



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Kelly Tolhurst MP
Parliamentary Undersecretary of State
Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Corporate Responsibility
1 Victoria Street
London - SW1H 0ET

Thursday 29th November 2018

Dear *Kelly*

I am writing to ask that you stop the franchising of 74 Crown Post Offices to WHSmith. If these go ahead, 60% of the Crown Network that existed in 2013 will be gone, following years of incremental privatisations.

I have been contacted on this issue by many of my constituents, including postal workers and members of the Communication Workers Union living across Dagenham and Rainham.

In 2013 I fought alongside residents and local councillors in an attempt to save the Crown Post Office at Dagenham Heathway because I know how important postal services are to the community. The privatisation of the Dagenham Heathway Crown Post Office, which is now operated from a newsagents is much diminished in terms of what they offer. There were also concerns at the time for the 15 jobs and the watering down of terms and conditions.

Research shows that franchising the Crown Post Offices to WHSmith will result in similar outcomes; sub-standard service, reduced services, staff redundancies, and changes to workers terms and conditions. I have no doubt the closure of Crown Post Offices across the country will lead to the further deterioration of local high streets, and it is something that I cannot support. 'Franchising' is nothing but back door privatisation and I urge you to oppose these proposals.

Having spoken to CWU representatives in my constituency I have learned that no public consultation is taking place on these proposals. It was a similar situation in 2013, where I stepped in to arrange a public meeting on the future of these important services in my constituency.

The Communications Workers Union (CWU), which represents many of the workers in the Crown Network were not engaged by the Post Office at all prior to the announcement, and they state 'around 800 staff will be affected by this round of franchising and it will cost at least £30 million in compensation payments.' The only beneficiary of this move seems to be WHSmith, who are seemingly being bailed out of their failing business model with £30 million of public money.

Jon Cruddas MP
Member of Parliament for Dagenham and Rainham, incorporating South Hornchurch and Elm Park



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Handing over profit-making Crown Post Offices to a failing retailer, whose business model is based on low wage part-time employment is not an answer to anything.

As the Member of Parliament for Dagenham and Rainham I am urging you to halt this privatisation, and ask what oversight and power the Government maintains over the public money given to Post Office Ltd, and how much money is earmarked to pay staff to leave?

I would also like to know why the decision about whether these assets should be privatised has been denied to the public.

I look forward to hearing from you on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

Jon Cruddas MP
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