



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Susan Allen
Head of Retail Distribution
Santander UK plc
2 Triton Square
Regent's Place
London NW1 3AN

19 July 2017

Thank you for your letter of 13 July, as well as for enclosing a hardcopy of Santander's impact assessment. Unfortunately, your response does not offer much reassurance that the proposed closure of the Chislehurst branch has been properly considered.

While I welcome your commitment to address the misleading wording of Santander's communication to date, and appreciate the recent inclusion of other notable stakeholders – such as the Chislehurst Town Team, Chislehurst Society, and Chislehurst Rotary Club – I fear the omission of these important community groups in the first place shows how little consideration has been given to the impact this closure will have on a great number of local residents. Anyone who knows the area will understand that these groups play a central role in our community's life.

It would seem that Santander's engagement is rather tokenistic when such groups have until very recently been excluded from the decision making process, and more importantly, when the closure of the branch is quite patently a done deal.

Having read through the impact assessment, I would be grateful if you could clarify a few additional points:

- What assessment, if any, has been made of the impact the closure will have on elderly and disabled customers? This is a particularly pertinent question given the demographics of Chislehurst, which has a growing elderly population. Indeed, the Borough of Bromley has the largest number of pensioners in London.
- You make reference to the comparatively higher use of a number of neighbouring branches. I would be interested to see the actual footfall figures for the branches you mention.
- The pie chart on page 2 of the impact assessment includes data on the percentage of personal customers who use counter and cash machine services at the branch. However, for business customers, only cash machine data is included. Why have the figures on business customer counter use been omitted? Would you be able to provide this information?



- What other options were considered before the decision was taken to close the branch? For example, was the viability of a low maintenance branch with more self-service machines considered?

I trust, in the spirit of proactive engagement with the local community, and given the considerable concerns these proposals have caused, you will feel able to provide this information as soon as possible. Ultimately, banks have a social responsibility to their clientele, and many local residents still feel their best interests are not being taken into account by Santander. I understand that no large print impact assessment is available for residents with sight loss, and I have already received a number of complaints about the dedicated helpline advertised.

I would welcome your thoughts on the above.

Bob Neill MP