

FROM: SIR JOHN BUTTERFILL FRICS MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

9 February, 2009

Dear Mr Clash,

Thank you for your letter of the 6<sup>th</sup> February with regard to the Hooper Review and the future of Royal Mail.

I can assure you that, together with my Conservative colleagues, I have welcomed the publication of the Hooper review and agree with its central theme that change within Royal Mail is vital. With regard to ownership, however, our position is that a change in the structure of Royal Mail which includes part privatisation may have merits depending on the wider circumstances of the proposals.

I was very pleased to see that the CWU endorses the call for a new relationship with management and is prepared to negotiate an agreement that would support modernisation of the industry. I also recognise that whether or not a change in ownership structure takes place, vital issues such as equipment modernisation, falling post usage, maintenance of the universal service obligation, safeguarding of the postal network and the pensions deficit, will all need to be dealt with.

I am very concerned at the lack of progress on these issues during the current Government's period in office and share your concerns that the issue of privatisation should not be used as a format for overlooking the key underlying issues which Royal Mail needs to face up to in any event. To that extent, whilst we have no objection to privatisation conceptually, the Conservative Party will certainly not be offering the Government unconditional support for its proposals and, on this basis, therefore, I am afraid that I do not currently feel able to sign the Early Day Motions you mention in your letter.

However, I can assure you that my colleagues and I will be reviewing the overall package most carefully to ensure that we retain a strong and sustainable postal service.

Yours sincerely,



John Butterfill

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