
K Iacovou London Borough of Sutton	The closure of Oldfields Road Post Office will not inconvenience K Iacovou who uses Church Hill Road Post Office but feels that it will inconvenience the elderly and disabled.
Mr and Mrs Holman London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Holman use Oldfields Road Post Office for registered and recorded delivery and savings payments and ISA accounts. They feel it will be a blow to local residents especially pensioners if it is closed. The nearest alternative is near to West Sutton station and although the 413 bus goes there it is not a good option in bad weather.
Mrs Wright London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Wright suffers from ill health that compromises her mobility and so would find it disastrous if her local Post Office closed.
Ms Watts London Borough of Sutton	Ms Watts opposes the closure of Oldfields Road Post Office as it will greatly inconvenience residents in her area whose only alternative will be to travel into Sutton as they cannot post parcels and buy international stamps anywhere else. She is able to walk to the Oldfields Road branch but as she has arthritis in her foot and knee going further would entail a car journey.

	This will add to the traffic problems as well as personally incurring parking costs and wear and tear on her car. She is appalled to be losing another facility that once constituted a part of the public services.
Mr and Mrs Brain London Borough of Sutton	Both Mr and Mrs Brain are in their eighties and pay their bills at the local Post Office. Oldfields Road Post Office is important to them because as well as having helpful, friendly staff, it is 100 yards from their home. Mr Brain is blind and has to use a wheelchair because of arthritis and the next nearest Post Office is a bus ride and walk away.
Mr Claydon London Borough of Sutton	Mr Claydon has great difficulty walking any distance and is just able to get to Oldfields Road Post Office. He uses the Post Office to post parcels. If his local branch closes he will buy stamps from the supermarket. Oldfields Road Post Office is used by many elderly people who also suffer ill health and by mothers with small children. Local businesses will have to make alternative arrangements for their postal business. All of these people will be inconvenienced. Mr Claydon presumes that the queues will be longer at the alternative Post Office.
Mr and Mrs Malley London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Malley use the Churchill Road Post Office, which they hope will not close. They anticipate that this branch will become busier when Oldfields Road Post Office closes.
Mr Hornby London Borough of Sutton	Mr Hornby has the Churchill Road Post Office nearby and so has no need to use Oldfields Road Post Office. He regrets its closure as it is important to those who use it particularly the elderly, for whom collecting pensions can be a social event. He feels that we are all worse off when everything is 'Business Led'. Mr Hornby wonders if the Post Office would be better off if it were relieved of the responsibility of delivering junk mail.
Mr George London Borough of Sutton	Mr George now buys stamps at the local supermarket and uses the Post Office in Sutton on the occasions he needs a new travel pass. He does not want the area to lose facilities.
J Edwards London Borough of Sutton	J Edwards local Post Office closed down 18 months ago and she now has her pension paid into a bank account and has to get cashback in the local supermarket. She feels sorry that closures mean a loss of a local centre for meeting with community members.
Mrs Godward London Borough of Sutton	While Mrs Godward rarely uses of Oldfield Rd Post Office due to mobility problems. Mrs Godward is against the closure as there will be less reason to use the parade of shops there and the businesses will deteriorate.
Ms Ash London Borough of Sutton	Ms Ash uses Oldfield Rd Post Office regularly. Ms Ash can walk there and does not relish the thought of having to take a bus to Gander Green Lane Station in addition to the walk at

