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THE POST OFFICE NETWORK

Government response to public consultation

MAY 2007

Contents

Executive Summary	2
Section 1: Introduction	5
Background	5
Consultation Process	6
Analysis of Themes	7
Section 2: Summary of Responses to Questions 1-7	9
Summary of Views and Comments	9
Government Decisions	
Section 3: Next Steps	28
Annex A: List of Respondents	30

Executive Summary

Post offices play an important social and economic role in the communities they serve. But with new technology, changing lifestyles and a wider choice of ways of accessing services, people are visiting post offices less. The network's losses rose from about £2 million a week in 2005 to almost £4 million a week last year and are likely to increase further unless action is taken to make the network more sustainable.

However, the Government remains committed to maintaining a post office network with national coverage and is putting in place a new policy and financial framework to achieve this. On 14 December 2006, the Government initiated a 12 week public consultation on a range of proposed measures, underpinned by the investment of up to £1.7 billion, to modernise and reshape the network and to put it on a stable footing.

We received over 2,500 responses, more details of which are provided in section 1 of this document and in Annex A. This document summarises the responses to the seven specific questions posed in the consultation document together with wider comments on the post office network and its future role and direction. It also sets out the Government's decisions in the light of the consultation.

In particular the Government has decided (subject to EC state aid clearance) to provide total funding of up to £1.7 billion to 2011 to support the necessary changes to the network to put it on a more stable footing and to provide continuing support for the social network.

We will introduce a new framework of minimum access criteria to maintain a national network of post offices and, in particular, to protect vulnerable consumers in deprived urban, rural and remote areas:

- 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 outlet.
- 99% of the total population in deprived urban areas across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.

- 95% of the total urban population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 95% of the total rural population across the UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

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 outlet.

In applying these criteria, Post Office Ltd will be required to take into account obstacles such as rivers, mountains and valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands to avoid undue hardship.

Post Office Ltd will also consider the availability of public transport and alternative access to key services, local demographics and the impact on local economies when drawing up area plans.

Post Office Ltd will be required to ensure that, by the end of local area plan implementation, in every postcode district, without exception, 95% of the population will be within 6 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

The Government funding will support strategic changes to the network with up to 2,500 compensated closures within the access criteria framework above. The Government expects that Post Office Ltd will implement this over an 18 month period from summer 2007. Post Office Ltd will be establishing new Outreach locations to provide access to services and Government will provide support for about 500 of these to mitigate the impact of the compensated closures.

A new account will be introduced to succeed the Post Office card account, available nationally and on the same basis of eligibility as now. The Government will be tendering for this service in accordance with EU rules.

Post Office Ltd will draw up area plans for closures and other changes in service provision within the framework above. Post Office Ltd will be initiating this process immediately and will in due course seek information and input from relevant parties including Postwatch, subpostmasters and local authorities as area plan proposals are developed for local public consultation.

Nationally, there will be around 50-60 area plans, based predominantly on groupings of parliamentary constituencies but allowing Post Office Ltd and Postwatch the flexibility to establish different boundaries where local considerations dictate otherwise.

Individual local area plans will each be subject to a 6 week public consultation. The role of Postwatch and local authorities in the development of proposals for, and local consultation on, closures and other changes in service provision is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Post Office Ltd and Postwatch and described in more detail below . In drawing up this Memorandum of Understanding, Post Office Ltd and Postwatch have drawn extensively on the lessons learned from the Urban Reinvention programme.

This process will also allow an opportunity both to assess how local authorities can better engage with Post Office Ltd to channel more business through post offices to help strengthen their viability and also to explore the scope for cohosting or co-locating post office services with local authority facilities under the network change programme or more widely in establishing Outreach services.

We will be working on proposals for devolving greater responsibility after 2011 for decisions on post office service provision to a local level and for providing greater flexibility for local funding decisions.

Introduction

Background

Post offices face a long-term challenge. Developments in technology and service delivery channels – such as online services, e-mail, telephone and Internet banking and retail services – enable people increasingly to make choices as to how they communicate and do business. Cumulatively the impact of these wider options is becoming substantial. Some four million fewer people are using their post office each week than two years ago. The network losses each week have risen from £2 million in 2005-06 to £4 million in the 2006-07 financial year. Against this background, the National Federation of Subpostmasters has recognised that the current size of the network of over 14,000 offices is unsustainable and the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee has acknowledged that many witnesses giving evidence to them also believe that the network is unsustainable.

Post offices provide key services in villages, towns and cities across the country and play an important social role in addition to their economic value. In recognition of this, the Government has invested £2 billion since 1999 to support the network and has confirmed that it will continue to make financial support available. On 14 December 2006 it put forward for public consultation its proposed future strategy for the post office network based on a funding package of up to £1.7 billion to 2011 to maintain a national network and to help Post Office Ltd make necessary changes to transform the network and put it on a stable footing for the future.

The Government's future strategy and funding package, together with the introduction of access criteria, recognise the social and economic role of post offices and also reflect its commitment to safeguard sustainable communities and to provide Post Office Ltd with a flexible framework to respond to new developments. The Government is committed to working with councils, agencies and local people and recognises the value that post offices add to local communities. It will provide continuing support of up to £150million per annum for the social network for the period until 2011. Together with the

introduction of Outreach and support for community-run post offices, this will ensure that a national network with national coverage remains viable.

Beyond 2011, there will be continued need for public support of the social network. The access criteria set out in this document will provide a framework to ensure a national post office network with particular safeguards to protect vulnerable consumers in deprived urban and rural and remote areas. The criteria also provide a framework within which Post Office Ltd will be expected to respond to and make provision for new and developing communities

This package of Government measures is complemented by the steps that Post Office Ltd is taking to modernise the commercial network, restoring the Crown offices to profitability, investing in new product offerings and looking at innovative ways of delivering services that people need more cost effectively.

Changes to the size of the network are necessary but measures to protect vulnerable communities will be put in place. In addition to access criteria, there will be a significant expansion of Outreach services provided by subpostmasters to nearby small communities.

Collectively the Government's proposals are designed to deliver a national network on a stable footing.

Consultation Process

The Government's public consultation on its strategy proposals for the network ran for 12 weeks from 14 December 2006 until 8 March 2007.

The consultation generated over 2,500 responses from individuals and from organisations and representative bodies at both local and national levels. The responses from many organisations and representative bodies reflected views and comments submitted by their members or allied groups.

In March the Trade and Industry Committee also issued its report 'Stamp of Approval? Restructuring the Post Office Network' following its inquiry.

During the consultation period and before it, Ministers and officials also had extensive contacts with key interested parties, including Postwatch and its Counters Advisory Group (with its wide range of customer representative bodies), Postcomm, the Commission for Rural Communities (and at specifically convened focus group meetings in rural locations) and the National Federation of Subpostmasters (at Executive Council and Branch meetings).

Many Members of Parliament have contributed to parliamentary debates on post office network issues and there has been a series of interdepartmental working group meetings. All of these events and contacts provided valuable insights and views on the issues facing the post office network and the role of post offices in the communities they serve.

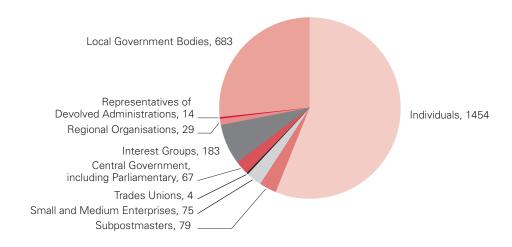
All of these contributions have been reviewed and assessed for the views and concerns expressed, proposals put forward, conclusions drawn and

recommendations made. They have been helpful in informing and shaping the Government's final decisions.

Responses by Country/English Region



Breakdown of Respondents by Type



Analysis of Themes

There has been widespread recognition of the scale of the problems the network faces, the need for action to put the network onto a more stable footing and general support for, or acceptance of, the following key strands of the Government's proposed strategy:

- its recognition of the importance of the social and economic role of post offices
- its recognition of the need for continued subsidy to support those parts of the network that can never be commercial but which provide key services in rural and deprived urban communities;

- the introduction of access criteria to maintain a national network and to protect vulnerable consumers;
- the commitment to a very substantial funding package
- the commitment to a successor to the Post Office card account beyond 2010 and
- the use of Outreach services to mitigate the impact of closures.

On more specific aspects, many responses focused on:

- the definition of the social and economic role of post offices,
- a breakdown of the funding package,
- the future sustainability of the network;
- · how future attrition can be mitigated,
- the range of factors to be considered in conjunction with access criteria in proposing closures and other changes in service provision, and
- the length of the local consultation period and of the programme overall.

Responses to Questions in the Consultation Document

Future Network Strategy

Q1. Do you think the Government's forward strategy for the post office network addresses all the key issues and challenges the network faces?

Q2. Are there other significant factors affecting the future of the post office network which appear to have been overlooked in the Government's proposed approach?

A large majority of responses addressed these issues together and both questions are therefore taken together in the Government's response below.

The summary does not attempt to repeat every comment made but aims to include the issues that were common to many responses and concerns that were widely reflected in a range of responses.

Sustainability

A large majority of respondents welcomed the Government's commitment to maintain a stable national network with national coverage and also welcomed Government's acknowledgement that post offices have a social as well as an economic value. It is widely recognised that people are changing the way in which they access services and that the network needs to change to ensure it is better able to capture business and provide new services that people want in the future. Many respondents accept that the current network is unsustainable and some closures are necessary but stressed the social role played by the post office network and the importance of giving due weight to this, alongside economic considerations. There was widespread emphasis of the role of post offices in promoting social inclusion and acting as the social hub of many communities.

A number of respondents questioned whether the proposals were sufficient to put the network on a genuinely sustainable footing for the longer term and called for specific commitments to funding beyond 2011 to provide greater certainty for both customers and subpostmasters.

The Government recognises that further funding will be required beyond 2011. We fully accept that parts of the network can never be commercial and that continued funding will be needed. But it would be premature to make a judgement now about what level of subsidy might be required in four years time given the changes planned for the network in the intervening period.

Without continuing public support, a purely commercial network would comprise fewer than 4,000 branches; implying over 10,000 closures. That cannot be allowed to happen. That is why the Government is providing continuing support to maintain a network with truly national coverage and putting in place detailed access criteria to ensure this, with supplementary criteria focused to ensure reasonable coverage in areas where the social need is greatest.

The purpose of this funding package is to bring stability to the network by 2011 by reducing losses and becoming more competitive whilst ensuring that the social needs of rural and disadvantaged communities continue to be met.

We see no justification for increasing the size of the network as suggested by some respondents. It remains larger than all the banks and building societies combined. It is not the absolute number of post offices which is important but where they are positioned and the ways in which services are provided that will help sustain the network's viability and provide the national coverage to which the Government is committed.

Funding

The ongoing commitment to a Social Network Payment both up to 2011 and beyond was generally welcomed but some consultees expressed concerns that its extension to the non-commercial urban network after March 2008 would result in an overall reduction in support for the rural network. Many respondents also asked for a breakdown of the £1.7 billion funding package. Some argued for a larger subsidy to avoid the need for any closures and others pressed for the Social Network Payment to be maintained at a level which ensured that the needs of sparsely populated and deprived areas were met. Several respondents suggested that there should be direct support to subpostmasters and funding to help refurbish and improve rural post offices.

