
From: Ruth Phillips [GRO]
Sent: Fri 02/08/2013 4:04:37 PM (UTC)
To: Paula Vennells [GRO]
Bcc: Chris M Day [GRO]
Subject: Update

Hi Paula,

A few moments to pause for breath! Progress to date:

1. SLT briefing (10.00 – 11.00) – seemed to go well, a few questions but nothing too taxing.
2. Call with Dave Ward/Andy Furey (12.00 – 13.00) – essentially “talks about talks”, slow progress being made and agreement in principle to meet next week (Wednesday/Thursday) with the intention of (a) restating our respective positions on key issues in order to endeavour to find common ground that might justify more detailed negotiations (I have made it clear that it would not be helpful for this to be publicised as evidence that POL Management is softening/weakening its resolve), (b) pensions clarity – DW has become much more engaged in RMPP generally and possible differences in approach between RM and POL specifically, therefore a session to drive clarity of understanding on this key component of any negotiation seems appropriate. We have also agreed that we will take a “check-step” after these two sessions to determine if detailed negotiations are worthwhile. At the end of the call I informed them that we were publishing our ARA today which they duly noted.
3. Call with Nick Noble, CMA (13.15) standing in for Brian Scott – courtesy call plus offer to take him through financial headlines of the accounts; he declined the offer but said he or Brian would come back with any questions next week.
4. Call with George Thomson (13.45 – earliest time he was available) – typically engaging if somewhat random debate with George. He pointed out that he would have preferred to have been taken through the numbers before publication, I explained why that had not been possible and he appeared to accept that. We agreed to meet in the next two weeks to discuss a range of business issues including any questions relating to the annual report – I will liaise with Nick Beal and others in preparation for this meeting.

Alana will summarise the external comms at the end of the day but as of 15:00 no calls have been received by the Press Office, most attention so far seems to be focused on RM.

Separately, and in response to the SS questions, it is true that we have not yet agreed a way forward with SS to retain costs but we are working extremely hard to resolve this issue. This week has been spent working up options that will allow us to address the cost issue but also keep the MPs and JFSA on board. Getting our approach right is important as we know from past experience SS & JFSA will go to JA if unhappy. To give you confidence that it is being worked on, Simon Baker had several open conversations with Ron Warmington today on this and he has a final call at 5pm to discuss further options. His expectation is that we have another week to go before we come to an agreement.

The reason why more cases require disclosure is because they have reviewed more cases. 151 this week, 124 last week. It is reassuring that the external law firm reviewing the cases has advised us that in all 9 cases we should challenge any appeal the defence makes with this new information, as they believe our case still stands.

Hope you're enjoying your break, feel free to call me at any time over the weekend!

Best,

Chris

Chris Day | Chief Financial Officer

First Floor – Old Street Wing, 148 Old Street, LONDON, EC1V 9HQ

GRO Postline GRO
Mobex GRO
GRO



From: Paula Vennells
Sent: 02 August 2013 13:14
To: Chris M Day
Subject: Fwd: Update

Chris hi, I hope today is going ok? I haven't seen anything yet, although as we are travelling south through the Highlands, the signal isn't reliable. Let me know how the SLT session goes - it feels very odd to be so far out of it all.

I've forwarded a note below from Susan. Surprised that she didn't copy you? Have you been in the loop - that was the idea.

My principal worry is that it says the same about SS as we were saying 10 days ago when I left: no resolution on the cost and that the initial workshop went ok. I'll catch up with Susan when she is back on Monday but wondered if you could shed any light in the meantime?

Also, our disclosure has gone up from 2 to 9 cases. That flags a risk - but there is no detail below. Again, do you have any sense what triggered it? (The note needs more risk added - it is a bit too factual, ie., without interpretation.)

Finally, I saw Alice's note, which she sent to the Board. I wasn't entirely sure how to take it. Helpful? And/ or has she decided to run/ chair the process (asking Susan to flag issues directly to her)? I'm not concerned re governance, Alice and I can talk through if any issues emerge. At this stage, I just want to be clear what conversations have been had. (Have you and Alice or Susan spoken about all of this? (Btw., If you don't already, you should take my Alice 121 slots during long holidays- do you and Alice catch up?))

Hope to hear from you later (hint: a slightly longer mail than your usual would be good!)

Thanks, Paula

Sent from my iPad
Begin forwarded message:

From: Susan Crichton GRO
Date: 1 August 2013 21:51:04 BST
To: Paula Vennells GRO
Cc: Theresa Iles GRO Simon Baker GRO
Subject: Update

Paula a brief update on actions for the last week on the Horizon project:

Case Reviews

- Workshop with JFSA and Second sight was productive and collaborative. High level process for mediation agreed.
- Email sent to JA informing him of the workshop and the new process – confirmation received from Janet, will follow-up next week.
- We have spoken several times to Alan Bates who told his members about the mediation process last Sunday.
- We have another workshop next Thursday where we will finalise the process, costs and communication, we intend to start the new process as soon as we can after that meeting.
- The new process allows new cases into enter into mediation (beyond those 43 in the second sight review), but also requires those in the review to re-register. It is likely that that not all the 43 cases will register, so will drop out of the review.
- This means we don't know how many cases there will be for mediation, but for budget purposes we are estimating 75.
- We have agreed that Post Office will provide funding for sub postmasters to have an independent advisor to help them through this process. We will offer to pay the first £2k of their costs, per case. We will need to put controls in place to ensure this isn't abused.
- We will develop a TOR for the Working Group – and from this a role description for the independent chair.

Second Sight

- Alice gave clear direction, following my discussion with her, that she doesn't want Second Sight to work on any of the cases beyond the original 43.
- We are working through various options of how we can minimise Second Sight's involvement and limit costs
- One option is to bring in another company to work with them, initially to help with the anticipated high demand, and then take over once JFSA have confidence in them.
- However we do it, replacing Second Sight will have to be carefully managed with JA and stakeholders
- We plan on having a face to face meeting with Second Sight next week to discuss and agree a way forward

Legal

- Sent our response to the Criminal Case Review commission. They have responded that they will wait for the outcome of the QC review
- To date Cartwright King have sifted 151 cases, out of which 20 required a detailed review. Out of these further disclosure has been provided to the defence in 9 cases.
- Cartwright King believe they will complete the review of cases by the end of August (these are all cases since Separation)

Process Improvements

- Gayle Peacock has been shaping up the process improvement work stream. She has produced a medium level plan, a draft TOR, key objectives and is planning a detailed workshop with her stream leads next week.

Budget

- Cost for this programme (but not including the implementation aspects of the process improvement streams) is estimated at approx. £1m. It is sensitive to the number of cases registered for mediation.

- We have reviewed the budget with Chris and will work with him to manage the SS costs.
- Discussions to be had next week to determine if it can be considered an exception cost under NT, given that it is a transformation project.

Regards

Susan