



**Post Office Ltd**

**Network Change Programme**

**Area Plan Decision Booklet**

**Surrey, Berkshire and  
West Sussex**



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## 1. Decision Summary

In May 2007, following a national public consultation, the Government announced a range of proposed measures to modernise and reshape the network of Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches (“the Network”) and put it on a more stable footing for the future.

Post Office Ltd has now commenced a Network Change Programme (“the Programme”) to implement the measures prescribed by the Government.

In January 2008 as part of the Programme, Post Office Ltd developed and published a local area plan proposal for the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area (“the Area Plan Proposal”) setting out the changes that it proposed to make, including the compulsory compensated closure of 44 branches, as well as establishing 4 Outreach service points. The development of the Area Plan Proposal involved obtaining feedback from stakeholders, including Postwatch and local authorities. More than 6.7% of our initial proposals were changed as a result of this input.

Post Office Ltd has now reached its final decisions on the future of Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches across the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area following a six-week local public consultation which ended on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

During the local public consultation Post Office Ltd received approximately 6100 pieces of correspondence and attended 25 meetings with customers and their representatives. This enabled Post Office Ltd to improve its understanding of customers’ concerns and to ensure that all such information was taken into account before final decisions were reached.

Post Office Ltd has decided to retain a total of 276 branches across the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area, and to proceed with 41 of the closures in the Area Plan Proposal. Post Office Ltd has decided not to proceed with 3 proposed closures as a result of feedback received during the local public consultation. These branches – Bridge Road, Parklands and South Merstham – will now remain open. Our proposals regarding replacement branch closures are set out later in this booklet.

The remaining network of 276 branches supports the minimum access criteria prescribed by the Government and ensures that 99.5% of the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area will either see no change or will remain within one mile (by road distance) of an alternative branch.

The consultation process has been scrutinised by Postwatch, the independent consumer watchdog, who have been closely involved throughout the Programme.

All affected branches will now display a poster informing their customers about the decision that has been reached. Further information will be provided shortly afterwards in branch to confirm the actual date that the change will take place. This will be not less than four weeks from the date on which the decision is announced and the poster displayed. Where appropriate, information will also be provided in each branch to help customers choose an alternative branch that is suitable for them. We expect to complete all changes in the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area by summer 2008.

We would like to thank all those who responded, including our customers and their representatives, for their contribution to the local public consultation process. Although Post Office Ltd appreciates that change will be difficult for some of our customers, we believe that these decisions minimise these difficulties as much as possible within the constraints of available funding and the criteria set by the Government.

## 2. Overview of the Programme.

### 2.1 Background

The Government recognised that fewer people are using Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches, partly because traditional services, including benefit payments and other services, are now available in other ways, such as online or directly through banks. It concluded that the overall size and shape of the network of Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches (“the Network”) needs to change.

As a result of this the Government conducted a national public consultation from December 2006 to March 2007 to develop a new policy and financial framework for the Network. In excess of 2500 people and organisations took the opportunity to make a contribution to this consultation.

In May 2007, following the national public consultation, the Government announced a range of proposed measures to modernise and reshape the Network with the purpose of putting it on a more stable footing for the future. A copy of the Government’s response to the national public consultation (“the Response Document”) can be obtained at [www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page36024.html](http://www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page36024.html).

Post Office Ltd has now put in place a Network Change Programme (“the Programme”) to implement the measures prescribed by the Government. The Programme will involve the compulsory compensated closure of up to 2,500 Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches with the introduction of about 500 service points known as “Outreach” to mitigate the impact of the proposed closures in some areas. Compensation will be paid to those subpostmasters whose branches are compulsorily closed under the Programme.

To support the necessary changes to the Network, the Government has proposed a funding package of up to £1.7 billion.

The majority of Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches - more than 80% - will not change as a result of the Programme. Post Office Ltd is seeking to implement those changes that do take place as efficiently and sensitively as possible.

The key way in which Post Office Ltd will make sure that people continue to have the best possible access to Post Office<sup>®</sup> services is by applying the minimum access criteria prescribed by the Government in the Response Document. These are:

Nationally:

- 99% of the UK population to be within 3 miles and 90% of the population to be within 1 mile of their nearest Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch.
- 99% of the total population in deprived urban<sup>1</sup> areas across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch.
- 95% of the total urban<sup>2</sup> population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch.
- 95% of the total rural<sup>3</sup> population across the UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch.

In addition, for each individual postcode district:

- 95% of the population of the postcode district to be within 6 miles of their nearest Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch.

The Government also prescribed the following additional criteria in the Response document:

- The population of any one area, any one country in the UK or any group of people is not to be overall significantly more adversely affected by the Programme than the population of any other area, country or group of people (as appropriate).
- There should be a broadly similar number of compulsory compensated branch closures pursuant to the Programme in rural areas as in urban areas (including deprived urban areas) across the UK as a whole.
- There should be a broadly similar number of compulsory compensated branch closures pursuant to the Programme in any one country as in the whole of the UK.

In order to deliver the changes set out in the Response Document, Post Office Ltd has divided the UK into 47 areas. For each of these areas Post Office Ltd will develop a local area plan proposal ("the Area Plan Proposal") which will set out the changes that it proposes to make within it.

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<sup>1</sup> Deprived urban – The most disadvantaged urban parts of the UK based on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (top 15% Super Output Areas in England, 15% of Data Zones in Scotland and 30% of Super Output Areas in Wales and Northern Ireland).

<sup>2</sup> Urban – A community with 10,000 or more inhabitants in a continuous built up area.

<sup>3</sup> Rural – A community not covered by the definition of Urban above.



When developing each Area Plan Proposal Post Office Ltd takes into account a number of factors. These include (where relevant) geographical constraints such as rivers, mountains and valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands in order to avoid undue hardship to customers. In addition, the availability of public transport, alternative access to key Post Office<sup>®</sup> services (such as cash withdrawals, bill payments, mail services), local demographics and the impact on local economies are all considered. Post Office Ltd has sought information in this regard from subpostmasters, local authorities, regional development agencies and other representative bodies.

In analysing these factors and considering the Government criteria, Post Office Ltd has also analysed the proximity of the Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches proposed for closure to other nearby branches, the number of customers currently using a particular Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch, the size and ability of nearby branches to absorb extra customers, and the commercial implications of any decision for Post Office Ltd.

Postwatch, the independent consumer watchdog for postal services, works with Post Office Ltd in assessing the options for change during the period leading up to the publication of each Area Plan Proposal. The dialogue between Post Office Ltd and Postwatch continues throughout the period of local public consultation that follows and during Post Office Ltd's final decision making processes.

Further information about the Network Change Programme is available on our website [www.postoffice.co.uk/networkchange](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/networkchange).

## ***2.2 The Area Plan Proposal for the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area***

An Area Plan Proposal for the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area was developed in accordance with the above process.

At present the area's 1.6 million residents are served by a total of 319 branches. Usage of Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches is falling, in line with national trends, as more customers access services at other places, make more use of the internet and have their Government benefits paid directly into bank accounts.

The communities of Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex are diverse in nature – combining seaside towns such as: Bognor Regis and Littlehampton; the cathedral city of Chichester; the market towns of Dorking, Farnham, Guildford and Haslemere; the royal town of Windsor; and the riverside towns of Henley-on-Thames and Walton-on-Thames; as well as rural areas dotted with small village communities. Some 34% of the population live in rural communities and 66% in urban towns and cities.

The needs of those living in communities defined as “deprived” were considered in the Area Plan Proposal, reflecting the specific national criteria set by the Government to give greater safeguards on the accessibility of branches in these communities. Some 0.18% of the area’s total population live in deprived communities, 0.14% of them in urban areas and 0.04% in rural areas. The Area Plan proposal for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex identified 1 branch as being located in urban deprived communities.

When preparing the Area Plan Proposal for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex, Post Office Ltd considered factors relating to geography, the availability of local transport and alternative access to key Post Office<sup>®</sup> services, local demographics and the impact on local economies. All branches where changes were proposed were visited by members of Post Office Ltd’s dedicated regional field teams to make sure that local factors that needed to be considered were assessed first hand.

In our conversations with stakeholders, we have been made aware of regeneration plans affecting areas within the overall proposal and have taken these into consideration when constructing the Area Plan Proposal. This includes information from Guildford Borough Council, which has made us aware of a possible new housing development of approximately 1,000 homes to the north east of Guildford town centre, the ongoing construction of the A3 Hindhead Tunnel and a new park and ride site planned near the A25 at Merrow. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council informed us of the regeneration of Redhill and Horley town centres, the development of two new neighbourhoods to the north east and north west of Horley, as well as the regeneration of Preston and Merstham, and the extension of bus services from Horley to Redhill.

Rushmoor Borough Council outlined its regeneration schemes for the town centres of Aldershot and Farnborough, and neighbourhood renewal of deprived areas in both towns, including some plans for improvements to bus services between these towns. It also highlighted a new housing development of approximately 4,500 new homes to the north of Aldershot planned from 2009. Spelthorne Borough Council notified us of its plans to build 166 new houses each year across the borough, and that it was expecting further commercial growth in Staines town centre. Elmbridge Borough Council told us of its plans for new housing developments within the borough.

The Area Plan Proposal for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex took into account the locations affected by these and other schemes, their likely implementation timescales, and had regard to the needs of the communities affected by these changes.

Stakeholders have not advised Post Office Ltd of any major road schemes that would materially change the accessibility to branches for particular communities. Similarly, the input that we have received regarding public transport provision does not suggest any proposed reduction in current provision which could leave branches significantly less accessible for particular communities, or make it more difficult for customers to access alternative branches than at present.

The Area Plan Proposal for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex proposed to retain a total of 275 Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches across the region, but to close 44 existing branches, and replace 4 with Outreach service points. In accordance with the Government’s minimum access and other criteria, the Area Plan Proposal for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex comprised 157 branches in urban towns and cities and 118 branches in rural areas.

## ***2.3 Local public consultation process***

The Area Plan Proposal for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex was published on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008. This was followed by a six-week period of local public consultation to allow customers, representative bodies and other interested parties to express their views on the Area Plan Proposal.

