

To: Neville-Rolfe Lucy [GRO]
Cc: Neville-Rolfe MPST [GRO]
From: Neville-Rolfe MPST [O=BIS PRODUCTION/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=6F2B04F873D84BADB6A80D880A549FC3-ROLFEMPST]
Sent: Thur 02/07/2015 10:59:28 AM (UTC)
Subject: FW: Submission to Baroness Neville-Rolfe and George Freeman: Post Office Horizon adjournment debate next steps

Minister,

Please see further advice on the meeting from Officials.

Kind regards

Andrew Smith

From: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)
Sent: 02 July 2015 11:33
To: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Cc: Callard Richard (ShEx)
Subject: RE: Submission to Baroness Neville-Rolfe and George Freeman: Post Office Horizon adjournment debate next steps

Andrew

Thanks very much for passing on.

I understand the Minister's concerns about excluding people, and that George Freeman is in favour of inviting Second Sight because MPs focused on them. However, I would still recommend strongly that they are not invited to the meeting. The legal risk to Post Office (and, potentially, Government) is significant if this meeting prejudices the work of the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) and we have very grave concerns that, based on Second Sight's conduct to date, they will not respect confidentiality or the terms of their engagement either during the meeting or afterwards. We understand (although cannot confirm) that they have links in to JFSA and we strongly believe that their presence in the meeting will do more harm than good.

I'd add that Post Office are extremely worried about the risk to their business from this meeting, particularly around legal issues like the CCRC. I'd be concerned that inviting Second Sight could be a red line for them – we would have to consider what would happen if this were the case, but I think it is important to remember that Post Office have put in a great deal of effort to be helpful and transparent here, yet are constantly denounced for their approach and their apparent "contempt" for MPs without any real evidence to demonstrate why. They accept the seriousness of the situation and are committed to resolving it, but are becoming increasingly frustrated by the attacks against them and it is not clear what more they can do – remembering, as we mentioned to the Minister, that POL are effectively fighting with one hand behind their back because they are respecting confidentiality when others are not.

As you know, when we discussed this briefly with the Minister on Tuesday she raised the idea of a calm, business-like meeting which would "lower the heat" on the situation, and we think this is the right approach. Achieving that will take careful chairmanship however, and being very clear about having the right people in the room. As the submission points out, meetings have taken place between Post Office and MPs before (including Mr Bridgen) and have been generally unsuccessful. Having the meeting facilitated by the Minister should, we hope, ensure that both sides can get a fair hearing. We advise that will best be achieved by a low key meeting between MPs and Post Office, rather than a wide-ranging conference-style meeting with multiple parties which could lose focus and achieve little.

Finally, on the Minister's point about allies, it is very difficult to find any. Which? are not involved in this debate – there are some very loud voices and a carefully orchestrated campaign against, with only Post Office (and, when needed, the NFSP) on the other side defending Post Office and trying to reduce the damage this issue does to the business as a whole.

I would be grateful if you could pass these points to the Minister. I am of course at the Minister's disposal to discuss this in any further detail, either in person or on the phone.

(I'd also add that I would be grateful if this advice is not shared too widely, although I am of course happy for them to be shared with George Freeman's office if you or the Minister think appropriate)

Thanks
Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director | Shareholder Executive

GRO

From: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Sent: 02 July 2015 10:43
To: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)
Subject: FW: Submission to Baroness Neville-Rolfe and George Freeman: Post Office Horizon adjournment debate next steps

Please see the response from the Minister.

Kind regards

Andrew Smith

From: Neville-Rolfe Lucy
Sent: 02 July 2015 10:41
To: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Subject: RE: Submission to Baroness Neville-Rolfe and George Freeman: Post Office Horizon adjournment debate next steps

I am uneasy about overruling George Freeman and am not sure about excluding others
Can we invite allies eg Which?

Sent from my Windows Phone

From: [Neville-Rolfe MPST](#)
Sent: 02/07/2015 09:34
To: [Neville-Rolfe Lucy](#)
Cc: [Neville-Rolfe MPST](#)
Subject: RE: Submission to Baroness Neville-Rolfe and George Freeman: Post Office Horizon adjournment debate next steps

Minister,

Just had a call from Officials who recommend strongly that second sight are not invited to the meeting.

Kind regards

Andrew Smith

From: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Sent: 02 July 2015 08:58
To: Neville-Rolfe Lucy
Cc: Neville-Rolfe MPST
Subject: FW: Submission to Baroness Neville-Rolfe and George Freeman: Post Office Horizon adjournment debate next steps
Importance: High

Minister,

Please find attached a submission on the Horizon adjournment debate outlining the next steps. Officials are keen for the draft letters to issue as soon as possible. The submission was also copied to George Freeman and his comments are below.

The submission also contains letters for you to send to Andrew Bridgen and Paula Vennels which officials are keen to issue this week.

George Freeman's comments as relayed by his private office "The Minister considered your advice and he is somewhat content. However, he feels strongly that Second Sight and George Thompson (NFSP) should be invited. He commented that the MP's focused on Second Sight and it would not be a satisfactory meeting without them. He agrees that JFSA should not attend.

He would also like a line in the letter to Andrew Bridgen MP to reflect the PM's offer at PMQs alongside his own."

Kind regards

Andrew Smith

From: Thompson Laura (Shareholder Executive)

Sent: 01 July 2015 15:02

To: Neville-Rolfe MPST; Freeman MPST; O'Driscoll, Katie

Cc: Javid MPST; SpAd Javid MPST; Perm Sec (BIS); Russell Mark (ShEx); Odgers Anthony (ShEx); Callard Richard (ShEx); McInnes Tim (ShEx); Dollin Michael (Shareholder Executive); Baugh James (ShEx); Boughen Aileen (Communications); Creer Simon (Communications); French Claire (Communications); Parly Unit - Others

Subject: Submission to Baroness Neville-Rolfe and George Freeman: Post Office Horizon adjournment debate next steps

Importance: High

Andrew, Katie

Please see attached submission which is being sent jointly to 1. George Freeman and 2. Baroness Neville-Rolfe. It follows up on Monday's adjournment debate in the Commons on the Post Office Horizon system, which is Baroness Neville-Rolfe's policy lead but the debate was taken by George Freeman.

The submission recommends how we meet the commitment made by Government (and repeated at PMQs today) to convene a meeting on this matter. There are draft letters for Baroness Neville-Rolfe to send to Andrew Bridgen MP (who called the debate) and Paula Vennells, Post Office CEO.

In terms of timing, we strongly recommend the letters issue this week if possible, so if George Freeman is able to consider this tonight and his views fed to Baroness Neville-Rolfe to consider tomorrow, that would be very helpful.

I am very happy to chat through any aspect of this, either with private office or with the Minister if they would find that helpful.

Please note that in the time available it has not been possible to clear this submission through SpAds, but we would of course welcome their input on the decision if **Rob** is able to put this to Nick tonight.

Many thanks

Laura

Laura Thompson | Assistant Director, Post Office Network Team | Shareholder Executive

BIS, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET

GRO

laura.thompson

GRO

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