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Hopkins concerned over new threat to local Post Offices

A Government decision to remove the £150 million-a-year Post Office Account Card from the Royal Mail will drastically increase the threat of more Post Office closures in Keighley and Ilkley, Kris Hopkins, the local Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, has warned.

Industry experts have said that as many as 3,000 more Post Offices could be forced to shut if the Government does not extend the Royal Mail's Post Office Account Card contract which gives Post Offices the right to distribute pensions and other benefits. The contract is due to expire in 2010.

"Keighley and Ilkley has already lost four Post Offices during the current round of closures and it is inevitable that more will follow if the Government decides to award this contract to a rival bidder," commented Cllr Hopkins.

"Such an outcome would be devastating for local people and I hope the Labour Government, for once, will have the sense to see this.

"The ongoing series of closures were defended by Ministers on the grounds that the Post Office network was losing money.

"However it has just been announced that, in the six months to September, the Royal Mail achieved an operating profit of £177 million – the most it has made in at least seven years - thereby destroying any excuse for any more Post Offices to shut.

"To put thousands more at risk by failing to extend the Post Office Account card would be nothing short of scandalous.

"As I've said so many times before, a huge number of local people in Keighley and Ilkley – particularly older and disabled residents - depend on their local Post Offices, or what's left of them after the latest round of closures. This contract simply must go to the Royal Mail."

ENDS