We communicated our proposals in a variety of ways to ensure that local people and their representatives were able to participate in the local public consultation process. In branches that were proposed for closure we displayed posters and provided letters and leaflets for customers to take away. In all branches that we proposed to keep in the Network, posters were displayed explaining the Programme and that, subject to the results of the local public consultation, these branches would remain in the Network.

To supplement the communications within each branch, we sent a copy of the Area Plan Proposal and other information to more than 160 stakeholders, which included the relevant MPs, local authorities, and other organisations and representative bodies. This information was also made available via our website at [www.postoffice.co.uk/networkchange](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/networkchange). We issued a press release on the first day of the local public consultation.

During the local public consultation we attended 25 meetings with customers and their representatives to generate feedback on a face to face basis and to help us to understand any local issues causing particular concern. We received in excess of 6100 pieces of correspondence, including emails and letters, in relation to our proposals. This correspondence was recorded, acknowledged and considered alongside all other information and feedback.

A summary of the information and feedback received during the consultation process was shared with Postwatch. In turn, Postwatch has shared with Post Office Ltd relevant issues that consumers had raised with them directly.

The local public consultation for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex closed on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008.



### 3. The role of Postwatch



#### **The consumer watchdog**

Postwatch is the independent watchdog for postal services, created by the Postal Services Act 2000. Postwatch is working with Post Office Ltd and local communities throughout the programme to help secure the best possible outcome for customers.

#### **What Postwatch will do**

Postwatch operates through nine regional and national committees across the UK. Postwatch's role during the programme – prescribed by government - is to scrutinise Post Office Ltd's proposals and give feedback, ensure local consultations are meaningful, and that Post Office Ltd's decisions are in line with government criteria.

Each Postwatch regional office investigates Post Office Ltd's closure proposals. Postwatch receives area plans in advance of public consultation, allowing the time to examine proposals, and Post Office Ltd the chance to refine their proposals before going to public consultation.

Once public consultation is underway, Postwatch works to raise awareness of local consultations, and encourage participation. Postwatch will also work to ensure the minimum access criteria set out by the government are maintained.

Where Postwatch thinks proposals are unsatisfactory, they will work with local communities and Post Office Ltd to address these problems. There is an agreed review mechanism between Postwatch and Post Office Ltd for such instances but it is important to note that Postwatch does not have a power of veto on Post Office Ltd's decisions.

#### **Further information**

Postwatch and Post Office Ltd have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out in detail the role Postwatch will play in the Programme. This is available on the Postwatch website at [www.postwatch.co.uk](http://www.postwatch.co.uk).



## 4. Response to Local Public consultation

Post Office Ltd has received a substantial response to the local public consultation in respect of its proposals for Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex. It is not possible to set out in full all of the responses to local public consultation in Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex in this document.

This section therefore contains a summary of the key aspects of the responses to local public consultation received by Post Office Ltd in relation to each of the branches originally proposed for closure in the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex Area Plan Proposal.

However, all such responses have been reviewed, considered and taken into account by Post Office Ltd when making the decisions set out below.

This section also contains the decision made by Post Office Ltd, following local public consultation, in respect of each of those branches, taking into account the responses and having regard (amongst other things) to the minimum access criteria, other criteria and factors prescribed by the Government.

The decisions to be made by Post Office Ltd during the Programme are complex and difficult. These involve balancing a wide range of factors, as prescribed by the Government in the Response Document (see section 2.1) above. They include the commercial viability of branches and other operational issues, as well as factors such as the local demographics and the effect of closures on the local economy. At the same time Post Office Ltd must ensure compliance with the detailed minimum access criteria and other criteria set out in the Response Document.

We appreciate that any decision to close a Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch is likely to be unpopular. Nevertheless, Post Office Ltd has to make decisions to close branches in order to put the Network on a more stable footing for the future and achieve this in a way which best meets the demands and concerns of the public, its customers.

Many responses received during consultation, addressing either individual closure proposals or the wider plan for the area, raised general objections to the loss of branches. The Government's own 12 week national public consultation from December 2006 to March 2007 allowed organisations and individuals to raise concerns regarding the overall policy towards the network, including a reduction in the number of branches. Therefore while having due regard to all consultation responses, in reviewing the Area Plan Proposal, Post Office Ltd has focused on new information relating to the criteria and factors prescribed by Government and set out in this document.





Post Office Ltd has decided not to proceed with the closure of the following branches:

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Bridge Road Branch**

Respondents made a variety of objections during the local public consultation. The main concerns raised from respondents included the new housing developments currently taking place in the area, the perceived long waiting times at the proposed alternative branches (including Maidenhead Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup>), limited parking facilities at the alternative branches and the impact of the proposed closure of this branch on vulnerable customers. Respondents also commented on the efficient and friendly service provided at Bridge Road branch and that the proposed closure would be a loss to the local community.

Post Office Limited has considered this feedback, as well as the large public petition received, a submission from Connells Land Department relating to proposed future developments and the written submission from the Thames Reach Residents Association representing over two hundred homes in the area. Post Office Limited also received correspondence from the local MP, Theresa May, which has also been taken into account.

Post Office Limited recognises that the closest alternative branch - Maidenhead Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is within one mile of the Bridge Road branch and that there is a direct bus service that operates regularly throughout the day between Bridge Road branch and Maidenhead Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup>. However, there is no disabled access on any bus services to alternative branches and there is no direct bus route between Bridge Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch and the second closest alternative branch - Furze Platt branch - which is almost two miles away.

The local area consists of a number of homes for the elderly, including the sheltered accommodation at Maudsley House, the George Herring flats and the Salters and Drapers Almshouses. A large new development of over 300 new homes is currently being built directly opposite the Bridge Road branch, and 200 more new homes, including social housing, are planned to be built nearby.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided not to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Parklands Branch**

Respondents to the local public consultation raised a variety of concerns, including the perceived very long waiting times at the proposed alternative closest branch - Chichester Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup>, the effect of the proposed closure of Parklands branch on vulnerable customers, local businesses and retailers, and the limited parking available at alternative branches. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the planned re-location of Chichester Post Office<sup>®</sup> into a nearby WH Smith store, which respondents thought to be too small. Additionally, respondents raised concerns regarding infrequent public transport services in the area and the possible adverse effect that the proposed closure would have on the local community.

Post Office Limited received a wide variety of responses to the local public consultation in relation to the proposed closure of this branch, including responses from West Sussex County Council, Chichester District Council, Age Concern, the Parkland Residents' Association, Fishbourne Parish Council as well as correspondence and a petition from the local MP, Adam Tyrie.

Parklands Post Office® branch serves a community in which over 30% of the residents are over the age of retirement and almost 4% are over 80 years old. Additionally, almost 40% of local residents do not own a vehicle. Whilst there is a bus service between the Parklands Post Office® branch and the Crown Post Office® in Chichester (which is the closest alternative branch and the one to which Post Office Limited anticipates the majority of customers would go if the Parklands branch closed), feedback received from respondents during the public consultation expressed concern that this bus service may not continue in the future due to local funding issues.

Further, over 20% of local residents claim benefits, which is reflected in the business activity undertaken at the Parklands branch. Nearly 7% of residents in the area are registered as suffering from long-term illnesses and/or disabled and the number of social housing tenants exceeds the national average.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided not to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office® South Merstham Branch**

The main concerns raised from respondents during the local public consultation related to the effect of this proposed closure on the elderly, particularly as the closest alternative branch – the Portland Drive Post Office® branch - was considered by respondents to be in a deprived, unsafe area. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the impact of this proposed closure on the local community and the new housing estates currently being built in the local area. Respondents also raised concerns about the effect of the proposed closure on surrounding businesses which use South Merstham branch, as well as the effect on the pharmacy connected to the branch. Some residents also raised concerns relating to the loss of the only banking facility in the area in the event of closure of this branch. Furthermore, respondents raised concerns about the transport links to alternative branches from the locale as these are perceived to be already over-crowded.

Post Office Limited has considered all the feedback received, including consultation responses from the local MP, Crispin Blunt, a submission from the Holmthorpe Estate Association and three letter campaigns opposing the proposed closure of South Merstham Post Office® branch. The community of South Merstham is densely populated and the branch is located within a small discrete shopping area.

Further housing development is now underway in the area, most notably the Watercolour Development of over 500 new properties, and there is also a planned expansion of the nearby Holmthorpe Industrial Estate, with a planned closure of the Holmthorpe Post Office® branch, which is expected to increase the demand for Post Office® services locally in the very near future.

Post Office Limited is also mindful that it is to proceed with the closure of Horley Road Post Office® in Redhill, and expects some customers to use Redhill Post Office® in the WHSmith store in the town centre. To ensure that all remaining branches in its network around Redhill have the ability to cope with extra customers, and having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided not to close South Merstham Post Office® branch.



Post Office Ltd has decided to proceed with the closure of the following branches:

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Abinger Hammer Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation included the effects on the community and vulnerable customers as this branch was seen as the hub of the community. Respondents also commented on the distance required to travel to the proposed alternative branches, the infrequent bus services to alternative branches and the potential adverse effect that closure could have on the attached village shop and other local retailers. Other issues raised were the lack of any other banking facilities in the local area and the difficult parking at the alternative branches. Respondents also commented that the Post Office<sup>®</sup> Abinger Hammer branch offered an efficient service.

Correspondence was received from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the local MP, Sir Paul Beresford and a number of petitions from Mole Valley Conservatives.

Post Office Limited has considered all consultation responses received. The closest proposed alternative branch is located amongst other retail premises in Gomshall within one mile of Abinger Hammer branch, and the Gomshall Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch offers a wider range of services and longer opening hours, including Sunday mornings. There is a regular bus service between Abinger Hammer branch and Gomshall branch which offers low level access for people with disabilities on most services and free off-peak travel for senior citizens and other eligible people. Gomshall branch offers its own parking and disabled access will now be improved by the planned installation of a ramp. Post Office Limited has also considered the number of elderly users of the Abinger Hammer branch, and the impact on local businesses. However, it is noted that access to the closest alternative branch is via main road, vehicle ownership is high amongst those in the community and the terrain between branches is mainly level.

