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22 August 2017

Dear «u\_name»

**Harlow Post Office® branch  
1 Stone Cross, Harlow, CM20 1AA**

**Decision - move to new premises & branch modernisation**

I'm writing to confirm that following a period of local public consultation and review the decision has been made to proceed with the proposal to move the above Post Office into the WHSmith store at 32 Broad Walk, The High, Harlow, CM20 1JD. The branch will be operated by WHSmith High Street Ltd under a franchise agreement.

This change is being made as part of the continuing modernisation of our network, to achieve commercial sustainability and will help us to provide services that will meet customer needs and safeguard future service provision in Harlow, now and for the long-term.

**Public consultation feedback:**

During the public consultation period we received 14 individual representations from customers and local representatives. We also held a customer forum to talk about our plans and answer questions.

I would like to thank everyone who took the time to let us have their comments and provide information. All the feedback we received helped us to better understand the views of customers and their representatives and this was taken into account along with all other relevant factors, when making our decision.

The main areas of feedback were around the size of the proposed premises and whether they are large enough to accommodate additional customers, accessibility into and within the proposed new premises, parking and the suitability of WHSmith as a partner. Customers also commented on the loss of the Home Office's Biometric Enrolment Service from the new branch.

**Getting to the new location:**

With any relocation it is inevitable that whilst some customers will have an easier journey to the new location, regrettably others will have further to travel. We carefully considered factors such as the local terrain, parking and transport links when developing our proposal. We also took account of whether there were any particular local road traffic issues that may negatively impact accessibility.

We have reviewed car parking availability and acknowledge that as the WHSmith premises is in a pedestrianised area, there is no parking directly outside. However there are several car parks in the vicinity of the proposed premises:

- Terminus Street car park, pay and display with 930 spaces, including 11 designated disabled bays, approximately 200 metres away.
- The Harvey Shopping Centre car park, pay on exit with 700 spaces and 23 designated disabled bays approximately 280 metres away.
- Water Gardens car park, smart payment scheme, payment and vehicle details recorded at pay machine, with 1200 spaces, including 62 designated disabled bays and 22 Mother & Toddler spaces, approximately 350 metres away.
- Post Office Road car park, pay and display with 139 spaces, including 7 designated disabled bays, approximately 320 metres away.

There are also 21 disabled bays along with short-term on street parking on West Gate approximately 300 metres from WHSmith. Additionally, there are a further 4 disabled bays on North Gate and 6 on East Gate, approximately 300 metres and 225 metres respectively from WHSmith.

Customers may also be interested to know that Harlow Shopmobility operates from John Robson House, Post Office Road, Harlow, CM20 1BJ, with designated disabled parking available directly outside, and provides manual and powered wheelchairs and scooters for use in the shopping centre and the town. More information is available by calling 01279 453024. Further, Harlow Community Transport (which is now part of Epping Forest Community Transport) does a drop off near to Shopmobility and can be contacted by calling 01279 446855 or emailing [efct@efcommunitytransport.org.uk](mailto:efct@efcommunitytransport.org.uk). (<http://www.efcommunitytransport.co.uk/harlow-community-transport/>)

There is a market on some days of the week, with stalls extending along Broad Walk and East Gate. When making these types of decisions we take access to the Post Office very seriously and we acknowledge that on market days this part of the Broad Walk may be busier with shoppers. However, the nearest stall to the entrance of WHSmith is approximately 50 metres away and we are satisfied that access to the store will not be compromised.

In conclusion, I remain satisfied that customers in Harlow will continue to have good access to Post Office services.

#### **What the new branch will look like:**

We know that the Post Office plays an important part in the lives of customers, including our elderly and disabled customers. We have a long and successful relationship with WHSmith and we'll be working together to provide a new, modern Post Office with sufficient room for Post Office and shop customers.

The branch will have its own designated area located on the ground floor to the rear of the WHSmith store and customer access both into and within the store will meet Post Office Ltd's own accessibility standards and all applicable legislation. There are two entrances into the store which are level with an automatic door at one of the entrances.

Externally the store front will include Post Office signage and an opening hours board. The existing street post box on Harvey Centre Approach, approximately 50 metres from WHSmith, will remain and full posting facilities will be available in branch.

There will be directional signage from the entrance door through to the new Post Office area. To make sure there is sufficient space for Post Office customers, including wheelchair users, to move around the store and reach the Post Office area without hindrance the entrance area and shopping aisles will be kept free of obstructions. The Post Office counter will be built to Post Office specifications and will include lighting to industry standards, low level counters, PIN pads and hearing loops. There will be space for people to wait for service and customer seating will also be provided.

The number of serving positions is based on current and future predicted business levels and the new branch will have one traditional floor to ceiling screened serving position and four open plan positions. There will also be two self-service kiosks for mails transactions including Parcelforce, most home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments.

Following the move, the Post Office will also be open on Sundays, providing customers with more flexibility around their visits.

I'm satisfied that customer needs will be met and, as with all of our branches, we'll continue to monitor customer usage at the branch following the move and will work with WHSmith to make sure service standards are maintained.

**Access to Post Office services and products:**

In our proposal letter, we advised you that the same wide range of services would be available with the exception of the Biometric Enrolment services.

In light of feedback received, we have reviewed our proposal for the provision of this service and I am pleased to let you know that this service will be retained in Harlow. We anticipate that there may be a short interruption to the availability of this service due to the complexities of establishing it in a new location. In the meantime, the new branch will initially continue to offer the DVLA Photocard Driving Licence renewal and Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence application service, whilst the nearest alternative branch offering the Biometric Enrolment Service for the Home Office, is Lower Edmonton Post Office, 1-7 South Mall, Edmonton Green, London N9 0TX, approximately 21 miles away.

