
From: Secretary of State DBT (DBT)/[O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=73D1B78651B9426CB175E1B86FB7588D-1724E4D2-17]
Sent: Tue 09/07/2024 6:03:13 PM (UTC)
To: Brooks-White Jobshare; [REDACTED] GRO; Spad SOS (DBT); [REDACTED] GRO; Minister MADDERS (DBT); [REDACTED] GRO
Cc: Carl CRESWELL (DBT); [REDACTED] GRO; David BICKERTON (DBT); [REDACTED] GRO; Charlotte HEYES (DBT); [REDACTED] GRO; Rob BRIGHTWELL (DBT); [REDACTED] GRO; Amy LILLEY; [REDACTED] GRO; [REDACTED] GRO; Gervase POULDEN; [REDACTED] GRO
Subject: [Readout] RE: Briefing for SoS discussion with POL Chair

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Hi all,

Please see below my e-sig for the readout of the meeting between SoS and NR early today.

Warmest,
Jason

Jason Cheung | Private Secretary to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade
Department for Business and Trade | Old Admiralty Building | London SW1A 2DY

Attendees

- Secretary of State (SoS)
- Nigel Railton (NR), Chair of Post Office Limited
- David Bickerton, Director General for Business Group
- Carl Creswell, Director for Post Office and Business Resilience
- Eleanor Brooks, Deputy Director in Post Office Policy
- Annie Leigh, Principal Private Secretary to SoS
- Private Office to SoS

Readout

- During introductions, NR mentioned that the previous government brought him in as “an agent of change”, to bring forth change to the Post Office Limited (POL) and make sure it is fit for purpose. NR mentioned that there are 3 main areas of focus:
 - Remediation:
 - NR's views is that DBT should take over on this process as (1) it needs to be sped up, and (2) POL is not trusted to handle the process by the public/affected subpostmasters.

- Get a new deal for subpostmasters:
 - NR's objectives is to put subpostmasters at the heart of Post Office and reduce the centre.
 - NR has started a strategic review which, in his view, is making good progress, and is crucial to informing POL on how to achieve "getting a new deal for subpostmasters".
 - NR mentioned how important banking hubs are, but suggested that it should be demand led: He wants to work out where the demand is, but is unsure whether banks would be supportive/provide the data for doing so. He asked for SoS/HMG supportive on this.
 - NR also suggested to review the requirement for 11,000 Post Offices. He suggested that the strategic review will be able to inform this decision.
 - NR stated that his objective is to move Post Office away from HMG funding and to find a way for it to be self-sufficient.
- Horizon Replacement System:
 - NR provided some historical background, mentioning to SoS that the NBIT project started 3 years ago with a budget of 180m, and is now looking at 1.2b instead.
 - NR wants to pivot, and will rely on the strategic review to inform POL how to do so.
 - NR also wants to bring in some experts in to provide advise to him.
- SoS asked for advice on ensuring confidence on POL and POL governance in the future. NR suggested that this can be tackled in 2 ways: 1) work can be done at a corporate level, to restructure POL and slim down POL, and 2) to rebuild the relationship between postmasters and ensure standards in both franchises and in the services provided by the centre.
- In relation to next steps, NR suggested for another meeting towards the end of August, where they can talk through the strategic review and devise a plan. SoS agreed.

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From: Brooks-White Jobshare [REDACTED] GRO

Sent: Tuesday, July 9, 2024 11:37 AM

To: Secretary of State DBT (DBT) [REDACTED] GRO; SpAds Office (Energy Security) [REDACTED] GRO

Cc: Carl CRESWELL (DBT) [REDACTED] GRO; David BICKERTON (DBT)

[REDACTED] GRO Charlotte HEYES (DBT)

[REDACTED] GRO; Rob BRIGHTWELL (DBT)

[REDACTED] GRO Amy LILLEY [REDACTED] (DBT)

[REDACTED] GRO Gervase POULDEN [REDACTED] (DBT)

[REDACTED] GRO

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Jason

Please find attached an updated brief for SoS's intro chat with Nigel Railton as requested. (NB this is now just a brief for discussion with Nigel despite the doc title).
Eleanor

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