

**JULIA LOPEZ MP**  
Hornchurch & Upminster



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Nigel Railton  
Chairman  
Post Office  
100 Wood Street  
London, EC2V 7ER

14 November 2024

Dear Mr Railton,

**Strategic Review: Harold Hill Post Station**

I write further to the launch of the Post Office's Strategic Review and its potential impact on the directly-managed Harold Hill branch in my constituency.

I appreciate the difficult position the Post Office finds itself in and support your intention of delivering a 'New Deal for Postmasters'. However, I am deeply concerned at any potential loss of the Harold Hill branch in Farnham Road. I am writing to you today to set out some of the reasons why this branch is so vital to the local community and to highlight potential ways in which its long-term future could be secured.

You will be aware how valuable a Post Office can be to communities, especially those where there are higher levels of deprivation which are much more reliant upon cash services – a fact that is recognised within Link's Access to Cash review process. The Harold Hill branch is located within a neighbourhood ranked, according to the 2019 English Indices of Deprivation, as among the 20% most deprived in the country. The neighbourhood immediately above, which this branch will serve, is ranked among the 10% most deprived in the country. The closure of this branch would have a disproportionate impact on some of the poorest households in my constituency and the wider borough of Havering.

The community's ability to deal with any potential closure is further exacerbated by poor access to public transport in the area. The Harold Hill branch is in an area where the Passenger Transport Accessibility Level is two (the third lowest ranking out of nine), with two of the three closest franchised branches having a poorer score of 1b. This is particularly relevant when you consider that Havering has the second oldest population of all London boroughs, meaning many will not be able to walk to alternative branches.

While I hope that the above is helpful in setting out the wider context as to why this branch is so vital to the local community, I do appreciate the wider challenges that the Post Office operates within. I would therefore like to draw your own and your estate team's attention to the London Borough of Havering's regeneration of Harold Hill Town Centre, including Farnham Road.

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Havering has published plans to completely regenerate the Farnham Road area by demolishing the existing units and rebuilding the town centre with a new shopping parade and new, modern retail units. This work will be delivered in phases commencing from spring 2026. I suggest that this may provide an opportunity for the Post Office to introduce a new, modern, cost-effective branch at the heart of the community, either managed directly or by franchise.

I would be grateful if you could let me know why this branch has been earmarked for closure and see out further details on how the Post Office will consider the future of its directly-managed branches. I would also like to know if Post Office have entered into any direct discussion with Havering Council about the regeneration of Harold Hill town centre.

With best wishes,

*Julia Lopez MP*

Member of Parliament for Hornchurch & Upminster