The Government has decided that from April 2008, the Social Network Payment should support non-commercial offices across the entire network, not only rural ones. It considers that the overriding priority is to maintain a national network with national coverage as set out in the access criteria. This will require support for non-commercial outlets in urban as well as in rural areas. Post Office Ltd will be making further significant savings through reductions in central costs and overheads, combined with more cost effective delivery of services and the strategically planned closure of up to 2,500 offices. This means that the proposed social network payments

will be sufficient to underpin the whole of the non-commercial network without adverse impact on the support available for the rural part of the network.

The Government notes the requests for the £1.7billion funding to be broken down. Up to £750million is set aside for the Social Network Payment to 2010-11. The Social Network Payment will not be used to fund compensation to subpostmasters leaving the business. These costs will be provided for separately together with funding for ongoing losses. A more detailed breakdown will not be available until Post Office Ltd has developed its detailed proposals for reshaping the network at local level.

Post Office Ltd is planning to establish a small fund to encourage new investment in Core and Outreach facilities and in branches facing access and capacity issues as a result of reshaping of the network.

Unplanned closures

Some respondents asked about the impact of further unplanned closures over and above the compensated closures of 2,500 offices, and called on the Government to prevent significant unplanned closures creating gaps in the network by retaining the no avoidable closure policy.

The Government accepts that there will inevitably be some natural exits moving forward, in addition to compensated closures under the programme. That is inevitable (for example if a subpostmaster decides to retire or move on, or even if their associated business is proving to be unprofitable) and neither the Government nor Post Office Ltd can prevent that. The Government's access criteria will however establish a minimum level of coverage that Post Office Ltd will be required to continue to ensure. Unplanned closures will be counterbalanced by replacements if those criteria would no longer be met. It is not possible to maintain a static network as new premises or replacement subpostmasters cannot always be found, but the access criteria will replace the no avoidable closure policy and ensure that a national network of post offices is maintained.

Social role

Many respondents stressed the social role played by the post office network and the importance of giving due weight to this, alongside economic considerations.

The Government agrees. Without ongoing public support a purely commercial network would comprise fewer than 4,000 branches; implying over 10,000 closures. That cannot be allowed to happen. That is why the Government is providing very substantial ongoing financial support to maintain a network with truly national coverage. To ensure that national coverage, the Government is also putting in place detailed access criteria, with supplementary criteria focused to ensure proper coverage in areas where the social need is greatest.

Government, local authority and banking services

Many respondents suggested that central and local government should closely examine the scope for retaining or offering more services through post offices to strengthen the viability of both the network and individual offices. There were also calls for all retail banks to make their current accounts accessible at post offices. The integration of post office services with the provision of other rural services was also seen as providing a potential synergy which could help create community service hubs adapted to local circumstances. On the other hand, one respondent believed that further subsidy to the post office threatened to distort the market and was unfair to alternative providers of the same services such as bill payment.

The Government notes the suggestion that more public services should be channelled through the post office network but rejects the notion that Government departments and local authorities should be required to do this at the expense of customer choice. People want to choose from a range of methods by which, for example, they can pay their bills or car tax. Increasingly people prefer to use telephone- and Internet-based access to Government services and find these more convenient. People have choices and are entitled to exercise them.

Equally Government departments cannot simply choose to award Post Office Ltd contracts to deliver certain services. EU rules and best practice in achieving value for money require transparent procurement and open competition. Many other private businesses provide similar, if not identical, services to those provided at the post office and to exclude them from the opportunity to bid for delivery contracts would potentially be unlawful under EU procurement law. Furthermore, it can only be right that Government departments and local authorities are required to find the best value options for delivering their services to ensure the best use of taxpayers' money.

It is, however, important that Post Office Ltd is given every opportunity to pursue Government business. Network change will put Post Office Ltd on a much stronger footing to compete for business in future, and to develop strong and innovative bids for delivering Government and other services. Post Office Ltd maintains regular links and contact with Government departments to ensure they are alert to all future business opportunities.

At present all the UK's major banks, along with the Nationwide building society, provide at least one basic bank account that is accessible at the post office. Some choose also to make their current accounts accessible over the post office counter. However some choose not to do so for commercial reasons, which may include concerns around cost or the potential loss of customers to a competitor. Ultimately these are commercial decisions for the banks and Government cannot force them to make their accounts available if they have taken considered commercial decisions not to do so. Discussions between the banks and Post Office Ltd continue on this matter but access to the retail banking services of all the

High Street banks through the post office network, however beneficial, must be a commercial decision for the individual banks and Post Office Ltd to make.

We shall encourage Post Office Ltd to explore further the scope for more cost effective delivery through co-location with other community services when such opportunities present themselves. Current pilot trials of shared service location based on post office premises include those with the police in Norfolk, Fife and Powys.

We will also be exploring how local authorities might channel more business through post offices to help strengthen their viability and to explore further the scope for co-locating post office services with local authority facilities as has been successfully done in Reading.

Closure strategy

Some respondents expressed concern about further closures in urban areas so soon after the urban reinvention programme and many respondents pressed for Post Office Ltd, in selecting offices for closure, to balance economic viability, customer usage and social role against subpostmasters' preferences.

Although urban reinvention went some way in aligning urban post offices to the numbers of users, there remain urban areas where several post offices are providing services in the same catchment area. It is right that this level of provision be looked at again to enable Post Office Ltd to optimise coverage and efficiency. The access criteria proposed for urban and urban deprived areas will however ensure that proper coverage is maintained in urban areas.

The strategy is to get the right service in the right area to meet the access criteria and ensure national coverage. Post Office Ltd needs to be able to make compulsory closures to ensure these objectives are met. Closure decisions will not be determined by subpostmasters' preferences though there will be cases where there is a strategic fit between a closure proposal and the subpostmaster's wish to leave the network. Post Office Ltd and the National Federation of Subpostmasters have signed an agreement on compensation payment terms and arrangements

Crown offices

Whilst there was support for Post Office Ltd's strategy for modernising and improving Crown post offices, there was some opposition to further franchising. An alternative viewpoint was that less should be spent on Crown offices in favour of maintaining the rural network and ensuring the continuity of post offices in areas with no alternative rather than supporting the Crown network in areas where there is a concentration of businesses providing similar services. Some respondents asked whether Government support would be used to support the Crown network and expressed concern about distortion of competition.

The Crown network is heavily loss-making, with forecast losses of £70 million this year. Post Office Ltd's vision for the Crown offices is for a smaller national chain of 'flagship' offices which pioneers new technology such as self-service channels. Post Office Ltd sees the retention of Crown branches as vital for the expansion of new business areas given that these branches account for over 60% of the sales of new financial services products. The problems of this part of the network cannot be ignored. In developing an overall strategy for a viable national network, Post Office Ltd needs to modernise the Crown network and restore it to profit by reducing its cost base and generating additional revenue by growing its financial services offer. By pursuing link-ups with well established, respected retail partners such as the recently announced commercial deal with WH Smith, Post Office Ltd can both cut unacceptable losses and maintain, if not improve, customer service. Converting a Crown office to a franchise office does not reduce the number of post offices - it is a different means of providing the same services.

Role of local authorities

The proposal to investigate what future role local authorities might play in decisions influencing the shape of the network and delivery of services beyond 2011 was generally welcomed in the responses.

Government is working with the relevant organisations and administrations with a view to deciding, in the longer term, the extent that funding and decision making on the provision of local services can be devolved to local level. The involvement of local authorities in the forthcoming network change programme will provide an opportunity to explore ways in which local councils can work with Post Office Ltd to help mitigate potential gaps in service and the potential role that local authorities could play in future funding decisions.

Social and economic factors

A number of respondents questioned whether the social cost of closures had been fully factored into the Government's strategy and commented on the need to offset the withdrawal of Government and other public services by increasing the subsidy to the post office network. Many respondents also questioned whether the Government's proposals adequately reflected factors such as impact on local small retail businesses (including the last shop in the village), availability of public transport, the environmental impact of increased car use, alternative access to key services, local demographics (especially the impact on older people) and impact on local economies. Many respondents commented on the importance of local access to post office services for small businesses and home workers, a significant and growing element of the local economy, particularly in rural areas, and many were concerned that the loss of the local post office would result in additional travel time and costs and reduced opening/working hours.

The consultation document stated that closures will principally affect a combination of branches in areas of over-provision and those that are least used. Post Office Ltd will be tasked with taking a strategic overview of service provision to ensure that in areas of over-provision, people should be able to find an alternative branch nearby and the vast majority will still be within walking distance of their nearest office. With the least used, the number of people affected will, by the nature of the offices, be low. The introduction of new access criteria will minimise the impact by ensuring that the network remains readily accessible across the UK – with far greater coverage than any other retailer or financial service provider or indeed any other public service provider

A number of studies have sought to put a price on the social and economic value of a post office, but this will vary from location to location as an assessment is highly dependent on the demography of the area. Some studies also indicate that people quickly adapt to new ways of accessing the post office services. But the retention of a large national network with continuing comprehensive coverage will ensure that many people will be largely unaffected by the changes.

Access criteria

Q3. Do you have comments on the national access criteria proposed?

Q4. Do you have specific comments on the access criteria proposed for deprived urban and rural areas?

The consultation document proposed a framework of access criteria to establish a minimum level of coverage nationwide and in areas of particular need.

A large majority of responses addressed the issue of access criteria and many of the responses to these two questions overlapped. The responses to both questions are therefore taken together below as is the Government's response.

Many respondents welcomed the Government's proposals to introduce access criteria as a step in the right direction.

A number of parties asked for further clarification of how the access criteria would apply and an explanation of the urban/rural area definitions for the purposes of access criteria. Some questioned whether the proposed criteria provided sufficient protection at local level and some argued that specific access criteria should be applied at country (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) or a more local level.

The Government's intention is to establish a comprehensive set of criteria applying at national level to ensure that access to post office services continues to be available across the country. Four of the criteria will apply at national level:

- 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 outlet.
- 99% of the total population in deprived urban areas across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 95% of the total urban population across the UK to be within 1 mile of their nearest post office outlet.
- 95% of the total rural population across the UK to be within 3 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

In addition the following criterion will apply at the level of each and every individual postcode district, establishing a minimum level of coverage at a very local level.

• 95% of the population of the postcode district to be within 6 miles of their nearest post office outlet.

The access criteria replace the requirement placed on Post Office Ltd to prevent avoidable closures of rural offices. But it is important to note that these criteria represent the minimum levels of accessibility and in many, if not most, cases actual coverage will be greater.

The emphasis of our policy is to maintain a national network with national coverage. We reject therefore the proposal that the criteria above should be applied at the level of individual countries or smaller local areas.

Accessibility to a post office for most people will be covered by the national criteria. However, in more remote areas where the population tends to be widely dispersed, it could be the case that they are not captured by the national criteria - an issue picked up by many respondents. The introduction of the postcode district criterion will address this issue and provide protection to those communities.

There are some 2,800 postcode districts (the first half of the postcode e.g. GU51) in the UK. We believe that a requirement to ensure that 95% of the population in every postcode district is within 6 miles of their nearest post office provides protection at a local level. In the consultation document our proposal was to exempt 38 postcode districts that currently do not meet the criterion. However, we have reflected on the comments received and concluded that no postcode district should be exempt from meeting this standard. In implementing local area plans, following local consultation, Post Office Ltd will be required to ensure that every postcode district provides that coverage, without exception. Post offices in the 38 postcode districts that currently fail the criterion will not be compulsorily closed during the transformation programme and Post Office Ltd will look to fill the gaps in coverage at the time that they develop local area plans so that by the end of each implementation plan, every postcode district in the local area plan will be required to ensure that 95% of the population is within 6

miles of the nearest post office outlet. This may mean that some new post offices will be required to open.

