

# Proposed branch closure



Mr D Cunningham  
City of Salford Corporate Services  
Salford Civic Centre  
Chorley Road  
Swinton  
Salford  
M27 5DA

Your Ref: E/DPC/CB  
17.06.03

Dear Mr Cunningham

## **URBAN POST OFFICE® CLOSURE PROGRAMME**

Thank you for your recent letter addressed to Eddie Herbert concerning future proposals to close Post Office branches within Salford. I have been asked to respond on behalf of Mr Herbert, as a member of the National Consultation Team with responsibilities in this area.

As you will know, we are progressing closures of urban Post Offices as part of our Network Reinvention programme to address our current financial situation and the impact of falling volumes as a result of the Governments decision to pay pensions and benefits into accounts.

We are proposing these closures on an area by area basis by reviewing both subpostmasters' preferences in terms of whether or not they wish to remain in the network together with our analysis of whether the provision of service in a locality would be sufficient should any particular branch close, and what the distances and transport links are between closing and surrounding branches. Only once we have done this do we propose a closure.

Due to the difficulties caused by changing operational situations and subpostmaster preferences etc, it has not been possible to set up and keep a plan covering proposed closures on a wider basis – e.g. at county or city level. However, we do realise that this makes it particularly difficult for bodies such as yourselves to plan for the future in terms of service provision and we are currently reviewing our approach to see if we can accommodate such requirements.

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The effect of any closure on the local community is one element that we consider very highly prior to proposing any such change. We realise that some customers will find these closures disappointing and it is regrettable that it is impossible to progress with a branch closure programme without inconveniencing some local residents. However, given the overall financial position of Post Office Ltd we have little alternative but to make changes to the way in which we operate our network.

The current period of public consultation on our plans for Worsley Road is being conducted under the terms of the Code of Practice agreed with our "watchdog" Postwatch. I would like to clarify that our criterion of 95% of our customers to live within a mile of their nearest Post Office branch is set down by Post Comm, the Postal Regulator, as a reasonable criterion of accessibility for customers. While we realise that inevitably this will mean that some customers live considerably more than one mile from their nearest office, it is clearly not practical for us to commit to maintain a Post Office branch within less than one mile of every member of the urban population of the UK.

I hope that I have gone some way to explaining the situation and the challenges we are now facing as a commercial organisation and the reasons behind our having to make such difficult proposals.

In closing, may I thank you for your time taken in this matter. A decision on the future of Worsley Road is due to be made shortly and I will ensure the Council is kept advised of developments.

Yours sincerely



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