



TSB Bank plc
20 Gresham Street
London
EC2V 7JE

Email: carol.anderson@tsb.co.uk

14 September 2018

Gordon Lindhurst MSP
Convenor, Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Lindhurst,

Thank you for your letter of 30th August inviting comment from TSB on the Economy, Jobs and Fair Work Committee's recent report on the impact of bank branch closures in Scotland. I am grateful for the opportunity to respond and to offer our views.

The Committee is right to observe that the way consumers access banking services is changing. As I noted in our evidence in June, TSB believes it is crucial this change be led by customers themselves, and not by banks. We have heard clear feedback from our customers that they want a range of options to meet their needs; not just online, mobile and telephone banking, but branch services as well.

This is why TSB is committed to responding to and anticipating customers' needs, and supporting them throughout their journey.

In order to do this, our 'Digital Wizards' programme helps personal banking customers who wish to access services online. This is hosted in every branch, providing face-to-face support. Our Straightforward Money blog helps customers with everyday banking information and we also host a range of educational videos online. We also share the Committee's concern that support must be available to vulnerable customers likely to be most affected, we encourage those with concerns to identify themselves so that we can ensure they get the help they need from TSB, including in branch.

The Committee are also right that Banks must support consumers and small businesses with the tools and services needed, to ensure they are not adversely affected where closures take place.

In this regard we are particularly mindful of the importance of cash handling to many of our business and personal banking customers. The Post Office is one of the ways in which customers can access banking services should their nearest branch close, and we recognise the Committee's comments about the awareness of such services. This is why we are also supporting UK Finance in their work to publicise and raise awareness of Post Office services from October. We will continue to explore ways in which we can help business customers to adapt and use our services, for example to help minimise their cash handling through cashless payment options.

We also note the Committee's comments on the Access to Banking Standard. TSB believes that the industry should have an open dialogue on all the options available to help customers and ensure their needs are a central consideration in the closure of any branch. The Access to Banking Standard has recently been strengthened and we welcome the fact that it is now under the responsibility of the Lending Standards Board. We will also continue to support and implement any further changes the LSB may require ensuring consumer needs are met.

Finally, I fully acknowledge your comments on the importance of bank buildings to high streets across Scotland. While it wouldn't be appropriate for us to decide on behalf of the community who next uses that space, I would add that when we do vacate a branch we are obliged to return our buildings to a state ready for general use. We try to do this as quickly as possible so that other users can move into those spaces. I can also confirm that we would be happy to provide the Committee with a further update on the usage of any closed branches, where this information is available, on the basis requested.

I would like to thank you again for inviting TSB to comment on the Committee's report. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Committee, the wider industry (including UK Finance) and the Scottish Government to ensure that we meet Scottish consumers' needs and lessen the impact where closures take place.

I look forward to a continuing dialogue with you and your colleagues, and please do not hesitate to get in touch if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anderson". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Carol Anderson
Scotland Branch & Business Banking Distribution Director