Many respondents believed the deprived urban criterion to be a diminution of the current protection which they assumed ring-fenced from closure those branches located in deprived urban areas where the nearest branch was more than half a mile away. There were also many calls for an extension of the criterion to cover the 15% most deprived urban areas and for specific provision for deprived rural areas.

Currently there is no protection for access to post office services in deprived urban areas. The half mile 'ring-fence' protection only applied for the purposes and duration of the urban reinvention programme and focused on the retention of the specific post office rather than taking account of the closest branch to customers. Our proposal focuses provision on accessibility rather than protection of post offices solely because of the distance to the next one, irrespective of the number of people that they actually serve.

The introduction of the specific protection for deprived urban areas, in addition to the national criteria, further safeguards these vulnerable communities. We proposed that the protection would apply to the 10% most deprived urban areas but have decided, in light of responses to consultation, to extend this to ensure that the 15% most deprived urban areas are protected

We understand the requests for further explanation of the definitions in relation to the access criteria. We have elected to continue to use the urban/rural divide that applied in respect of the urban reinvention programme. The definitions are:

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

Rural – a community not covered by the definition of urban above.

Deprived Urban – the most disadvantaged urban parts of the UK.

To ensure a fair balance between the countries in the UK, urban deprived areas will be defined by reference to the most deprived 15% of Super Output Areas in England, 15% of Data Zones in Scotland, and 30% of Super Output Areas in Wales and Northern Ireland. This takes into account the proportional spread of disadvantaged areas across the UK¹.

1 Each nation produces separate Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This means that the 15% most deprived areas across the UK cannot be specifically identified from existing data. A blanket 15% application across each nation would not be equitable or reflect the relative need of each country (since an urban area outside the 15% most deprived areas in one country might have greater need than an area within the 15% most deprived in another). We have built on the approach developed for the application of stamp duty relief, and sought to apply the same protection to each nation as that experienced by its most comparable English region (based upon appropriate socio-economic indicators). As a result 15% of urban areas in England and Scotland will be defined as 'urban deprived' and 30% in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Many respondents welcomed the proposal to tailor access criteria to take account of significant local geographical constraints such as rivers, mountains and valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands and other practical constraints like railways to avoid undue hardship. We also received many responses asking that other factors be added, including the availability of public transport, actual travelling distances and times by road or other routes accessible on foot, and other socio-economic factors including the wider economic impact on communities. Some respondents took the view that the distances proposed in the criteria would be physically taxing for many customers if making both legs of the journey on foot. The key concern of many respondents was that access criteria had to be relevant to people at the local level with appropriate safeguards for the vulnerable and proper consideration given to factors relating to people, place and provision of essential services. The need for the criteria to be responsive to future population trends with particular reference to areas of population growth was also raised.

We recognise the force of the points above and in applying the access criteria, Post Office Ltd will be required to take into account obstacles such as rivers, mountains and valleys, motorways and sea crossings to islands to avoid undue hardship. Post Office Ltd will also consider the availability of public transport and alternative access to key post office services, local demographics and the impact on local economies when drawing up area plans. Post Office Ltd will demonstrate how these factors have been considered in arriving at their plans in each local consultation document.

Many respondents also called for parity of treatment between rural and urban areas, between countries within the UK and for parity to be maintained.

We agree that no particular part of the network and no particular group of people should be significantly more adversely affected by closures or other changes in service provision than any other. We therefore expect that Post Office Ltd will be making roughly similar numbers of closures in rural and urban areas. We also expect that when developing detailed area plans Post Office Ltd will reflect the principle that no country within the UK and no group of inhabitants at the area plan level should be significantly more adversely affected than any other.

Ensuring that access criteria continue to be met

Several respondents asked how access criteria would be monitored and enforced to ensure that potential gaps in the resulting network from unplanned closures would be avoided. It was asked how monitoring might note changes over time in most deprived area rankings and check compliance in development areas which experience sizeable population growth.

The Government considers that external monitoring of and responsibility for reviewing of Post Office Ltd's compliance with the access criteria should rest with Postwatch (and subsequently its successor body – the National Consumer Council). Postwatch already contributes to the annual report on

the network prepared by Postcomm and the role of periodically monitoring and reviewing compliance with access criteria would be a logical extension of that work. Discussions are in progress on the nature of the monitoring and review arrangements.

Relationship to the universal service obligation

Some respondents asked how the new access criteria would relate to Royal Mail's universal service obligation and whether Outreach services would be part of the universal service. Some also called for the access criteria to include a minimum service obligation for all post offices and Outreach outlets including minimum opening hours and a minimum range of products.

It is the responsibility of Postcomm to define and protect the universal service and to ensure licence holders' compliance with the universal service obligation. The Government has established these access criteria in recognition of the social role which the post office network performs in addition to its role in providing postal services. These criteria are separate from, and independent of, Royal Mail's universal service obligation which is a matter for Postcomm. It is therefore for Postcomm to enter into discussions with Royal Mail Group to ensure that the universal service obligation is not in any way compromised in fulfilling access criteria requirements.

Decisions about local service offerings and opening hours are a matter for Post Office Ltd and local subpostmasters, reflecting the needs and demand in local communities. It is not appropriate for the Government to intervene in this or seek to set national standards for matters which are best considered at local level.

There were also calls for consideration to be given to the potential for integrating post office services with other local services.

We believe that local people are best placed to understand the needs of their communities but we also recognise the continuing need for national provision. We will be reflecting on experiences of local involvement in light of the forthcoming change programme and will be considering further what role local authorities might play in the future provision of services.

Closure programme & the future network

A number of respondents questioned the scale of the closure programme and the potential for the network to decline over time significantly below 12,000 outlets as a result of further uncompensated closures yet still be within the requirements of the accessibility criteria.

The Government believes that the access criteria ensure reasonable coverage levels on a nationwide basis. We have set a maximum number of compensated closures as we believe that a network of around 12,000 branches will be sustainable. However, the market in which post offices

operate has changed dramatically in recent years and is likely to continue to evolve. Post Office Ltd must be able to develop with that market and it would be wrong for Government to invest in their future while at the same time placing arbitrary and inflexible constraints on them. Some closures are unavoidable and this is likely always to be the case.

The Government decided on a network closure programme of 2,500 offices following detailed consideration with Post Office Ltd. In arriving at this decision, we were aware of the need to balance the social needs of the network with the cost to the taxpayer of continuing to fund a national network.

As was stated in the consultation document, Post Office Ltd cannot continue to sustain current levels of losses. The network as it stands is unsustainable. In addressing these losses, Post Office Ltd will need to take a strategic approach to the network. While significant efficiency savings have been identified, the scale of losses cannot be properly tackled if the network remains at its current size. The Government has to strike a balance between ensuring that the network remains accessible, particularly to vulnerable groups, and the heavy cost to the taxpayer. We believe that a net closure programme of 2,000 – as 500 new Outreach access points will replace some closures – enables us to meet those goals.

Local consultation

Respondents welcomed the commitment to local consultation on Post Office Ltd's proposals for closure and associated changes in service provision and were keen to see wide engagement to ensure that the views of local people are taken into account before any final decisions are taken by Post Office Ltd. Many consultees were keen to see early input from local authorities to the development of local area plans. Many respondents sought an increase from 6 to 12 weeks for the consultation period on local area plans. Many also thought that an 18 month period for the whole programme was challenging and should be extended to allow for the complexity of matching closures with Outreach arrangements without gaps in service. A contrary view called for local consultation to be carried out speedily to minimise continuing uncertainty for subpostmasters and customers

The Government notes the arguments but has decided to confirm its decision for a six week local consultation period. That reflects the approach followed during the latter stages of the urban reinvention programme. The early stages of the local process will involve detailed area plan development discussions with Postwatch and the involvement of local authorities in advance of formal public consultation. When combined with the subsequent six weeks of public consultation, the Government believes that this will enable sufficiently robust consultations to take place at a local area level. We are also mindful of the fact that the organisation representing subpostmasters has argued for a speedy local consultation

to minimise uncertainty for subpostmasters and customers, an issue acknowledged by other respondents.

Post Office Ltd's timescale for developing, and consulting publicly at local level on, local area plans for changes in post office service provision is 90 days overall. In the pre-public consultation phase, Postwatch will provide input and advice on how best to meet the area criteria while achieving changes to the network that are sensitive to customer needs, implement Government policy requirements and minimise adverse customer impact. The aim is to assist Post Office Ltd in developing a practical area plan for a sustainable network to put to public consultation. During public consultation, Postwatch will ensure that the right people are being consulted, that the consultation process is being properly observed and that issues raised are promptly shared with Post Office Ltd. After public consultation, Postwatch will consider the responses and discuss the specific issues raised with Post Office Ltd. There is also provision for Postwatch to nominate individual branches for further discussion and joint review by Postwatch and Post Office Ltd before final decisions are reached.

Post Office Ltd considers that implementation of the changes, including the introduction of new Outreach services, within an 18 month period is deliverable. The Government confirms the decision to aim to complete the programme within that period.

Delivery of Services

Q5. Do you have any suggestions as to how services might be better delivered through the post office network?

One stop shops

Many respondents called for Government to recognise and support local post offices as focal points or 'information gateways' for national and local Government products and services enabling all vulnerable groups access to vital services in their communities.

The suggestion that post offices become 'one stop shops' for Government services has been voiced on numerous occasions. This is an area which Government has looked at previously. In 2002 we provided £25m for the 'Your Guide' pilot to test the concept of post offices as a one-stop shop for advice on Government services. The impact of the 'Your Guide' pilot was limited with 85% of customers commenting that they would have found the information they obtained elsewhere. The pilot showed that the costs of rolling out a publicly funded national scheme would be excessive and would not represent value for money given the size of the likely customer base that would use and benefit from it.

Extension of opening hours

A number of respondents believed consideration should be given to extending opening hours at post offices to broaden the customer base and increase footfall. The absence of Saturday opening by smaller rural offices was seen as a significant impediment to accessing services in such areas.

The core opening hours for a full time post office branch are 09:00-17:30 weekdays and 09:00-12:30 on Saturdays. Where the branch operates an open plan or combined retail and post office counter, retailers are encouraged to offer post office services for extended hours, preferably to the same times as the associated retail. Therefore subpostmasters can, if they choose, open the post office for longer than the core hours but their remuneration would be based solely on the value and volume of the post office products or services sold. In some rural branches the level of business generated does not cover the costs of operating on a full time basis. In order to maintain services in that location the subpostmaster is contracted to open on a restricted hours basis and receives a fixed payment for the number of hours under the terms of the contract. In branches offering restricted opening the subpostmaster can still choose to offer Post Office services for longer and many do choose this option as they are in attendance anyway.

Open network to other mail service providers

Many respondents called for the network to be opened up to other mail providers as a means of strengthening the viability of sub post offices.

The Government recognises the benefits of competition. It is clear that encouraging extra business into the network is absolutely essential. It is simply wrong to suggest that there are barriers to competitors. We opened up the postal services market with the Postal Services Act 2000 and any mail company that wants to use the post office network can approach Post Office Ltd to discuss a commercial agreement. In the event that a deal cannot be reached the matter can be taken up by the Regulator.

