BARCLAYS

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Ms Rachel Reeves MP
Chair of the Business,
Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Rachel,

Thank you for your letter of 30 October.

We had a number of helpful conversations, as a result of our announcement, on access to cash and the future of the Post Office Banking Framework, including with you, and I would like to thank you for that.

While we remain absolutely clear that nobody would have been left without the ability to access cash as a result of our decision to remove the cash withdrawal element from our relationship with the Post Office, we were persuaded that to do so risked undermining the future viability of the Post Office. While we continue to have concerns regarding the sustainability of the model in the medium term, we are committed to working with Government to address the problems whilst fully signed up to every aspect of the Banking Framework.

To address your question directly, I can confirm that our change in decision regarding the Post Office cash withdrawal service has had no impact on our approach to bank branches.

Barclays has the largest branch network of any banking brand in the UK and our commitment stands to keep 105 remote and last-in-town branches open for at least two years. We are working with local communities to find ways of making these branches as relevant as possible and hopefully commercially viable for the longer term.

We are actively initiating dialogue within the industry as we look at ways in which we might make a shared branch model work sustainably in an increasingly digital society. Another innovation is our Barclays Flex model which allows us to revisit the way in which some of our customers can access face-to-face banking, allowing us to take some products and services to where people work, study, and spend their leisure time, such as libraries and shopping centres.

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As you note, the overall number of branches across the sector has come down over the years, but through some of the innovative, customer-focused approaches described above, we believe we can continue to deliver face-to-face banking in a sustainable manner. This approach will include future closures and openings as we respond to changing customer behaviours and invest in the formats and locations where our customers need us.

Yours sincerely,

Matt Hammerstein

Matt Hammerstein
CEO, Barclays UK