Darren Jones MP
Chair, Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Select Committee
House of Commons
LONDON
SW1A 0AA

25 January 2023

Dear Mr Jones

Select Committee Follow Up

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on 17 January to give evidence in respect of the Post Office aspects of the current state of postal services in the UK.

I undertook to provide three updates:

- **Services at Barrow-upon-Soar:** extensive efforts have been made to find new premises for a suitable permanent replacement following the closure of the branch in 2021. A local Postmaster provided an outreach service in the period after the closure but could not continue for personal reasons. Despite excellent support from the community, the parish council and the Member for Loughborough, we have been unable to find a retailer to host a new branch. The only viable option we have been able to identify is the local Co-Op, but they do not wish to incorporate a post office as part of their retail mix. In the circumstances, we are no longer advertising for the branch. However, should a local business come forward with an application to reopen a branch at Barrow we would, of course, welcome it and consider it. The nearest branches are at Quorn (1.5 miles away) and Sielby (2.9 miles away).

- **Services at Treharris:** the branch at Treharris closed in 2019. We advertised and began looking for a new Postmaster to take over the branch. An applicant came forward but we were then faced with Covid-19 and the first of the lockdowns. At this point, our efforts became exclusively focused on maintaining services in as many communities across the country as possible. In the event, over 90% of post offices remained open throughout. We notified the member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney that we had reviewed Post Office service provision for the local area last year. In the time that had lapsed since the branch closed, that review showed that customers had made alternative arrangements to access services. Trelewis Post Office is 0.6 miles from Treharris and has picked up over 60% of the customers from Treharris. In the circumstances, we cannot make a case for opening a new branch in Treharris, not least since it would significantly undermine the business of the Postmaster at Trelewis, and bill payment and cash services continue to be available in Treharris. While I appreciate that this decision is disappointing for some, it is incumbent on the business to maximise its reach across the country, so that all can benefit at least from the minimum requirements set out for us through the Government's access criteria.

- **Post Office meeting with the CWU:** a meeting with Dave Ward and Andy Furey has been arranged for the week commencing 6 February.

I am naturally very happy to answer any other questions you or Committee members may have. In the meantime, I am copying this letter to the Member for Loughborough, Jane Hunt MP, and to the Member for Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney, Gerald Jones MP.

Yours sincerely



Nick Read
Chief Executive, Post Office Limited

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