At present, Post Office Ltd only provides mail services for Royal Mail and Royal Mail uses the network to satisfy its regulatory obligation to provide service access points. The company is alive to the potential benefits to be had from providing package and parcel collection services at post offices. Royal Mail already offers a parcel collection service through the network. Its 'Local Collect' service enables customers ordering goods from selected mail order catalogues and Internet suppliers that use Royal Mail (and Parcelforce Worldwide) services to have goods delivered to a post office if they do not expect to be at home when the delivery is made. Alternatively, people can elect to have their Royal Mail package or Parcelforce Worldwide parcel redirected to their local post office for collection later for a small charge.

Clearly this is a developing market, and we will continue to encourage the Post Office to take opportunities where they exist. Post Office Ltd stands ready to develop its business in this area. Realistically, however, it is unlikely that any new commercially negotiated deal between Post Office Ltd and other mail providers would create significant volumes of new business and revenues for subpostmasters; rather it is likely to be a substitute for Royal Mail business.

POca

Respondents generally welcomed the Government's decision to continue with a new account after the current Post Office card account (POca) contract ends in 2010 in view of their importance for financially and socially vulnerable people. Many also offered views on the replacement POca with some suggesting increased functionality, such as ATM access and a direct debit facility, with simple application procedures and for anyone switching to the replacement POca a seamless process with no requirement for new applications and no change to the existing PIN numbers.

We understand the concerns about the future POca and note the suggestions made. The scope for introducing new functions in the replacement product will be considered as part of the product design and tendering process, but, as mentioned in response to Questions 1 and 2, we must recognise that one of the attractions of the POca is its simplicity and we do not simply wish to create a basic bank account by another name when there are many such accounts already on the market, many of which can be used at the Post Office. We share the aim that any change from the existing product to the new product is as seamless for customers as possible, and this will again be taken into consideration as part of the product design and tendering process.

Credit Unions

Some respondents suggested that working closely with Credit Unions would help the post office extend financial inclusion and generate new business.

This is a commercial matter for Post Office Ltd and the Credit Unions. There have been some discussions between Post Office Ltd and the Credit Union body at a national level on the scope for working together and they continue to explore all the possible options.

Financial services

A number of consultees suggested that Post Office Ltd should introduce a greater mix of financial services to suit low-income customers and to help meet social and financial inclusion objectives.

Post offices are now the leading supplier of foreign currency exchange services. In a venture with the Bank of Ireland, Post Office Ltd has in recent

years introduced a wider range of financial services. The Government's proposals support Post Office Ltd's efforts to develop new financial services products, building on their existing success in this area. For example, the Instant Saver account, introduced in April 2006 has proved very popular with customers as has car and home insurance. The venture partners continue to look for products that are well matched to the needs of Post Office Ltd's customers. In common with all providers of financial services, Post Office Ltd is bound by the regulatory framework set by the Financial Services Authority. Subpostmasters are not qualified to give financial advice but can and do act as introducers to financial products available through the post office. Beyond this, there is no obstacle to expansion of financial services available and Government will continue to encourage Post Office Ltd to explore all possible opportunities in this market.

Parcel delivery/collection

Many respondents wanted post offices to offer a parcel delivery and collection point service.

Royal Mail already offers a collection service through the post office network. In addition, the 'Local Collect' service enables customers ordering goods from selected mail order catalogues and Internet suppliers that use Royal Mail (and Parcelforce Worldwide) services to have goods delivered to a post office if they do not expect to be at home when the delivery is made. Alternatively people can elect to have their Royal Mail package or Parcelforce Worldwide parcel redirected to their local post office for collection later for a small charge.

Outreach

Q 6. Do you have any comments on Outreach arrangements as a means of maintaining service to small and remote communities?

Many respondents agreed that Outreach has the potential to provide a more cost effective service in areas with low footfall whilst offering a mutually beneficial option where another small business acts as 'host' site for post office services.

Of the four generic Outreach types, respondents generally see the 'Partner' and 'Hosted' services as the most preferable alternative to a fixed branch. While sensitivities about location may need to be taken into account, many diverse locations such as pubs, petrol stations village halls and churches are already being successfully used.

There was a general welcome for the idea of a mobile post office as a means to maintain service, particularly in remote rural areas. Though the mobile post office has received significant attention and levels of acceptance where it has been trialled, it is clearly something of an unknown for the majority of respondents who have no personal experience of using it. As a result, a wide

range of concerns was raised over logistical and operational issues. Many respondents expressed concerns that a mobile office might not be available when they needed it and there were also substantial concerns about security.

Others suggested that it would be sensible to explore whether there might be the potential to link mobile post offices with other mobile services as has been piloted by Post Office Ltd working with a mobile library in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland.

The 'Home' service was seen as the least preferable alternative service for individual users. Many respondents expressed a concern that despite the additional convenience, having services delivered to the door was in fact least preferable because it removed the reason to leave the house and therefore reduced social interaction. However, it is apparent that in some instances, the Home service has been successful in supporting the needs of small businesses with Core sub-post offices in Aldeburgh and Glastonbury having arranged for mail pick ups directly from small businesses that have signed up to the service.

In our consultation we set out our proposals that, building on trials in place since 2005, Post Office Ltd should introduce some 500 Outreach services to mitigate the consequences of some managed post office closures. We indicated that we would provide support for Post Office Ltd to open new Outreach locations to provide access to services for small remote communities by building on the success of the pilot trials including mobile post offices and post offices hosted in other locations such as village halls, community centres or pubs.

We welcome the overall acceptance in the responses of the need to explore more cost-effective means of providing post office services, particularly in remote areas. Respondents generally agreed with the principle of increasing scope of the Core and Outreach approach. It has also been helpful to receive detailed suggestions for how implementation of Outreach, beyond the existing pilot schemes, can be best achieved.

Shared concerns

Whilst many were supportive of the introduction of new service delivery methods, there was an over-riding concern that there should not be any decrease in the availability or range of services provided. There was also a strong emphasis on engaging with communities at an early stage to determine their usage requirements and on local authorities and parish councils being involved in local consultation on changes to service.

Many respondents commented that Outreach, as a replacement for a fixed branch, would need to be carefully tailored to local circumstances as regards type and availability of service offered.

We want Post Office Ltd actively to engage with local authorities and communities, through a process of local consultation and ahead of establishing Outreach services, so that they can be tailored to individual

circumstances and stand the best chance of acceptance and success. The company should take account of local usage patterns and ensure that Outreach services are adequate to accommodate the level of demand. Where possible, the company should ensure that the social benefit of Outreach is maximised by arranging availability to fit with local activities. The company should also investigate the level of demand for making Outreach services available in areas where there is no longer, or has never been, a fixed post office service.

Specific concerns

Some consultees were sceptical about the financial benefits and the viability of Outreach and had concerns that the proposed number of Outreach would not be sustainable. The technical reliability of the portable or mobile equipment for some types of Outreach service was also a concern to some respondents

Post Office Ltd will need to continue to work with the National Federation of Subpostmasters so that entrepreneurial subpostmasters who are willing to offer Outreach services, and are well placed to do so, are incentivised and are remunerated accordingly.

Post Office Ltd's pilots have shown that Outreach services can yield significant cost savings and the continued operation of the pilots has enabled the company to overcome initial teething problems and achieve very high levels of technical and service reliability, demonstrating the sustainability of the Outreach model.

Community ownership

Q 7. Do you have comments on the practicality of community ownership of parts of the post office network, which might involve the transfer of assets to community organisations and/or the establishment of local mutual or co-operative organisations to own and run local services?

Many respondents broadly welcomed the potential for greater community involvement, taking the view that Post Office Ltd should be encouraged to engage actively with any communities expressing an interest in adopting a community ownership solution. However some questioned whether this was a means of transferring a Government public service provision problem over to communities whilst others expressed concerns about the long-term sustainability of community owned models which rely on the goodwill and funding of local residents. Others raised concerns about security and questioned whether the role and services provided by post offices are suited to community ownership given the levels of training and knowledge required of subpostmasters and whether access to post office services should be contingent on community enterprises.

The community ownership model was seen as being capable of successfully catering for rural communities of between 400 – 1,000 people. It was thought

work should be done to identify a community ownership contract that would help facilitate development of the community ownership model. As pointed out by the National Federation of Subpostmasters, there are also financial service regulations that subpostmasters abide by and this poses further issues when seeking to expand further the concept in this field.

The vast majority of post offices are private businesses – traded commercially. Having a community run its own office will not, on its own, make it financially viable from Post Office Ltd's perspective.

But there are currently some 150 thriving community-owned shops in the UK, many of which already incorporate post offices. And it is clear from the comments received that there is widespread interest in the concept of establishing more. The Government has since published the Quirk review into community management and ownership of assets, Making Assets Work, and its response which set out practical proposals for removing barriers to increasing community ownership. The Quirk Review recognises that community ownership can play a role in enhancing the local environment and giving local people a bigger stake in the future of their area.

The Government wants to encourage more community-run post offices where they are viable. We recognise that the processes can be daunting. The Government will therefore work with stakeholders to ensure there is suitable advice available to interested parties and that community ownership is promoted as a possible means of maintaining post office services where other options are not available. We will also expect Post Office Ltd to engage constructively with groups who present a viable case for community ownership in those circumstances.

Next Steps

Having reached its final decisions, the Government believes it is important to implement its strategy for the post office network as soon as is practicable and is consistent with sound preparation and planning.

Key steps for Government include obtaining state aid clearance from the European Commission for the Government funding package underpinning the post office network strategy. A notification will now be submitted. In addition, Parliamentary approval for elements of the funding package will be required and this will be sought before the Summer Parliamentary recess.

The Government is particularly keen that measures that will help to contain or reduce the network's losses and to reduce damaging uncertainty over future service provision for customers and subpostmasters should be taken forward as soon as possible. The programme of compulsory closures together with the introduction of Outreach will therefore be a priority.

Government will continue to work up proposals on the scope for devolving greater responsibility for decisions on post office service provision to local authorities and devolved administrations and for providing greater flexibility for local funding decisions.

Post Office Ltd will develop its network change programme within the framework of the access criteria and the wider factors which they will be required to take into account or consider in developing area plan proposals for closures and other changes in service provision. In the first instance this will require extensive analysis of the characteristics, usage and financial performance of the existing network on an office by office basis to identify and assess options for change. Post Office Ltd will be initiating this process immediately as a comprehensive data analysis exercise. The second stage will be to seek information and input from relevant parties, including Postwatch, subpostmasters and local authorities, as area plan proposals are developed for public consultation. Taking the pre-consultation phase together with the six week public consultation period, the total process allows a reasonable period of time analysis and assessment of proposals at the local level.

Nationally, Post Office Ltd expects to accommodate its network reshaping programme in around 50-60 area plans, based predominantly on groupings of parliamentary constituencies. Post Office Ltd plans to develop these plans progressively over a 12-15 month period from mid-summer 2007 and by July will publish a timetable of when they expect to announce plans for each area. They aim to complete the closure and network reshaping programme by the end of 2008.

