POL00116436

From: Paula Vennells GRO

Sent: Tue 08/04/2014 6:43:50 AM (UTC)

To: Mark R Davies GRO; Belinda Crowe GRO; Chris Aujard GRO; David Oliver GRO

Cc: Chris M Day GRO; Neil Hayward GRO

Subject: JA response

Dear all, Mark and I have reviewed the JA response. Whilst we need to be clear in our challenges to some of James' requests, we also need to be careful that we don't alienate him as we are considering our forward options. Could you read the note below and feed in any views to me and Mark asap. (Mark pls see changes: para 4 ref to TH, para 5 ref to Andrew Bridgen and also change to final para re proposed time of call, to give us time to digest the output of the S/C.)
Suggested amends or nil reply by 10am pls?
Thx Paula

> Thank you for your letter of March 26. My apologies for the delay in responding. You will appreciate that you raised some issues which it was important for me to think through in detail before coming back to you.
>
> I would like to suggest that we schedule a telephone call to discuss some of the points which emerged in your letter, and in the email sent to MPs following our meeting in Portcullis House. (I must confess to being slightly surprised by the email, which I believe – unusually – was not shared with us in advance?)
>
> To address some of the points you have raised: I would like to reiterate my support for a final report on the Mediation Scheme, even if it is, as you suggest, in generic terms, once the process has been completed.
>
> I must however be clear in my firm view that to produce an interim report would have the potential to damage the integrity of the Scheme, and more particularly would not be in the interests of applicants given the imperative to allow due process to take its course. (As I emphasised at the meeting in Portcullis House, this is a point that continues to be strongly made to all members of the Working Group by its independent Chair.)
>
> To turn to the question of when we should next meet with MPs, I was very grateful for the point you made at the March meeting when you said in closing (in response to the comment by Andrew Bridgen MP - 'no point if there is nothing to discuss') that although desirable, a meeting in July might not be possible. I can confirm that it will be extremely unlikely we will be able to hold a meeting on that timescale as the Scheme will still be in operation and we would not be able to comment any further than we were able to last month. It would be useful to discuss the handling of this point with you.

In terms of further cases being raised, whether historical or current, I would be grateful if they could be sent to the Post Office for my attention. I will ensure that although they will not be able to enter the Scheme they will be thoroughly investigated.

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As you know the processes which lie behind the scheme are extremely thorough. Evidence is being rigorously assessed by all involved, particularly the Chair, as indeed it should be. We are examining how it might be possible to accelerate the process, but I know you will appreciate the fine balance required in such matters so that we are fair and consider all those with an interest in any decisions we take about the Scheme.

I know you also appreciate how seriously the Post Office Board, led by Alice and myself, is taking this process. A further conversation in the run up to our next Board discussion at the end of this month, might I think help to address some of the issues you have raised.

Sent from my iPad