Having therefore given due regard to these and other relevant factors, Post Office Limited, has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Aldwick Branch**

Respondents' main concerns related to the effect of the proposed closure on elderly people in the area and the potential damage to the local community. Concerns about the proposed alternative branches focused on what was said to be infrequent bus services, hazardous roads and poor parking facilities, as well as the effect on the environment of more cars on the road as a result of the journey to alternate branches. Additionally, some customers commented on the friendly, helpful staff at the Aldwick branch.

During the local public consultation, Post Office Limited had further discussions with Arun District Council, and their comments and written submissions have been carefully considered, as have those of the Aldwick Preservation Society.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received during the local public consultation as well as submissions from both West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council. Post Office Limited recognises that Aldwick is situated in a densely populated area, and careful consideration has been given to the elderly residents living in the local area and how they would access Post Office<sup>®</sup> services in

the future in the event of the closure of Aldwick branch. The two closest alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches are located within one mile of Aldwick and the closest, the Rose Green Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch, has a ramp, a handrail and a wide door into the premises to assist customers in wheelchairs or customers with mobility difficulties. Rose Green branch also has three serving positions, offers a wider range of products than Aldwick branch and will increase its opening hours if customer demand requires it. A regular bus service runs between the branches, with disabled access on some vehicles, and there is free bus travel for people over the age of sixty and disabled passengers on weekdays after 9.00 am and at weekends. For those customers with access to a car, there is some parking available outside the Rose Green branch. The walking journey between the branches would be generally along level ground, with some very small undulations, and there is a pelican crossing to assist pedestrians crossing Gossamer Lane.

Having given due regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited is to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Ash Road Branch**

During the local public consultation Post Office Limited received a petition with over 260 signatures opposing the proposed closure of this branch. Post Office Limited has considered this petition as well as all other responses received during the local public consultation.

The two closest alternative branches are located within one mile of the Ash Road branch. Both of these branches have two serving positions, have ramp access to the premises through a wide door and space inside for a wheelchair. They are also both located amongst a variety of other local retailers. There is a regular bus service to the closest alternative branch – Church Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> - and, if walking, the route is varied but well paved and well lit. For those with access to a car, parking is available within 50 yards of the branch. A number of elderly people live in the local area and this, along with the effects any closure could have on the local economy, has also been considered.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Balcombe Road Branch**

During the local public consultation the main points raised by respondents related to the new housing developments currently taking place in the area and the difficulties in walking to the closest alternative branch since customers would need to cross the railway, which effectively divided Horley in two. Respondents also commented that Horley Post Office<sup>®</sup> was always busy whereas customers received efficient, friendly service at the Balcombe Road branch. Other respondents said that the proposed closure would adversely affect local businesses, as well as the community in general.

Post Office Limited received during the consultation a submission from Horley Town Council and a petition opposing the proposed closure.

Post Office Limited has given very careful consideration to the feedback relating to Balcombe Road Post Office<sup>®</sup>. There is a frequent bus service to the closest alternative branch in Horley town centre, which is within one mile of the Balcombe Road branch, and this is situated in the main street amongst

many other retailers. There is a regular bus service to Horley Post Office<sup>®</sup> and some buses have disabled access; there is also free off-peak travel for senior citizens. Horley Post Office<sup>®</sup> has level access, an automatic door and a low-level writing desk inside. It also offers a full range of Post Office<sup>®</sup> services, longer opening hours, six serving positions and Post Office Limited believes it does have sufficient capacity to absorb potential extra customers. Parking is available in a pay and display car park within 150 yards of the branch. Post Office Limited has noted that there is a footbridge (with steps) or subway (no steps) to cross the railway on foot, but otherwise the route between branches is mainly level.

Having given due regard to all of the relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Boxalls Lane Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents related to the impact of closure on elderly residents in the area as the Boxalls Lane Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch was considered to be a vital part of the local community. There were also concerns about the fact that Weybourne Post Office<sup>®</sup> only had one parking space outside the branch and was on a busy road, whereas the Boxalls Lane branch had good parking facilities. Post Office Limited also noted residents' concerns regarding the Post Office<sup>®</sup> in the WHSmith store in Aldershot.

Post Office Limited has considered the feedback and has also taken into account the written submission from a local councillor and a 1,000-signature petition. The two closest alternative branches are located within one mile of the Boxalls Lane Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch, - with Church Road branch just over half a mile from Boxalls Lane branch. The Church Road branch has longer opening hours and offers extra services and both of the closest alternative branches have good access for the disabled. Although it is noted that there is no direct bus route between Boxalls Lane and Church Road branches, the roads are well lit and have footpaths for those who are able to walk. For those customers with access to a car, parking is available within 50 yards of Church Road branch.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited had decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Boyne Hill Branch**

The main concerns received from respondents during the local public consultation included the impact of the proposed closure on vulnerable customers, the distance and risks involved in travelling to the closest alternative branches, the long waiting times at alternative branches, the lack of adequate public transport in the area and the effect of the proposed closure of Boyne Hill Post Office<sup>®</sup> on the community as a whole.

Post Office Ltd considered the feedback received for Boyne Hill including correspondence from the local MP, Theresa May. Post Office Limited believes that the community has reasonable access to its services, with the closest alternative branch at Highway just over half a mile away. Whilst it was noted that there is no direct bus service operating between Boyne Hill and Highway branches, vehicle ownership in the area is high with almost 90% of households having a car or van. Free parking is available at both of the closest alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches. It was also noted that both of the closest branches have level or ramp access. Whilst customers walking to the closest alternative branch, would need to cross the A4, the route is mainly level with footpaths.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Burnham Lane Branch**

The main concerns received from respondents during the local public consultation included the lack of public transport to the alternative branches, the length of waiting times at these branches, and the length of travel time required to reach them for customers without access to a car. There were also concerns expressed by local residents who viewed this branch as a vital part of the community. It was also mentioned that Burnham Lane is the only branch in the area with parking directly outside, which helped disabled customers, whereas there is a lack of parking at Burnham Post Office<sup>®</sup>. The staff at Burnham Lane were also praised for being friendly and helpful.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback, including correspondence from Slough Borough councillors, and it believes that the suggested alternative branches do provide reasonable access to Post Office<sup>®</sup> services. The two closest alternative branches are both within three quarters of a mile of Burnham Lane branch, and a frequent bus service operates to them, although it has been noted that the bus stops are not close to the branches. All buses have concessionary fares available to senior citizens and disabled passengers. Post Office Limited recognises that the walking route to the closest alternative branch is varied and passes beneath a railway bridge but this is well-lit and the pavements are in good order. Both of the alternative branches have access for disabled customers and space inside for a wheelchair. Access to cash is available at each of the closest alternative branches and from non-charging ATMs nearby. Some parking is available close to the alternative branch on Bath Road. Burnham Post Office<sup>®</sup> has parking outside the branch and pay and display parking at the rear.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Claygate Branch**

Respondents' main concerns included concern for vulnerable customers, particularly the elderly and those with limited mobility. Respondents also commented upon the excellent customer service at Claygate branch and how the closure would affect the local community, particularly nearby businesses.

Submissions were also received from the Esher & District Citizens Advice Bureau, the local MP, Ian Taylor, and Claygate Parish Council.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses received during the local public consultation in relation to the proposed closure of Claygate branch, and also a petition of over 1,000 signatures submitted by the Subpostmistress on behalf of customers. It is noted that the closest alternative branch - The Parade - is less than half a mile away and a regular bus service operates between the branches. There is some parking at The Parade Post Office<sup>®</sup> for those who have access to a car, with additional pay and display parking nearby at the station. Post Office Limited acknowledges that the route from Claygate to The Parade is hilly, although the pavements are good with street lighting. The effect of the proposed closure of this branch on the elderly living in the area has also been taken into account, particularly for residents of the Arbrook Hall flats. However, Post Office Limited considers that there is reasonable access to Post Office<sup>®</sup> services in the area. The Parade Post Office<sup>®</sup> has a step at

the entrance but there is a portable ramp to assist customers when required (the pavement is too narrow to install a permanent ramp) and assistance can be requested via a buzzer.

Having taken these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of Claygate branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Cookham Road Branch**

Respondents' main concerns included the effect of the proposed closure on vulnerable customers, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities. Respondents were also concerned about the risks and difficulties associated with travelling to the alternative branches, and the long waiting times at those branches.

Post Office Limited received correspondence, sent as part of a public letter-writing campaign, a written submission from the Islamic Trust, a petition and feedback from the local MP, Theresa May.

The two closest alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches are within one mile of Cookham Road, and there is a regular bus service to both branches. The journey time is five and six minutes respectively. All buses have concessionary fare schemes for senior citizens and disabled passengers, although it is noted that disabled access is only available on some vehicles. Post Office Limited noted that the route to the closest alternative branch - Furze Platt - is hilly and there is a level crossing en route but there is street lighting for those able to walk. For customers with access to a car, there is some parking outside Furze Platt branch, with additional parking nearby if required. Parking is available directly outside the branch for drivers who are disabled. Post Office Limited recognises that there is a high percentage of retired people living in the area.

Having given careful consideration to these and other relevant factors, Post Office Limited is to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Craigweil On Sea Branch**

The main issues raised during the local public consultation by respondents in relation to Post Office Limited's proposal for this branch related to concern for elderly customers and those with disabilities as well as for the local community as a whole, difficulties in accessing services at the closest alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches due to the distance required to travel to those branches, the variable route between branches and a lack of public transport. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the environmental impact of the closure if more people had to drive to an alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup>.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received, including a petition received from a local councillor as well as input from Arun District Council together with the detailed submissions from the Royal Bay Care Homes. Craigweil has a high proportion of elderly residents and care homes in the community and consideration has been given to this fact. The closest alternative branch is Rose Green Post Office – located 0.7 miles from Craigweil. However, feedback from some customers indicated that they considered Nyetimber Post Office<sup>®</sup> to be closer, depending on where they live, and this is acknowledged by Post Office Limited. Although there is no direct bus service between Craigweil Post Office<sup>®</sup> and the two closest alternative branches – Rose Green and Nyetimber – there is a bus service that circles the estate and this service (which runs between Midhurst and Bognor Regis) passes Rose Green Post Office<sup>®</sup> going one way and Nyetimber Post Office<sup>®</sup> in the opposite direction. The bus stop is at the end of a paved well-lit 200-metre pathway which is situated off Barrack Lane, 30 metres from



Craigweil Post Office<sup>®</sup>. If customers wish to walk to the Rose Green branch, the route is varied and there is a pelican crossing over the one busy road between branches. For customers with access to a car, some forecourt parking is available, with roadside parking and a small car park close by. Post Office Limited has also noted that the Rose Green branch has good access for customers and three serving positions currently. Further service improvements, for example longer opening hours, may be introduced in future should the need arise.