List of Respondents

Abberley Parish Council Abbotskerswell Parish Council

Abbott DM Abbott P Abell BJ

Aberdeen City Council Aberdeenshire Council Aberlady Community Association Abingdon Town Council Aborfield & Newland Parish Council

Acourt B

Action with Communities in Rural England

Acton Turville Parish Council

Adam B (MSP) Adams CF,DPW,RV,ML

Adams P Adams T Ade P Ade S

Adey F/Gable Tea Rooms

Adie J

Adisham Parish Council Adkins Mrs&Mrs Advice NI

Age Concern England/Jones G
Age Concern Islington/Tansley K
Age Concern Lerwick/Erskine A
Age Concern Ripon/Rainer P
Age Concern/Huskinson M
Age Concern/Simmonds T
Age Concern/Spye J
Age Concern/Turnock H

AICMO Aitken E

Alconbury Parish Council Alconbury Weston Parish Council

Alexander D Alexander D (MP) Alexander P Alford Parish Council Alford S

Alfred R All Party Parliamentary Group on Rural

Services/Dunne P (MP)

Allen A

East Hoscote Parish Council

Allen B Allen CVD Allen P Alvsaker R AMICUS

Anand M Reverend Anderson A Anderson E Anderson KME Anderson M Anderson Mr&Mrs G Anderson S Andrew J Andrews M Andrews Mr&Mrs C Andrews Mrs

Andross Community Council

Anglesey Federation of Womens Institutes/Uchaf S

Anson B Antaur JW Applewhite Mrs

Archbishops' Council, Church Buildings

Division/Griffiths P

Archer E Archer IJ Ardovicone D

Ardrishaig Community Council Ardross Community Council Argyll & Bute Council

Arkell J Arlington J

Armagh District Council Armstrong J

Arne Parish Council
Arthur JS
Arthur JW
Arthur Rank Centre
Ashingdon Parish Council
Ashurst Wood Parish Council

Association of British Credit Unions Ltd

Association of Independent Cash Machine Operators Association of Scottish Community Councils ASCC

Attfield S
Attwood Ms
Auphlet DJ
Austin AM
Austin HE
Avery L
Avory G

Awre Parish Council Axbridge Town Council Aylesbury Vale District Council

Aylitte S

Ayton Village Community Council

Badgett FD Bailey A Bailey Mr Baines P

Baker D/Lydbury English Centre Ltd

Baker H Baker JM Balfour Scott D Balhatchet P Ball EE Ball P Ballantine TA Ballatonet P

Baltonborough Parish Council

Bamber J Bijman Adirana Banks H&D Billericay Town Council Banks S Billing T Banner M Bingham A Birch HJ Bantick A Bantick A/Cairngorm Music Birches Community Association Birchwood B Bantick H Birmingham City Council/Hill M Birmingham City Council/Hughes S Birmingham City Council/Kirk L Barber S Barcis J Bardgett F&A Barham Parish Council Bishop D&M Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council Barker CD Barnes MJ Black MC Barnes R/Select Research Ltd Blackawton Parish Council Blackburn and District Trades Council Barnett C Barnett P Blackburn with Darwen BC Barnett S Blackford Community Council Barnsley MBC Blackler GFA Blackwood N Blaikie G Barr C Baron J MP Barret J (MP) and Margaret Smith MSP Blairgowrie and Rattray Community Council Barrett P Blakemore R Barrington Parish Council Blandford District Trades Council Blandford Forum Town Council Blean Parish Council Barrios C Barton A Barton B Bletchley & Fenny Stratford Town Council Barton Parish Council Blewitt C Barton St David Parish Council Blewn J Blockley Parish Council Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council Boardman K Bass JM Bassetlaw District Council Boardman W Bassington KJ/Roxwell Wednesday Club Boddington C Boddington Parish Council Bate B Bolingbroke L Bateman R Bates D Bolney and Cowfold Parish Councils Bates H/Milton House Holiday Lets Bonehill Mr Bates MG Bonner L Bates RD Bonson G Boonham A J Booth P Bates S Bathford Parish Council Bathgate M Borough of Pendle Baughen K Borthwick Bossom P Bawden R Boston Borough Council Boughton RH Bawdsey Parish Council Bawn T Baxter D Bourne FA Bournemouth Borough Council Baxter L Bayliss NC Bourton Parish Council Bowes Parish Council Bean Residents Association Bean T Bowhay J Bear P Bowman M Bearcroft B Bowyer P Beard J Boyce J Brachtvogel P Beasley W Braco & Greenloaning Community Council Beattie WM Beaumont B Bradford & Cookbury Parish Council Beckett J Reverend Bradford A Bradford Metropolitan District Council Bedford L Bedlow Women's Institute Bradford on Avon Town Council Brady G (MP) Beeching J Bees A Braggins M Beetham Parish Council Brain L/Gem Jewellery Ltd Belbroughton Parish Council Braintree District Council/Barrett K Braintree District Council/Bolter S Beleus EE Bell A Braithwaite A Bell B Bramall D and Jennifer and David Thomson Bell JR Bramley Parish Council Brandean and Hinton Ampner Parish Council Bell S Bennett AW Brandon & Byshottles Parish Council Bennett J Braunton Parish Council Bergin S Brayshaw R Berkeley Town Council Breed C (MP) Berry C Brett P Berry G Brewer D Berryman Mr Brewer M Bertie C Brice M Brice, Sarah/Rachel/David and Anna Brice Better Government for elderly in South Lanarkshire Bridport Local Area Partnership Bettyhill, Strathnaver & Altnaharra Comm. Council Brighton and Hove City Council Biawith & Subberthwaite Parish Council Bickford J Brill Parish Council Bideford Town Council British Chambers of Commerce

Britnell BG & L

Biggs K

Carlisle City Council/Sutton Z Broadbent S Carlisle Parish Councils Assoc. Broadley M Brocklehurst S Carmarthenshire Council Carmichael A (MP), Tavish Scott MSP Carmichael A (MP), Wallace MSP Brocks P Brocton Parish Council Carmichael CD Bromsgrove Council Bronstein JM Carney A Brooke E Carpenter J Brooks H Carpenter Mr&Mrs T Brora Community Council Carter C Brotherton LW Brough Parish Council Carter G Carter J Broughton A Cartwright EM Brown EB Cash W (MP) Brown ED Cassop-cum-Quarrington Parish Council Brown Mrs Castletown and District Community Council Brown R (MP) Caton-with-Littledale Parish Council Bruce J Cawkwell K Bruce N Cawood Parish Council Bruno F Ceredigion County Council Bryant F Cerne Valley Parish Council Bryer-Parsons D Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council Buchanan V Chalford Parish Council Buckden Parish Council Chalmers D Buckham CJ Chamberlain R Buckland Brewer Parish Council Chambers C Buckland D Chandler C and Nick Whiteley Buckland Monachorum Parish Council Chapman B (MP) Buckley Antiquarian Society Charfield Parish Council Charles Mr&Mrs Buckman B Buckridge T Charles R Budd L/The 100 Minute Press Ltd Checkley A Chelmsford Borough Council Bufton IJ Bufton SA Cherry JM Cherwell District Council Bullough D and David Midgely Burden R (MP) Chesham Bois Parish Council Burgess Hill Town Council Chesham Evening Townswomen Cheshire & Warrington Rural Partnership Burgess S Cheshire County Council
Cheshire Rural Retail Advisory Partnership Burke D Burke J/Flourishing People Ltd Burke J/Townswomen Today Chester le Street District Council Chesterfield Borough Council Burke Mr Burke VM Chestfield Parish Council Chetnole and Stockwood Parish Council Burney GG Burnham Health Centre Chichester District Council Chidgey A Burnip A Burnmouth Community Council Chilcompton Society, The Burra and Trondra Community Council Child Okeford Parish Council Child S/Rackenford Village Shop Company Burrell P Burrows SM Chitham R Burton Mr&Mrs Chowcat H Bury Parish Council Christleton Parish Council Busby Mr&Mrs Christopher B Butcher B Christy A Butler MJ Chryston Community Council Butterfill J (MP) Churches of Scotland, The Churches Rural Group, The Buttle M Bwrdd Yr Iaith Gymraeg (Welsh Language Board) Churt Parish Council Byrne BH Citizens Advice and CA Scotland Byrne F Citty Mr Byrne MP City of Edinburgh Council City of Ely Byrt M City of Lincoln Council Caernarfon Civic Society Civil Service Pensioners Alliance Shropshire Cain G Cairns J Clapham D Callicott B Clapham V Calmady-Hamlyn Mrs Clark D Clark E Cambridgeshire County Council Clark M Cameron J Campaign for Community Banking Services Clark M Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales Clark Mr&Mrs Campaign to Protect Rural England/Bawtree R Clarkson T Campaign to Protect Rural England/Willis G Clayton M Campbell J Clayton R Campbell S Clouts M Campton & Cruickshanks and Silsoe Parish Councils Coates S Canonbie and District Council Cockburn D Canterbury City Council Cockburn G&W Carhampton Parish Council Cogan C Carleton Rode Parish Council Cohen P

Cohn L

Colbourne B

Carley J

Carlisle City Council/Bainbridge J

Cole EJ Dent M Denton E Coles A Derbyshire S Collins C/Civil Service Pensioners Alliance Derrick K Collins F Derrick K Collins P Derry J Coltman D Destefano N Comerford G Devenport P Commins M Deverish VK & R Commins PJ Dhorey TJ Community Council of Staffordshire Dick R Dickinson W Constable E Consumer Council NI, The Dickinson WE Conwyn M Dickinson WE Cook D Dickson H Coole D Dison MS Cooper D Dixon M Cooper G Dobbins B&J Cooper TP Dobson D Corfield Mrs Dobson WH Donald Mr&Mrs Cornford S Corrance H Donaldson TR Corrie A Done M Cottage A Dorrell S (MP) Cotterill G Dorries N (MP) Coughlin M Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils Countryside Agency, The Double V Cowper J Doubtfire T Cowper JE Cowperthwaite D Douglas S Dow S Cox A&S Downey A Cox C Downey P Cox G (QC MP) Downward C Dowsing K Craythorne S Dowswell Mr Creed J Crombie M Drake K Crompton R/Storth Post Office Drew D (MP) Crooks G Driver I/Post Office at the Black Lion Hotel Drumchapel Lawn Tennic Club Cross HN Drumchapel St Andrews Church Cross R Cross RB Drummond S Cross RNR Dryden A Cross S Duffy D Crouch C Dumo L Crouch Mrs&Mrs CJ Dumpleton C Crowe A Dunbar JCM Crowhurst A Duncan A (MP) Cryer M/Martin Cryer Consulting Ltd Dundas J Cunningham A Dunlop AJ Dunrossness Post office Cunningham N Curd KH **Durham County Council** Currie DF Duval JE Currie S Dyer HM Curtis D Dymoke K Curwen Sir Christopher Dyson J Cylde M Dziewulskle K Dale J Eachain T Dane Walters T Eaglesham & Waterfoot Community Council Earp Ms David B Davies D/The Silk Bureau East and West Buckland Parish Council Davies I East Leake Parish Council East Midlands Regional Agency Davies N Davies SD East Northamptonshire East Riding of Yorkshire Council Davis A East Sussex Rural Partnership Davis D Davis R Eastleigh Borough Council Davis S Eday Community Council Eden District Council Dawes Y Dawson CH Eden District Council Dawson DG Eden Local Strategic Partnership Dawson R Edmunds HV Day B Day Ms Edrom, Allanton and Whitsome Community Council Edwards A J Deacon M Edwards DP Deamer W Edwards Mr/Oliver House (Evesham) Ltd Dean and Shelton Parish Council Edwards Mrs Dean D Edwards MS Deas SD Edwards R Deeming J Edwards S Denbighshire County Council Edwards W Denny G EEDA