	either end especially in winter. Using the Post Office in Sutton takes over one and half hours and there is always a queue there and she has difficulty standing. She needs her pension as cash and is nervous of using cash dispensing machines.
Mrs Wright London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Wright is upset to think Oldfield Rd Post Office is closing. She has health problems and the branch is convenient for her. If the branch closes she will have to travel to Sutton.
Mrs Greenway London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Greenway feels that the closure of Oldfield Road Post Office will distress many elderly people who use the branch and are known and respected there. They will have to depend on other people to collect their pensions if it closes. It would be helpful if the Post Office could be kept open even for a few days a week. If her branch closes Mrs Greenway will have to take a bus to Sutton to post her overseas letters.
W Tambs London Borough of Sutton	The agenda of nationwide Post Office closures is a retrograde step to the detriment of local communities.
Mrs E Burgess London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Burgess would be desperate if her local Post Office closed (Churchill Road)
Mrs Maddans London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Maddans's local Post Office in Collingwood Road has already closed and she elected to use the St Nicholas Post Office branch because of the proposed closure of Oldfield Road Post Office. Business people bringing in bags of money use St Nicholas Post Office and take an especially long time; queues are often over 18 people long. At these Mrs Maddens, who is 85 feels as though she will pass out and there are no seats nearby.
Mr and Mrs Bailey London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Bailey use Churchill Road Post Office but object to the closure of Oldfield Road Post Office because this would result in difficulties for older people, disabled people and those with young children as well as busier roads.
Mr and Mrs Tennant London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Tennant will have twice as far to travel to a Post Office if Oldfield Road Post Office closes. Like many of their neighbours they are pensioners and find it hard to get about.
Mr Minnion London Borough of Sutton	Mr Minnion uses the Post Office close to his work at lunchtime and is concerned that queues will lengthen when nearby branches close. He writes that Oldfield Road Post Office is near a major store, Tesco, which making it handy for local people especially the elderly, people with mobility problems and those with children who can withdraw their pensions and other benefits and when they go shopping.

Mr King London Borough of Sutton	If Oldfield Road Post Office closes then Mr King will use the Churchill Road branch, which is inconvenient for him. He will not be able to use his car for this longer journey because of parking problems at Church Hill Road. He would like to be able to use the Post Office to pay, without a charge, all his utility bills and to pay cheques in and draw cash and extended opening hours. Mr King would like the branch to be open six days a week.
Ms Johnson London Borough of Sutton	Oldfield Road Post Office is within walking distance of Ms Johnson's home but she works full time so uses the St Nicholas Centre branch where the queues are very long. She previously used Collingwood Post Office to collect her Child benefit but this has now closed down so she has it paid into a bank account. She feels that elderly people in the area are suffering because they need to take a bus to St Nicholas centre.
Mrs Zimmerman London Borough of Sutton	Mrs Zimmerman uses the Churchill Post Office on a regular basis for banking services for a charity she is involved in; this service is free which is extremely important when small sums of money are involved. She is aware of how inconvenient the closure of Oldfield Road Post Office will be for people especially older people who will need to use a bus to get to the nearest alternative.
Mr and Mrs Monteith London Borough of Sutton	Mr and Mrs Monteith frequently use Oldfield Road Post Office and feel its closure would be disastrous for the local community that rely on this branch for pensions and payment of utility bills. Sutton has already lost a Post Office and this further closure would result in loss of other local amenities, which would mean elderly people and mothers with young children would have the difficulty of travelling to Sutton High Street of North Cheam.
Mr Wilson London Borough of Sutton	Closure of Oldfield Road Post Office would have a devastating affect on local people especially the elderly who rely on it to collect their pensions. Mr Wilson and his wife are both in their late 70's and not in good health and would have to travel to St Nicholas Centre in Sutton if their local branch closed.
E. L Bamford	The closure of Kew Green Post Office has caused considerable inconvenience. The Post Office in Sandycombe Road also closed and E L Bamford has to take a taxi to pick up change for business purposes. E L Bamford also feels that elderly people will be inconvenienced, as the nearest Post Office is a bus journey away.
Ms Granleese	Ms Granleese feels there is no doubt that the closure of Kew Green Post Office has had a huge impact on local business. Ms Granleese used this branch for business purposes and now her staff have to spend time travelling to the nearest available Post Office. Other Post