Having given due regard to all of these factors, the decision is to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Easebourne Branch**

Respondents' main concerns related to the difficulty of travelling to, and parking at, the closest alternative branches, as well as the perceived long waiting times at these branches. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the effect of the proposed closure on elderly customers and the community in general. Respondents praised the current service provided by Easebourne branch.

Submissions were received from Easebourne Parish Council, the Mole Valley Conservatives and Chichester District Council.

Post Office Limited has considered the existence of the residential care home in Easebourne, the cost of public transport between Easebourne branch and the closest alternative branches, planned new developments in the local area, the likely effect of the proposed closure on the local economy and the overall impact on the elderly population of the area.

Post Office Limited also considered all feedback received during the local public consultation for this branch, including a petition received by the Parish Council.

The closest alternative branch – Midhurst Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is less than one mile from Easebourne branch, offers more services and has longer opening hours. A regular bus service operates between the branches, with concessionary fare schemes for elderly and disabled passengers and there is disabled access on some of these bus services. For those customers with access to a car, there is some roadside parking available outside the Midhurst branch. Alternatively, free parking is available in a large car park at the end of Midhurst High Street, which is located not far from the Midhurst branch.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> East Street Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation included the long waiting times at the Chichester Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> - the closest alternative branch - and the difficulties with parking at that branch. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the effect that the proposed branch closure might have on vulnerable customers, particularly the elderly, as well as the community as a whole. Respondents also commented upon the excellent and efficient service currently provided at the East Street branch.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received during the local public consultation relating to the proposed closure of this branch, including submissions from Chichester District Council. The two

closest alternative branches are located within one mile of East Street Post Office<sup>®</sup>, with regular bus services to each of these alternative branches from East Street branch. These bus services offer concessionary fare schemes for the elderly, and disabled access is available on most of the buses. The ground is level between branches for those who prefer and are able to walk.

The capacity of the closest alternative branches to absorb the expected additional customer levels as a result of the proposed closure of East Street branch has also been carefully reviewed. Post Office Limited considers that there is sufficient capacity in these alternative branches to cope with levels of additional demand. Chichester Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> offers a full range of Post Office<sup>®</sup> products and services and there is parking available within 100 yards of that branch.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into consideration, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Effingham Junction Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the likely effect of the proposed closure on the community and vulnerable customers, the distance and risks associated with accessing the alternative branches, poor public transport in the local area and the potential impact on local retailers and local business. Other issues raised by respondents related to the cost of parking close to the alternative branches and recent housing developments in the area. Respondents also commented that Post Office<sup>®</sup> Effingham Junction branch offered an efficient service.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received from respondents during the local public consultation relating to Effingham Junction branch, including correspondence from the Local MP, Sir Paul Beresford, and a petition opposing the closure of this branch.

The two closest alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches are within two miles of the Effingham Junction branch, with the closest branch being Station Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> in East Horsley, being just over 1.5 miles away. Station Road branch has two serving positions, offers more Post Office<sup>®</sup> services and has longer opening hours (Effingham Junction Post Office<sup>®</sup> only opens three days a week). There is a limited bus service operating each day, with most buses having access for disabled people. There is free off-peak travel for those over sixty years of age and passengers with disabilities. For customers who have access to a car, restricted parking is available at Station Road branch, with one designated disabled parking bay.

Although Station Road branch has a stepped entrance, a buzzer is to be installed for use by any customers requiring assistance. Whilst, there is no pavement or street lighting for part of the route to Station Road, Post Office Limited has found that over 90% of the households in the local area have access to a car or van.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Hawthorn Road Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the likely impact of the proposed closure on elderly customers and the capacity of the closest alternative

branches to cope with the expected additional customer levels resulting from closure of Hawthorn Road Post Office<sup>®</sup>. Respondents also commented on the efficient, friendly service provided at the branch and some respondents said that the proposed closure would be a significant loss to the local community.

Petitions were submitted by local residents and from residents of the Servite Sheltered housing scheme. Feedback was also received from Bognor Regis Town Council and a detailed submission was received from Arun District Council.

The two closest alternative branches are located within three quarters of a mile of Hawthorn Road branch - Durlston Drive and North Bersted Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches. Although it was noted that there is no direct bus service between Hawthorn Road and Durlston Drive branches, there is a frequent service (approximately every 10 minutes) to North Bersted branch. All buses have concessionary fare schemes for customers over the age of sixty and disabled passengers, and disabled access is available on most of these buses.

For customers who have access to a car, parking is available outside or opposite both of the closest alternative branches, and travel on foot to the closest alternative branches is mainly level with well lit pavements for pedestrians and a pelican crossing over the A259. The ability of nearby branches to absorb the expected extra customer levels resulting from the closure of Hawthorn Road branch has been carefully reviewed by Post Office Limited and some improvements are planned to North Bersted Post Office<sup>®</sup> in the event of increased demand for services at that branch. These include longer opening hours and better physical access for customers.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Holmbury St Mary Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the rising elderly population in the local area, the distance required to travel to alternative branches and the waiting times required at those branches. Respondents also commented that the Holmbury St Mary Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch offered an efficient service.

Post Office Limited has carefully considered all feedback received during the local public consultation, a petition submitted by the Mole Valley Conservatives and proposals for planned future development in the local area.

Post Office Limited recognises that the closest alternative branch at Gomshall is over two miles away, but notes that there is a regular bus service between Holmsbury St Mary and Gomshall branches which offers free off-peak travel for senior citizens and disabled passengers. Also, there is disabled access on most of these bus services.

Post Office Limited also recognises that car ownership in the local area is high, with 90% of households owning one or more vehicles, and there is parking available outside Gomshall Post Office<sup>®</sup> for those customers who have access to their own transport.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

## **Post Office® Holmethorpe Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the potential increase in demand for Post Office® services in the local area arising from two large residential developments (already half-completed) in the area, the impact on local business customers from a nearby industrial estate and the vulnerable customers in the area. Respondents also raised issues relating to the cost of parking at the closest alternative branches, the perceived long waiting times at those branches and the likely effect of the proposed closure on the community in general. Respondents also commented that Holmethorpe Post Office® branch offered an efficient service.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received during the local public consultation relating to this branch, including a submission from the Holmethorpe Estate Association.

There are a number of alternative Post Office® branches located approximately a mile from Holmethorpe branch – including Linkfield Corner and the Redhill town centre branch, located in a WH Smith retail shop. Whilst Post Office Limited acknowledges there is no direct bus service between the Holmethorpe and Linkfield Corner branches, there is a frequent bus service to the Redhill town centre from the nearby main road. For business customers who may not have a Royal Mail collection service, there is a post-box for franked business mail on Frenches Road, located close to the industrial estate.

Post Office Limited recognises that approximately over 80% of local households have at least one car or van and there is a pay and display car park with a designated disabled bay within 150 yards of Linkfield Corner Post Office®.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

## **Post Office® Horley Road Branch**

Respondents' main concern related to the impact of the proposed closure on the large elderly population in the local area. Respondents view the branch as an integral part of the community, and praised the helpfulness of the staff.

Respondents also raised concerns relating to the future of the Londis store (in which the branch is currently located) if Post Office® Horley Road branch is closed and customers migrated to other nearby branches for Post Office® services. Respondents pointed out that parking at the closest alternative branches was difficult, and that the bus service to those branches was infrequent and unreliable. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the need to cross a busy dual carriageway in order to walk to an alternative branch and that residents from the Whitebushes Estate and South Earlswood community had poor access to alternative branches due to the limited number of routes across the railway that runs through Redhill.

Two petitions signed by local residents were also received.

The two alternative branches are within just over one mile of Horley Road branch – Salfords Post Office® and Earlswood Post Office®. There is a frequent bus service to both alternative branches, with free off-peak travel for senior citizens and lowered floors for disabled access on most vehicles.

Salfords Post Office<sup>®</sup> has planned improvements including the installation of a new open-plan counter, longer opening hours and additional staff. For customers who have access to a car, parking facilities are available on the road close to the Salfords branch, and outside the branch at Earlswood. For customers who are able to walk to Salfords branch, the route is relatively flat with good pavements and street lighting.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Kingston Road Branch**

Respondents' main concern related to the impact on vulnerable customers, the distance required to travel to alternative branches and the perceived long waiting times at those alternative branches. Respondents also commented that the Post Office<sup>®</sup> Kingston Road branch offered an efficient service.

Post Office Limited received a large petition from the Mole Valley Liberal Democrats and correspondence from the local MP, Sir Paul Beresford and Mole Valley District Council.

The two closest alternative branches are located within half a mile of Kingston Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch. There is a regular bus service to both of these alternative branches, with lower floors and free off-peak travel for senior citizens and disabled passengers. Both alternative branches have level access for customers in wheelchairs or with buggies and parking is available at each for those who have access to a car. For pedestrians travelling to the alternative branches, the route to each is generally level, with a railway bridge crossing if walking to the Leatherhead Common Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch.

Having carefully considered all of the consultation responses and having regard to all relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Knowle Hill Branch**

Respondents' main points related to concerns for elderly customers and foreign students in the event of closure of this branch, infrequent public transport in the area and insufficient parking facilities at the closest alternative branches. Respondents to the local public consultation also commented on the excellent service provided by the staff at Knowle Hill branch and some respondents raised concerns relating to the future of the local shop in which the branch is located in the event of closure of the branch.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received, including that from Hurley Parish Council and correspondence from the Local MP, Theresa May. Whilst it is acknowledged that the closest alternative branch - Upper Wargrave Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is almost three miles from Knowle Hill branch, Wargrave branch offers a wider range of services, has longer opening hours and is located in an area with other retail shops nearby. In addition, over 90% of the households in the local area own at least one car or van, and parking is available within 10 yards of Wargrave branch for customers who have access to their own transport. There is a bus service between Knowle Hill Post Office<sup>®</sup> and the second closest alternative branch - Highway Post Office<sup>®</sup> - and some of the buses operating on this service have low-level access to assist disabled passengers.