For reasons outside Post Office Ltd's control, we cannot yet confirm whether a cash machine will be available at the new branch. The provision of a cash machine is subject to a survey, operational considerations, relevant consent and planning permission. If this is not possible, or we are unable to install a machine before the move, customers can continue to withdraw cash free of charge at the counter. For customers requiring an out of hours service, there is an external Post Office cash machine at Bush Fair Post Office, 1-2 Corner House, Harlow, CM18 6NZ, which is located approximately 1.6 miles away and can be reached by a regular bus service.

Staff, who will work exclusively in the Post Office, will be trained to provide information on financial products, including savings and insurances. Product information will also be available for customers to take away with them and our website and specialist customer helplines also provide information on what's available and how to make a purchase.

Further details of the new branch, including opening hours, are provided in the enclosed information sheet.

**Customer service training and existing Crown staff:**

WHSmith already successfully operate over 100 Post Office branches and have satisfied us that they are equally as committed to delivering excellent customer service as we are. Any person employed to work in Harlow Post Office will be trained to the highest Post Office standards. Just as with branches we run ourselves, the branch will receive on-going training on products and services, as well as general operational and service related matters. Post Office Area Managers will work with the WHSmith team to provide support, in the same way they already do in existing Post Office branches operated by us or other retail partners.

In respect of our people working at the existing branch, we have a strong track record of supporting our people through change. We will do all that we can to find a solution that works for each individual within the options available.

**Conclusion:**

After careful consideration of the feedback received, I am confident that the new branch will be suitably located and that it will continue to meet customer needs and deliver an excellent service, whilst helping to provide future sustainability for the branch and maintaining a Post Office presence in Harlow. The current branch will close at 17:30 on Wednesday 25 October 2017, with the new branch opening at 09:00 on Thursday 26 October 2017.

You can also find a copy of this letter on our website at [postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk). When entering the website you will be asked to enter the code for this branch: **00812499**.

Yours sincerely



**Roger Gale**  
**Sales & Trade Marketing Director**  
**Post Office Limited**

**How to contact us:**

-  [postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk)
-  [comments@postoffice.co.uk](mailto:comments@postoffice.co.uk)
-  Customer Helpline: 03452 66 01 15  
Textphone: 03457 22 33 55
-  FREEPOST Your Comments  
**Please note this is the full address to use and no further address details are required.**

We've published our final plan on-line, to see it, scan here.

If you don't have a QR code scanner on your phone, you can find one in your app store.



This communication process has been agreed with the independent statutory consumer watchdog, which in Great Britain is Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland, and in Northern Ireland, the Consumer Council, and is being carried out in line with our Code of Practice for changes to the Post Office network, which we have agreed with them. If you'd like copies of the Code they are available in branch, by contacting us or on our website – [postofficeviews.co.uk](http://postofficeviews.co.uk). If you think that the process has not been properly followed and wish to make a complaint, then please write to us or email us via the contact details included in our posters and letters and let us know why. We'll examine your complaint and respond to you as soon as we can. We will provide you with the relevant contact points for the consumer watchdog, so if you are still not satisfied when you have received our response, you can ask them for their assistance.

**To get this information in larger print, audio or braille, please contact the customer helpline on 03452 66 01 15 or textphone 03457 22 33 55.**

<b>Harlow Post Office information sheet</b>															
<b>Address</b>	WHSmith 32 Broad Walk The High Harlow CM20 1JD														
<b>Opening hours</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Mon</td> <td>09:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tue</td> <td>09:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Wed</td> <td>09:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thu</td> <td>09:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fri</td> <td>09:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sat</td> <td>09:00 – 17:30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sun</td> <td>10:00 – 14:00</td> </tr> </table>	Mon	09:00 – 17:30	Tue	09:00 – 17:30	Wed	09:00 – 17:30	Thu	09:00 – 17:30	Fri	09:00 – 17:30	Sat	09:00 – 17:30	Sun	10:00 – 14:00
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<b>Products &amp; Services</b>	The same wide range of products and services will still be available, with the initial exception of the Biometric Enrolment Service. DVLA and SIA services will still be available. For reasons outside Post Office Ltd's control, we cannot yet confirm whether a cash machine will be available at the new branch. The provision of a cash machine is subject to a survey, operational considerations, relevant consent and planning permission.														
<b>Serving positions</b>	There will be five serving positions in total; one screened and four open plan. The total number of serving positions has been based on current and future predicted business levels.														
<b>Additional facilities</b>	Two self-service kiosks for mails transactions including Parcelforce, most home shopping returns, E Top-Ups, and a range of bill payments.														
<b>Access &amp; facilities</b>	There are two entrances into the store which are level with an automatic door at one of the entrances. Low level serving counters, a low level writing desk and hearing loops will be available.														
<b>How far away is it?</b>	Approximately 350 metres away from the current branch, along level terrain in a pedestrianised area.														
<b>Transport &amp; parking</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Parking</b></p> <p>There are several car parks in the vicinity of the proposed premises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terminus Street car park, pay and display with 930 spaces, including 11 designated disabled bays, approximately 200 metres away.</li> <li>• The Harvey Shopping Centre car park, pay on exit with 700 spaces and 23 designated disabled bays approximately 280 metres away.</li> <li>• Water Gardens car park, smart payment scheme, payment and vehicle details recorded at pay machine, with 1200 spaces, including 62 designated disabled bays and 22 Mother &amp; Toddler spaces, approximately 350 metres away.</li> <li>• Post Office Road car park, pay and display with 139 spaces, including 7 designated disabled bays, approximately 320 metres away.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Buses</b></p> <p>Public transport available to and from the surrounding areas. The bus station is approximately 200 metres away.</p>														
<b>Retail</b>	Stationery, books and news														
<b>Date of move</b>	26 October 2017														

