

Two County Councils may seek Judicial Review of PO closures

Following the shambles of yesterday's announcement of East Midlands sub-Post Office closures, two County Councils may now jointly seek a Judicial Review of both the closure process and decisions.

Lincolnshire and Kent County Councils are exploring a joint legal exercise which would formally examine how PO Ltd has gone about the closure proposals and also the results of their public consultation exercise.

By implication it would also put the whole Government Post Office proposed closure plan under the microscope.

The Review would be sought under what's known as "process and rationality."

Both authorities are angry about the way the consultations have been conducted and extremely dissatisfied with some of the results – a joint approach would also mean sharing costs.

Kent's closure plan decisions were announced last week resulting in two reprieves and 56 confirmed closures.

Coun. Martin Hill, Leader of Lincolnshire County Council said that he still hasn't got to the bottom of what happened yesterday when contradictory information was given to the village of Rippingale and 10 other communities in the East Midlands.

But he said that from what he had seen so far it appeared to be "shambolic."

Jim Latham, one of the Friends of Rippingale Post Office welcomed the idea of a Judicial Review. "Having an unbiased legal view of what's been happening can only shed some light on what we think has been a secretive, undemocratic, mockery of a so-called public consultation exercise," he said. "Not least it could demand explanations of why the Government's own figures add up to at least 2600, if not 3400 branches with unarguable cases FOR closure – and why Rippingale with 300 customers a day to the shop/PO, is on any closure list."

"We hope that other Local Authorities round the country will consider joining Lincolnshire and Kent to make it a class action. One of the worst aspects of yesterday's unbelievable mess is that Simon Deane, our Sub-Postmaster – and I assume ten others in the East Midlands, have still not yet been officially told their fate – they had to learn this from the press, radio and tv. This is about their lives and livelihoods, their families and their futures – it's completely unforgivable."

Jim Latham
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