Having taken these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

## **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Leatherhead Road Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the distance required to travel to the closest alternative branches, problems with parking and the perceived long waiting times at those alternative branches.

Other issues raised by respondents during the local public consultation included the expected adverse effect on local retailers and the community in the event that this branch is closed, the infrequent bus services in the local area and the expected increased carbon emissions resulting from customers required to drive to alternative branches. Respondents also noted the efficient customer service at Leatherhead Road Post Office<sup>®</sup>.

Post Office Limited also considered access to its services for the residents of sheltered housing in Turville Court and correspondence from the local MP, Sir Paul Beresford.

The closest alternative branch - Great Bookham Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is located just over half a mile away from Leatherhead Road branch, with parking facilities and a dedicated disabled bay outside the branch for those with access to a car. Car ownership in the area is said to be approximately 88% and Post Office Limited has noted that a bus service travels between the two branches, albeit a limited service, and the buses usually have a low level floor to assist passengers as well as offering free off-peak travel for senior citizens and the disabled.

For customers who are able to walk to Great Bookham branch, the route is generally level. The ability of the alternative branches to cope with the expected additional customer levels has been carefully examined and Post Office Limited considers that these branches do have sufficient capacity.

Having taken these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

## **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Little Green Lane Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the impact of closure of this branch on the local community, especially those from St Peters Hospital and the Salesian School. Respondents also raised concerns relating to elderly customers who use the branch. Respondents felt that parking facilities at the closest alternative branches, especially Chertsey and Addlestone branches, was poor, and that the alternative branches were located far away and would require customers to cross dangerous roads if walking. Some respondents also questioned the proposed closure of this branch since it had been recently refurbished after a fire. Post Office Limited has considered all responses received during the consultation, including the submission from the Runnymede Older People's Forum.

The two closest alternative branches are within two miles of Little Green Lane Post Office<sup>®</sup>, and buses run frequently to both, with concessionary fare schemes for elderly and eligible disabled customers. Both of the alternative branches have longer opening hours, offer a wider range of products, including motor vehicle licensing, and have level access into the premises. Car ownership in the local area is high - over 83% - and parking is available at both alternative branches.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Mickleham Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the effect the closure of this branch would have on the community and local retailers. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the effect on vulnerable customers, the high cost of travel and time required for travel to the closest alternative branches, inadequate parking at and inadequate public transport to those alternative branches, the perceived long waiting times at them and the expected increased carbon emissions resulting from increased car travel to alternative branches. The impact on local business customers was also raised as a concern by respondents, who also commented that Mickleham Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch offered an efficient service to customers.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received during the local public consultation, including correspondence from the Local MP, Sir Paul Beresford, and submissions from Mickleham Parish Council, the Leatherhead & Dorking Citizens Advice Bureau, Mole Valley District Council and the Westhumble Residents Association.

At least 80% of households in the local area have one or more cars/vans and parking is available close to both of the closest alternative branches.

There is a regular bus service from Mickleham branch to both alternative branches, with buses usually having a low-level floor to assist passengers and offering free off-peak travel for senior citizens and disabled people. Both of the suggested alternative branches have level access and wide doors for customers in wheelchairs.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Minley Estate Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the impact of the proposed branch closure on elderly customers and those customers with limited mobility. Respondents also commented on the efficient, friendly service provided at Minley Estate branch, that it would be a loss to the community if the branch closed and pointed out that several hundred new houses had been built in the area in the last 18 months. Some respondents drew attention to the long walks and dangerous roads required by travel on foot to the closest alternative branches, the unreliable bus services in the area and the possible impact of closure on the environment due to increased car travel and the associated emissions.

Post Office Limited has carefully considered this feedback, including submissions from Rushmoor Borough Council and a petition signed by over 900 people. Post Office Limited has also considered the elderly community of Minley Estate, including residents of sheltered accommodation such as that at St John's.

There are two alternative branches within one mile of Minley Estate Post Office<sup>®</sup>: Oak Farm Estate and Fox Lane Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches. Both of these alternative branches have more counter positions and offer a wider range of products. There is a regular bus service between the Minley Estate and Fox Lane

branches, with concessionary fare schemes for elderly and disabled passengers. Some buses that operate this service also have disabled access.

Over 80% of households in the local area have at least one car or van and for those who have access to private transport, there is parking available at both of the closest alternative branches. For those who are able to walk, there are some slight inclines en route to each of the closest alternative branches, but there are pavements, street lighting, traffic islands and drop-down kerbs to assist pedestrians crossing the road.

There are some improvements planned to Oak Farm Estate Post Office<sup>®</sup> to provide better access for customers.

Having considered these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Norfolk Park Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the possible impact on vulnerable customers, the perceived long waiting times at the closest alternative branches, as well as the limited and costly parking at those branches. Respondents also highlighted the distance to other branches along dangerous roads, the limited bus services in the area and the hilly terrain if customers were walking to alternative branches. The effect on local business customers was also highlighted by respondents as well as the view that this branch represented a vital part of the community.

A petition was received and correspondence was received from, amongst others, the local MP, Theresa May.

The two alternative branches are located within one mile of Norfolk Park Post Office<sup>®</sup> and there is a regular bus service to both these branches. Concessionary fare schemes operate on these buses for elderly and disabled people and there is low-level access on some of the buses operating these services to assist elderly and disabled passengers. For customers with access to a car, parking is available close to both alternative branches. The closest suggested alternative branch - Maidenhead Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> - offers a wider range of products and services, has ramp access into the branch and a low-level counter to assist customers in wheelchairs.

Having considered these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Nursery Road Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the possible impact this proposed closure would have on the large elderly population in the area and the community as a whole. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the distance to alternative branches being too long, and that anyone walking would have to cross the railway and use an underpass. Some respondents also expressed concerns relating to the possible effect of closure on the grocery business within the shop in which the branch is located.



Additionally, concerns were raised by respondents in relation to the inadequate parking facilities at the Thames Street and Sunbury On Thames branches. The staff at Nursery Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> were praised by respondents as being particularly efficient, and the good parking facilities at the branch were noted.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses received during the local consultation, including a submission from Spelthorne Borough Council.

The two closest alternative branches are located just over a mile of Nursery Road Post Office<sup>®</sup>, with Sunbury On Thames branch being within three quarters of a mile from Nursery Road branch. There is a frequent bus service in operation to Nursery Road branch, which offer passes to people over the age of sixty and disabled passengers. Disabled access is available on most of these bus services. Sunbury On Thames and Thames Street branches offer a wider range of products, including motor vehicle licensing, and both branches have three counter positions. Free parking is available in front of the branch at Sunbury On Thames (for two hours) and there is a free car park close to Thames Street Post Office<sup>®</sup>.

Having given due regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Oriental Road Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the impact of closure on the local community as a whole and the difficulties faced by vulnerable customers if they were required to walk to the closest alternative branch, which would require walking through an underpass beneath the railway which had steps on both sides and therefore unsuitable for some customers. Respondents also commented that the Oriental Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> was very busy and offered an efficient service.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received during the local public consultation, including the sizeable petitions signed by members of the local community and submitted by, the local MP, Humfrey Malins. The closest alternative branch is New Woking Post Office<sup>®</sup>, which is due to open in a WH Smith store in May 2008, and located less than half a mile away from Oriental Road Post Office<sup>®</sup>. The second alternative branch - Kingfield Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is located just over a mile away.

Over 80% of local households in the area have at least one car or van and there is a multi-storey car park close to New Woking Post Office<sup>®</sup> and unrestricted car parking available outside Kingfield Post Office<sup>®</sup>, for those who have access to private transport. There is a regular bus service that operates between Oriental Road and Kingfield branches and this offers free travel for people over the age of sixty and disabled passengers on weekdays after 9.00 am and all day on weekends. There is also disabled access on some buses operating this service.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of Oriental Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Salt Hill Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the impact on the elderly and on small businesses. The lack of a reliable bus service to alternative branches was also raised, and the convenient location of Salt Hill branch was also highlighted.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses received during the local consultation, including a submission from Slough Borough Council.

There are two alternative branches within one mile of Salt Hill branch, both with extra counter positions and offering a wider range of products.

Chalvey Post Office<sup>®</sup> has level access for customers in wheelchairs, automatic doors and a low-level writing desk inside the branch.

Farnham Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> has access into the branch via a ramp, and there is a frequent bus service from Salt Hill branch to Farnham Road branch, with concessionary fares available for elderly and disabled passengers on request from the bus company. There are also free parking facilities available close to both suggested alternative branches for customers who have access to a car.

Having given due regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> South Bersted Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the difficulty in travelling to the suggested alternative branches because bus services in the local area were inadequate, many people in the area did not have their own transport and parking facilities at the closest alternative branches was not adequate. Respondents also raised concerns relating to vulnerable customers, particularly the elderly, and for the local community as a whole. Respondents also pointed out that there were some large residential developments being built in the area as well as commenting that the branch offered efficient, friendly service.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses to the local public consultation, including a submission from Arun District Council and correspondence from Bognor Regis Town Council.

The two alternative branches are located within one mile of South Bersted branch - Durlston Drive Post Office<sup>®</sup> and Bognor Regis Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup>. Whilst there is no direct bus service between South Bersted and Durlston Drive branches, the route is mainly flat and the pavements are lit for those able to walk. There is a regular bus service into Bognor Regis town centre, with some buses having disabled access and all offering free travel to people over the age of sixty and disabled passengers after 9.00 am on weekdays and at any time over the weekend. For those customers who have access to a car, parking is available outside Durlston Drive Post Office<sup>®</sup> and within 110 yards of Bognor Regis Post Office<sup>®</sup>.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> South Street Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the effect on vulnerable customers, the community and local business. Respondents also highlighted the perceived long waiting at alternative branches, the inadequate bus services in the local area and the effect on

local business customers. Respondents commented that South Street Post Office<sup>®</sup> offered an efficient service to customers.

