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| Mr Ross McEwan  CEO Royal Bank of Scotland 36 St Andrews Square  Edinburgh  EH2 2YB | Your ref:  Our ref: AM  Date: 12 October 2018 |

Dear Mr McEwan,

**Re: Proposed closure of RBS branch in Hathersage, Derbyshire.**

Following a meeting of Members of the Peak District National Park Authority on 5 October, I am writing to express our disappointment at the proposed closure of the RBS bank in Hathersage, Derbyshire; to explain the importance of access to local services as set out in our newly-adopted 5-year Management Plan; and to encourage you to reconsider the decision in order to support the social and economic good health of the Peak District's rural communities.

The two statutory purposes of the National Park Authority are to 'conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage' and to 'promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of national parks by the public. In carrying out these aims we are also required to seek to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities within the national park.

Earlier this year we approved our new 5-year Management Plan, again a statutory requirement, which is not a plan for an individual organisation or group but a plan for the entire place - in this case, Britain's first national park, created in 1951. In the new plan we have defined six areas of impact that reflect our current priorities, one of which is 'Supporting thriving and sustainable communities and economy'. Access to local services is a key component of this and the Plan recognises that an ageing demographic will mean that some residents will find it increasingly hard to access key local services such as banks, especially if they have no transport of their own. On-line banking may be more widely used today, but some older people in particular either find it hard to use or simply don't have access to the technology. The RBS branch at Hathersage is the last remaining bank in the Hope Valley and serves a string of important local communities including Castleton, Hope, Bamford and Grindleford. It is also one of only two remaining banks in the whole of the national park, since the RBS bank at Bakewell was closed. Other RBS branches just over the national park boundary that have recently closed include Ashbourne, Chapel-en-le-Frith and Matlock.

The Authority is concerned that the closure of the Hathersage branch will seriously diminish local peoples' access to banking facilities, not to mention a facility of direct use to the 12 million people who visit the national park every year.

If the bank itself is to cease operating in its present location, has any thought been given to alternative models of delivery, such as the introduction of a mobile banking service?

I hope you will understand our concerns at this potential loss of a vital local service and its implications in terms of the Authority carrying out its statutory duty to foster the economic and social wellbeing of local communities. This was reinforced at our annual event for parish councils that we held recently where there was an in-depth discussion around the question of what a thriving and sustainable rural community looks like and the necessary building blocks - including access to banking facilities. There was considerable and understandable public concern at the proposed RBS bank closure in Hathersage, and I hope you will reassess your proposals in light of this.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew McCloy

**Chair**

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