

**St Leonards On Sea Directly Managed branch**  
**Citizens Advice consultation feedback**

**Major concern: Long term sustainability of post office and building:** CitA notes that the franchisee will be buying the freehold of the property, and will be required to maintain post office services in the building for five years. Peter Chowney, Leader, Hastings Borough Council is concerned that after that the building could be sold and converted. He believes proper use of the building could have made the post office building overall sustainable. Cllr Chowney says that Hastings Council would have been (and still would be) willing to talk to the Post Office about such proposals, and how the council could help. It is clear that the community want to safeguard the premises for future use – therefore could POL provide an update on CitA's request for POL's PAM to engage with the leader of the council prior to the decision being announced please?

**Major concern: Suitability of operator:** Amber Rudd MP has significant concerns [REDACTED]. Could POL provide assurances please and confirm whether Amber Rudd has received a reply?

**Minor concern: Access into and inside new premises:** Respondents have concerns about the space and layout once the post office is merged with retail. CitA would seek clarification on what specific alterations are planned to ensure that there is free and easy access that meets the guidelines set out in POL's accessibility guide and also ensures that there is sufficient space to queue inside the post office and retail areas.

CitA seeks assurances that the entrance and designated walkway will not be impeded by retail customer queues next to retail tills and that operator will ensure that access for disabled customers will not be restricted or impeded at all times, with adequate interior and exterior signage, ventilation and lighting.

**Minor concerns: Capacity and staffing:** The current branch has 5 counters and a total of 4 are proposed at the current branch. Cllr Judy Rodgers (mayor of Hastings) has raised concerns about capacity at the new branch and the impact of the quality of service on local consumers (as has Cllr Chowney). She cites Hastings as an example of a post office where 'the promises made to my residents have not been adhered to' as during peak times there is allegedly often a queue through the shop that takes 30 minutes to get to the counter. Cllr Chowney is also concerned about staff expertise. CitA notes that there will be an increase of 5 hours per week however seeks assurances that capacity and staffing (including training) has been reviewed, particularly any peak demand and seasonal variation.

**Query:** Have all local representatives received a reply?

**Query:** Can POL confirm that the external ATM and AEI are being retained alongside 100% product retention please?

**Query:** Can POL confirm is there sufficient space to accommodate a chair?