Post Office Limited received a campaign letter from many local residents, a petition received from the Mole Valley Liberal Democrats as well as correspondence from Mole Valley District Council and the local MP, Sir Paul Beresford.

The two closest alternative branches are located within a mile from South Street branch, the closest being Dorking Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> which is less than half a mile away. For customers able to walk, the route is mainly level to Dorking Crown branch. Both the suggested alternative branches have longer opening hours and Dorking Post Office<sup>®</sup> offers a wider range of Post Office<sup>®</sup> services, including motor vehicle licensing. Regular bus services are available to both of the closest alternative branches, with the journey to Dorking Crown branch taking approximately five minutes. There is free off-peak travel for senior citizens and disabled passengers and these bus services usually have low-level floors to assist those passengers with disabilities or with pushchairs. For those customers with access to a car, there is a car park within 200 yards of Dorking Crown branch and roadside parking along Spook Hill for customers visiting North Holmwood Post Office<sup>®</sup>, the other closest alternative branch.

The ability of alternative branches to absorb additional expected customer levels due to a closure of South Street branch has been carefully considered and Post Office Limited does consider that Dorking Post Office<sup>®</sup> has sufficient capacity.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Springfield Road Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to vulnerable customers who were not able to walk long distances to alternative branches and did not have their own transport, as well as the likely impact of closure on local business and the community. Respondents also raised concerns relating to parking and the perceived longer waiting times at the alternative branches and unreliable bus services in the area. Further, respondents commented that Springfield Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> was very busy and offered an efficient service to customers.

The two closest alternative branches are located within approximately a mile of Springfield Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> and there is a direct bus service to the closest alternative branch in Windsor town centre. A concessionary fare scheme operates on this service and there is disabled access on marked buses. For those able to walk to the Windsor branch, the route is varied, however, there is parking available within 250 yards of Windsor Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> for those customers with access to a car.

The ability of alternative branches to absorb the expected additional customer levels has been carefully considered and Post Office Limited does consider that Windsor Post Office<sup>®</sup> has sufficient capacity to meet the expected additional demand for its services.

Post Office Limited has carefully reviewed all feedback received during the local public consultation, including a petition from the Windsor Liberal Democrats as well as correspondence from local councillors and the Windsor Evening Townswomen's Guild. Post Office Limited has also considered issues relating to the town centre parking and the large number of people who visit Windsor each year.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Station Road Bognor Regis Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the impact on elderly customers and insufficient parking facilities at the closest alternative branches. Respondents also drew attention to the perceived long waiting times at alternative branches.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses to the local public consultation, including a submission from Arun District Council and correspondence from Bognor Regis Town Council.

The two closest alternative branches are located within one mile of Station Road Post Office<sup>®</sup>, the closest - Bognor Regis Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> - being just over a quarter of a mile away. Both of these branches offer a wider range of products than the Station Road Bognor Regis branch. Whilst there is no direct bus service between Station Road and Bognor Regis Crown branches, the route is flat for those who are able to walk the short distance.

There is a bus service to Victoria Park Post Office<sup>®</sup> and this offers a concessionary fare scheme. For those customers with access to a car, parking is available in the roads around Bognor Regis Crown branch or in the town centre and parking is also available near the Victoria Park branch.

The ability of alternative branches to absorb the expected additional customer levels has been carefully considered and Post Office Limited does consider there to be sufficient capacity in these alternative branches.

Taking into account these and other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Station Road East Oxted Branch**

Respondents' main concerns related to the ability of alternative branches to cope with the expected additional customer levels resulting from the closure of this branch. Respondents were also concerned that parking was insufficient at the alternative branches and that the journey to each alternative branch was difficult.

The two closest alternative branches are located within one mile of Station Road East Oxted, the closest alternative being Oxted Post Office<sup>®</sup> which is located approximately half a mile away. Oxted branch has more serving positions, offers a wider range of products, including motor vehicle licensing, and has ramp access to help customers in wheelchairs or with buggies. There is a regular bus service to both Oxted and Limpsfield Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches from Station Road East Oxted branch and both bus services offer free off-peak travel for senior citizens and disabled passengers. Low-level floors are provided on some buses to assist passengers. Approximately 86% of local households own a car or van and parking is available near both suggested alternative branches for customers who have access to private transport.

Post Office Limited has carefully considered all the feedback received during the local public consultation relating to this branch, including two petitions as well as correspondence from the local MP, Peter Ainsworth, Oxted Parish Council and the Oxted Chamber of Commerce.

Having regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Station Road Farnham Branch**

Respondents' main concerns related to the potential impact of closure on vulnerable customers, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities, and on the local community as a whole. Respondents also expressed concerns relating to the distance required to travel to alternative branches, perceived lengthy waiting times and inadequate parking at those branches, as well as concerns relating to the poor public transport in the local area. Respondents also raised concerns about the possible impact on the environment due to increased car usage and the resulting increase in car emissions.

Post Office Limited has carefully considered all feedback received during the local public consultation, including that submitted by Waverley Borough Council.

The closest alternative branch – Farnham Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is approximately half a mile away. There is a frequent bus service between the branches from a bus stop within 60 yards of the Station Road branch and the journey takes approximately 10 minutes. All buses offer free travel for elderly and disabled passengers and some of the buses operating this service have disabled access. There is also a bus service to the second closest alternative branch. Approximately 80% of households in the local area have a car and there is a car park available just over 300 yards from Farnham Post Office<sup>®</sup> for those customers with access to their own transport.

Farnham Crown branch has level access, longer opening hours and offers a wider range of products than Station Road Farnham branch. Post Office Limited has considered the capacity of the Farnham Crown branch to cope with any additional demand resulting from the proposed closure of the Station Road Farnham branch and believes it is able to cope with the expected increase in customer levels.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited's decision is to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Stepgates Branch**

Respondents' main concerns related to the impact of the proposed closure on the large elderly population in the local area, and on the community as a whole. Respondents also raised concerns relating to the distance required to travel to the closest alternative branches, and the poor parking facilities at those branches, particularly for disabled customers. Customers praised the current Subpostmaster at Stepgates branch for being helpful and friendly.

Respondents also pointed out that several housing developments were planned for the surrounding area. Additional concerns were raised by respondents in relation to overcrowding at Chertsey Post Office<sup>®</sup> in Windsor Street, and the lack of a direct bus service to Addlestone Post Office<sup>®</sup>.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received during the local public consultation, including that received from the Runnymede Older People's Forum.

The closest alternative branch is located within the Tesco Superstore in Addlestone, has six counter serving positions, has longer opening hours and offers the full Post Office<sup>®</sup> range of products, including motor vehicle licenses. Approximately 83% of local households in the area have a car and there is adequate parking in the supermarket car park for customers who are able to access Addlestone branch by car. Parking is also available outside the second closest branch – Weybridge Post Office<sup>®</sup> - and in the large pay and display car park nearby. Both of the suggested alternative branches have level access into the premises.

Having given due regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> The Beach Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the possible impact of closure of The Beach branch on the large proportion of elderly people in the local area. Respondents thought of this branch as vital to the local community, and respondents also raised concerns about the distance required to travel to the closest alternative branches of Littlehampton and Rustington, which were perceived to be very busy branches. Concerns were also raised by respondents in relation to the limited bus services in the area, as they only operate in the mornings on weekdays and only guaranteed until October.

The closest alternative branch is Littlehampton Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup>, which is located in the town centre just over half a mile away. This branch has more serving positions and offers a wider range of products, including motor vehicle licensing. The walking route between Littlehampton Crown and The Beach branches is mainly level along roads that are well lit and paved. There are also traffic islands and drop kerbs to assist pedestrians if they need to cross the road. There is an hourly bus service between The Beach Post Office<sup>®</sup> and the two closest alternative branches, with free travel for the elderly and disabled passengers after 9.00 am on weekdays and at any time over weekends. Both the closest alternative branches have level access, with wide doors, and space inside the branches for a wheelchair. For customers who have access to a car, there is some parking available around the side streets near Littlehampton Crown Post Office<sup>®</sup> and there is a pay and display car park within approximately 270 yards of the branch.

Post Office Limited has given due consideration to all feedback received during the local public consultation, as well as the local demographics, such as the higher than average elderly population in the Littlehampton area, as well as the feedback received from Arun District Council, Littlehampton Town Council, and the local MP, Nick Gibb, and a petition opposing the closure.

Taking these and all other relevant factors in consideration, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Tilford Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the lack of a regular bus service from Tilford Post Office<sup>®</sup> to either of the closest alternative branches. Respondents also raised concerns in relation to the likely effect of the proposed closure on the elderly, and the local community. Further, respondents raised concerns regarding the difficulty of travelling to the closest alternative branches if lacking their own transport, and raised the issue of over-crowding in those branches. Respondents' feedback also highlighted that work was due to commence on expanding the

retail shop in which Tilford branch is located, with the retail area increasing by 50% and improved disabled access. The local shop association expressed a desire to make the case for re-opening the branch with a full-time service.

Post Office Limited has considered the feedback received from respondents in relation to the proposed closure of Tilford branch carefully, including submissions received from the Tilford Women's Institute, local councillors, Surrey County Council and the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association.

In preparing Area Plan proposals, Post Office Limited considers, among other factors, customer usage statistics, the expected economic impact on local communities, the proximity of alternative branches and the provision of public transport/local car ownership.

The two closest alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches are located within two and a half miles of Tilford branch, each offering a wider range of Post Office<sup>®</sup> services, including motor vehicle licensing at Rushmoor Post Office<sup>®</sup> which is the closest alternative branch. Approximately 96% of local households have a car and there is roadside parking in the streets close to Rushmoor branch for those customers who have access to a car. Although there is no direct bus service to either of the closest alternative branches, there is a dial-a-ride community hopper bus service that can be booked if required.

Having given due regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Wargrave Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the distance and hilly terrain to the closest alternative branches and that the closest alternative did not offer DVLA services. Other issues raised by respondents included the lack of public transport in the local area and the potential impact on the elderly.

Post Office Limited has given careful consideration to all feedback received during the local public consultation, including correspondence from the local MP, Theresa May.