	Offices in the area are unable to cope with their increase trade and it is rare that they are able to complete a transaction within half to three quarters of an hour. Ms Granleese feels that the closure of the sub Post Office has reduced passing trade by about 90%. Kew Green Post Office was a vital element of community life and its closure is a particular loss to the elderly and those with small children.
Mr Bailey	As there is now no local Post Office, Mr Bailey has to pay £250.00 per year to have post collected from his business.
Mrs Humphreys, Practise Manager, The Surgery	The closure of the Westwood Post Office is a great inconvenience to The Surgery as they used it almost on a daily basis. Its closure is a problem for elderly people who used to collect their pension, do a little shopping and chat to neighbours. Trade in the local shops has decreased.
Mr Doran Falconwood Transport and Military Bookshop	Mr Doran's has a specialist bookshop, 45% of his business is mail order, both within the UK and internationally. He opened his business in 1985 and one of the main requirements when he was looking for a suitable location was to be close to a Post Office; he found premises next door to Westwood Post Office. With the closure of this branch Mr Doran now needs to make a half hour round trip every working day to the nearest Post Office which means closing early. Mr Doran has a specialist business and trade is down by 5% but he estimates the Parade of which his shop is part has had a 40% reduction in passing trade. He foresees that as leases come up for renewal that more businesses will close.
Ms Sage Cravelon Metal-Pack Limited	Cravelon Metal-Pack is a busy organisation sending many documents worldwide and uses recorded and registered post. They relied heavily on Hayes Street Post Office have been greatly affected by its closure. Since then a member of staff has to make frequent car journeys the next nearest Post Office.
J Pola	Since the closure of Langtry Walk Post Office J Pola's business has seen a drop of 20% in trade. The parade of which it is part is now deserted with virtually no passing trade. J Pola also misses being able to buy stamps and the Alliance and Leicester banking facility provided by the Post Office.
Mr Bonds Doors of Distinction	Since the closure of Longlands Parade Post Office Mr Bond has to drive to New Eltham or Sidcup for postage requirement with extra costs of time, diesel and parking. They have had to switch their banking arrangements to a high street bank.

Mr Menon Generations (Elderly, Disabled and Nursing Products)	Generations provide a service for the elderly and disabled, supporting independent living. It was convenient for customers to shop there when going to the Post Office. Passing trade has reduced since the closure of the Westmead Road branch; the sales margin has dropped below 50%. Due to the difficulties getting to the next nearest Post Office Mr Menon is no longer able to give a postal service of urgent items such as inco pads. This is a particular problem to those that are housebound. It is also difficult for Mr Menon to send recorded delivery mail because he works alone.
Mr Collinson	Mr Collinson feels the loss of the Post Office is another nail in the coffin of a small, clearly defined neighbourhood. In 1987 Mr Collinson produce a six-part series for Channel 4 entitled 'Talking Shop' that examined the role local shops in a community and took the shops adjacent to Kew Green as an example. Mr Collinson believes this series demonstrated that shops and amenities such as the Kew Green Post Office provide much of the vital cement that hold communities together. Following recent closures there are now no Post Offices in Kew and Mr Collinson has to travel two miles to Richmond to post registered or recorded delivery letters, which he points out would be a problem to those pressed for time or infirm.
Mr Tyrell Bromley & Company	Bromley & Company's business is wall coverings and fabrics. They used Hayes Post Office to dispatch fabrics to converters around the UK on a regular basis and now have to drive with parcels to Hayesford Park Post Office. They can only do this one day a week to cut down on staff time lost from the shop. The parade of shops of which Bromley & Company are part has also less passing trade.
F E Hudson United Business Machines PLC	United Business Machines rely on the services of the Post Office; the closure of their local branch has increased overheads as they now have to pay for a daily pickup collection by Royal Mail. They find the pickup service unreliable and that there are delays in mail and parcels reaching their customers. They feel that the closure of the local Post Office has affected all the business in the area and that trade figures are down. They also feel the large number of elderly people living locally need the services of the Post Office.
Mr Willoughby	The Post Office is a public service, therefore it is an improper reason to close a post office on the basis of cost or the individual circumstances of the present subpostmaster.
S Taylor	Mr Taylor felt that the closure of the post office is another in the long chain of preposterous ideas. He said he was interested in the motivation behind this.
P Howard	Mr Howard is the Chairman of Spring Park Residents Association in Croydon. The



