



Response to The Jersey Competition and Regulatory Authority's Strategic Review of Postal Services: Draft Decision

From The Jersey Consumer Council

The Jersey Consumer Council (JCC) welcomes the recommendations outlined in the Jersey Competition and Regulatory Authority's (JCRA) Strategic Review of Postal Services. In particular, the Council are in favour of the Authority's proposal for Jersey Post to set up a Postal Users' Group.

Although the JCC wouldn't have the resources to host such a group, we would be very willing to be part of it, as we feel that a user group is very much needed to challenge the major decisions that are currently being made regarding postal services, and which have been impacting consumers in Jersey this year.

Jersey Consumer Council members have been very disappointed and concerned in recent months by the impact that the removal of the mail plane has had on their service. We are routinely hearing of letters taking more than a week – and in some cases more than two weeks – to be delivered, despite Jersey Post's assurance that First Class mail will now take two working days to get to the Island from the UK, and that mail from Jersey to the UK will aim to be delivered within a minimum delivery timeframe of three working days.

At the time the mail plane stopped serving the Island, Ministers said that the change would have 'almost no impact on inbound deliveries'. However, this has not been the case, and we are regularly hearing from the public, as well as from our own Council members, about mail taking much longer – affecting individual Islanders and businesses alike. This is particularly frustrating, as it follows further price rises earlier this year, meaning that Islanders are now paying more than they were last year, but receiving a poorer service.

This is further compounded, our Council feels, by the decision to close four post offices in Co-op stores, as this will have a negative impact on the lives of many Islanders – in particular, those consumers who do not have easy access to the internet or modern technology and still rely on the Post Office to pay household bills and other everyday expenditures. We've heard from many Islanders who are disappointed and frustrated by this decision.

The Consumer Council agrees that membership of a user group 'should reflect local circumstances and challenges', and that the chair of this should be independent and not represent particular organisations, or groups of customers.

We agree with the JCRA's proposal that key changes that affect local postal services should be discussed with a user group initially, and that, for major decisions, some kind of consultation process should complement a piece of public engagement work.

That said, the Jersey Consumer Council feels that any new User Group could only have a meaningful impact if such a group was underpinned or backed up by an undertaking from the postal regulator – in this instance the JCRA – to act on any recommendations which are made. We must be careful that any user group or postal forum does not become a tick-box exercise.

The JCC would also like to see any new user group have the remit or authority to review decisions up to 12 months after they have been made, as the full impact of some changes which may, in the first instance, seem minor, may not be fully realised until after they have been implemented.

On behalf of the Jersey Consumer Council



Carl Walker

Chairman