The closest alternative branch - Upper Wargrave Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is located just over half a mile away from Wargrave branch and there is parking available very close to the branch for those customers with access to a car. Locally, some 92% of households have a car.

The second closest alternative branch - Twyford Post Office<sup>®</sup> - is approximately two miles from Wargrave branch and has a car park at the rear of the premise and other parking available within 50 yards of the branch. Motor vehicle licensing is a service available at this branch and there is an hourly bus service from Wargrave to Twyford branch, with a journey time of approximately eight minutes. This bus service offers a concessionary fare scheme and some buses have disabled access.

Having due regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> West Wittering Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the potential impact on vulnerable customers who would find it difficult to travel to the closest alternative branches

and the lack of any parking facilities at East Wittering Post Office<sup>®</sup>, one of the alternative branches. Respondents also commented that West Wittering branch only opened two years ago and it provided an invaluable service to the local community, as well as to those holidaying in the area during the busy summer season.

Post Office Limited has given due consideration to all feedback received during the local public consultation, including submissions from South Chichester County Council Committee and Chichester District Council.

The two closest alternative branches are within two and a half miles of West Wittering branch - East Wittering and Bracklesham Bay Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches. There is a regular bus service from West Wittering Post Office<sup>®</sup> to both of these alternative branches, with a concessionary fare scheme available and most buses having disabled access. Both of the alternative branches have extra serving positions, and East Wittering Post Office<sup>®</sup> offers a wider range of Post Office<sup>®</sup> services, including motor vehicle licensing. Over 80% of local households have at least one car and there is parking available at both the closest alternative branches for those customers with access to their own transport, including dedicated disabled parking bays outside the East Wittering branch. Both of the closest alternative branches have level access into the premises.

Having given due regard to these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Winkfield Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the potential impact of the proposed closure on elderly customers, most of whom did not have their own vehicles, and the effect on the local economy and community.

The closest alternative branch is Brookside Post Office<sup>®</sup> and there is a regular hourly bus service between the two branches for customers who do not have their own transport. The service offers a concessionary fare scheme and disabled access on some buses. Around 90% of local households do have one or more cars and forecourt parking is available within five yards of the Brookside branch for customers who choose to drive. The branch offers a wider range of Post Office<sup>®</sup> products, including motor vehicle licensing.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, including the low customer usage, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of this branch.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Woodthorpe Road Branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the effect of the proposed closure on vulnerable customers. Respondents felt that closure would damage the local community that had already seen the temporary closure of Ashford Post Office<sup>®</sup> in recent months. Respondents also claimed that the closest alternative branches were located too far away for travel by foot, and they also pointed out that the journey to Edinburgh Drive Post Office<sup>®</sup> involved crossing the busy Kingston Road, which had no pedestrian crossings.

Respondents also raised concerns relating to the potential adverse effect that the closure would have on local retailers and small businesses. The service at the Woodthorpe Road branch was praised, whilst



both alternative branches were criticised for being overcrowded. Parking facilities at Feltham Hill Road were considered to be inadequate. Some respondents also claimed that there were no bus services between the Ashford and Stanwell branches.

Post Office Limited has considered all feedback received during the local public consultation in relation to the proposed closure of Woodthorpe Road branch, including correspondence from local councillors.

Post Office Limited remains committed to re-opening Ashford Post Office<sup>®</sup> in the near future. Moreover, the two closest alternative branches are located within approximately 1.2 miles of Woodthorpe Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> and the route to both is mainly level, with well-lit pavements and traffic islands to assist pedestrians crossing the road. The closest alternative branch is Edinburgh Drive Post Office<sup>®</sup>, which has more serving positions and offers a wider range of products, including motor vehicle licensing.

There is a regular bus service to both the suggested alternative branches that accept Oyster cards and concessionary fare bus passes for the elderly and disabled passengers. For customers who have access to a car, unrestricted parking is available outside the Edinburgh Drive branch and there is limited free parking available at the Feltham Hill Road branch.

Taking these and all other relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the closure of Woodthorpe Road Post Office<sup>®</sup> once the Ashford branch re-opens.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Wych Street Branch**

Respondents' main concerns related to the high proportion of elderly customers living in the Hook Heath area who were expected to be inconvenienced through the closure of Wych Street branch. Respondents also commented on the distance to the alternative branches, the extra carbon emissions that would be generated by more car journeys and a perceived lack of parking at alternative branches. Respondents also remarked on the efficient service offered at the Wych Street branch.

The two closest alternative Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches are located just over a mile of the Wych Street branch. Both have an extra serving position and have longer opening hours. The St Johns branch has also recently undergone a major refurbishment and offers a wider range of Post Office<sup>®</sup> products. A bus service runs every hour between the Wych Street and St Johns branches, offering free travel for senior citizens and disabled passengers and there is disabled access on some vehicles. Over 80% of local households have at least one car and parking is available close to both St Johns Post Office<sup>®</sup> and Kingfield Post Office<sup>®</sup> for those customers who are able and choose to drive.

Having considered these and all other relevant factors, Post Office Limited's decision is to proceed with the closure of this branch.



Post Office Ltd has decided to proceed with the replacement of the following branches with an Outreach service:

Post Office Limited's decisions in relation to each of those branches proposed for closure and replacement with an Outreach service in Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex appear below.

However, the implementation of an Outreach service depends on a number of matters not wholly within the control of Post Office Limited, including for example finalising agreements with third parties.

For this reason, while Post Office Limited will endeavour to establish the types of Outreach service listed below, it may be that in due course Post Office Limited will decide that it should establish a different type of Outreach service for any of these branches. In doing so, Post Office Limited would have regard to all relevant matters raised in the public consultation and all other relevant factors. If such a change in the type of Outreach service for any branch were to occur, Post Office Limited would include posters updating customers of any changes in affected branches and will announce changes on its website. A consolidated Decision Booklet will also be issued in due course.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Compton branch**

During the local public consultation period, the main concern raised by respondents in relation to the proposed closure of this branch was the potential impact the closure may have on the local community.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses received and a review of this proposal has been undertaken. Taking all relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the proposed closure of Post Office<sup>®</sup> Compton branch and its replacement with an Outreach service.

No responses were received during the public consultation in relation to the type of Outreach service proposed.

Post Office Limited has considered and taken into account all relevant factors and has decided to proceed with its proposal to replace the branch with a Hosted Service to operate from the Coach and Horses Public House for two hours per week.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Graffham branch**

During the local public consultation the main concerns raised by respondents were the impact that the proposed branch closure may have on local businesses and the community. Respondents also commented on the distance to the closest alternative branches, the possibility of increased carbon emissions from more car journeys, unreliable and limited bus services and limited parking at Post Office<sup>®</sup> Cocking, Petworth, and Midhurst branches.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses received, including submissions received from Graffham Parish Council, and a review of this proposal has been undertaken. Taking all relevant factors into account, including the needs of our vulnerable customers, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the proposed closure of Post Office<sup>®</sup> Graffham branch and its replacement with an Outreach service.

No responses were received during the public consultation in relation to the type of Outreach service proposed.

Post Office Limited has considered and taken into account all relevant factors and has decided to proceed with its proposal to replace the branch with a Hosted Service to operate from the existing Post Office<sup>®</sup> premises in Graffham for seven hours per week.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> Redford branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to the impact that the proposed closure may have on the community, in particular local retailers and business customers. Respondents also commented that the branch was considered an asset to the community and the surrounding villages of Woolbeding, Stedham, and Miland Valley. Respondents were also concerned about the potential impact on local retailers and business customers if the branch closed. Respondents highlighted issues with parking and queuing times at the alternative branches and the possible increase in carbon emissions if more people drove to other Post Office<sup>®</sup> branches. Further, respondents commented that the branch in Redford offered an efficient service.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses received, including submissions received from Milland Parish Council and the Milland News.

Taking all relevant factors into account, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the proposed closure of Post Office<sup>®</sup> Redford branch and its replacement with an Outreach service.

In respect of Outreach, respondents commented that that an Outreach service was not a true alternative as it would only be open for four hours per week.

Post Office Limited has considered and taken into account all comments offered during local public consultation relating to the provision of the proposed Outreach service and all other relevant factors and having reviewed customer usage at the existing branch has decided to proceed with a Hosted service to operate from the existing Post Office<sup>®</sup> premises in Redford for four hours each week.

### **Post Office<sup>®</sup> West Dean branch**

The main concerns raised by respondents during the local public consultation related to how local businesses, vulnerable customers and the community as a whole would be affected by the closure of the branch, which respondents said was the hub of the village. Respondents also commented on the distance to and limited parking at the alternative branches in Cocking, Chichester and Sheep Wash Lane and the effect any closure would have on vulnerable customers. The possibility of increased carbon emissions from customers making additional car journeys was also mentioned.

Post Office Limited has considered all responses received and a review of this proposal has been undertaken. Taking all relevant factors into account, including the needs of our vulnerable customers, Post Office Limited has decided to proceed with the proposed closure of Post Office<sup>®</sup> West Dean branch and its replacement with an Outreach service.

No responses were received during the public consultation in relation to the type of Outreach service proposed.

Post Office Limited has considered and taken into account all relevant factors and has decided to proceed with its proposal to replace the branch with a full-time Partner service which will operate from the existing Post Office<sup>®</sup> premises in West Dean; 07:00 – 18:00 Monday, Wednesday to Friday, 08:00 – 18:00 on Saturday and 08:00 – 13:00 Sunday morning.



## 5. Proposed changes to the Area Plan Proposal as a result of local public consultation

In implementing the Programme across the UK, Post Office Ltd must meet the requirements set out by the Government which include:

- The compulsory compensated closure of up to 2500 branches.
- The introduction of about 500 Outreach service points.
- Compliance with the minimum access criteria.
- That the population of any one area, any one country in the UK or any group of people is not overall significantly more adversely affected by the Programme than the population of any other area, country or group of people (as appropriate).
- That there should be a broadly similar number of compulsory compensated branch closures pursuant to the Programme in rural areas as in urban areas (including deprived urban areas) across the UK as a whole.
- That there should be a broadly similar number of compulsory compensated branch closures pursuant to the Programme in any one country as in the whole of the UK.

