

RESTRICTED - POLICY & COMMERCIAL

Rt Hon Alan Milburn MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
Parliament Street
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9 February 1999

BA/POCL PROJECT HORIZON

You will know that as Minister for the Post Office I have been charged with taking forward the work on preparing an initial draft of our White Paper on the future of the Post Office.

It has become increasingly clear that given the central importance of the Horizon project to the future of the counters business of the Post Office, it will be difficult and perhaps even in practice impossible to issue the White Paper until the future of Horizon has been settled.

Against this background - and you are aware of the pressures we are under to achieve early publication of the White Paper - I have become increasingly concerned at the continuing silence from the Treasury since Jeremy Heywood's letter of 28 January. I would therefore very much welcome an urgent meeting on the progress of the work which your officials are taking forward under your guidance. I will ask my office to contact yours shortly to arrange a suitable time, if you agree.

Ian McCartney