



**East Hampshire  
Conservatives**

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

29/04/08: immediate release

### **It's official: access to services in East Hants has got worse under Labour** *Local communities are losing Post Offices, GPs, schools and shops*

Millions of households across the country are being deprived of a post office, primary school, shop or GP surgery, according to a new report. A major academic survey by Oxford University has shown which parts of the country are most 'geographically deprived' because essential services are so far away.

Conservative analysis has highlighted the areas of the country hardest hit by the disappearance of local services in the last four years – based on the report's measure for access to local services. This measure reflects the distance to the nearest GP surgery, convenience store or supermarket, primary school and post office.

In East Hampshire, 51 of the 72 neighbourhoods studied have seen a decline on this measure even since the last time it was looked at, in 2004. The figures refer to the situation before the current round of post office closures.

East Hants prospective parliamentary candidate, Damian Hinds, said: "Under Labour, people in rural areas such as ours have seen essential services move further and further away from them. I'm afraid there may be even more to come, with the spectre of GP 'polyclinics' and a threat from Whitehall to take away money from councils which don't remove so-called 'surplus places' in schools."

Recognising the critical importance of village shops and post offices to community life, both the district and county councils have been actively supporting our threatened post offices.

Now, David Cameron has set up a national commission which has called for more to be done to protect small shops. It has slammed Government proposals to weaken planning rules which currently control out-of-town retail development. If the rules are relaxed, the hearts of villages and towns centres could be ripped out by a new wave of out-of-town hypermarkets.

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