As indicated previously, Post Office Ltd has decided not to proceed with the closure of the Bridge Road, Parklands and South Merstham branches. Following a further review of the area Post Office Ltd is now proposing that the following branches should be closed instead:

**Post Office<sup>®</sup> Shelveys Hill branch**, 7 Shelveys Hill, Tadworth, KT20 5PU

**Post Office<sup>®</sup> South Ascot branch**, 20 Brockenhurst Road, Ascot, SL5 9DL

A six-week period of local public consultation will commence shortly in relation to the proposed closure of these alternative branches.





## **6. Branches submitted for further review by Postwatch**

Postwatch is working with Post Office Ltd and local communities throughout the programme to help secure the best possible outcome for customers.

Postwatch and Post Office Ltd have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding, which sets out in detail the role Postwatch will play in the Programme. Where Postwatch thinks Post Office Ltd's proposals are unsatisfactory, it will work with local communities and Post Office Ltd to address these problems.

Where Postwatch can show, in respect of an individual branch, Post Office Ltd has not given due consideration to material evidence received during the public consultation in coming to its decision or where evidence emerges from the consultation that the proposal for that branch does not meet the Government's policy requirements, there is an agreed review mechanism between Postwatch and Post Office Ltd. It is important to note that Postwatch does not have a power of veto on Post Office Ltd's decisions.

There are no proposals in the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex Area Plan which are in the process of a further review by Postwatch.



## 7. Conclusion

We appreciate that any decision to close a Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch will often be unpopular. Nevertheless, Post Office Ltd has to make decisions to close branches in order to put the Network on a more stable footing for the future and achieve this in a way which best meets the demands and concerns of its customers.

As has been indicated previously, there is a process by which Postwatch can request a further review of changes that Post Office Ltd proposes to make to the Network. Following the conclusion of any such further review Post Office Ltd's decision is final and there is no appeal procedure to Post Office Ltd.

Post Office Ltd understands the importance of its role in both urban and rural communities and is keen to continue to provide access to services for as many customers in as many of these communities as possible. In implementing the Programme in the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area, we have considered the relative convenience of alternative branches for those customers whose closest branch will close. Of the 7.7% of customers who use a branch that will close, 7.2% would have access to Post Office<sup>®</sup> services within one mile as measured by road distance (1.6% being within half a mile of their nearest alternative). In total 99.5% of the population will either see no change, or will be within one mile of an alternative branch.

We were pleased to be able to retain 37 branches in the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area that support the only essential retailer and 65 branches that provide the only access to cash in the respective rural communities that they serve.

After the changes have been implemented, Post Office Ltd will remain the largest retailer by network size in the area, and will still have more branches open than all of the major banks and building societies combined. More than 99.5% of the population will see no change to the branch that they currently use or would remain within one mile of an alternative outlet.

It is proposed that 6 branches within the Surrey, Berkshire and West Sussex area will have improvement works in order to provide better disabled access or increase the number of counter positions to ensure that they have sufficient capacity for customers migrating from other branches.

It is very important to us that our customers are kept informed of any changes to the Network and that we provide them with full details of alternative options to enable them to continue to access Post Office services.

In each of the branches that will be closed posters will be displayed to inform our customers. Further information will be provided to confirm the actual dates the closures will take place. Press releases will also be issued.

In line with the Code of Practice agreed between Post Office Ltd and Postwatch, any closures or other changes will take effect not less than four weeks after the decision is announced.

A copy of this decision booklet is available on our website at [www.postoffice.co.uk/networkchange](http://www.postoffice.co.uk/networkchange).

## Appendix 1

### Outreach Service details:

Current branch address	Outreach service point	Opening times
<b>Post Office® Compton branch</b> The Square, Compton, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 9HA	<b>Compton Hosted Service</b> The Coach and Horses Pub, The Square, Compton, Chichester West Sussex, PO18 9HA	Fri 09:30 - 11:30
<b>Post Office® Graffham branch</b> Graffham, Petworth, West Sussex, GU28 0QD	<b>Graffham Hosted Service</b> To remain at the current branch location.	Mon 09:00 - 12:30 Thur 13:00 - 16:30
<b>Post Office® Redford branch</b> Redford, Midhurst, West Sussex, GU29 0QF	<b>Redford Hosted Service</b> To remain at the current branch location.	4 hours per week, opening times to be confirmed.
<b>Post Office® West Dean branch</b> West Dean, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0QY	<b>West Dean Partner Service</b> To remain at the current branch location.	Mon, Wed, Thu & Fri 07:00 - 18:00 Sat 08:00 - 18:00 Sun 08:00 - 13:00



**Appendix 2 -  
Closing branches**

Branch Name	Address	Town/City	Postcode	Constituency	Local Authority
Ash Road	131 Ash Road	Aldershot	GU12 4DB	Aldershot	Rushmoor Borough council / Hampshire County Council
Boxalls Lane	18 Boxalls Lane	Aldershot	GU11 3QJ	Aldershot	Rushmoor Borough council / Hampshire County Council
Minley Estate	3 Broomhill Road	Farnborough	GU14 9PN	Aldershot	Rushmoor Borough council / Hampshire County Council
Aldwick	2 Tudor Buildings, Aldwick Street	Bognor Regis	PO21 3AW	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Arun District Council / West Sussex County Council
Craigweil On Sea	91 Barrack Lane	Bognor Regis	PO21 4DX	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Arun District Council / West Sussex County Council
Hawthorn Road	53 Hawthorn Road	Bognor Regis	PO21 2BW	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Arun District Council / West Sussex County Council
South Bersted	62 Gordon Avenue	Bognor Regis	PO22 9LS	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Arun District Council / West Sussex County Council
Station Road	15 Station Road	Bognor Regis	PO21 1QD	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Arun District Council / West Sussex County Council
The Beach	6 Norfolk Road	Littlehampton	BN17 5PL	Bognor Regis and Littlehampton	Arun District Council / West Sussex County Council
Easebourne	6 Easebourne Street	Midhurst	GU29 0AL	Chichester	Chichester District Council / West Sussex County Council
East Street	30 Sadlers Walk, East Street	Chichester	PO19 1HQ	Chichester	Chichester District Council / West Sussex County Council
West Wittering	Four Seasons Country Store, Rockwood Road, West Wittering	Chichester	PO20 8LT	Chichester	Chichester District Council / West Sussex County Council
Balcombe Road	65 Balcombe Road	Horley	RH6 9AB	East Surrey	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council / Surrey County Council
Station Road East Oxted	18-20 Station Road East	Oxted	RH8 0PP	East Surrey	Surrey County Council / Tandridge District Council
Claygate	2 High Street	Esher	KT10 0JG	Esher and Walton	Elmbridge Borough Council / Surrey County Council
Boyne Hill	Boyn Hill, Martins, 49 Wooton Way	Maidenhead	SL6 4QZ	Maidenhead	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Cookham Road	Spar Store, 128-130 Cookham Road	Maidenhead	SL6 7HR	Maidenhead	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Knowle Hill	Knowle Hill Stores, Choseley Road, Knowle Hill	Reading	RG10 9YT	Maidenhead	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Norfolk Park	42 Vicarage Road	Maidenhead	SL6 7DS	Maidenhead	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
Wargrave	55 High Street, Wargrave	Reading	RG10 8BU	Maidenhead	Wokingham District Council

**Appendix 2 -  
Closing branches**

<b>Abinger Hammer</b>	Guildford Road, Abinger Hammer	Dorking	RH5 6RX	Mole Valley	Mole Valley District Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Effingham Junction</b>	Forest Road, Effingham Junction	Leatherhead	KT24 5HE	Mole Valley	Guildford Borough Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Holmbury St Mary</b>	Felbury House, Holmbury St Mary	Dorking	RH5 6NL	Mole Valley	Guildford Borough Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Kingston Road</b>	1 The Parade, Kingstone Road	Leatherhead	KT22 7SR	Mole Valley	Mole Valley District Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Leatherhead Road</b>	Bungalow Stores, Leatherhead Road, Bookham	Leatherhead	KT23 4RQ	Mole Valley	Mole Valley District Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Mickleham</b>	Roses Store, Old London Road, Mickleham	Dorking	RH5 6DU	Mole Valley	Mole Valley District Council / Surrey County Council
<b>South Street</b>	45 South Street	Dorking	RH4 2JX	Mole Valley	Mole Valley District Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Holmethorpe</b>	41 Frenches Road	Redhill	RH1 2HR	Reigate	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Horley Road</b>	63 Horley Road, South Earlswood	Redhill	RH1 5AL	Reigate	Reigate and Banstead Borough Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Little Green Lane</b>	20 Little Green Lane	Chertsey	KT16 9PH	Runnymede and Weybridge	Runnymede Borough Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Stepgates</b>	17 Fordwater Road	Chertsey	KT16 8HW	Runnymede and Weybridge	Runnymede Borough Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Burnham Lane</b>	172-174 Burnham Lane	Slough	SL1 6LE	Slough	Slough Borough Council
<b>Salt Hill</b>	140 Bath Road	Slough	SL1 3XL	Slough	Slough Borough Council
<b>Station Road</b>	3-4 Station Hill	Farnham	GU9 8AA	South West Surrey	Surrey County Council / Waverley Borough Council
<b>Tilford</b>	The Street, Tilford	Farnham	GU10 2BL	South West Surrey	Surrey County Council / Waverley Borough Council
<b>Nursery Road</b>	60 Nursery Road	Sunbury- On-Thames	TW16 6LG	Spelthorne	Spelthorne Borough Council Surrey County Council
<b>Woodthorpe Road</b>	110 Woodthorpe Road	Ashford	TW15 3LH	Spelthorne	Spelthorne Borough Council / Surrey County Council
<b>Springfield Road</b>	109 Springfield Road	Windsor	SL4 3PZ	Windsor	Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
<b>Winkfield</b>	Squirrel Lane	Windsor	SL4 4TP	Windsor	Bracnell Forest Borough Council
<b>Oriental Road</b>	1-3 Oriental Road	Woking	GU22 7AH	Woking	Surrey County Council / Woking Borough Council

Appendix 2 -  
Closing branches

Wych Street	Wych Hill	Woking	GU22 0EU	Woking	Surrey County Council / Woking Borough Council
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