



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Gareth Thomas MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Services,
Small Business and Exports
Department for Business and Trade
King Charles Street
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2AH



Ref: DC-BD18679

12 December 2024

Dear Gareth,

Springburn Crown Post Office, 230 Springburn Way, Glasgow G21 1BU

I am writing with regards the ongoing process by which the Post Office is looking to actively dispose of the 115 Crown Post Offices across the UK. This is of deep concern to me as the constituency MSP for the Maryhill and Springburn constituency, given this puts the Crown Post Office in Springburn Shopping Centre under direct threat. These concerns are also shared by local Councillors Christina Cannon and Graham Campbell, so please consider this letter as a joint representation.

I understand this process is in alignment with the Post Office 5 year strategy which was approved by the current UK Government. Clearly there are significant issues with how the plans to dispose of Crown Post Offices came to light through a media leak. As the constituency MSP covering Springburn, I have still had no formal notification that the Crown Post Office within Springburn Shopping Centre is being actively considered for disposal. Nor what that process will look like.

Having proactively reached out to the Post Office, I do thank them for their engagement. Following that engagement I thought it only right to raise direct concerns with yourself as the relevant UK Minister. I understand under Post Office plans, supported by the UK Government, there are three possible outcomes.

1. Springburn Crown Post Office will close with no alternative offered
2. Springburn Crown Post Office will close and a franchisee identified (potentially outwith the town centre with a lesser range of services available)
3. Springburn Crown Post Office will be retained.

Constituents will be sceptical that option 3- the retention of our Post Office- will be the outcome. The community has witnessed three banks in recent years all consult on potential closure and ultimately those outcomes, closure in every case, always felt like a fait accompli. A done deal. I very much hope we are proven wrong and that Springburn Post Office can be retained within Springburn Shopping Centre. The Post Office is very busy and I believe will assist hundreds of customers with thousands of transactions each week. However, I have been informed that the data required to establish this cannot be shared formally due to commercial confidentiality. Furthermore, I am told that no records or data exist of the demographic of those who are using the Post Office.

I suspect many will be older, less likely to be digitally connected and have limited or no access to banking services. Given the high level of deprivation and poor health outcomes within the area, many are also likely to have additional vulnerabilities. Without capturing such information and analysing the data, I am unclear as to how the full impact of closure can be assessed. The detrimental impact on the town centre generally and the shopping centre in particular would be significant. As local MSP and a trustee of Spirit of Springburn (a local charity) I have sought to advocate for community-led regeneration and the expansion of local amenities, not their removal. The closure of the Post Office would see fewer people use the town centre and fewer people spending money in the local economy. This detrimental local economic impact should also be an important consideration of the Post Office and the UK Government.

For all the reasons above, as the MSP for Maryhill and Springburn constituency, as well as our local Councillors, we would ask that the UK Government instructs the Post Office to halt the current process. The Post Office should engage with the relevant Trade Union, the CWU, local elected representatives, key local stakeholders and the local community to establish a way to further develop Post Office services, not remove them. Cash Access UK run many banking Hubs across Scotland and the UK. This provides communities with access to banking facilities for various high street banks that have previously departed. Why not develop an enhanced Post Office and banking hub that builds upon the services currently available at Springburn's Post Office, and considers genuinely how to innovate in a way that protects rather than removes Post Office services. I therefore reiterate our calls for the current process to be halted and Springburn's Post Office saved.

Along with our local councillors, I would be happy to meet you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Doris". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bob Doris MSP

MSP for Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn constituency (SNP)