

DÁIL ÉIREANN

Fógra Tairisceana : Notice of Motion

GNÓ COMHALTAÍ PRÍOBHÁIDEACHA PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

“That Dáil Éireann:

recognises that:

- post offices serve a vital social and economic role in their communities;
- there is a very specific commitment in the Programme for a Partnership Government to protect the postal network;
- rural and small urban post offices, which are mostly run by independent postmasters, have had their income and footfall greatly reduced;
- many small post offices are now operating on the equivalent of the National Minimum Wage;
- if this is allowed to continue, Grant Thornton has predicted that 450-500 offices will cease to exist by 2017; and
- if footfall and incomes are not improved then the post office network will be decimated; and

calls on the Government to:

- act on its commitment as outlined in the Programme for a Partnership Government;
- implement an action plan for the post office network within three months;
- implement a new community banking service operated by An Post to be made available in all post offices throughout the country; this post community bank could be based on either the New Zealand Kiwibank model or the German Sparkassen model, both of which have been found to be valid models;
- consider a once-off Capital Investment Fund for the further modernisation of the post office network to enable the widespread provision of banking services in rural and disadvantaged urban areas, most of which have been completely abandoned by the current banking model;
- ensure that the provision of all over-the-counter services relating to Government departments must be tendered for on the basis of both social and economic grounds, to include rural Ireland in any future growth;
- ensure that all business previously identified by Grant Thornton, the former Oireachtas Joint Committee on Transport and Communications and the Post Office Network Business Development Group must be implemented;
- establish a working group to identify the potential for local post offices to act as hubs to facilitate other services such as health, transport, agriculture, etc., and to act as a one-stop-shop for Government services as committed to in the Programme for a Partnership Government;
- strongly consider committing funds, while the above measures are being implemented, to ensure no more downward pay reviews to post offices which will make them uneconomical and have the effect of closure by a thousand cuts;
- ensure that a five-year holding plan will be put in place while these changes are being implemented or there will be no network left to salvage; and

recommends that An Post be invited before the Committee of Public Accounts to outline their plan for the future of the post office network.” — *Mattie McGrath, Michael J. Healy-Rae, Michael Collins, Noel Grealish, Michael Harty, Danny Healy-Rae, Michael Lowry.*

[11 November, 2016]