

Proposed

The logo consists of a red circle with a white border. Inside the circle, the words "POST OFFICE" are written in white, uppercase letters. "POST" is on the top line and "OFFICE" is on the bottom line.

branch closure

Dear Customer

Post Office[®] Rippingale Branch
5 Middle Street, Rippingale, Bourne, Lincolnshire, PE10 0SU

As you may be aware, in December 2006 the Government initiated a national public consultation on a range of proposed measures to modernise and reshape the Post Office[®] network ("the Network") and put it on a more stable footing. The consultation was undertaken against the backdrop of falling customer numbers, decline in traditional services such as Government based business, changing consumer behaviour and rising losses in the Network (from £2m a week in 2005 to almost £4m a week in 2006).

In its response to that consultation (published in May 2007) ("the Response Document") the Government announced the proposed compulsory compensated closure (subject to EU State Aid clearance) of up to 2,500 branches (out of a current Network of around 14,300 branches), with the introduction of about 500 Outreach service points to mitigate the impact of the proposed closures.

In conjunction with the introduction of strict minimum access criteria, as set out in the Response Document, the Government is proposing an investment of up to £1.7bn as a funding package (subject to EU State Aid clearance) to underpin these changes and to support the reshaped Network in the future. A copy of the Response Document can be found at: www.dti.gov.uk/consultations/page36024.html.

In order to deliver the changes set out in the Response Document, Post Office Ltd is now implementing its "Network Change" Programme ("the Programme") and in doing so has divided the United Kingdom into 47 areas ("Areas"). A local area plan ("Area Plan") will be prepared for each Area detailing the changes that Post Office Ltd is proposing to make within it. Each proposed Area Plan will be subject to a twelve week pre-public consultation process which will involve a substantial amount of local stakeholder engagement, including discussions with Postwatch, the independent consumer watchdog for postal services. This will be followed by a six week local public consultation which will provide an opportunity for those that are interested in or likely to be affected by any of the proposed changes to give their views on the proposals for the future provision of Post Office[®] services in that Area.

Outreach services are an innovative way to continue to provide Post Office[®] services in some areas where we may need to close a Post Office[®] branch.

Outreach is a means by which Post Office[®] products and services are provided by a 'core' subpostmaster (who already operates a Post Office[®] branch in a community) to outlying communities. Outreach builds on Post Office Ltd's experience of successfully operating over 250 satellite branches since 2000 and has been tried and tested in a number of pilot schemes. There are currently four different Outreach models: the Mobile Service, the Hosted Service, the Partner Service and the Home Service. Details of the current Outreach models are set out below.

The Mobile Service is a travelling Post Office[®] situated within a van operated by the core subpostmaster or his assistants that will visit small communities at set times and days each week to deliver certain Post Office[®] products and services to customers.

The Hosted Service is a fixed site Post Office[®] branch from which the core subpostmaster or his assistants transact certain Post Office[®] products and services during restricted hours each week. The premises are owned by a third party, for example, a shop or community centre.

The Partner Service is a fixed site Post Office[®] where a local partner (such as a pub landlord), appointed by the core subpostmaster, transacts certain Post Office[®] products and services from the partner's own premises during the opening hours of the partner's business.

The Home Service is a service for very small communities whereby the core subpostmaster delivers a reduced range of Post Office[®] products and services which are ordered over the telephone by customers. The products may either be delivered to the customer's home or at a local drop-in session. There will not be a physical Post Office[®] building in the community.

As part of the Area Plan for East Midlands Post Office Ltd is proposing to close Ripplingale Post Office[®] branch on a permanent basis and to mitigate the impact of the proposed closure we propose to put in place an Outreach service point for 13 hours per week. We are actively working to develop a suitable proposal and we would like to seek views from the local community as to which of the current Outreach models they think would be appropriate for this Area. Full details of the Area Plan are available on our website www.postoffice.co.uk/networkchange or by contacting us at the address below. In proposing that this branch should close, Post Office Ltd has taken into account that as well as using the Outreach service if one is put in place, customers would also be able to access Post Office[®] services from other branches.

In addition to accessing Post Office[®] services from the Outreach service if one is put in place and from other branches, customers may of course access Post Office[®] services by telephone or via the internet.

Any changes to the Network that are made under the Programme will be implemented in accordance with a Code of Practice that has been agreed with Postwatch.

If the decision is taken permanently to close this branch and to put in place an Outreach service then we expect that this would take place in January 2008, at the earliest. We will communicate our decision about the future of this branch and any Outreach service type if one is to be put in place after the end of the local public consultation period, once all representations have been reviewed and considered.

It is important to us that you understand the reasoning behind our proposal and that you also have the opportunity to comment and input into our plans. A leaflet answering some of the questions you may have is available within the branch. Should you have any other questions or wish to make any comments as part of the consultation process please contact me as detailed below.

Please note that 12 November 2007 is the closing date of the local public consultation for this Area and all comments must be received by that date if they are to be considered. Please note that your comments will not be kept confidential unless you expressly ask us to do so by clearly marking any correspondence "In confidence".

Mark Partington
Network Development Manager
Post Office Ltd
FREEPOST CONSULTATION TEAM

By Email: consultation@postoffice.co.uk

Customer Helpline: 08457 223344
Website: www.postoffice.co.uk

The Post Office[®] is able to supply customers with this information, free of charge, in an alternative format for people who are visually impaired. To obtain a copy, call the Post Office[®] helpline on 08457 22 33 44 or textphone 08457 22 33 55.

Other branches in the area:

Pointon branch Yew Tree Farm West Road Pointon Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 0NA	Folkingham branch The Old School 7 Market Place Folkingham Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 0SE
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