

Your reference:  
Our reference: RMA/ES/  
Enquiries to: Mrs R Atkinson  
Direct Dial: (01768) 212202  
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# Eden

## District Council

Town Hall Penrith Cumbria CA11 7QF  
Telephone: (01768) 817817  
Facsimile (01768) 890470  
Internet: [www.eden.gov.uk](http://www.eden.gov.uk)  
Email: [dpp@eden.gov.uk](mailto:dpp@eden.gov.uk)

Mr Tony Spencer  
Postcomm  
6 Hercules Road  
LONDON  
SE1 7DB

Dear Mr Spencer

### ***Royal Mail proposal to introduce Zonal Pricing***

I am writing in response to the above consultation on behalf of Eden District Council. The Council is concerned that the withdrawal of geographically uniform prices and the introduction of differential zonal pricing for the bulk mail products listed will have a negative impact on costs for local organisations and businesses. It will clearly result in higher charges for essential postal services within this area at a time of significant financial pressure.

Eden is the most sparsely populated area in England and the majority of residents live in small settlements or villages. The population is served by approximately 30 rural Post Offices that cover over 830sq miles and Eden is ranked 11<sup>th</sup> most deprived out of 354 districts in relation to access to services (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004). These statistics highlight the obstacles local organisations and businesses face in relation to provision of ordinary day to day services. It seems inequitable that operating in a rural area should lead to disadvantage through potential financial penalties.

As a rural district council we are aware of the increased costs and complexity of providing services over large sparse areas and are committed to sustaining essential local authority services to rural communities that offer value for money as opposed to being based on cost reflective pricing.

Overall, the Council is not in favour of zonal pricing. Fair, affordable uniform charges for postal services irrespective of geographic area should be maintained that do not discriminate against rural public service providers, as permitted under the Royal Mail's existing licence. It is our view that the assessment process and criteria for considering new zonal pricing applications needs to ensure the preservation of this principle.

Yours sincerely



RUTH ATKINSON  
Director of Policy and Performance

C.C. Judith Donovan CBE, Regional Chairman of Postwatch



Ruth Atkinson BA PGCE DMS MBA  
Director of Policy and Performance



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