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# Stand By Your Post

SAY **No** TO PRIVATISATION &

**YES** TO A WHOLLY OWNED PUBLIC SERVICE

NW CWU BRIEFING DOCUMENT

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You will no doubt be aware the delayed release of the Hooper Report into the future of the UK Postal Service was published immediately prior to Christmas 2008.

The report makes a number of recommendations and to be fair, the report isn't entirely negative from a CWU point of view.

- It recognises that something needs to be done about the pension deficit and the government have agreed to look at this.
- It also agrees that Postcomm the current regulator needs changing along with the regulators primary objective.
- It agrees that the Universal Service Obligation( USO) must not be worsened ( albeit on social/stamped mail only)
- That the Post Office LTD (POL) remains fully publicly owned, offering a wider range of services.
- Recognises the current management have not delivered on modernisation despite being given £1 billion to do just that 3 years ago

Unfortunately, the report appears only to measure the success of the service in terms of its profitability in comparison to other postal services across Europe. This approach fails to recognise the difference between the services offered across Europe and the cost of posting in these countries.

It also repeats the Adam Crozier mantra that UK postal workers are 25% overpaid and in some way this contributes to the services poor efficiency. Incidentally, the report fails to offer any analysis of the pay rates between unionised and non unionised workers and some of the highest paid civil servants in the country including Crosier.

*The CWU do not accept most of the criticisms levelled at us by the Report. We reject the idea that we have been blocking modernisation. We have consistently asked Royal Mail for their vision for the future of the business and to date has yet to receive it.*

*Neither do we accept the role of junior partners in carrying out Royal Mail management plans. We are a democratic Union that exists to serve the needs of our members.*

However, the report reveals that Royal Mail does have a view of modernisation and this involves investment in new technology and large scale reductions in the number of sites it operates from. Nobody in the CWU intends to stand in the way of the introduction of new technology but Mail Centres and the Distribution network should be arranged on the basis of what provides the best service, not the cheapest and machinery introduced to make the service better, not worse

The remedy for this, the report concludes, is outside investment. In other words part privatisation, which in turn will bring with it the managerial expertise to affect change in the industry.

Despite arguing to the contrary this is a plan in our view based merely on ideology. The ideology that says it is better to have a private profit making company providing a reduced service than a public company offering a superior service. In the current climate, to argue that private capital is more readily available than public and private management more dynamic is stretching credulity to its limit.

The CWU remain steadfastly opposed to any form of privatisation and will campaign vigorously amongst the public, MPs and all groups interested in the continuing survival of Royal Mail as a wholly publicly owned service, as committed to by the government in their manifesto.

The crucial question we need to pose to both MP's and the public is "Do you want Royal Mail to be a publicly owned company offering a quality service at a reasonable cost or do you want it to be a business simply making profits?"

Furthermore the notion that the price to pay for Government accepting its pension obligations is part privatisation is unacceptable. Private companies would only be prepared to put something in now if they thought they could take more out later.

The failure of the report to recognize the impact of the introduction of unfair competition following the ill advised early liberalization of the UK Postal Market gives rise to some of the reports conclusions that are clearly void of any accurate analysis of the issues affecting Royal Mail.

However, the campaign to stop the privatisation will be only one arm of the campaign the CWU will have to be engaged in. Royal Mail management, despite being criticized by the Report has seen it as a green light to step up their slash and burn policy by

reducing services further. The CWU have no option but to oppose this.

In support of our campaign we would ask that you ensure your MPs have signed EDM 428 that at the time of writing this report had over 100 signatures.

We would also ask that you invite speakers to affiliated CLP/ Trade Councils meetings so the case can be put for an agreed way forward for a modern postal service within the public sector.

We have always said that we are more than willing to discuss change with Royal Mail, but by negotiations and agreement. Management must be persuaded that this is the only way that change is going to happen in a successful manner. Hopefully, this can be done by discussions with us and with a little arm-twisting from those with influence outside the business such as you.

Once again, the CWU are committed to a fully publicly owned, modern Postal Service, ***as the Government is committed to in their manifesto***. We are confident that this is what the British public wants and increasingly MPs are voicing their concerns about plans to privatise the Post Office.

***We ask that you join us in our campaign to ensuring Royal stop the current slash and burn policy and that Government honors its commitment***

The simple message from the CWU is; - **Ensure you write to your M.P. Support the campaign to keep Royal Mail a wholly publicly owned company. Support the CWU in ensuring that we have a progressive company that protects our pension rights, modernises in a way that secures our public service obligations, protects jobs and looks to grow the business not downsize it with their current "slash and burn" policies.**

**CWU NW Campaign Group  
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