Elderton B

Denny MJ

Forest of Dean Citizens Advice Bureau Flderton P Ellesmere Port & Neston BC Forest of Dean District Council Elliot B/Sci-Lab Analytical Ltd Forsyth W Forsythe N Elliot MC Ellwav RM Forum of Private Business (FPB) Elston Parish Council Foster P Elsworth E/GE Elsworth & Son & Carastore Fox C Elsworth Jubilee Club Fox EM Elwes HWG Fox I Emerson EC Frame Mr&Mrs Frampton Cotterell Parish Council Emery J Frampton on Severn Parish Council/Howe J Enticknap LR Erewash Borough Council Frampton on Severn Parish Council/Ireland L Erricker N Francis AO **Erwood Community Council** Francis GO Essex County Council Franke L Essex Rural Partnership Frankland E Evans D Frankling C&P Fraser C (MP) Fraser JW Evans DR Evans LB Evans R Freij R Evans S Fremington Parish Council Everard T French P Evercreech Parish Council Fresson RA Everett CL Freuchie Community Council Everett Mrs Frinton and Walton Town Council Everitt L/Framework HA Fross CV Evershot Parish Council Frost B Everton Parish Council Froxfield Parish Council Evie & Rendall Community Council Froyle Parish Council Ewing A Fryer PA and E Excell MKC Fryer R Fair Oak & Horton Heath Parish Council Fuller M Fairbrother J&J Furnance Community Council Fyfield & Tubney Parish Council Falconers Al Fallon A Fyfield Parish Council Farcet Parish Council Gairloch Community Council Galleywood Parish Council Farquhar Munro J (MSP) Gard B Farr S Farr W Gargrave Parish Council Farrell J Garnethill Community Council Garrett M Garthwaite G Federation of Small Business Anglesey/Williams S Federation of Small Business Oxford /Bage D Garwood P Gash AF & A Federation of Small Business/Davenport C Federation of Small Business/King A Gasking D Feering Parish Council Gateshead Council Felixstowe Town Council Gedard V Felton Parish Council Geddes J Fenton G Gee P Fenton P Georgeham Parish Council Fenwick J German V Gibb R Ferrier A Field McNally Leathes Ltd Gibson PAJ Giddins M Field R Fifehead Neville Parish Meeting Gilbert FW Finch J Gilbert JA Finch RM Gilbert N Finn Mr&Mrs Gill B/Gretton Village Hall Finnegan B & TP Gill C Fisher P Gill J Fisher WK Gill S Gillham A Fivehead Parish Council Gillingham Town Council Flack E Flack PR & VM Gillis B Fladbury Parish Council Ginns S Flaherty PJ Gittos Mr Fleetwood J Glascwm Community Council Flellor R (MP) Glen Lyon & Loch Tay Community Council Fleming FG Glenorch & Innishail Community Council Fletcher S Glos Assoc. of parish & Town Councils Gloucestershire County Council Folkard P Folke Parish Council/Crothers D Gloucestershire First Folke Parish Council/Dolder J Gloucestershire Rural Community Council Follett P Glover GW Folwer SE Goldie S Foot NP Goldsmith DC Gooch AJ Ford J Ford RG Goodleigh Parish Council Forde I/Snacktime UK Ltd Goodman H (MP) Forest Heath District Council/Cooney E Goodrich N

Goodwin J&B

Forest Heath District Council/Syvret SJ

Hardwood HM Goom J Gordon A Harman K Gordon AC Harmer M Gordon GAG Harpenden Town Council Harper M (MP) Gorton D&J Gorton J Harray Scottish Womens Rural Institute Gorton K Harris Goss M Harris EM Harris J&J Gow I Gow ID Harrison W Gowers R&JE Harrogate Spa Ladies Harrower EM Graham A Graham W Hart C Grahame C (MSP) Harting Parish Council Grange over Sands Town Council Hartland R Hartlepool Borough Council Grant E Grasmere Village Society Hartley S Gray E Hartpury Parish Council Gray J Gray JM Hartwell A E Harvey C Gray Mr&Mrs Harvey S Gray Mrs Harwood EJ Gray W Hassocks Parish Council Grayling K Hastings Borough Council Grayshan H Hastings DJ Great Abingdon Parish Council Hatfield Broad Oak Parish Council Great Brington Post Office & Stores Haven's Older Persons Forum, The Great Elm Parish Council Hawkes R Great Gransden Parish Council Great Staughton Parish Council Hawkins JE Hawkins S Great Torrington Town Council Hawkins S&J Great Waltham Parish Council Haworth, Cross Roads & Stanbury Parish Council Greater London Authority/Lorimer K Hay JC Greater London Authority/Mayor Of London Hayes A Green A Hayes B Green J Hayes GA Green Mrs Hayes J Green R Hayes N Haynes Parish Council Greening J (MP) Hay-on-Wye Town Council Gregg GJ Gregory R Hazelwood J Greves J&G Healey J (MP) Grev W Heanton Punchardon Parish Council Heathhall Community Council Griffith N (MP) Griffiths L Hednesford Town Council Griffiths Mrs Heley E Griffiths R Helliker L Grimes VC/Focusability Wakefield Help the Aged Help the Aged in Wales/Lloyd V Help the Aged/Sinclair D Grimwood RW Grinnell G Gristwood IE Hemingway J Hemingway J Groom G Hendry C (MP) Grove GG Hendry G Grummant J Henham Parish Council Gulberwick Quarff & Cunningsburgh Community Council Henio S Hennock Parish Council Gunn AR Gurnard Parish Council Henry S Gurney RD Herald A Guy JŘ Herald G Guy N Herbert JP Haines I Hereford A Hair A Herefordshire Council Hale Parish Council Herefordshire Federation of Women's Institutes Hall E Heritage BM Hallam DM Heritage P Hallsworth B Herod S Halton Borough Council Herod V Hambledon Parish Council Herongate and Ingrave Parish Council Hamilton A Hessel L Hamilton M Hetherington MA Hamlin G Hewlett B Heydon GM Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils Heywood J Hampton E Handford DM Hickman I&B Hanikens P Higbee C Hanmer M High B High Offley Parish Council High Peak Borough Council Hanna M Hanson M&N Hardie R Highland Council/Clark A

Highland Council/Edge H

Highlands & Islands Enterprise

Harding M

Hardman RJ

Highton E	Hunt M
Hildersham Parish Council	Hunt Mr
Hildersley C	Hunter M
Hill A Hill C Venerable	Hurstpierpoint Trades Association Hush A
Hill H	Hussey D
Hill J	Hutcheson JJ
Hill M	Hutchings P
Hill REW	Hutchings V
Hill W	Huxley LM
Hilperton Parish Council Hincliffe AE	Hyatt S Hyman F
Hindson JNR	Ibbeson DB
Hinsley BM	Ibstone Parish Council
Hintz N	Icke D
Hirst P	Ickleton Parish Council
Hitchman J Hitts J	Ickleton Society, The Idiens Mr&Mrs
Hoare S	lerston J
Hoareau L	Impington Parish Council
Hobson ME	Ingleby Barwick Parish Council
Hockley Heath Parish Council	Insley PR/Knowle Hill Nurseries Ltd
Hockley Parish Council Hodges J	Iravani A/Business plus Scotland Ltd Irongray Community Council
Hodges SJ	Irranca Davies H (MP)
Hodges SJ/Richmond and Partners	Irranca Davies H (MP) on behalf of constituents
Hodgson N	Isherwood C
Hodgson S (MP)	Island of Bute Community Council
Hodson Mr Holberry GA	Isle of Anglesey County Council/Dunning P Isle of Anglesey County Council/Jones E
Holbrook P	Isle of Wight County Federation of WI
Hollining J	Issaacs E
Hollis J/FML Public Relations	Iver Parish Council
Hollywell B	Ivybridge Town Council
Holm and Wideford Community Council Holm WRI Orkney Isles Scotland	Jack AM Jack C
Holme Parish Council	Jack E
Holme Post Office & News	Jackman BJ
Holmes Mr	Jackson JE
Holmes S	Jackson S (MP)
Holtey Classic Handplanes Holton DW and HRB	James A James S (MP)
Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council	Jardine E
Holywood and Newbridge Community Council	Jarvis D&I
Honour Fiancial Planning Ltd	Jeenings H
Hope	Jeffrey J Jenkins J
Hope GD Hope P (MP)	Jenkins JV
Hopewell S	Jenkins R
Hopewill D	Jenkins R
Hopkins S	Jennings H
Hopton on Sea Parish Council Horn Mr&Mrs	Jennings M Jewer M
Horningham Parish Council	Jiggin B
Hornsby AP	Jiggins E
Horoen C	John C
Horrocks-Taylor P	John I/Ruislip Residents Association
Horrold C&D Horsham District Council	Johnson D Johnson D
Hosking S/Meeth Post Office	Johnson DT
Houghton and Wyton Parish Council	Johnson K
Hourihan K	Johnson L
How R Howard P	Johnson M Johnson P
Howard RG	Johnson S
Howarth D (MP)	Johnson-Hill Mrs
Howarth T	Johnstone GG
Howett D	Joint P
Howley J Howse T	Jones A Jones B
Huckfield C/Tivetshall Monday Club	Jones BP
Huckson A	Jones BR
Hudson R	Jones I
Hughes H	Jones I Jones O
Hughes HI Hughes I	Jones D Jones P
Hughes RM	Jones P
Hull C	Jones S
Humble LJ	Jordon A
Humphreys R (MP) Humphries Mr&mrs	Jowett Mr&mrs Junor A
Hunsdon Parish Council	Kalis H

Lewisham Council Kanok Ms Keddie M Lickfold R Kelly C Lighthorne Parish Council Kelly Mrs Lilly J Kelly S Limond J Kemble and Ewen Parish Council Limpley Stoke Parish Council Lincolnshire Accessibility Partnership Kennedv M Kennoway Community Council Lincolnshire Assembly Kentisbury and Trentishoe Parish Council Lincolnshire County Council Lindfield Parish Council Kenton Mandeville Parish Council Lindford Parish Kenward I Lindford Parish Council Kerwood R Kettle M Lindsay A Kiltarlity Community Council Linton N Kincraig & Vicinity Community Council Linton Parish Council Lippett GL Kina B Liss Parish Council Kingoon Mr&Mrs D Kings Sutton Parish Council Lister L Kinoulton Parish Council Little Abington Parish Council Little Downham Parish Council Kirk M Kirklees Metropolitan Council Little Gransden Parish Council Kirkwall Community Council Little Hallingbury Parish Council Kirkwood Sir Andrew Little Leigh Parish Council Littlebourne Parish Council Kitchin JR Littlejohn R Knight A/Magdalen Street Post Office Knight G Baroness Livesey A Knight V Livett P Knott RE Llanarmon yn Ial Community Council Llandegla Community Council
Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council Knowles Bolton P Kramer S (MP) Lacashire City Council/Thompson W Llangefni Town Council Llangernyw Community Council Lamb JM Lamb N (MP) Llewlyn Jones R Lancashire Association of Parish & Town Councils Lancashire County Council/Buddle K Lloyd Jones A Llovd L Lancashire County Council/Wardle M Local Government Association Northampton/Dunbar K Lancashire County Council/Whipp D Local Government Association/Bruce-Lockhard (Lord) Lancaster City Council Lochhead R (MSP) and Angus Robertson MP Lane E Lane Mr Lockwood JB Lodge P Lane S Lodgills GM Langan J London Assembly, Health and Public Services Langley CR Committee Langmaid N London Borough of Lewisham London Borough of Newham Langston D Large J Long Horsley Parish Council Largo Area Community Council, Fife Long Newton Parish Council Latham DS Long Sutton Parish Council Longbridge Deverill + Crockerton Parish Council Latham V Longden J/Pub is the Hub Launder C Launder M Longford Mrs Laurance K Longthorpe Post Office Lavers B Loosley J Lowe DR Lawrence R Laws D (MP) Lower Winterborne Parish Council Lawson M Lowrie T Lawson WG Lowther A Leach P Lubbock B Leahy L Luckett M Luckhurst L&M/National Business Services Leamington SPA Town Council Lee A Luing Community Council Lee Mrs Luker JC Lunan M Lee V Leeds City Council Lunch A Lunnon S Lees G/Roxburgh Press Agency Lees LS Macdonald Bennett T Leicestershire Rural Partnership MacDonald E MacDonald H Leigh G Leigh Mr&mrs MacFarland S Lepper D (MP) MacGillivray A LeSage DM MacGillivray C Leslie M MacGregor J Machfillow C Levett A Mackay T Levings E/Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Business Mackenzie J Levington & Stratton Hall Parish Council Mackie I&T Levington and Stratton Hall Parish Council Mackrill A Levitt T (MP) MacMillan MW/Overton Post Office MacPherson G/MacPherson Electrical Ltd Lewin D Lewis J MacPherson L/Max Management Ltd

