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Our ref:

01 May 2014

Richard Peterson

This is in response to your email of 25 April 2014 where you asked:

***"Is the minister aware that the Post Office in Coventry's Corporation Street is due to close on 12th June 2014, the shop is situated inside the Heart of England Co-operative store in the city centre?"***

***Is this example the Governments vision for the future of the Post Office network?***

***Has a minister visited Heart of England Co-operative store in Coventry city centre?***

***Has a minister met with Heart of England Co-operative over this closure?"***

Although you have indicated that you wish to make a request for information, further to your 'right to know' contained in section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), your email contains an enquiry rather than a request for recorded information held by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Where a 'request for information' contains an enquiry, rather than a specific request for copies of information held by BIS, we deal with such requests as a 'normal course of business' enquiry rather than a formal request for information under the FOIA.

This is in accordance with the guidance given in the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) publication 'Freedom of Information & Environmental Information Regulations – Hints for Practitioners handling FOI/EIR requests', which states on page 6 "Requests which are not for recorded information, but instead ask questions, such as "please explain your policy on x" or "please explain your decision to do y" are not requests for recorded information and therefore should be treated as routine correspondence.". This publication is available on the ICO website, and can be accessed via the following link:

[http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/freedom\\_of\\_information/practical\\_application/foi\\_hints\\_for\\_practitioners\\_handing\\_foi\\_and\\_eir\\_requests\\_2008\\_final.pdf](http://www.ico.gov.uk/upload/documents/library/freedom_of_information/practical_application/foi_hints_for_practitioners_handing_foi_and_eir_requests_2008_final.pdf)

Any future 'normal course of business' enquiries should be sent to [enquiries@bis.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bis.gsi.gov.uk).

In response to the specific questions you raise, the Government, as shareholder, does not play a role in operational matters relating to individual post office branches operating within the Post Office network. Such matters are the responsibility of the management of Post Office Ltd.

However, the Department has made enquiries of Post Office Ltd on your behalf, and has been told that Post Office Ltd informed local stakeholders on 23 April that the Corporation Street Post Office would be temporarily closing on 11 June, owing to the decision of the Co-operative to no longer offer Post Office services from that branch.

The Post Office explained in its letter to stakeholders that this is a temporary closure while the Post Office works to reinstate a service within the community.

In 2010, the Government published its policy statement, 'Securing the Post Office network in the digital age', which made a clear commitment to provide funding to maintain, modernise and protect a network of at least 11,500 branches, that meets strict access criteria that see, for example, 99% of the urban population living within one mile of a post office outlet. Since 2010, the Government has committed nearly £2 billion to secure these objectives. The Post Office network is the largest retail network in the UK, with more branches than the high street banks and building societies combined.

The nearest alternative branch is located approximately 500 metres from the Corporation Street branch. The Post Office is working with the operator of that branch to ensure that they are able to meet customer needs.

Yours sincerely,

**Post Office Network Team**  
**Shareholder Executive**

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