

STATES OF JERSEY



CENTRAL MARKET SUB-POST OFFICE FACILITY: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STUDY OF CLOSURE

Lodged au Greffe on 28th June 2010
by Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to refer to their Act dated 23rd June 2010 in which they requested the Minister for Treasury and Resources, as representative of the shareholder in Jersey Post, to take the necessary steps to request Jersey Post to reconsider its position relating to the presence of a Sub-Post Office facility in the Central Market, and –

- (a) to request the Council of Ministers to commission a report which will examine the social, economic and cultural impacts of the closure of the Sub-Post Office and to present the report to Jersey Post and all States Members, in order that they can consider its findings and recommendations, before the final decision is made as to whether or not the Sub-Post Office in the Central Market should close;
- (b) to request the Minister for Treasury and Resources, following the publication of the report, to lodge a proposition asking for the States Assembly to debate whether or not they consider that the Sub-Post Office in the Central Market should close so that the Minister can inform Jersey Post accordingly.

DEPUTY S. PITMAN OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

On 20th April 2010, it was announced that the Sub-Post Office in the Central Market was to be closed at the end of June this year. There are several purported reasons for its closure and they are: that of the rapid decline of the use of local and global postal services; that the retail network, i.e. the Island's Sub-Post Office network, loses around £1 million per year and therefore, that Jersey Post needs to change the way it delivers its retail services. In other words it needs to be modernised. Finally, Jersey Post will be opening a new retail outlet at the Co-op in Don Street, which will 'apparently' deliver a more efficient service than the current Sub-Post Office.

The Central Market Sub-Post Office has been an important part of our historical Market since 1972, with its Post Box being the oldest in the Island. It has been vital for most of the Market Traders in the operation of their businesses and provides a vast range of reliable services to the community. These are –

- Normal postal services.
- Provision for paying Housing Department rents.
- Paying electricity bills.
- Paying water bills.
- Paying television licences.
- Cashing Social Security cheques.
- Banking with Lloyds/TSB and Barclays.
- Sending money-grams.
- Foreign exchange services.
- Pensions.
- Sells parking pay-cards.
- Sells mobile phone top-up cards.
- And has a Portuguese employee who can translate.

It also has, with the Market, significance to Jersey's culture, i.e. that of a small British and French Island Market that is vibrant with life, has a range of different and local products and services.

Despite the fact that thousands of people and Market Traders rely on this Sub-Post Office; that we do not know what services will be lost to the community when it is closed or how much money this particular Post Office loses per year (the Minister for Treasury and Resources has been unable to provide such information on these 2 points); that we don't know if the Co-op service will make up for this loss; how much potential impact there will be on the Market as a visitor attraction; and finally, what the impact on the Traders within the Market and outside will be; Jersey Post has announced the closure of the Market Sub-Post Office and the Minister for Treasury and Resources has raised no questions as to the impact of its loss.

I urge Members to consider these points carefully before deciding whether or not they will support this proposition.

Financial and manpower implications

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States in asking the Council of Ministers to commission a report.

There will, however, be a cost of around £10,000 incurred in the production of the report commissioned by the Council of Ministers, which could be met by last year's tax revenue surplus of £21 million.

There will be no financial implications for Jersey Post, as it would be expected that the research for the report will be undertaken whilst it is open to the public until the extended date of 30th October 2010.