

Jardine welcomes delays in branch closures

Late last year the Royal Bank of Scotland announced closure of many branches across Scotland including some in Edinburgh. Today in an apparent U-turn the bank has said it will keep 10 of the branches earmarked for closure open for this year.

At the end of the year the bank says an independent review will be carried out into the use of these branches and whether they should be kept open or not. The vast majority of these branches are in communities where there is no other Royal Bank branch within a nine mile radius.

The branches which will remain open include : Biggar, Beaully, Castlebay/Barra, Comrie, Douglas, Gretna, Inveraray, Melrose, Kyle and Tongue.



Liberal Democrat Scottish Affairs spokesperson Christine Jardine, whose constituency contains the RBS headquarters, has reacted to the announcement.



Christine Jardine MP

Ms Jardine said: "These changes are the result of pressure from campaigners, the public and the cross party Scottish Affairs Committee but branches are not yet secure and there is still work to be done.

"It's extremely disappointing any politician should use this to claim credit for themselves, as if this were a political edition of The Apprentice.

"These branch closures will be a bitter blow for staff and

customers. Rather than slapping themselves on the back, Ian Blackford and co should be standing up for the more than 50 communities which are still set to lose their bank branches.”

The bank has also said that if a branch is destined for closure after the end of the year, then where it owns the building (and where there is no demand for a building) they will work with development trusts and local communities to transfer ownership to a community for free, if there is a viable and deliverable three-year business case.

As part of the proposal if the community venture fails within those three years, then the ownership of the building will remain with the Royal Bank of Scotland. Where possible the bank will also donate all suitable branch furniture and other suitable equipment to local organisations for free.