London Borough of Croydon	Association complained about the closure of the post office at Spring Park. They make the point that they could do with a post office and a pharmacy, and less fish & chip and kebab shops. Many of their members are old and infirm. The Council do not help by imposing punitive parking costs to raise their revenue.
L Noctor Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames	Ms Noctor said that four sub post offices have closed in Kingston upon Thames. There have been community petitions and media interest.
N Syde	Ms Syde raised the issue of franchising post offices.
M Davison	Ms Davison said she was concerned about a post office closure in Newham in May 2003. Despite public opposition against the closure, the Post Office went ahead saying that the post office was not a necessity.
G McGee	Mr McGee sent in the draft report of Camden's post office closures scrutiny panel.
Cllr Craig	Cllr Craig of Newham recently helped lead a campaign to try and save a post office in his own ward (Canning Town South). Despite community opposition and meetings with Post Office managers, it became obvious that the talk of consultation was little more than a sham.
Ms Fell	Ms Fell made the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local post offices are easier for carers to get to and so they can spend more time on caring than on travelling to and queuing in post offices;</li> <li>• Keeping post offices open helps maintain social contact;</li> <li>• If post offices close the area can become deprived and this could lead to crime.</li> </ul>
B Morton	Ms Morton said she is unhappy about post offices being closed.
J Yates	Mr Yates was interested in the Post Office's closure programme.
A Oyebade	Mr Oyebade asked if he could help.
Mario Petrou	Mr Petrou wrote a paper about the justification to open a debate on the volume and form of postal provision outlets. He questions and challenges the direction of the Royal Mail and Post Office Limited. Mr Petrou is a shopkeeper who has been trading in the same secondary parade for seven and a half years. He explains the social and economic value that a post office provides to communities and businesses, as well as the perceived public service. He makes the case for incorporating a sub-post office within a viable host business and a change of emphasis of expectation of revenues derived from postal provision from primary to secondary.

Securiglaze Applications Ltd London SE19	Ms Gray the Office Manager wrote that the closure of the Anerley Road Post Office has interfered with the smooth running of their office.
Mr D C Willoughby Orpington	Mr Willoughby wrote about the closure of the Post Office at Court Road, Orpington and his perception that a closure decision had already been made and was implemented despite the matters raised during the consultation.



## **Annex D: Public Services Committee Publications**

The Public Services Committee has also produced the following scrutiny reports, which can be downloaded free at: <http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/pubserv.jsp>

The power cut in London on 28 August 2003  
February 2004

London's Water Supply  
October 2003

The future of Mail Rail  
April 2003

Elections and Electorate Engagement  
May 2002

Reaching Out – Is the Mayor Listening?  
April 2002

## Annex E: Orders and Translations

For further information on this report or to order a bound copy, please contact:

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You can also view a copy of the Report on the GLA website:  
[www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/index.htm](http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/index.htm)

If you, or someone you know, needs a copy of this report in large print or Braille, or a copy of the summary and main findings in another language, then please call us on 020 7983 4100 or email [assembly.translations@london.gov.uk](mailto:assembly.translations@london.gov.uk)

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## **Annex F: Principles of Assembly Scrutiny**

The powers of the London Assembly include power to investigate and report on decisions and actions of the Mayor, or on matters relating to the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, and on any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Londoners. In the conduct of scrutiny and investigation the Assembly abides by a number of principles.

Scrutinies:

- aim to recommend action to achieve improvements;
- are conducted with objectivity and independence;
- examine all aspects of the Mayor's strategies;
- consult widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost;
- are conducted in a constructive and positive manner; and
- are conducted with an awareness of the need to spend taxpayers money wisely and well.

More information about the scrutiny work of the London Assembly, including published reports, details of committee meetings and contact information, can be found on the GLA website at [www.london.gov.uk/assembly](http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly)

## **Annex G: Photography Credits**

Front Cover and Pages 6, 9 and 13  
Kan Grover



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