Maddock E

Madson K

Lewis L

Lewis Mr

Merched Y Wawr Pumsaint Maidstone Borough Council Mail AE Merchiston Community Council Maisemore Parish Council Mere Parish Council

Major S Merrill J Malcolm V Merritt P Malone P Metcalf A

Malone SE/Bettyhill General Merchants Methodist Church East Anglia District

Maltby WM Meton Borough Council Maltman M Micklewaite M

Managhan R

Mid Atholl, Strathtay & Grandtully Community Council Manchester City Council Mid Devon District Council

Manklow J Mid Sussex District Council

Manning D Mid-Beds Council Manson A Middleborough P March MJ Middleton E Middleton Parish Council Marcham MO

Markahm J Midlothian Council Market Bosworth Parish Council Midwood A Markey J Midwood S

Miles A Marks GM Markyate Parish Council Miles N Marsh W/Millhouse Green Post Office Miles RA

Marshall B&P Milford Haven Town Council

Marshall G Miller D Marshall J Miller HT Martin J Millett R Martin L Millett R Martin MA Mills F Martin Parish Council Milne Mrs Martlesham Parish Council Milroy P Milton A (MP) Marwood C

Mary Tavy and Peter Tavy Womens Institute Milton N

Mason Ming P

Ministerworth Parish Council Mitchell A Masters AR Masters I

Mather MF Mitchell C Matthew A/Farm Crisis Network Mitchell D

Mitchell GB Matthews J Mitchell J Matthews M Mitchell K Matthews NM McCafferty A Reverend Mitchell N McCall Mr Mitchell W

McCaul D Mobley Mr&Mrs PJ McCreath CA/Inside Story Moncur GF

Monkleigh Parish Council McCullen G McDonald J Montague Parish Council

McDonald JE Moole C McDonald P Moon M (MP) McDougal C Moon Mr&Mrs McElliott K Moor C McGillis L&J Moore M (MP) McGivern E Moore P McGuinness A Moore S McInnes C Morgan AM McInnes S Morgan C Mcintosh A (MP) Morgan S McKee I Morris A Morris FJ Mckereth R&D McLean R Morris H McLeod B&M Morrison B McLeod L Morrison ND McMillan I Mortimer JGM McNab C Moseley CWRD McNaughton F Moseley ME

McVey D Motcombe Parish Council

Mears Mould H Meatchem JVS Moyses J

Mechell Community Council Much Hadham Parish Council

Mundell D Medd P Melchbourne & Yelden Parish Council Murby J Mells Parish Council Murchie R

Murphy J Melville N Murray R Melvin P Membury Community School Membury Parish Council Murray R Murray S

Mendip CAB Murtough K Menhinick M Murtough L Mennell S

Mustoe C/Penderyn Post Office

Mepal Parish Council Mylechereest A Merched Y Wawr (Anglesey) Mylor Parish Council Merched Y Wawr (Bontuchel) Nairn SJ/SJN Consultants

Merched y Wawr (Ruthin) Napier A

Annex A: List of Respondents

Napier J/Chairman of Royal and Sun Alliance Napton on the Hill Parish Council Northmaven Community Council Northumberland County Council Nardi R&N/Riverside Stores and Post Office Nottinghamshire County Council National Assembly for Wales Noyes E National Association of local Councils Oakamoor Senior Citizens Association National Consumer Council Oakley B O'Brien S (MP) National Farmers Union National Partnership Forum Older People in Wales Odoson KM National Pensioners Convention O'Flannagan P National Pharmacy Association Ogilvie D&H Natland Parish Council po support group Oliver PO NDMC consulting Osborne EM Neal BR Osborne S (MP) Neal Y Osgathorpe Mr&Mrs Neenton Parish Council Oswald S Neil L/SRG Ottaway M Nelson A/Pheasant Inn Overton Parish Council Nelson JS & PF Owen G Nesting Methodist Church Owen G,S,M and C netCUĎA Ltd Owen S Nether Kellett Women's Institute Owermoigne Parish Council Nether Witton Parish Council Owestry Borough Council New Radnor Community Council Oxford City Council Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils Newbold MN Oxfordshire Pensioners Action Group Newbold Mr&Mrs Newbold R Oxfordshire Rural Community Council Newbury M&J Pace A Newcombe P/Wilton Friendship Club Painswick Parish Council Newick Parish Council Pakenham Village & Playing Field Assoc. Newport and Dinas Cross Older Persons Forum Palmer T Newport City Council Pamber Parish Council Pamlyn V Newsome DD & GM Newton A Panting Ms Newton S Parade Hangleton Sub-Post Office Newton St Boswell Community Council Parish Council of Norton Newton ST Cyres Parish Council Parker D/editor Valley News Newtown St Boswells & Eidon Community Council Parker K National Federation of SubPostmasters Parkin D Parkinson MH Parsons BL & SJ Nichol B Nichols Mr&Mrs Nicholson C Parsons I Nicholson J Parsons JA Nicoll M Parsons N Nielsen D Partridge RA Nigbet Mrs Paslen K&R Nimmo WD Pasquire L Nisbet A Patching J Niven M Patching Parish Council Nixon RJ Pate T Patterson DM Noble N Noble S Pattison D Norfolk Rural Community Council Pauley M Norfolk Rural Support Network Pawlyn V Norham Parish Council Paypoint PCS ARM Wales Branch Norman G Norman PD Peacock P and Maureen MacMillan Peakirk Parish Council Norris D North Bradley Parish Council Pearce C North Cadbury and Yarlington Parish Council Pearce JE North Cornwall District Council Pearce P North Devon District Council Pearson AR North District Council Pearson B North Dorset District Council Peasenhall & Parham Parish Council Peel RE/Blockley Post Office North East Assembly North East Derbyshire District Council Pembrokeshire County Council North Lincolnshire Council Penhow Community Council North Roe Methodist Church Penney H North Shropshire District Council Penney R North Staffs Pensioners Convention Pensioners Forum Wales North Sunderland Parish Council Penwith District Council North Vale Parish Council Penzance Town Council North Wales Group of Labour MPs Pepper C North West Leicestershire District Council Percival H North West Rural Affairs Forum Perranuthnoe Parish Council North West Rural Community Councils Petch S North York Moors National Park Authority Peters S North Yorkshire County Council North Yorkshire District Councils Peterson L Petrie R Northamptonshire ACRE Philips B Northamptonshire County Council Phillips A

Phillips C

Phillips R

Northaw & Cuffley Parish Council

Northern Ireland Rural Development Council

Phillips V Rees A Reffin Mr&Mrs Picard A Pickering JT Reid A (MP) Pickersgill M Reid BA Pickett C&J Reid Thomson R Renfrewshire Council Rennie W (MP) Pickford BM Pierce M Pilling C Rennison E Place S Renshaw RML Plas Cybi Partnership Renton M Platten M Renton RA Revelstoke Community Trust Pledger Plewa L Rhodes ML Plumridge K Rhodes S Rhondda Cynon TAF Plunkett Foundation, The Plymouth & SW Cooperative Society Ltd Rhudlan Town Council Podington Parish Council Richardson DJ Pollard M Richardson Mr&Mrs Polley M Polley MV & G Richardson P Richardson S Port William & District Community Association Richardson S Port William Community Council Richardson T/Salvation Army Porthcawl Town Council Richmond-Hardy M Postcomm/Stapleton N Ridd H Postwatch/Banerjee M Rigeh M Postwatch/Hodder E Riley MJ Potepa S Rimmell G Potts I Rimmer DT/The Hai Management Co Ltd Powell R Rimmer PJ Ripley G Powys County Council/Jones E Powys County Council/Morris M Ripley G&F Powys Radnor Federation of Women's Institutes Rippon I Preece K & D Roat M Prescott A Robbins B&D Prescott D&D Roberts AL Prestbury Parish Council Roberts CA Roberts MF Preston A Roberts P Prestwood Evening Women's Institute Roberts P Price AE Reverend Price G Roberts PA Price H Roberts T Price RA Robertson CG Robertson H Priestner J Pringle M (MSP) Robertson IM Pritchard E Robertson W Pritchard L Robinson A Pritchard R Robinson JW Prudden Mr Robinson M Pucklechurch Parish Council Robinson RA Pugh A L Robinson S Pugh AL Robinson TH Pugh DE/Llanwnnen Post Office Robson J Robson V Pullin J Rochford District Council Pullom L Pulloxhill Parish Council Rock E Rock M Pwllgor Cyfiawnder Cyndeithasol ac Rode Parish Council Queen Thorne Parish Council Rogate Parish Council Queennan CK Rogers D Quendon & Rickling Parish Council Rolfe C Quin V Rolfe K Quinn K Romans J Quinn S Rooke A Rooke A/Punkermentality Rabone VJ Radford P/Civil Service Pensioners Alliance Rosburgh P Roskams R&M Ramsey J Randall J Ross B Randall Mr Ross R Randolph I Rossendale Borough Council Rankine E Rostherne Parish Council Ranking CO Rother District Council Raper H Rousay, Egilsay and Wyre Community Council Rouse EM Ray OT Read Mr&Mrs NC Rowe A Reay K Rowley M Redd L/O&M Redd & Son Rowley WNK/Touchdown Redfern M Roxburgh J Redgewell K Roxburgh P RedMarley Parish Council/Cullimore B Royal Borough Selkirk & District Community Council Redmarley Parish Council/Lambert Y Ruane C (MP)

Rugby Borough Council

Rural Community Council of Essex

Reece Mr

Reed T

Annex A: List of Respondents

Rural Shops Alliance Shropshire County Council Rural Voices Rural Choices Shute M Ruscoe J Sibford Ferris Patish Council Rushmore Borough Council Sibley C Siddons G Russell AG & B Russell B (MP) Silcock P Silk Willoughby Parish Council Rutter D Ryan J Sim M Ryder Mr&Mrs Simm J Simmonds J Ryedale District Council Sadler T Sage WH Simpson F Simpson J&M SALC Simpson Mrs Salter S Sinclair M Sanday Community Council Singleton Mr&Mrs T Sandown Evening Townswomen's Guild Sisson J Sandown Town Council Sisson K Sarjant Alan and Deborah Skeabost & District Community Council Saunders M Skellett A Saunders PJ Skerratt S/Scottish Agricultural College Saunders RM Skerries Community Council Saville Roberts L Slack S Saward J Slaley Community Trust Scaife M Slate G Scarborough Borough Council Slater L Schneider J Slaughter EP Sclates E Sleeman J Scorroth R Smart LD Scott AG/Village Hall Management Committee Smaut M Smith A Scott EF Scott ES (MSP) Smith A (MP) Scott J Smith C Scott NS Smith C Smith D&D Scott S Scottish Borders Council/Hume D Smith E Scottish Borders Council/Scott D Smith E Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations Smith EH Scottish Disability Equality Forum Smith F Scottish Executive Smith G Scottish Women's Rural Institutes Smith G Scott-Thompson I Reverend Smith I Scotwest Credit Union Ltd Smith MJ Smith N Scully M Smith NFC Seabeck A (MP) Seabright V Smith P Smith P Sebastian J Sedgemoor District Council Smith R Seed S Smith R Smith Ross D Smith Sir Robert (MP) SEEDA Seehy S Selattyn & Gobowen Parish Council Smith TJF Selby District Council Smith V Semington Parish Council Smith Y Sennen Parish Council Smurthwaite D Smyth EUC Sevenoaks Town Council Seymour H Smyth M&P Shamley Green Village Society Smyth M/Pentre Bach Holiday Cottages Smyth MJ Shaw B Shaw P Smythe G Shaw R&R Smytherman B Shay Mr&Mrs Snape A Sheehan D Snerborne St John Parish Council Shelley D Soames N (MP) Shenley Brook End & Tattenhoe Parish Council Socha M Shepard M Soham Post Office Shepherd RC Somerby Parish Council Shepton Montague Parish Council Somerset Association of Local Councils Sherbourne Area Partnership Somerset County Council Sheriff Mrs Somerton Town Council Sheringham Town Council Sorsky JD Shetland Islands Council/Clunes A Sothcott TJ Shetland Islands Council/Gregson BP South Ayrshire Council South Ayrshire Council, Rural Development Officer Shetland Islands Council/Hawkins IJ South Bucks District Council Shewan H Shildon Town Council South Cambridgeshire District Council Shillingstone parich Council South Cambs District Council Shinfield Parish Council/Barnes J South Cave Parish Council South Derbyshire District Council Shing D Shiplake Parish Council/Hudson RV South Gloucestershire Conservative Group Shiplake Womens' Institute South Gloucestershire Council/Hope S Shipton A South Gloucestershire Council/White D Shirdley Hill Roadside Environment Workers South Green Parish Council

The Post Office Network South Hams District Council Stratton JA South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership Streeter M South Molton Town & Parish Forum Stromness SWRL South Northamptonshire Council Stroud DG Stroud District Council South Oxfordshire District Council South Shropshire District Council Stroud S South Somerset District Council Stuart-Turner M South Staffordshire Council Stubbs B South Tyneside Council/Stewart M Stubbs Y South Tyneside Council/Waggott P Sturdy J (MP) Sturry Parish Council South West ACRE Network of Rural Community Council South Wingfield Parish Council Sturtevant B South Woodham Ferrers Suffolk County Council's Policy Development Panel Southampton City Council for Post Offices Suffolk Rural Alliance Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Southlake District Council Sullivan D SPARSE & the Rural Services Summers A/Orleton Post Office & Stores Spaull DJ Sumner P Spencer BM Sunday Community Council Spencer P Surani K Surani K/Sneinton Elements Post Office Spetisbury Parish Council Speyside Council Swaffham Bulbeck Parish Council Spicer Sir Michael (MP) Swale Borough Council Spiers E Swan DK Swan J Spittles L Swan S/Kincraig Stores Spooner J Spratt V Swavesey Parish Council . Springfield Parish Centre Sweet CJ Swift A Sprouse J Swift A St Briavels Parish Council St Dominic Parish Council Swift J&C St Erme Parish Council Swift M St Giles on the Heath Parish Council Swift Mr&Mrs P St Helens Council Swindon and District Group of Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance St Ibbard Parish Council Swinney J (MSP) and Peter Wishart MP St Levan Parish Council St Martha Parish Council Swinson J (MP) St. Helens Council Sykes Sir David Staffordshire Moorlands District Council Staffordshire Parish Councils Association Tacolneston Parish Council Tait A Stalmans B Takeley Parish Council Stamfordham W. I. Tameside MBC Tanar G Stanley L Tarporley Parish Council Tatham Parish Council Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council Stanton EM Stapleford Parish Council Tatsfield Parish Council Stark VA Taylor A Taylor A/Aquila Business Services Ltd Staveley with Ings Parish Council Stazicker D Taylor D Stebbing J Taylor E Stenning PD Taylor G Stephen A Taylor H Stephen O Taylor K Stephens D Taylor O Taylor R Stevens C Stevens C/Euronova Ltd Tchaikovsky S Stevens G Tector M Teignbridge Association of Local Councils Stevenson P Telford & Wrekin Council Stevenson S (MP) Steward R Temple-Fry C Stewart A Templeton W Stewart B Terling and Fairstead Parish Council Terling C of E Primary School Stewart B Tewkesbury Town Council Stewart BE

Stewart D Stewart Dr & Mrs R Stewart IJ

Stewart MJ & RD Stirling Council Stock Parish Council

Stoehr G

Stoke Mandeville Parish Council Stoke Poges Parish Council Stoke St. Michael Parish Council

Stoker S Stollery L Stone T

Storth Community Co-op Stourpaine Parish Council

Stout W Stowe Mr&Mrs

Strathaven & Glasford Community Council

Thatcham Town Council Thaxted Parish Council

Theobold IR Thirkill K Thirsk Town Council

Thomas GM

Thomlinson P/Maiden Bradley Post Office and Stores

Thompson GS

Thompson K

Thompson K/Sanguhar Post Office Thompson Mr&Mrs

Thomson C Thorne T

Thornhackett Parish Council Thould R&S

Threadgill J&C Threstic J Thronton AM

Thurlton Parish Council Walker N Thurso J (MP) Walker R Thwaites B Walker T Tickhall Parish Council Walkett S Tidey AC Wallace K Wallace KM Tidsley Mr Tierney S Wallace W Titchmarsh G Wallbank F Tivetshall Parish Council Walsh D Todd M (MP) Walsh D and Val Holmes Todd SF Walton Mr&Mrs Wandsworth Borough Council Toll C Tolley J/Limpsfield Village Store Association Wandsworth Pensioners Forum Tomkinson MJ War Widows Association of Great Britain Tomkotowicz A Warboys Parish Council Tompsett J Ward B Torbay Council Ward J Tordoff A Ward Mrs Torr A Wardlaw P Totnes and District Sustainability Group Ware Town Council Wareham St Parish Council Towers M Townsend H Wargrave Housing Association TravelWatch South west Warmington D&W Travery D Warwick Town Council Trenfield M Waterman G Trenfield R Waters KC & GA Trimdon Foundry Parish Council Watford and District Group of CS Pensioners Watkins R Trinder J Tring Rural Parish Watling S Trowbridge Town Council Watson GD Try S/Welland Post Office Watson J&S Tryanor M/Oxenholme Post Office & Store Watson N&P Tuck C Watson S Tucker AS Tucker S Watson V Watt A Tudor E Watters P Tull CS Watton C Tulloch S Waverley Borough Council Way E Way Mr&Mrs S Tully K Tumble Post Office Turbeville J Wayte M Turnbull E Wealden District Council Turner A Webb MJ Turner E Webster D Webster MC Turvey J Twin M Weir J Twyman P Weir M (MP) Twyning Parish Council Weir S Tyler EWW Welbourne Parish Council Tyler MA Welch Mrs Tynedale Council Wells J Úley Parish Council/Robins RC Welsh Assembly Uley Parish Council/Sutcliffe A Welsh Group of Parliamentary Labour Party Underwood S Welsh H Welton Parish Council UNITE Upper Tweed Community Council/Armstrong K Wenhaston with Mells Hamlet Parish Council Upper Tweed Community Council/Middlemass P Wernham T URR Community Council West & East Putford Parish Council West Ardnamurchan Community Council Vale of White Horse District Council Valley G West Berkshire Council Vaughan B West D West Devon Borough Council Veitch A West Dorset District Council Venamore BP Vernon B/Tithe Farm Oaks Works West Dorset Partnership Vewles J West Dunbartonshie Council Vidall MA West Lancashire District Council Village Shop Association West Lindsey District Council Voice Mr&Mrs MC West Mr West Oxfordshire District Council Voluntary Action Cumbria Vowles J/Spar Store & Post Office West Somerset Council Waaldron JA West Sussex County Council West Wales Pensioners Alliance Waddell M&M West Wiltshire District Council Wade I West, Nigel/Liam/Laura and Jean Bell Wade P Wakefield District Council Westbury on Severn Parish Council Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Western Isles Council Wakeling SC & PM Walford B Weston & Basford Parish Council Weston Colville Parish Council

Walford Mr&Mrs

Walhest JP

Walker C Walker L Whalsey Community Council

Wharton P Wharton RP

Whitaker V

Whitby R Wiltshire County Council
Whitby S Winchelsea Community Office
Whitchurch Town Council
White CG & KM Windermere Town Council

White DB & CA
White J
White J
Windsor Mr&Mrs
White M
Windsor Mr & Winkleigh Parish Council
White P
Windsor Mr & Winkleigh Parish Council

White S
Winterburn P
White S/One Voice Wales
Whitecroft Community Association
Whitehead P
Wokingham District Council
Whitehouse J
Wolverhampton City Council
Whiteley J
Wonersh Parish Council

Whiteside Mr&mrs MR Wood J/Highland Archaeology Services Whittington D Wood M

Whittington D Wood M
Wickham Market Parish Council Wood RE
Wickham St Paul Parish Council Woodchester Parish Council
Wicks EH Woodcham Water Parish Council

Wicks EH Woodham Water Parish Council Widdrington Station + Stabswood Parish Council Woods PJE

Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Wigman MA
Wild ED
Wild R
Wookey S Reverend
Woollcott N
Woolley LAD
Woolley LAD
Woolsey EA

Wilkes J Worcestershire Chaplaincy for Agricultural and Rural Life
Wilkinson P&W Worcestershire County Council

Williams A Wotherspoon T Williams E Wreay IM Wright C Wright DE Williams J Williams K Williams LE Wright H Williams Mrs Wright J Williams Mark Wright J Williams N Wright LB Williams R (MP) Wright M Williams TG Wright R Willing D Wright W

Willington Parish Council Writtle Parish Council

Willis F (MP)
Wyatt Mrs
Willis P
Wyatt RJ
Willis R
Wychavon District Council
Willis S/R3N
Wylam J Reverend
Wills D
Wynn C
Wilmot AE
Wyre Borough Council
Wilsdon C
Wyre Forest District Council

Wilson G Yarrow F
Wilson GE Yeatman Biggs N
Wilson J Yendell DM
Wilson J Yendell Mr&Mrs DG

Wilson J York Conservatives Association

Wilson J Yorkshire & Humber Rural Community Councils

Wythall Parish Council

Wilson JD Yorkshire and Humber Assembly

Wilson JL Young H
Wilson L Younger S

Wilson M Yoxford Parish Council

Wilson A

